A person with long blonde hair, wearing a black and white striped dress, is holding a large bunch of leafy green vegetables, possibly chard or spinach, in a garden. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with trees and a building.

8 Step Guide to Becoming a Nutrition and Wellness Consultant



AFPA

HEALTH, NUTRITION & FITNESS

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Introduction

Are you considering a career in the health, fitness, and wellness field? If you're passionate about making a positive change in people's lives, it might be the perfect move for you. The industry is booming with opportunity, particularly for those who combine education and insights with business savvy.

In this guide, we'll share the key elements of nutrition and wellness and provide step-by-step tips on pursuing and obtaining professional certification in the field. You'll also learn how to identify goals, gain first-hand experience in the industry, enroll in a certification program, excel at consulting practices, and capitalize on growth opportunities.



Growing Demand

As people become more health-conscious, the demand for nutrition and wellness advice continues to rise.

For example, the sports nutrition market is expected to reach more than \$45 billion by 2022, according to Zion Market Research.¹ The Global Wellness Institute, a research firm focusing on areas such as healthy eating, fitness, and anti-aging efforts, notes that wellness is a \$3.7 trillion market. Of that, \$648 billion is nutrition. From 2013 to 2015, the industry grew by about 10 percent.²

Despite the general increased interest in health and wellness, it's still difficult for the average person to sort through all the information out there to find strategies that serve them. They may want to enjoy a healthy, active lifestyle but sometimes don't know what elements to include or how to gauge how nutrition or wellness will fit into their everyday schedules.

What does this mean for aspiring health and wellness professionals? A sustainable, meaningful career that's geared toward growth. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, nutrition professionals can expect 16 percent job growth in the period that started in 2014 and that will end in 2024.³ If you're passionate about health, nutrition, and wellness, now could be a great time to enter the field.





The Role of a Nutrition and Wellness Consultant

A consultant in this field has a number of different responsibilities that include:

- Assisting clients with healthy eating habits and weight management goals
- Advising and presenting a balanced nutritional strategy
- Discussing and advising on weight management plans and options
- Assisting clients with nutritional goals and offering sound nutritional plans for optimizing health
- Recognizing appropriate behavioral change modifications and dietary approaches for different ages and populations

In general, as a nutrition and wellness consultant, you become a resource and a partner to clients, helping them live their best lives. There are many career opportunities in the field of nutrition, and there are several specialties if you choose to focus on certain areas such as sports nutrition or weight loss.

Learn what you can and can't do when offering nutrition advice.

[Download the Guide](#)



Establish and Identify Your Goals and Objectives

Before you get ready to dive into your career, it's important to identify why you became interested in the first place and what you're hoping to gain from your certification. Establishing clear goals and objectives will give you the foundation you need to pursue your career in a direction that's right for you.

Here are some tips that can help you set goals and identify your objectives:

Identify Your Direction

Write down the aspects of the profession that are appealing to you. Do you like inspiring other people to feel healthy? Do you enjoy the idea of structuring your career around your personal interests? This will help you see why you want to pursue a particular path.

Define Milestones

Create a timeline with several milestones, such as becoming certified, obtaining your first client, creating a website for the business, and perhaps even renting your own office space. Try to “see” yourself five years from now: What will you have accomplished?

Pick a Specialty

Consider specialties that interest you. Although you can specialize later, it’s good to keep potential specialties in mind when you’re first starting out because it can help you navigate in that direction.

Once you know why your end goal is a career in nutrition and wellness, map out how you’re going to get there. Create a timeline with each of the milestones you must hit to achieve your goal. For example, you may set major milestones such as earning a certification or building a business. Break these into smaller, more digestible tasks and add due dates in your calendar for when you will complete each one. Challenge yourself but be realistic when considering how much time you can commit each week.





Talk to a Nutrition and Wellness Consultant

One of the best ways to immerse yourself in the health and wellness industry is to learn from the experience of others.

To do that, speak with professionals who have been in the industry, have had clients, and are operating the kind of business you hope to have. Even if they have different specialties or different approaches, you can learn so much about what having a career in the field may be like.

Tips for connecting with other professionals:

- Find a local nutrition and wellness consultant and offer to take him or her to lunch or coffee, being sure to be upfront about your intentions.
- Ask to keep in touch after the meeting, either on LinkedIn or in person.
- Have questions prepared in advance. This can help structure the discussion and makes the most of your time together.
- Send a thank-you note that is professional but sincere.

Another option is to hire a nutrition and wellness consultant to work on your own wellness efforts. This is a great way to see his or her client approach and to learn about crucial aspects such as follow-up, paperwork procedures, and billing.





Enroll in a Nutrition and Wellness Program

Before you can establish yourself in the nutrition and wellness space, you'll need to enroll in a certification program. Doing so increases your knowledge of the field, helps build trust with clients, establishes you with others in the industry, and offers more career opportunities as you expand your client base.

There are different programs available, each with its own benefits and drawbacks.

Traditional Degree at a College or University

Pros:

Comprehensive, four-year programs that provide a deep dive into the subject matter, along with other subjects. Colleges also have alumni networks and career centers that can help expand your lifelong career networking options.

