



Preventing Injuries in Employee Fitness Programs

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IRMA member employees are frequently injured while participating in employer-sponsored fitness programs or utilizing employer-owned fitness areas. Often, the cause of injury is identified as improper use of equipment or conducting exercises that are outside the essential job functions, such as heavy weightlifting or full-contact team sports.

While the risk of injury during fitness activities cannot be eliminated, improvements can be made to workplace fitness programs that reduce overall risk and increase the advantages of offering these types of programs. Fitness opportunities provide significant benefits, not only to the employee, but also to the employer. Workplace fitness programs enhance the physical health of the workforce, thus minimizing occupational injuries, disability retirements, health insurance costs, and workers' compensation costs.

For these reasons it is important for employers to establish formal fitness program guidelines or policy that take into consideration the risks of injury when employees exercise in their fitness areas. This guidance should be implemented regardless of whether fitness programs are voluntary or mandatory. To assist members with this process, IRMA has developed an [Employee Fitness Program Best Practice Guideline](#) to highlight the most effective risk management considerations to include in any well-rounded fitness program.

With some extra attention given to injury prevention, employee fitness programs can be a great benefit. For more information or assistance with your programs, please reach out to the IRMA Risk Management team.