

Fitness Instructors

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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Fitness Instructors

[NOC 2021: 54100 / NOC 2016: 5254]

May also be called:

- Personal Trainer
- Leader – sports & recreation
- Fitness or recreation coordinator
- Yoga Instructor
- Pilates Teacher

1. What Would I Do?

You help people get fit by leading them in a variety of activities such as aerobics or yoga. Depending on your training, you can lead many different types of workouts and fitness classes. You may provide one-on-one instruction, or teach classes to groups of people.

Fitness instructors have a wide variety of tasks including:

- plan classes and choose activities and music
- provide instruction, advice and encouragement to students
- assess clients' health, fitness and goals
- work out with clients, offering motivation and encouragement
- make sure clients exercise safely

- help clients with special needs and adapt programs as needed
- maintain equipment

Personal trainers often also provide advice on nutrition, weight control, and lifestyle issues.

If you work for a larger fitness club you may have additional duties such as sales, management, or marketing.

Sources:

- WorkBC Profile for Program leaders and instructors in recreation, sport and fitness, <https://www.workbc.ca/plan-career/explore-careers>
- *Career Cruising* database (Profiles for Fitness Instructor & Personal Trainer) <https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>
Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

2. Am I Suited For This Job?

You should be in excellent physical shape, a creative and energetic person with coordination and a sense of rhythm. You should have good communication skills, an outgoing personality, able to generate enthusiasm and motivate clients

As a fitness instructor, you must love to work out. While teaching, you not only demonstrate correct technique, but you also break a sweat!

You may only spend a couple of hours a day teaching classes. Therefore, many instructors also have other jobs, such as being a personal trainer or working in sales or marketing. Classes are often held in the evenings and on weekends to accommodate those who are at school or work during regular business hours.

You should be a good communicator. Fitness instructors don't just run classes; you also talk to and advise people before, during, and after class.

You should also be willing to learn and try new things, such as new exercise techniques.

You may suffer falls and strains from exercising, but by being careful and knowing your limits, you can usually prevent injuries.

Sources: WorkBC and Career Cruising

3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, the annual median salary is \$43,652, with hourly rates ranging from \$15.65 to \$32 / hour. Your wage varies greatly depending on location, experience, and type of employer.

In BC's regions, you can expect to make:

Community/Area	Low (\$/hour)	Median (\$/hour)	High (\$/hour)
British Columbia	15.65	20.83	29.83
Cariboo Region	15.65	23.40	29.83
Kootenay Region	15.65	19.34	26.20
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	15.65	20.00	30.00
Northeast Region	19.00	24.00	30.00
Thompson–Okanagan Region	15.65	20.25	30.00
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	16.00	21.00	28.00

Table from Job Bank Wage Report <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis/search-wages>

You may work full-time, part-time, or on a contract basis. If you are employed full-time you may receive benefits, such as health and dental coverage, paid vacations, and sick days.