Cons:

Cost is often a top factor, with tuition varying widely among different schools. But even online college nutrition degree programs can be expensive compared to certification programs. The average cost⁴ is about \$15,000 per year, so a four-year degree would be \$60,000.

Online Certification Program

Pros:

These programs can be significantly less expensive than a degree program, with some letting you pay as little as \$56 per month over a certain time frame. Also, some programs can be completed in six months or less, which means you will be able to start your career much faster than you would coming out of college.

Cons:

Some employers prefer a college degree over a certification, so based on what type of work you're doing, you may need to get a degree to be competitive.

Whether you decide to take your learning to the classroom or obtain your certification online, it's important to do your research first.

There are endless certification programs available on the internet—some more credible than others. It's imperative that you choose one that adheres to high standards, offers support during the program, and has third-party accreditation. This ensures that the program's certification process is recognized and respected among the entire fitness community.

Keep in mind that there isn't one approach that works for everyone. For example, some students choose to complete a certification program to make sure it's the right field for them before investing in a four-year degree. In doing your research, decide which seems like the best fit for you.



Apply for an Internship

Here are some tips on finding internships in the nutrition and wellness industry:

Work Your Network

Reach out to people you know (or who a connection may know) that are in the industry. Let them know you're interested in an internship—even if there isn't a formal program, often times an internship opportunity can be created specifically for you.

Offer to Job-Shadow

Research which people or companies are doing the work you'd like to be doing and offer to provide internship services for a specified amount of time in exchange for job-shadowing.

Get Creative

There are so many opportunities online. Whether it's checking out specialized Facebook groups, online forums, or other social media locales—you can get creative to find an opportunity that you're excited about.



Find the Best Fit for a Career

The health, wellness, and nutrition market is very competitive—but with a well-respected certification, you can find your place in a professional setting. The right program will provide you with the knowledge you need to give educated guidance to a client or potential client seeking to improve their health.

Career opportunities you can pursue with a nutrition and wellness consultant certification include:

- Nutrition and wellness consulting
- Nutrition coach
- Food supplement sales
- Nutrition and wellness writer
- Corporate wellness centers
- Weight loss centers
- Health food and nutrition retail stores
- Nutrition and wellness education

Once you earn a certification, there are plenty of opportunities that will be available to you. You could launch your own consulting business, partner with other consultants to create a multi-service business, coordinate with corporate wellness efforts, lead workshops or seminars, or do a combination of these.

The flexibility of a nutrition and wellness career is one of the most appealing aspects of the profession.

You might see clients a few days per week and give corporate talks on other days or lead classes in nutritional and lifestyle topics.





Master the Consultation

Here are a few tips for becoming a master at the initial client consultation:

Confirm Every Consultation

Your potential client is investing his or her time in meeting with you, so it's important that you confirm his or her consultation prior to the first meeting. This will help the client get an initial sense of what you're like and increase the likelihood that he or she will commit to the consultation and become excited about his or her health and wellness journey.

Help Your Client Feel at Ease

One of the best ways to help your client feel more at ease is by being vulnerable. Did you once lead an unhealthy lifestyle? Were you overweight? Sharing how you made your own transformation can make your clients feel more confident that you're here to help them meet their own personal goals.

