



Loss Control Insight

PROVIDING A SAFE EXERCISE ENVIRONMENT

The safety of individuals exercising is paramount. The planning process and the management of exercise facilities must ensure that sufficient precautions and limitations are established and followed for the safe conduct of the exercise.

EQUIPMENT ORIENTATION

A mandatory equipment orientation session is to be provided prior to using the equipment. This is to include the dangers inherent with using weight equipment. Teach participants how to properly adjust a seat, how to adjust weight stacks, how to properly insert a selector pin, etc.

EQUIPMENT POSITIONING

Equipment positioning is critical in providing a safe environment for participants. Sometimes you are at the mercy of electrical outlet placement when laying out your cardio area so position equipment strategically using the following guidelines:

- Provide at least 3' of space behind each treadmill. You don't want the person to hit a wall or mirror, or even be knocked back onto the running treadmill which could seriously hurt them.
- Electrical cords must be positioned completely out of traffic areas or covered. This will help reduce the possibility of a person tripping over cords and will also reduce damage to electrical cords and motors.
- Position equipment with at least 2-3' of space between each machine. There must be adequate space between machines.

EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

To get maximum results from exercise equipment, daily and weekly maintenance routines must be followed. The frequency of maintenance needed on exercise equipment is determined by factors that include the following: Temperature, Humidity, Use, Ventilation, Shielding and Friction.

There are two types of maintenance that must be performed on equipment. They are external and internal maintenance. One is just as important as the other so to make sure that neither type is overlooked. Maintenance Schedules and Logs should be used.

MAINTENANCE SCHEDULES

Maintenance schedules are used to assign and dictate duties to staff members involving basic cleaning and lubricating procedures on exercise equipment. Maintenance Schedules should clearly state what pieces of equipment should be cleaned and lubricated by a designated member.

MAINTENANCE LOGS

Maintenance logs are a means of documenting major repairs performed on exercise equipment. Maintenance logs can help provide proof that the correct procedures have been followed in repairing equipment. The document should indicate who performed the work, what repairs were made, what type of parts were used (factory or generic), and what date the work was completed.

TIP: Make sure you only use **Factory Recommended** Replacement Parts when repairing equipment. Document all repairs using Maintenance Logs.

SIGN CLASSIFICATIONS

- Policy Signs: Signs stating rules and regulations involving use of the facility.

- Warning Signs: Signs stating specific risks in an area of the facility.
- Directional Signs: Signs indicating entrances/exits, fire evacuation plans, etc.
- Emergency Item Signs: Signs indicating where various emergency items are stationed such as fire extinguishers, first aid kits, etc.

SIGN APPEARANCE

- Sign must be made of durable material that will hold up.
- Signs must be created using fonts (letters) that are easy to read from at least 5'-10' away.
- Signs should be created using bright colors that will demand attention. Typically, signs with a white background and colored letters are the best. Wall color should be factored in on sign selection if possible. Don't use signs that will blend with walls and not be easily identified.
- Area rules signs should be at least 18" x 24" in size to allow for easy viewing.
- Individual rules signs, such as "Re-rack Weights" signs can vary in size, but should be large enough to be easily identified in a particular area.

SIGN PLACEMENT

Sign placement is critical in that an unseen sign is useless.

- Signs should be placed from 4'-6' off the floor.
- Signs should be placed consistently throughout an area.
- Make sure sign colors don't blend with walls.
- Post signs uniformly throughout the facility to ensure visibility.
- Computer printouts and handwritten signs should be avoided. They can act as a temporary fix, but should be replaced with permanent signs as soon as possible. Printouts and handwritten signs can be confused with general club postings, class schedules, etc.

FREE WEIGHTS

The free weight area is probably the most dangerous area in a fitness area in regards to the type of exercises performed. This is true for several reasons. The main reason is the human factor. People are creatures of habit and once they have been taught a particular technique, whether right or wrong, it is usually the technique to which they adhere. This is why it is crucial to have qualified individuals monitoring the free weight area at all times. The following issues must be addressed in order to provide a safe Free Weight Area:

1. Exercise Technique
2. Equipment Use
3. Equipment Maintenance
4. Area Signage

Spotter Required When Using Free Weights

FREE WEIGHTS EQUIPMENT USE

The free weight area consists of a variety of equipment ranging from benches to weight plates. That's a lot of equipment for a person to know how to properly use, especially the novice lifter. The orientation program should cover the following topics:

1. How to safely handle weight plates.
2. How to load a barbell/curl bar using bar collars.
3. How to safely handle dumbbells.
4. How to use a spotter.

FREE WEIGHTS EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

A simple formula exists in the Free Weight Area, Defective Equipment = Certain Injury. There are so many variables already present in the area just from the presence of people that management has to make sure that all equipment is in good working order. Barbells and dumbbells should be inspected weekly for loose parts, excessive wear, oxidation (relative to area environment), etc.

RISK AREAS

- Improper Technique
- Improper Supervision
- Improper storage of equipment

You must create a safe environment in your facility. A great way of fulfilling this obligation is through the use of signs. Signs act as a constant reminder of potential dangers within the facility that are inherent within exercise areas.

FIRST AID KIT

There must be at least 1 adequately stocked First Aid Kit at the facility at all times. The Kit must be easily accessible by all. First aid kits should contain the following:

- Latex Gloves
- Band-aids (all sizes)
- Cotton Swabs
- Antiseptic Spray
- Gauze Pads
- Ice Packs
- Eye Wash Solution