

Workplace Hazards in Fitness Centres, Gyms and Pools

This fact sheet is for students undertaking work experience programs, and for their host employers. It can be used as a tool to assist with task planning, and to develop appropriate induction, training and supervision to minimise any risk to students while they are 'at work'.

Students must be given instruction, and must be supervised at all times. Consideration must always be given to hazards when allocating tasks. If any risk exists, students must NOT undertake the activity.

Hazard	Possible Harmful Effects	Possible Employer Action to Prevent Injury / Illness	Preventative Action Students Can Take
Gymnasium equipment	Back and shoulder strains and sprains, injuries to feet if weights are dropped	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Arrange floor layout to enable pedestrians to avoid contact with others using equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Don't walk near equipment when in use by patrons
Slips, trips and falls	<p>Broken bones, sprains and strains</p> <p>Swimming pool surrounds are often slippery and serious falls may occur</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Provide floor mats ♦ Practise good housekeeping: ensure that equipment is stored away after use ♦ Install signs to warn of slippery surfaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Wear non-slip shoes ♦ Walk carefully when near pool surrounds or other slippery surfaces
Hazardous substances (cleaning products, including pool chemicals)	<p>Skin contact may cause irritation or dermatitis</p> <p>Vapours or fumes may cause headaches and/or respiratory problems</p> <p>Long-term exposure may lead to chronic (ongoing) health effects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Use the least hazardous product for each job ♦ Ensure good ventilation ♦ Make sure safety information is on label <i>and</i> Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) is provided ♦ Provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Use personal protective equipment (PPE) when provided – this could include rubber gloves, eye protection, face mask ♦ Read chemical safety information and follow recommended practices
UV radiation	Sunburn, skin cancer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Provide appropriate headgear, PPE and sunscreen for employees working outdoors ♦ Arrange work to minimise time which must be spent outdoors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Be conscious of how long you are working outdoors – limit your exposure to UV radiation ♦ Wear head protection ♦ Use PPE and sunscreen
Manual handling (bending, reaching, stretching, pulling, lifting)	Musculoskeletal disorders, including sprains and strains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Assess risks before heavy equipment is handled ♦ Provide mechanical aids ♦ Arrange team lifts if required for heavier items ♦ Provide training in correct manual handling techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Use mechanical aids where provided ♦ Follow instructions and training ♦ Seek help if you think a task may present manual handling risk
Contact with public	Abuse, assault, robbery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Provide adequate security ♦ Students should not be asked to work in change rooms or shower areas ♦ Arrange customer service <i>and</i> emergency response training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Follow procedures and instructions regarding security and contact with the public ♦ Report any concerns about public behaviour immediately
Sexual harassment, work place bullying	Emotional stress, fear and anxiety, physical illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Establish work place policy ♦ Provide staff briefings or training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Report any concerns immediately