

crafting fitness resumés

Cast off your panic and writer's block. Resumés are a whole new game.

Does the mere suggestion of writing a resumé send you into a nosedive? You are not alone! The gut-level fear of drafting resumés is so commonplace among professionals from *every* field that, as a resumé writer by profession, I've noticed that clients consider the experience as frightening and nerve-racking as speaking in public or undergoing extreme dental procedures. Is it possible to create a resumé without experiencing stress at the top of the Richter scale? The information below should help you quell your tremors.

Benefits of Writing a Great Resumé

The process of resumé writing can actually be a professionally productive and inspirational journey. A resumé is a valuable "promotional" tool to help you achieve the success you desire. A resumé helps you get "from here to there" on the road map of your career goals. A well-written resumé helps establish your credibility and reflects your competence and confidence in your field. A good resumé allows a positive reputation to precede you in the interviewing process and can actually guide the flow of your interview much like a script.

Most importantly, your resumé, once comprehensively prepared, need only be *updated* for years to come to serve your needs. It can be transformed easily into a personal website, brochure, advertisement or flyer. It's one of the best investments of time you can make to further your career.

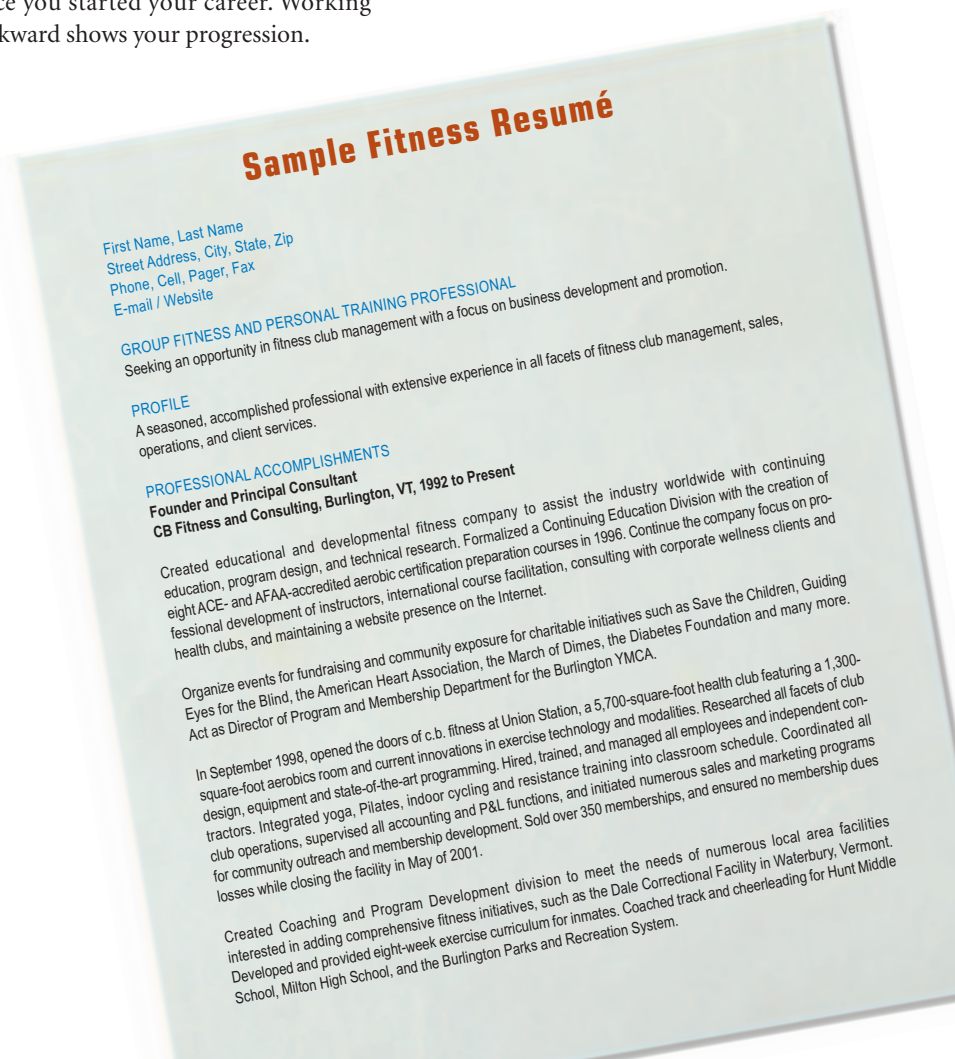
Important Rules

The following are the only sacred truths about resumé writing, some of which might surprise you. Resumé protocol changed dramatically in the 1990s, becoming much simpler than in the past.