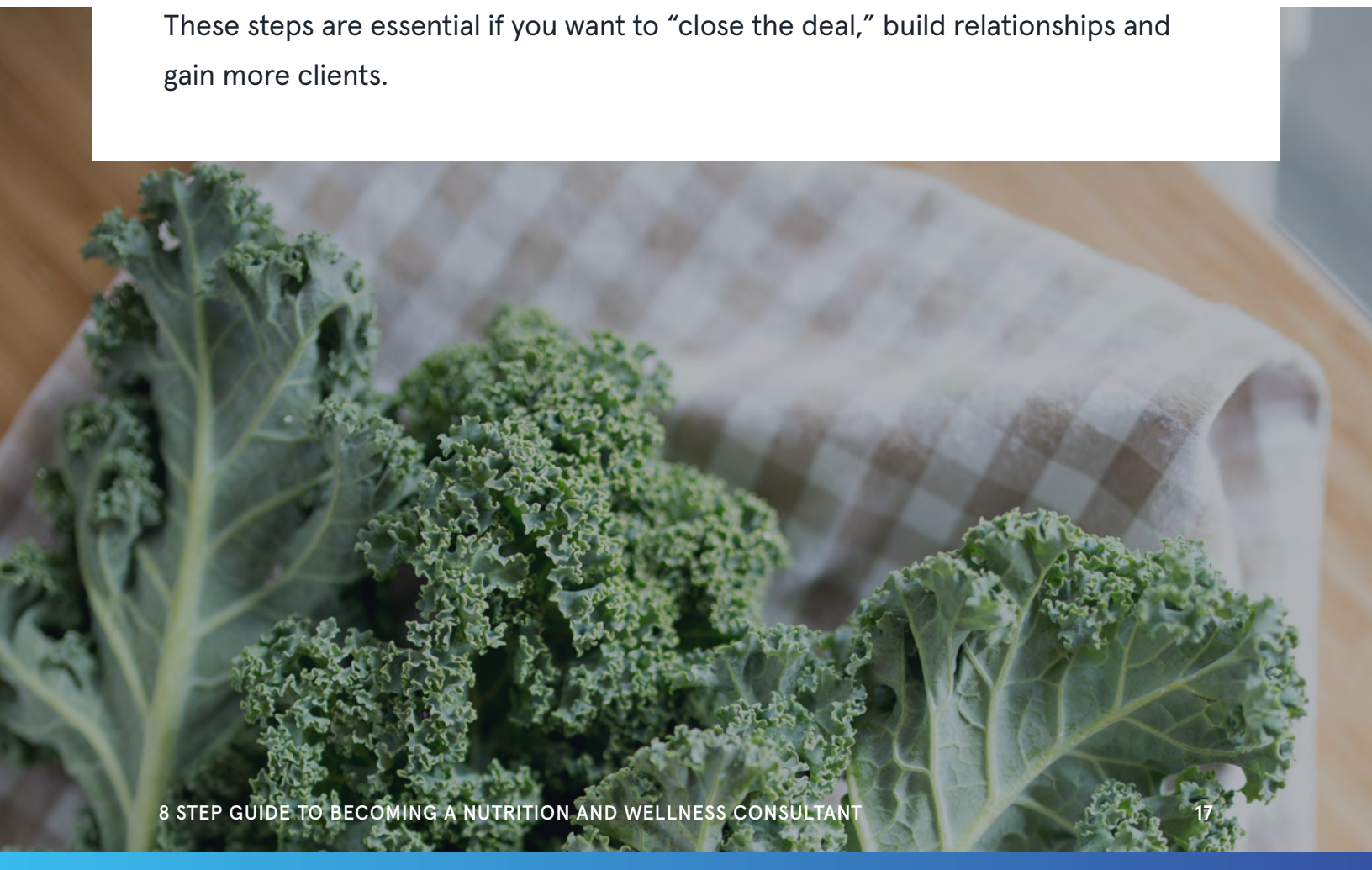
Ask the Right Questions

Whether your client is in need of a complete diet overhaul or is looking to manage a medical condition such as celiac disease, it's important to gain a full understanding before you start offering solutions. This is also a perfect time to educate your client on the importance of nutrition and how a range of factors, from stress to weight, can change with a few lifestyle and nutrition adjustments.

Show Your Support

Making major health changes can feel daunting, even scary for some. Reassure your client that they have your full support and that you'll be doing everything you can to help them stay motivated.

These steps are essential if you want to “close the deal,” build relationships and gain more clients.





Explore Advancement and Specialization Opportunities

Although it's fine to consult on a wide variety of nutrition and wellness topics, some professionals find it's better to select a specialization. Specializing can help you refine a client list, drive referrals, and focus your energy on areas you're particularly passionate about.

Opportunities for specialization are weight management, holistic nutrition, sports nutrition, senior nutrition, youth nutrition, and more. Narrowing your focus may create more advancement in your chosen career because you can partner with relevant organizations, for example, or tailor workshops and client plans based on those specialization areas.

What's your earning potential as a nutrition and wellness consultant? Download [The Ultimate Nutrition Professional Salary Guide](#).

AFPA's Nutrition & Wellness Consultant Certification program provides educational guidance for those seeking nutritional advice on weight management and enhancing health and fitness performance. The program builds the fundamental skills of counseling strategies and protocol through action-based worksheets and

practical case studies. Learn how to effectively communicate with clients to reach and exceed their desired health goals.

AFPA's Nutrition & Wellness Consultant, Weight Management Consultant, and Holistic Nutrition curriculum fully meets the American Naturopathic Medical Accreditation Board's educational requirements. Graduates of AFPA are eligible to apply to be a Board-Certified Holistic Health Care Practitioner, Board-Certified Nutritional Consultant, or Board-Certified Holistic Nutritionist through the American Naturopathic Medical Certification Board. AFPA also offers different specialty certifications that let you focus on certain areas of nutrition, from senior health to sports nutrition.

As a Nutrition & Wellness Consultant, you can help your clients develop better eating habits, achieve their fitness goals, and, ultimately, help them maintain a healthy and fulfilling lifestyle.



Next Steps

A man with a beard and dark hair, wearing a grey speckled sweater, is standing in a modern kitchen. He is focused on chopping vegetables on a wooden cutting board. The kitchen features white cabinetry, a stainless steel oven, and a countertop with various kitchen items including orange pots and a glass lid. The lighting is bright and natural, suggesting a daytime setting.

Just like you, we share a passion for nutrition and wellness and the benefits of inspiring others through health and wellness coaching.

At AFPA, we bring you the most advanced, innovative, and rewarding certification programs, with a specialized focus on delivering the education you need to succeed. Our globally recognized accredited programs have certified more than 110,000 professionals since 1994.

Share your passion for a topic that touches every life, every day. As health and wellness continue to be top of mind for so many people, you can be part of the shift toward empowerment and insight.



Ready to Change Lives as a Nutrition & Wellness Consultant?

[Enroll Now](#)

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