

# Questions to Ask Before Taking Your Client's Workout Outdoors

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Summer is officially here! Longer days, surprise happy hours, barbecues and the beach – Can you blame your clients for wanting to skip the indoor gym? While you can't beat the convenience of the treadmill and elliptical, there's nothing quite like working out in the sunshine. **Fitness professionals should be aware of the potential liability that comes with providing outdoor exercise and take steps to keep their risks at a minimum.**

## **The Basics**

Carefully consider the risk to your clients ahead of time. It's important to ask yourself the following questions before inviting clients to outdoor sessions:

*Is this location safe and appropriate for the planned work out?*

*Are you using equipment? If so, is it proper for the exercise? Is the equipment regularly maintained?*

*Are outdoor ground surfaces free from defects or unsafe conditions?*

## **Go Further**

You've evaluated the site, but what about the conditions of your planned workout?

Temperature, humidity, wind, pollen and air pollution – any number of environmental factors may potentially and adversely impact your client's ability to safely exercise. Talk with your client about their medical issues and update your gym's liability waiver. Specific written warnings, specialized informed consent and release documents should be used. Your clients should know all risks involved so that they may determine whether to engage in an activity.

## **Consider the Location**

*Do I need permission to take my client(s) to a public park?*

Maybe! Fitness professionals should consider whether there are local zoning or similar laws in effect prohibiting business to be conducted on public grounds. Permits may even be required in some jurisdictions.

## **Have an Emergency Plan**

*What if my client is hurt and requires immediate medical attention?*

Even with safety protocols and qualified trainers, workout related accidents can and do happen. Personal fitness trainers must consider emergency response plans. Generally, if the workout location is more than 5-10 minutes from what would be a typical emergency response (9-1-1) time, another location should be considered unless other forms of emergency response are available. And, always be sure that cell phones or other mobile devices are adequately charged and ready for use.

In short, take extra care when planning all off-premises fitness activities. **Careful evaluation of your fitness plan and the location not only reduces potential harm to clients, it also reduces the chances of claim and suit against the trainer. Protect your business with a professional liability policy specifically written for fitness instructors.** You've dedicated yourself to helping your clients meet their fitness goals. You should be free to focus on clinical care without worrying about a threat to your livelihood.