

# Knowledge is Power

## Why High School Seniors Should Certify

By **John Platero**, CEO of the NCCPT

If there were ever a time to learn about fitness, the teenage years would be it.

For one, a teenager's body most likely hasn't developed postural deviations or injuries. Secondly, it's during this time when sports become more competitive and dangerous. If a teenager understood how his body is designed and actually were able to study the body, they would be less inclined to perform activities that go against that structure. For example, I'm seen young break dancers actually bounce the weight of their entire body off their head! If they knew every nerve in their body comes through the atlas (C1) of the cervical spine and how small and mobile the atlanto-occipital and the axial-atlanto joints are, they wouldn't even dream of bouncing off their head! There is no mammal on earth that bounces off their head. If a teenager knew the definition of a calorie, he would learn that it is a measurement of heat. If he then saw a commercial on television that claimed a piece of exercise equipment burned more calories with less time and energy, he would know it's a mathematical impossibility. First of all, machines don't burn calories and a person can't create more heat with less time and less energy!

For years, the National Council for Certified Personal Trainers has been trying to convince high schools to offer the NCCPT personal trainer certification to seniors in high schools. Seniors are at the age where they can comprehend and appreciate the information taught in our courses. There would no better time in their lives to learn about their bodies. They only have one; there are no trade-in or returns. I wish I had the opportunity to learn this information when I was a senior in high school. The incorrect mechanics I imposed on myself in the gym led to my six knee surgeries. I believe it could've been prevented if I had exercised correctly and respected the joint structure of my knee. Every teenager should have the opportunity to learn about their bodies.

*There is nothing more important.*



**John Platero**, MA, is a fitness educator who has consulted both nationally and internationally. He is the CEO of the National Council for Certified Personal Trainers, an organization that has certified thousands of personal trainers all over the world. He is the "trainer to the trainers." He has obtained 35 personal training certifications, filmed over 30 fitness videos and infomercials and has been published in many prominent fitness magazines. As an athlete, John was a champion bodybuilder turned cyclist, winning multiple gold medals in road racing, mountain biking and the velodrome.

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