

Sample Written Simulation Problem #2

Answer Key With Explanations

OPENING SCENE

While working as a personal trainer in a fitness center, you are approached by an apparently healthy female named Sally. Sally expresses interest in hiring you to train her in order to lose weight. Through the course of your initial interview and fitness assessments, you learn the following information:

Age: 21

Weight: 130 lb (58.5 kg)

Height: 5'6" (1.68 m)

3-Site Body Composition Test: 20% BF

BMI: 21

Blood Pressure: 118/75 mmHg

Resting Heart Rate: 62 bpm

CAD Risk Factors: None

Results of Fitness Battery:

Cardiorespiratory endurance is average.

Muscular strength and endurance are average.

Flexibility is within the normal range of motion.

SECTION A

Your next session with Sally includes a discussion about her exercise attitudes and history. What question(s) would be appropriate to ask Sally at this time? (*Choose all those questions that are appropriate at this time.*)

1. **“What are you currently doing for your workouts?” (CI—Clearly Indicated)**

This is appropriate and important information because the personal trainer needs to assess the client's current conditioning and skill level for development of proper program design.

2. **“Are you or your family financially able to pay for training sessions and equipment?” (C—Contraindicated)**

This is an unnecessary question because it is too personal and not related to completing your responsibilities as a personal trainer. The client will indicate what she can afford once pricing options have been offered to her and you discuss the frequency and duration options for your sessions.

3. **“How much weight do you want to lose?” (CI—Clearly Indicated)**

This is appropriate and important information for the personal trainer in order to develop realistic goals and proper program development for this client.

4. **“Are you dating anyone or doing anything that might interfere with training at night or on the weekends?” (CC—Clearly Contraindicated)**

This is an inappropriate and unnecessary question because it is too personal and probes her dating/relationship status. A client may perceive that the trainer is seeking to discover if she is available for dating or of a certain sexual orientation, which may be considered sexual harassment. It is best for a personal trainer to avoid direct personal questions relating to finances, religious beliefs, politics, illicit drug use, and sexual orientation. This question would be appropriate if the dating reference was removed.

5. **“What is your major in school?” (N—Neutral)**

This information may or may not be helpful in determining the fitness knowledge and activity level of the client. It certainly does not do harm to ask this question.

6. **“What recreational activities do you enjoy?” (I—Indicated)**

This is appropriate information for the personal trainer in order to develop proper program design and uncover any sport-specific goals for this client.

7. **“Do you take any recreational drugs?” (C—Contraindicated)**

This is an inappropriate question because it is too personal and probes her drug-use status. It is best for a personal trainer to avoid direct personal questions relating to finances, religious beliefs, politics, illicit drug use, and sexual orientation.

8. **“How often do you work out?” (CI—Clearly Indicated)**

This is appropriate and important information because the personal trainer needs to assess the client’s current conditioning level for the development of proper program design.

SECTION B

You design a comprehensive exercise program for Sally that includes four days per week of a combination of cardiorespiratory training, strength training, and flexibility. After two months of meeting with her, you reassess Sally’s fitness level. What would be appropriate action(s) to take at this time? (*Choose all those actions that would be appropriate at this time.*)

9. **Assess Sally’s anaerobic threshold. (CC—Clearly Contraindicated)**

This test was not one of the assessments included in Sally’s initial fitness battery. Therefore, it makes no sense to incorporate it at this time because there is no comparison value from the previous assessment. Additionally, this action is inappropriate and unnecessary for this client and poses more risks than benefits due to the high-intensity nature of the test. This type of testing is better suited for well-conditioned, athletic individuals or for clients training for a sport-specific goal.

10. **Measure Sally’s body weight. (CI—Clearly Indicated)**

This assessment is appropriate and important because it was performed in the initial fitness battery and there is baseline data available for comparison. The information derived from this assessment will help the personal trainer to further develop realistic goals and create proper progression through program design.

11. **Measure Sally’s blood pressure. (CI—Clearly Indicated)**

This assessment is appropriate and important because it was performed in the initial fitness battery and there is baseline data available for comparison. The information derived from this assessment will help the personal trainer to further develop realistic goals and create proper progression through program design.

12. **Measure Sally’s resting heart rate. (CI—Clearly Indicated)**

This assessment is appropriate and important because it was performed in the initial fitness battery and there is baseline data available for comparison. The information derived from this assessment will help the personal trainer to further develop realistic goals and create proper progression through program design.

13. **Obtain physician clearance to allow Sally to continue exercising. (C—Contraindicated)**

This is an inappropriate action based on Sally’s current health and risk factors. Suggesting that Sally seek medical clearance at this time would be a waste of her time and money, and would cause her to unnecessarily halt her exercise program.

14. **Measure Sally’s body composition. (CI—Clearly Indicated)**

This assessment is appropriate and important because it was performed in the initial fitness battery and there is baseline data available for comparison. The information derived from this assessment will help the personal trainer to further develop realistic goals and create proper progression through program design.

