FITNESS

How to Become a Longevity Coach in Chicago: Long Winters, the Lakefront Trail and Corporate Clients — Skills, Scope and Training Path

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Short answer: Chicago has a lakefront made for walking and cycling in summer, and long, cold, dark winters that push people indoors. Many clients work in offices downtown or for large employers with wellness programmes. A longevity coach helps clients build the habits with the strongest evidence (activity, strength, sleep, food quality and social connection) in every season, sorts hype from evidence, and refers anything medical. Coaches do not diagnose, prescribe or sell treatments.

This page is education and career information, not medical advice. See our [Chicago hub](/us/chicago) for local context.

Skill 1: speak the guidelines

The US [Physical Activity Guidelines](https://odphp.health.gov/our-work/nutrition-physical-activity/physical-activity-guidelines) recommend at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate aerobic activity a week, plus muscle-strengthening on two or more days. Most longevity coaching is helping people actually do that, week after week, including in February. If you can explain the guidelines simply and adapt them to a client's job, family and joints, you are already ahead of most "protocol" content.

Skill 2: strength and fitness literacy

Observational data link higher cardiorespiratory fitness with lower long-term mortality ([Mandsager et al., 2018](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30646252/)), and a meta-analysis linked muscle-strengthening activity with lower all-cause mortality ([Momma et al., 2022](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35228201/)). These are associations, not guarantees, but they justify a coaching focus on progressive strength and aerobic work. Learn to explain the difference between association and cause; clients respect it.

Skill 3: plan for two cities, summer and winter

From late spring to early autumn, the [Lakefront Trail](https://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities/lakefront-trail) makes walking and cycling easy to schedule. In winter, the same client may barely leave the office. Good Chicago coaches plan the switch in advance: an indoor walking route or gym, a home strength routine, and a set time for daylight on the commute. Ice and snow raise fall risk, so older clients may need indoor options and sturdy footwear. Anyone who has had falls or balance problems should see a clinician.

Skill 4: calm the protocol chasers

Some clients arrive with long supplement stacks, peptide adverts or a list of tests from a podcast. Your job is not to argue but to sort: what has good human evidence, what is unproven, and what needs a doctor. FDA's [health

fraud page](https://www.fda.gov/consumers/health-fraud-scams) is a useful shared reference for "cure" and "reverse ageing" claims. Product, dosing and testing decisions go to the client's clinician.

Skill 5: protect muscle for clients on GLP-1 medicines

More clients are on GLP-1 medicines, and lean-mass loss is a known concern ([Neeland et al., 2024](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38937282/)). Coaches can support protein-first meals and two strength sessions a week, alongside the prescriber. Dosing and side effects are never the coach's call.

Skill 6: sleep and winter mood

Regular sleep and wake times, morning daylight, a cooler and darker bedroom, and less late caffeine and alcohol are simple habits to coach. Short winter days can affect mood and energy. A coach can encourage daylight walks and routine, but persistent low mood, loss of interest or changes in sleep and appetite are reasons to see a clinician ([NIMH, seasonal affective disorder](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/seasonal-affective-disorder)). Coaches do not recommend or advise on light boxes, supplements or medicines for mood. Loud snoring, gasping at night or daytime sleepiness that affects driving should also go to a doctor.

What a first session looks like

Spend most of the first hour listening. Ask about goals, a typical week in summer and in winter, current activity, sleep, food, work and family pressures, and any conditions or medicines the client is happy to share. Agree one or two small habits for the first fortnight, such as a daily 15-minute walk and one strength session. Explain clearly what you do and do not do, and how you will refer if something medical comes up. Write it down and send a summary afterwards.

Common questions

- *"Should I get my biological age tested?"* "It's your choice, and your doctor can help you decide. I'd rather we track what you do each week." - *"Which supplements should I take in winter?"* "That's a question for your doctor or pharmacist, especially if you take medicines. I can help with food and habits." - *"Can our company run a weight-loss challenge?"* "I'd suggest an activity or step challenge instead, so nobody feels pressure about their weight." - *"How fast will I see results?"* "I can't promise a number. We'll judge progress on the habits you build."

Corporate wellness work

Large employers are a common route for new coaches. Keep group sessions inclusive, avoid weight-loss leaderboards, which can harm people with eating-disorder histories, and never collect or share individual health details with an employer. Report participation, not anyone's health results.

Red-flag referrals

Chest pain, fainting, unexplained weight loss, new neurological symptoms, low mood with thoughts of self-harm, or signs of an eating disorder: refer immediately to a clinician or emergency services. Write your referral steps down before you take your first client.

Illinois scope: titles, food advice and referrals

Medicine, dietetics and nutrition services, physical therapy and other health professions are regulated in Illinois. Do not use clinical titles you do not hold, keep food advice general, and refer medical nutrition therapy to a

licensed dietitian. Check current state rules yourself before you market services. Use [NBHWC scope of practice](https://nbhwc.org/scope-of-practice/) language in your intake forms and on your website.

A Chicago-style weekly check-in

Monday: review steps, strength sessions and sleep. Wednesday: one practical tip, such as a 10-minute walk after lunch, indoors in winter. Friday: plan a weekend lakefront walk or ride in good weather, or an indoor session when it is icy. Keep the check-in under five minutes and focus on what the client did, not on the scale.

Credentials and honest marketing

Credentials such as [NBHWC](https://nbhwc.org/) board certification, or a recognised personal-training certificate, show training. They are not a licence to practise medicine. Market outcomes you can control (sessions held, habits built) rather than weight numbers, biological age or disease claims. Disclose any paid partnerships clearly.

A 90-day path for new coaches

1. **Days 1–30:** finish foundations, write your scope statement and referral list, and coach two or three practice clients for free. 2. **Days 31–60:** build a simple intake form and weekly check-in template; ask practice clients for honest feedback. 3. **Days 61–90:** publish a profile, take a small number of paying clients, and review every case against your scope. **Local spaces.** The Chicago Park District's [Lakefront Trail](https://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities/lakefront-trail) runs along the shore and is a free venue for walking groups in the warmer months. Check park rules for paid group sessions before you book clients.

LetsGo Academy

Start free with [Level 1](/academy). [Level 3 (US$300)](/academy/level-3/evidence-quality-for-coaches) covers evidence quality and [scope of practice](/academy/level-3/scope-of-practice). Level 4 (US$500) covers [working alongside GLP-1 prescribers](/academy/level-4/glp1-coach-alongside-prescriber) and [US state scope](/academy/level-4/us-state-coach-scope). Level 5 (US$500) covers case work and documentation. Already coaching? Create your profile at /coach. We do not promise income or client results. *Education only. Not medical advice. LetsGo Academy is not a licence to practise.*

Safety note

If you have a medical condition, are pregnant, or take prescription medicines, check with your own doctor before booking heat, cold, cryotherapy, hyperbaric, or float sessions.

Disclaimer

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