

TerranearPMC Safety Share

Week of January 5, 2015 – New Year's Resolution and Gym Safety

Well it looks like we have reached, yet again, that time of the year when so many of us are in the throngs of the promises we made to ourselves only a few days ago, just before we said good-bye to the old year, that we will be resolute in our undertaking to take a certain facet of our being and to improve it. Yep, another year, another new year's resolution! No political poll is necessary to convince us that the vast majority of Americans are going to have some type of New Year's resolution related to fitness. Either you want to build more muscle, or reshape your physique. Maybe you decided to participate in some form of competitive sports and you need to increase your performance. Whatever your reason, it's a good decision to treat your physical self properly. After all, it has been said that "your body is a temple."

Whatever the resolution is, you need to have a game plan to be successful. It's no secret that most New Year's resolutions fail, and often this failure can be attributed to not having a solid game plan. And that game plan includes a strong, prioritized commitment to you.

When it comes to a commitment to being fit, it generally means getting a membership at a gym and maintaining a regular program. This is great, but while we might eagerly make time to work out, most of us complete our sessions without even thinking about safety. No pain, no gain, right? Well not exactly - even though enthusiasm goes a long way, it won't prevent a projected 8 million Americans from experiencing a training injury related to sports/fitness this year.

With the advent of various and convenient fitness centers, at-home gyms, exercise equipment and training programs, the likelihood for injury has skyrocketed. And we can all imagine how embarrassing it would be to get hurt in the gym as a result of poor safety practices. I can remember trying to jump over a bar at a training field. Unfortunately, the ground was wet and that caused me to slip, going feet over head as my head skidded across the grass. The very first thing I did – as hurt as I was – was to look around to see if anyone was watching!

But wait, maybe you're thinking "I've never been injured, so my training must be pretty safe" – Well, don't bet on it! As any S&H professional can tell you, the fact that a worker might not have experienced an accident for performing an "at-risk" behavior is not an indication that one is working safely. The next injury might just be around the corner! Below are a few potential accident scenarios. Check it out and see how you fare.

What should you do if someone is bench pressing and the bar slips and hits their throat?

Throat injuries are very serious, and hoarseness is a key indication that things aren't good. Swelling of the throat can be aggressive and could cause the airway to become closed: and at that point even CPR may not help get oxygen to the body. Give a person with a severely swollen throat some water and you could easily cause them to choke. So make the call just in case, and get some ice to prevent any dangerous swelling from complicating things.



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What is the best cleaner to use on exercise equipment surfaces? It isn't practical to torch your exercise equipment or drop loads of cash on expensive brand name cleaners. Your best bet is to mix plain old regular bleach with water for an ultimate and budget-friendly germ killer. Throw it in a spray bottle so you're armed against all the nasty cultures that live in the gym. However, don't make the mistake of mixing chlorine bleach with ammonia - the combination produces chloramine - a very toxic gas.

True or False? Exercising longer than 45 minutes helps burn fat and won't increase cardiac stress.... False - slow down, Turbo. An elevated heart rate for longer than 45 minutes typically increases the production of a hormone called cortisone, which results in the body holding onto more fat. Continued cardiac stress can also weaken cardiac tissue and may result in cardiovascular problems. So put your heart into your workouts, but just make sure to give it a rest, too.

Which cause is most likely to result in an injury in the gym? Slips and falls are surprisingly one of the most common causes to accidents in the gym. Think about all the sweat, water bottles, slick surfaces, and heavy equipment that can turn a gym into a booby trapped maze, and it starts to not seem so far-fetched. Combine all this with every lemming in the gym on a solo mission to build an awesome body, and it becomes that much easier to take a slip or fall. So pay attention, don't rush yourself, and bring a towel.

Which is the most commonly injured body part in the gym? If you guessed "the fingers," you are right! We use them to pick up weights, hold bars, and adjust exercise machines, which is why they're the most at-risk body part for injury. Most of us don't recognize how important our hands and fingers are, but just think about all the exercises you couldn't do without the use of your hands!

What is the highest cause of death in the gym? Cardiovascular failure is still the leading cause, so make sure to keep your heart up to snuff when you're training. This commonly occurs because people go too hard and too fast in the gym, forcing the hardest working organ in the body over the edge. Remember to push yourself within a healthy range, and it might be useful to get CPR certified in case you have to save someone else's life in the gym.

True or False....It is not necessary to "spot" someone when they are working on such fool-proof pieces of equipment such as the Smith machine. If you are not familiar with this type of equipment, let me just say they are designed to reduce accidents as the weights are attached to vertical bars and therefore, cannot be removed. However, as idiot-proof as some machines may appear to be, **NEVER** take your eyes off your partner when they're lifting, and make sure to pay attention all the way until your partner's head is out from under the bar. Even experienced high-profile athletes have been seriously injured and sometimes killed while using "safe" equipment like the Smith machine.

"Be yourself, everyone else is taken."

-Oscar Wilde