15. Measure Sally's cardiorespiratory endurance. (CI—Clearly Indicated)

This assessment is appropriate and important because it was performed in the initial fitness battery and there is baseline data available for comparison. The information derived from this assessment will help the personal trainer to further develop realistic goals and create proper progression through program design.

16. Measure Sally's muscular strength and endurance. (CI—Clearly Indicated)

This assessment is appropriate and important because it was performed in the initial fitness battery and there is baseline data available for comparison. The information derived from this assessment will help the personal trainer to further develop realistic goals and create proper progression through program design.

17. Measure Sally's flexibility. (CI—Clearly Indicated)

This assessment is appropriate and important because it was performed in the initial fitness battery and there is baseline data available for comparison. The information derived from this assessment will help the personal trainer to further develop realistic goals and create proper progression through program design.

18. Conduct a hydrostatic weighing test on Sally. (N—Neutral)

This assessment is unnecessary because the body-composition test conducted in the initial fitness battery was done with a different method. However, this assessment does the client no harm and may give a more accurate estimate of body composition.

SECTION C

Based on the results of the eight-week reassessment, what decision(s) would you make regarding the design of Sally's program? (*Choose all those options that are appropriate at this time.*)

19. Advise Sally to drink more water. (N—Neutral)

This advice may or may not help Sally's performance and it certainly will do her no harm.

20. Encourage Sally to change her high-impact exercises to low-/non-impact exercises. (CI—Clearly Indicated)

This is appropriate and important advice based on Sally's reassessment results, which included tightness in the hamstrings and an inability to finish the cardiorespiratory endurance test. This should alert the personal trainer that there may be an overtraining issue to address. Therefore, changing high-impact exercises to low- or non-impact exercises will decrease the intensity of the training and allow Sally to recover more completely between exercise sessions.

21. Increase Sally's volume of cardiorespiratory exercise. (CC—Clearly Contraindicated)

This action is inappropriate and may be harmful to Sally based on her reassessment results, which included tightness in the hamstrings and an inability to finish the cardiorespiratory endurance test. This should alert the personal trainer that there may be an overtraining issue to address. Therefore, increasing the volume of Sally's aerobic exercise would accelerate her program and likely lead to over-use injuries.

22. Increase Sally's weight-training frequency. (C—Contraindicated)

This action is inappropriate and may be harmful to Sally based on her reassessment results, which included tightness in the hamstrings and an inability to finish the cardiorespiratory endurance test. This should alert the personal trainer that there may be an overtraining issue to address. Therefore, increasing the volume of Sally's strength-training exercise would accelerate her program and likely lead to over-use injuries.

23. Increase Sally's number of flexibility exercises. (I—Indicated)

This action is appropriate and may help to alleviate the tightness in Sally's hamstrings as indicated by the flexibility reassessment.

24. Decrease Sally's volume of cardiorespiratory exercise. (CI—Clearly Indicated)

This is appropriate and important advice based on Sally's reassessment results, which included tightness in the hamstrings and an inability to finish the cardiorespiratory endurance test. This should alert the personal trainer that there may be an overtraining issue to address. Therefore, decreasing the volume of the aerobic training will allow Sally to recover more completely between exercise sessions.

25. Decrease Sally's number of flexibility exercises. (C—Contraindicated)

This action is inappropriate based on Sally's reassessment results, which included tightness in the hamstrings. Decreasing her flexibility exercises would contribute to more tightness and, as a result, present an increased likelihood of injury.

26. Do not modify Sally's current exercise program. (C—Contraindicated)

This action is inappropriate and may be harmful to Sally based on her reassessment results, which included tightness in the hamstrings and an inability to finish the cardiorespiratory endurance test. This should alert the personal trainer that there may be an overtraining issue to address. Therefore, modifying Sally's program is important in order to decrease the likelihood of exercise-related injuries.

SECTION D

Within one week of implementing the second phase of her exercise program, Sally approaches you and expresses concern about her lack of progress in the program. What question(s) would be appropriate to ask at this time? (*Choose all questions that are appropriate at this time.*)

27. "How do you like the revised training program?" (CI—Clearly Indicated)

This question is appropriate and important at this time because it helps the personal trainer understand Sally's feelings about her exercise program. If she dislikes her program, she will be less likely to adhere to it.

28. "Why do you think you aren't getting results like my other clients?" (CC—Clearly Contraindicated)

This question is inappropriate and possibly harmful because it places unnecessary pressure on Sally to compare herself to others. This may cause her to feel guilt and self-blame about her lack of progress and may cause her to question her self-efficacy.

29. "Are you following the program I have designed for you?" (CI—Clearly Indicated)

This question is appropriate and important because the personal trainer needs to be aware of the volume of exercise Sally is performing each week. If she is not following the recommended exercise program, Sally may be overtraining or undertraining. Either way, not following her program will affect Sally's established goals.

30. "How are you feeling physically at this time in your program?" (CI—Clearly Indicated)

This question is appropriate and important at this time because it helps the personal trainer understand Sally's physiological state. This is a probing question intended to uncover any signs or symptoms of overtraining. If any signs or symptoms are reported by Sally, it is important for the personal trainer to adjust her program accordingly.

