



- Course:** The Senior Athlete Fitness Exam (SAFE): a tool for screening high-functioning older athletes
- Online host:** University of South Dakota – Department of Physical Therapy
- Instructors:** Becca D Jordre PT, DPT, PhD & Wendy Viviers, PT, DPT, MPhil, BS
- Duration:** 2 hours
- Format:** Online audio, video, electronic documents, post test
- Available to:** Physical Therapists, Physical Therapist Assistants, DPT and PTA students
- Cost:** \$20
- Contact:** E-mail [becca.jordre@usd.edu](mailto:becca.jordre@usd.edu) with name and preferred e-mail address.  
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**Course Description:**

The Senior Athlete Fitness Exam (SAFE) was designed as a screening tool for older athletes and addresses physical capacity and risk factors in the areas of cardiovascular fitness, muscle fitness, flexibility fitness, and balance fitness. The SAFE is utilized by the National Senior Games Association at the state and national level and has been adopted by the Academy of Geriatric Physical Therapy as the preferred tool for screening older athletes. This online course presents an overview of SAFE research findings from over 3,000 older athletes and explains normative values and risk factors that have been identified. All aspects of the SAFE tool are presented with instructions and video demonstration. Guidance on how to score and interpret older athlete performance on the SAFE is included as are educational tools created by the APTA Geriatrics/National Senior Games Task Force. These tools align with the components of the SAFE and are specific to older athletes. Associated forms, instructions, normative references and cut scores are provided electronically for future use. Dr. Jordre discusses the structure of the National Senior Games Association and how it relates to state and local senior games opportunities. Strategies for implementing the SAFE in clinical practice or as a service activity at the state level are also included. This class is open to licensed physical therapists, physical therapist assistants as well as students enrolled in DPT and PTA programs.

## **Objectives:**

As a result of this session the learner will be able to:

1. Discuss the major categories of the Senior Athlete Fitness Exam (SAFE) and what each is designed to test.
2. Discuss the current findings from National Senior Games athletes already tested on the SAFE.
3. Describe the need for fitness testing in older athletes and how this population differs from community-dwelling older adults.
4. Conduct each area of the SAFE with consistent and accurate methods.
5. Interpret each area of the SAFE in terms of norms and risk thresholds as it relates to the senior athlete.
6. Complete and interpret the Athlete Report Card.
7. Describe the structure of the National Senior Games Association and how it relates to state and local senior games activities.
8. Report the best strategies for implementing the SAFE at the state and local level.

## **Instructors:**

Dr. Jordre is a professor of Physical Therapy in the School of Health Sciences at the University of South Dakota (USD). She is an alumna of USD where she earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology in 1999 and her PhD in Health Sciences in 2021. She received her Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree from Duke University's School of Medicine in 2002. She is board certified in Geriatric Physical Therapy through the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties and is a Certified Exercise Expert for Aging Adults through the American Physical Therapy Association's Academy of Geriatric Physical Therapy. Dr. Jordre spends her time teaching DPT students at USD and conducting research on successful aging. She created a fitness screen, the Senior Athlete Fitness Exam (SAFE) for use at the South Dakota Senior Games in 2009 and brought it to the National Senior Games Association in 2011. Since that time, she and her students have screened more than 3,000 National Senior Games athletes. She regularly teaches others how to conduct the SAFE, which has allowed it to spread across the United States. Dr. Jordre is originally from Minnesota and now resides in Vermillion, South Dakota with her husband and two children. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family and training to be a senior athlete.

Dr. Viviers is a clinician and adjunct professor for multiple Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) programs in North Carolina, where she instructs on the Older Athlete. She hails from South Africa, having earned Bachelor of Science degrees in Psychology and Physiotherapy from the University of the Witwatersrand in 1995 and 1999 respectively, before receiving her Sports Physiotherapy Specialization degree from the University of Cape Town, in 2009. She founded and ran a successful multidisciplinary clinic in South Africa for several years, focusing on management of athletes 35+, and instructed regularly on the South African Sports Physiotherapy Specialization Course. She relocated permanently to the United States in 2019 and received her Transitional DPT from the University of South Dakota (USD) in 2020 and became an American Board-Certified Geriatric Clinical Specialist in 2021. During her time at USD, she met Dr. Jordre, a kindred spirit, and has proudly become involved in the next chapter of the Senior Athlete Fitness exam. Dr. Viviers lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina with her very accommodating husband and two children. She spends her time keeping older adults off the couch and promoting physical therapy as an indispensable tool for managing an aging world population.

## References Associated with the SAFE

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