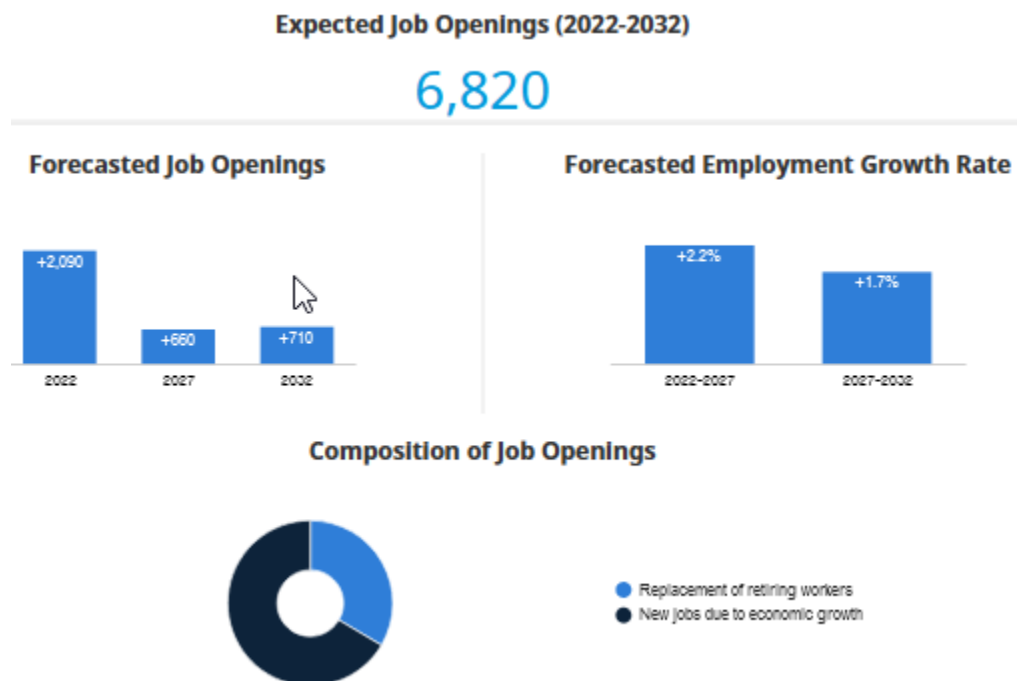
Sources: WorkBC & Career Cruising

4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

17,150 people are currently employed in this occupation. The employment outlook is expected to be limited for the 2022-2024 period.

Individuals with motivational and leadership skills will be in higher demand. Communication, conflict resolution, problem solving and being able to support and mentor others are also important skills. It is important to stay up to date about new techniques and processes for fitness and recreation, as well as health, wellness and nutrition.

Most jobs are found in the Lower Mainland followed by Vancouver Island/Coast and Thompson/Okanagan regions.



Sources:

- WorkBC
- Job Bank Canada <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/outlookreport/occupation/21189>

5. How Do I Become A Fitness Instructor?

Fitness Instructors "usually" require:

- completion of high school
 - demonstrated ability in a particular recreational, sport or fitness discipline
 - completion of a college program in recreation or physical education
- or***
- extensive experience in a specific sports program activity
 - Certification is usually required

Certification is usually required in a specific area of recreational, sports or fitness activity, such as personal trainer, or in first aid or emergency care. You can get certification through several organizations including BC Recreation & Parks Association (BCRPA), American Council on Exercise (ACE), CanFitPro, Canadian College for Exercise Physiology (CSEP), and others.

The **BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA)** is widely regarded as the main regulatory body for fitness professionals throughout BC.

Currently, the BCRPA registers fitness leaders in:

- Aquatic Fitness
- Group Fitness
- Osteofit
- Older Adult Fitness
- Personal Training
- Pilates Fitness
- Weight Training

- Yoga Fitness

Certification through **ACE** is also available. ACE certification allows you to work throughout North America and around the world.

For more information about becoming a registered fitness professional see:

- **BCRPA – Become a Fitness Leader**
<https://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/fitness/become/>
- **BCRPA Approved Courses**
<https://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/fitness/manage-cecs/>
- **ACE Fitness Certification**
<https://www.acefitness.org/fitness-certifications/why-certification-matters/>
 - **InfoFit (ACE Certification Provider in BC):**
<https://infofit.ca/ace-certification/>

6. How Do I Find A Job?

Where do Fitness Instructors Work?

You may work for a variety of organizations including:

- gyms and fitness clubs
- community centres
- spas
- health care facilities
- resorts and cruise ships
- government departments
- private businesses

You may also be self employed

Finding Advertised Jobs

Jobs are advertised in a variety of sources including newspapers, magazines and online job sites.

Local Newspapers

You can look at the *Vancouver Sun* & *The Province* at Vancouver Public Library for free. Check the job postings daily, the careers section in the *Vancouver Sun* on Wednesdays and Saturdays and, in *The Province* on Sundays.

