

Guidance for Coaches – Physical Preparation

Physical preparation of the athlete is one of the keystone pillars of athlete development, supporting technical development, rate of skill acquisition and development of biomotor abilities (components of fitness). There is an increasing body of evidence which supports participation in well-designed training programmes that are supervised and instructed by qualified professionals. The following text offers guidance to coaches who are designing, implementing and delivering a physical preparation programme.

Slips, Trips and Falls

- Floors should be in good condition; clean, dry and nonslip.
- Coaches should check if platforms are raised prior to the session.
- Athletes must be made aware of tripping hazards which exist within the facility
- Coaches to reinforce gym etiquette including use of towels and appropriate use of chalk.
- Coaches should ensure that athletes wear appropriate footwear.
- Ensure footwear should provide good traction.
- Laces should be well tied and there should be no obstruction such as loose tongues of shoes.
- No outdoor shoes recommended, risk of dragging in moisture and dirt from outside. Bring additional footwear, or clean footwear prior to entering indoor training environment.
- Equipment should be safely stored when not in use.
 - Ensure floor is free from extraneous/unused materials/equipment (see also manual handling, correct storage of equipment)
- Ensure water fountains are free from water spillages, clear up any spillages after use
- Athletes should never run with equipment, unless they are using push/pull activities (e.g. sled or prowler)

Collision with others

- Coach shall reinforce gym etiquette.
- Athletes must always be aware of the activities of other athletes when in the gym.
- Ensure recommended coach to athlete ratios to maintain safe training to athletes, coaches and partakers.
- Ensure appropriate number of athletes to a platform/training area is employed (e.g. four athletes to a platform).
- Athletes who are waiting to take part or who have taken part should stand in a clearly designated area whilst the activity takes place.
- Athletes shall not lift/exercise when another athlete is on the same lifting platform; only one athlete on the platform at a time when exercising.
- Activities should be arranged so that athletes are well spaced, and the likelihood of collision is limited.
- Athletes should be involved in assessing the training area is safe in order to encourage future good safety practice.

Equipment Failure

- All equipment shall be checked prior to use.
- Athletes should be encouraged to get involved with safety checks to promote good health and safety practice.

- Damaged equipment shall never be used (e.g. worn cables, rusted barbells, ensure barbells rotate, racks, benches, hurdles, plyometric boxes, etc)
- In general, equipment should only be used for the purpose that was intended. If equipment is to be used for a purpose for which it was not primarily designed, great care must be taken.
- Athletes should take responsibility for not using damaged equipment and report damaged equipment to coach and/or facility staff.

Environment - Indoor facilities present a number of safety issues; lack of space, floor surfaces, walls and wall projections, ventilation, temperature, glare, windows (unbreakable or protected), lighting.

- Lighting should be fit for purpose.
- A comfortable working temperature should be provided, including appropriate ventilation.
- Ensure plugs and electrical points are checked regularly and safe to use.
- Any sharp edges on walls and doors and any other projections should be protected or steps taken to ensure that they do not pose a danger.
- Ensure content of music is suitable for partakers (volume, non-explicit content). Coaches and Athletes encouraged to report inappropriate use.
- So that athletes can hear instruction, recommend that athletes do not wear ear/headphones
- Ensure appropriate access for wheelchair users (e.g. parking, loading and unloading areas, flush and even door thresholds.
- Ensure suitable height space for safe overhead and vertical throwing activities.
- Ensure sufficient spacing between equipment/apparatus to ensure safe practice.
- Ensure training is carried out away from fragile objects (e.g. mirrors, lighting).

Athlete Overload

- Ensure training is supervised by a qualified professional (qualified and licensed coach working within the context of their coaching or other relevant qualification).
- Resistance training prescription should be age-related and not age- determined. Prescription should be based according to biological status, training age, motor skill competency, technical proficiency, existing strength levels, and psychosocial maturity.
- Ensure athletes are taught how to lift correctly and technically competent.
- Regardless of resistance training mode, training volume and intensity shall not be increased at the expense of technical competency.
- Ensure athletes are taught how to spot, and 'fail' lifts safely.

Pre-existing medical condition

- Ensure appropriate athlete needs analysis is carried out.
- Ensure medical questionnaire is carried out, including ParQs.
- Have accessible ICE (In case of emergency) details for Leader/ Coach & participant.
- Ensure athletes carry necessary equipment for pre-existing medical conditions, such as an epi-pen and that guidance for use has been shared with the coach and understood.
- Remind athletes to ensure they are hydrated before the session starts and have access to a drink and refuelling either before, during or post session.
- Ensure athletes carry out facility inductions/requirements (of access).

- All accidents & incidents should be reported to UK Athletics via the online 'Accident and Incident Reporting Form'.
- Have emergency contacts for those in the group and Coach/ Run Leader to have access to mobile phone (where applicable) for emergency situations.
- Coaches shall discuss and share the above process(es) with parents/guardians (under18).

Manual handling

- Ensure bars are evenly loaded and collars are employed and securely fastened.
- Ensure equipment is set up and used correctly (e.g. direction of hurdles).
- Ensure equipment is returned and stored in the correct place (e.g. as per facility signs, instructions during induction).
- Resistance equipment (e.g. Barbells, Plates) should always be carried with both hands when loading and unloading.
- Resistance equipment (including dumbbells) should be placed on the ground rather than dropped/thrown down.
- Participants shall not run when carrying equipment.

Safeguarding

- Must always consider athlete welfare and wellbeing.
- Ensure training is supervised by a qualified professional (qualified and licensed coach).
- Resistance training prescription should be age-related and not age- determined. Prescription should be based according to biological status, training age, motor skill competency, technical proficiency, existing strength levels, and psychosocial maturity.
- Anticipate potential risks of injury, taking measures to eliminate or reduce them, and alert participants to these risks, including recommended coach:athlete/platform ratios.
- Have knowledge of first aid procedures or knowledge of the facility first aider.
- Assist in correct spotting techniques and teaching/coaching of proper resistance training exercise technique when necessary.
- Ensure athlete can hear instructions (use of headphones whilst training).

Other

- Coaches shall achieve and maintain professional certification(s) with continuing education requirements and a code of conduct.
- Coaches must operate within their scope of practice; responsibilities and knowledge and understanding of physical preparation.
- Athletes must be made aware of gym discipline and etiquette when using the facilities.
- Ensure equipment is wiped clean after use.
- Athletes and coaches should always be informed of the correct mode of dress required for coaching sessions.
- Clothing should not be so loose that it obstructs movement, nor should it be so tight that it restricts movement.
- Clothing should insulate / aerate the athlete comfortably.
- All jewellery and watches should be removed prior to the session commencing.
- In the event that an athlete wishes to wear different clothing in accordance with their religion or cultural traditions, this should be discussed and a suitable outcome agreed on, resulting in maintaining respect for the individual's beliefs at the same time as enabling safe participation.
- Glasses should be with plastic or unbreakable lenses.
- Coaches should ensure that athletes wear appropriate footwear.

- Footwear should provide good traction.
- Footwear should provide good support and appropriate cushioning for the activity being carried out.
- Laces should be well tied and there should be no obstruction such as loose tongues of shoes.