1. Be honest.
2. Maintain a consistency of format. Do you want to write your resumé as a **chronology** of your experience, presenting it in a **backward timeline**, featuring your current experience first? Potential employers will assume that your current work reflects an increase in your abilities since you started your career. Working backward shows your progression.

Or do you want your resumé to focus more on your skill sets, presenting the information in a **functional format**? Do you want to combine the two formats? No problem. Just remember to maintain consistency throughout the resumé. The sample resumé shown here is a "combination" resumé, showing groups of skill sets in a chronological order after a description of current experience.

Note: When you write your resumé, investigate what your culture likes to see as a general format. Different countries have their own prescribed protocols for



APPOINTMENTS AND AWARDS

- * Vermont Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, Chair, Youth Fitness Subcommittee, "Get Moving Vermont" and "Get Moving Champlain Valley," 2001 and 2000
- * The Elite Who's Who, America's Successful Businesswomen, 2001
- * Woman of Achievement Award, Burlington Business and Professional Women's Club, 1999
- * New York IDEA State Representative, 1993 to 1996
- * Second-Place Winner, Sundance Aerobic and Fitness Challenge, 1991

MEDIA EXPERIENCE

- * "On the Waterfront," Talk Show Guest, 2001
- * "For the Health of It," Fitness Trainer / Performer, 2000
- * Fitness magazine, Featured Fitness Trainer, 1998
- * "High Visibility: The Success Perspective," Talk Show Guest, 1998
- * New York Times, Featured in "Women on the Fast Track" article, 1997
- * Gannett Suburban Newspapers, Featured in "Women on the Fast Track" article, 1996
- * "Aim for the Top," Japanese Television, Fitness Trainer / Performer, 1995 and 1996

SPEAKING AND PRESENTATION EXPERIENCE

- * Speaker, "Avoid Fatigue Through Exercise," Vermont Gas, 2001
- * Speaker, "Fitting in Fitness," Department of Corrections, 2001
- * Speaker, "Finding Balance in Work and Life," and "How to Become Stress Fit," Vermont Educational Opportunity Conference, 2001
- * Panelist, Presenter, "Developing a Business Image," 2001
- * Presenter, Aim 30 Physical Activity Institute, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2000
- * Presenter, "Building Healthy Communities Through Physical Activity," Vermont Department of Health, 1999
- * Presenter, "Aim for the Top," East Coast Alliance Convention, 1996

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- * Event Developer and Manager, Kids' Safety Day Kickboxing Demo, 2001
- * Presenter, American Diabetes Association Walk, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001
- * Presenter, American Heart Association Heart Walk, 1999, 2000, and 2001
- * Participant, Vermont Multiple Sclerosis Walk, 1997, 2000, and 2001
- * Participant, Guiding Eyes for the Blind, 1994, 1995, and 1996
- * Participant, March of Dimes Walkathon/Reebok Sports Club New York, 1995

resumé presentation. Also, resumé may be more than one page. *As long as your resumé is an engaging read*, it can fill as many pages as you need to describe your abilities. In fact, the norm for fitness professionals is three to five pages. That's because so many things go into being a fitness professional!

3. Print your resumé from your computer using an easy-to-read type style like Times Roman or Helvetica. Print your resumé on good-quality business paper. Choose a color and a linen, laid, confetti or parchment finish. An office supply company or online paper store will have a selection for resúmes.

Resumé Elements

The following elements need to appear within your resumé, preferably in this order:

Who You Are and Where You Can Be Found. Include your name, address, personal e-mail and/or website address, personal phone numbers, cell phone numbers and pagers. It is *not* acceptable to list your current work phone number as a contact number, even if your employer knows you are looking. The exception to this is if you are seeking

another position within your current company.

What You Do and Where You "Want to Go." State your desired career path so that the reader understands what you would like to do with your experience. Communicate this fact right after your name and contact information. The resumé example presents an effective way to do this, using a title that describes what the person does and a statement explaining how she wants to use her experience toward her next career move. Then, she uses a headline called "Profile" and underneath gives a short statement of her qualifications.

The Details of Your Career. Include the what, when, where and hows, all summarized to the point. Include a concise presentation of accomplishments and activities, including

- employment experience
- achievements
- appointments and awards
- certifications
- affiliations
- media experience
- speaking/presentation experience

- continuing education and training
- education

You will see in the resumé sample how you can present your information concisely in either paragraph form or bullet points for quick review. The categories of experience described above do not apply to everyone, but they give you an idea of the kinds of things you can include. There is no right or wrong order for them.