Online Job Postings

- **BC Recreation & Parks Association Job Listings**
<https://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/jobs/>
- **Recreation Facilities Association of BC Job Board**
<https://rfabc.com/jobs/>
- **Indeed.com**
https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search
- **BC JobConnect**
<https://bcjobconnect.ca/> **must have permanent resident number**
newcomers can post their skills, education and work experience to BC employers looking for workers

Finding "Hidden Jobs"

Many job vacancies are not advertised. The resources below help you with finding jobs in this "hidden" job market.

Using Directories to Create a List of Potential Employers

You can use company directories to produce lists of employers who employ fitness instructors in Vancouver or the Lower Mainland. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **Health Clubs & Studios, IDEA Health & Fitness Association**
<https://pro.ideafit.com/fitnessconnect>

- **HealthLocal Directory**

<https://health-local.com/>

Search listings under "Allied Health Pros" – "Healthy Living" - Fitness Classes, Gyms & Clubs, Personal Training

- **Civic Info**

<https://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/directories>

Includes contact information for municipalities throughout BC. Most hire fitness professionals to lead programs offered through their Parks & Recreation departments.

- **Reference Canada**

<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/reference-canada>

Click on "Start Search" beside Canadian Businesses, then select the "Advanced Search" button. Select both "Keyword/SIC/NAICS" under Business Type and "City" under Geography. In the top search box enter "fitness" and click LOOKUP. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.

Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

NOTE: *You can access this database from a Library computer. If you are using a computer from outside the Library, you will need a Vancouver Public Library card to login to this database. After clicking on the database name, you will be asked to enter your library card number and PIN (usually last four digits of your telephone number).*

Networking, Volunteering and Temporary Agencies

Many positions are filled by people who have been recommended by someone they know. Networking, working as a volunteer or registering with a temporary employment agency are good ways of helping you find jobs and meet people in your industry.

Networking and the Hidden Job Market:

When looking for work, be sure to talk to friends, relatives and neighbours. They may know someone who is hiring! Working as a volunteer, attending events, and joining clubs and associations are good ways to gain "Canadian experience." They are also good ways to meet people to learn about the local job market.

Volunteering in Community Organizations and Recreation Centres

Many public community organizations and recreation centres run fitness classes – go to your local city/town website and search for 'parks' or 'recreation' or 'community centre'; when you locate your local recreation centre, search for 'volunteer'

Complete list of BC cities and towns available at:

<https://www.ubcm.ca/about-ubcm/member-directory>

For additional tips see:

- **Networking for Employment**

<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/networking-for-employment>

- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**

<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/getting-canadian-work-experience>

7. Applying for a Job

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume and a cover letter that identifies the position you are applying for and summarizes your experience.

Use the library catalogue, <https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/> to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

For more information see:

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**

<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/writing-resumes-and-cover-letters>

8. Where Can This Job Lead?

Your skills as a fitness instructor can help you in any profession that involves working with large groups of people on a daily basis. Many of these positions will be in the service industry, such as a customer service representative either on the phone or in a retail setting.

You could also work in personal training, club management, fitness writing, equipment maintenance, or lifestyle consulting, or you may direct a fitness program.

Source: Career Cruising

9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **BC Recreation and Parks Association**
<https://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/>
- **Recreation Facilities Association of BC**
<https://rfabc.com/>
- **ACE**
<https://www.acefitness.org/>
- **Infofit**
<https://www.infofit.ca/>
- **Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP)**
<https://csep.ca/>

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- **CanFitPro**
<https://www.canfitpro.com/>
- **IDEA Health & Fitness Association**
<https://www.ideafit.com/>
- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/learn-more-about-working-in-bc-and-canada>

Questions? Please ask the Information Staff at the Central Library or telephone 604-331-3603.

Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/>.