31. “Is there something about the program you’d like to change?” (CI—Clearly Indicated)

This question is appropriate and important at this time because it helps the personal trainer understand Sally’s feelings about her exercise program. If she dislikes her program, she will be less likely to adhere to it. This is a probing question intended to uncover any details about how Sally feels about her program that may have been missed from question number 27.

32. “Do you plan on following an exercise program during the school break?” (N—Neutral)

This question may or may not be helpful in the programming process of Sally’s exercise routine. There is not enough information in the stem of the question about the school break to apply it to Sally’s program (e.g., the length of the break, what she’ll be doing, where she’ll be). However, this question certainly will do no harm to Sally or her program.

33. “What do your friends think about your body?” (C—Contraindicated)

This question is inappropriate because it places unnecessary pressure on Sally to compare herself to others. This may cause her to feel guilt and self-blame about what she thinks is lack of progress, which may cause her to question her self-efficacy. It is important for the personal trainer to educate the client during the goal-setting process about the rates of progress for weight loss. This is based on the individual client’s personal physiology and behaviors and in no way should be compared to others.

34. “Do you think your alcohol consumption is keeping you from losing weight?” (C—Contraindicated)

This question is inappropriate because the way it is worded seems accusatory. There are better ways of accessing a client’s caloric intake information, such as having the client keep a food diary for several days. If there is a regular alcohol intake pattern occurring in the food diary, the personal trainer can address it as an opportunity for educating the client about the calories associated with alcoholic beverages and their impact on sabotaging weight loss.

35. “Is everything okay at school?” (N—Neutral)

This question may or may not be helpful in addressing Sally’s program design and goal-setting process. More probing would be required to discover if school issues were becoming a barrier to Sally’s progress. This question certainly does no harm.

36. “What are your eating habits?” (I—Indicated)

This question is appropriate because it allows the personal trainer to gain information about the client’s caloric intake, timing of meals, and blood sugar levels throughout the day, all of which are related to the client’s weight-loss goal.

SECTION E

Based on the information you discovered in your discussion with Sally, what decision(s) would be appropriate at this time? (*Choose all those options that are appropriate at this time.*)

37. Develop a new program to help Sally reach her goal. (CC—Clearly Contraindicated)

This action is inappropriate and potentially harmful because it ignores Sally’s real issues, which appear to be excessive exercise and restrictive eating behaviors. Both of these conditions are beyond the scope of practice of a personal trainer and should be addressed by the appropriate health professional. Therefore, Sally should be referred to a registered dietician who deals with eating disorders.

38. Give Sally an eating attitudes test. (CC—Clearly Contraindicated)

This action is inappropriate and potentially harmful because it ignores Sally's real issues, which appear to be excessive exercise and restrictive eating behaviors. Both of these conditions are beyond the scope of practice of a personal trainer and should be addressed by the appropriate health professional. Therefore, Sally should be referred to a registered dietician who deals with eating disorders.

39. Provide Sally with information about the appropriate amount and types of exercise. (CI—Clearly Indicated)

This action is appropriate and important because it is your role as her personal trainer to educate Sally about proper exercise to help her reach her weight-loss goal. This is within your scope as a personal trainer and an expected industry standard.

40. Provide Sally with information on supplements. (CC—Clearly Contraindicated)

This action is inappropriate and potentially harmful because it ignores Sally's real issues, which appear to be excessive exercise and restrictive eating behaviors. Both of these conditions are beyond the scope of practice of a personal trainer and should be addressed by the appropriate health professional. Therefore, Sally should be referred to a registered dietician who deals with eating disorders. Additionally, personal trainers should never promote or recommend supplements to their clients.

41. Inform Sally you have no other ideas that will assist her in obtaining her goals. (C—Contraindicated)

This action is inappropriate and potentially harmful because it does not provide Sally with an option. Your role as her personal trainer is to recommend that Sally seek professional advice from a registered dietician to address her issues that are beyond your scope of practice.

42. Advise Sally that to stick with the program and she will see results soon. (CC—Clearly Contraindicated)

This action is inappropriate and potentially harmful because it ignores Sally's real issues, which appear to be excessive exercise and restrictive eating behaviors. Both of these conditions are beyond the scope of practice of a personal trainer and should be addressed by the appropriate health professional. Therefore, Sally should be referred to a registered dietician who deals with eating disorders.

43. Recommend that Sally train with you an additional day per week. (CC—Clearly Contraindicated)

This action is inappropriate and potentially harmful because it ignores Sally's real issues, which appear to be excessive exercise and restrictive eating behaviors. Both of these conditions are beyond the scope of practice of a personal trainer and should be addressed by the appropriate health professional. Therefore, Sally should be referred to a registered dietician who deals with eating disorders.

44. Refer Sally to a registered dietician. (CI—Clearly Indicated)

This action is appropriate and important because it addresses Sally's real issues, which appear to be excessive exercise and restrictive eating behaviors. Both of these conditions are beyond the scope of practice of a personal trainer and should be addressed by the appropriate health professional. Therefore, Sally should be referred to a registered dietician who deals with eating disorders.