You may place unpaid work—such as volunteer services, in-kind services, internships and extracurricular activities—within your employment experience section or in a separate section called "Community Service."

Generally, put your education section at the end of your resumé because employers tend to look for your work experience first. The exception to this might be if you are a recent graduate of a school where your student achievements are important for landing your first job.

For your information, standard American resúmes no longer require you to write "References Furnished Upon Request" at the end.

Be Creative

When you write your resumé, no matter what the format, the focus is on you. Shed your shyness about tooting your own horn. Boast and brag!

Also allow yourself to be creative when writing your resumé. After all, it is your ticket to securing a job interview. People have to *read* it. Why not give them a refreshing take on a customary tool? This is where the finesse of resumé writing comes in—the nuances that separate the neophytes from the pros. Bring your resumé to life with action, demonstration, analysis and results. Let it show strength, certainty, observations, deductions and conclusions through the use of high-impact/professional-caliber verbs. For example, use some of these impactful verbs:

facilitate, instruct, construct, teach, provide, manage, promote, design, enhance, inspire, relieve, orchestrate, research, profile, develop, integrate, organize, hire, coach, coordinate, create, sustain, maintain, foster, initiate, supervise, oversee, monitor, sell, improve, increase

These verbs can be used in past and present tense to actively describe your experience. They are key to the preparation of a professional presentation. Pair them with words and phrases that discuss

meeting goals, monitoring performance, establishing standards, providing client services and supervising others. These verbs can paint an active and productive picture of your talents.

Alternative Styles

Do you live outside the United States or provide fitness services for academia, the military, security, government or medicine? In your case, your resumé may be called a “bio” or a “CV” (short for *curriculum vitae*). Use these additional pointers for crafting a bio or CV.

Bio Style. If you are self-employed and/or an active continuing education provider, you might choose to use the bio format. *Bio* is short for biography, and the format usually includes a narrative flow that is conversational and descriptive. It’s a presentation of your professional story and can be written like an essay. The accepted point of view is third person. Write as if your story is being told by another person.

It can be as engaging as you would like to make it. It can contain personal details that help you shape the story of your career, such as overcoming great odds; starting your career later in life after raising a family; or achieving something monumental, such as climbing a mountain. The focus is on telling an interesting story, while including specific data about your professional history and training.

Curriculum Vitae (CV). A CV also includes personal information such as birth date and place, social security number, dri-

ver’s license number, security clearances, military identities, all past workplace phone numbers and street addresses, marital status, number of children, and even the names of people with whom you have trained and the circumstances of your education and internships. Currently, for privacy and security reasons in America, a standard resumé does *not* include these facts. A CV can be written in chronological, functional or combination formats.

Create a Cover Letter

When you are satisfied with your resumé, write a good cover letter template you can adjust to accompany the resumé each time you mail or deliver it to a prospective employer or client. Your finished resumé will make the cover letter writing process a snap, as you pull out some highlights of your experience and tell a little bit more about yourself and what you are seeking. If you need help writing cover letters, read about them in the October 2004 issue of *IDEA Fitness Journal*.

Diane Y. Chapman is the founder of Words To Your Advantage speaking and writing service in Aliso Viejo, California. She has provided resumé writing services and speaking workshops to fitness pros for over a decade. She can be reached at dichapman@cox.net.

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INDUSTRY AFFILIATIONS

- * Canyon Ranch Spa, Berkshires, MA
- * Rancho La Puerta, Baja California, Mexico
- * New York Sports Club, New York City, NY
- * Westchester Health and Fitness/Equinox, Eastchester, NY
- * Reebok Sports Club NY, New York City, NY
- * Molly Fox Studio, New York City, NY

HEALTH AND FITNESS CERTIFICATIONS

- * American Council on Exercise (ACE) Master Practical Trainer
- * Aerobics and Fitness Association of America (AFAA)-Certified Personal Trainer and Fitness Counselor
- * AFAA-Certified Aerobics and Step Instructor
- * ACE-Certified Group Exercise Instructor
- * American Red Cross Instructor
- * Pre- and Postnatal Fitness
- * Post-Rehab Fitness
- * Pilates Balanced Body Mat Instruction

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Psychology

Bachelor of Fitness Management

Burlington College, Burlington, VT, August 2003

Master of Clinical Mental Health Counseling

In progress, Vermont College at Union Institute and University; Graduation 2006

Dance / Movement Therapist Studies, Expected completion 2006

Business Management, Bryant and Stratton Business Institute, Syracuse, NY, 1984