



Outdoor Training Guidelines



One of the most significant recent growth areas in the Australian Fitness Industry has been the emergence of services offered in an outdoor setting. The range of activities offered by industry service providers continues to expand rapidly and trends are shifting on a regular basis. Outdoor training services offered by registered exercise professionals, such as one-on-one personal training and small and large group training are now incorporating a large range of activities including, but not limited to, boxing for fitness, kettlebells, bootcamp, cross training, event training, sport specific training and adventure activities.

The Outdoor Training Guidelines apply to all fitness services that are conducted in an outdoor environment. An outdoor setting is typically an open space that may be used for multiple purposes and remains a dynamic, flexible and unpredictable environment. Outdoor settings may include local parks, school grounds, private land, beaches, fitness facility grounds and sports venues.

To further clarify best practice standards and risk management for the outdoor setting, Fitness Australia provides the following information for guidance:

Duty of Care

All Registered Exercise Professionals have a duty of care to prevent harm which could reasonably be expected to occur in the course of providing advice or instruction to clients. Professional standards and guidelines developed by Fitness Australia (such as the Outdoor Training Guidelines) will assist Registered Exercise Professionals in mitigating risk and exercising their duty of care.

Professional Skill, Qualification and Continuing Education

To plan and deliver exercise programs in an outdoor setting registered exercise professionals must be appropriately qualified and continually update their related skills and knowledge.

The following minimum education is required:

- Certificate IV in Fitness
- Completion of activity specific education.
(i.e. Fitness Australia Approved Programs)

Risk Management

Registered Exercise Professionals operating outdoor training services should address the following areas to mitigate risk:

Local Government Requirements

It is extremely important for Registered Exercise Professionals and businesses to access, understand and comply with relevant local government policies and requirements for conducting outdoor training. Many local government authorities require that Registered Exercise Professionals obtain a permit to practice on local government land/areas.

Pre-Exercise Screening:

Client screening and assessment is to occur before participation in outdoor activities. Use of the [Adult Pre-Exercise Screening System](#) (APSS) will help to identify client health status and the subsequent process to ensure effective and safe programming.

First Aid & Safety:

Registered Exercise Professionals should maintain current Australian certifications in First Aid (Senior or equivalent) and CPR. An individual clients' health and safety is paramount, therefore it should be ensured that a well-equipped First Aid kit as well as ice packs, a mobile phone and other safety equipment necessary for specific activities are available and in close proximity for the duration of the activity. Registered Exercise Professionals should also ensure participants are wearing appropriate and protective attire.

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Setting & Space Requirements:

Local government policy terms relating to space requirements are to be adhered to. The activity area should be searched at the beginning of each session for any potential hazards and assessed to confirm that it can accommodate the number of participants. It should be ensured that adequate lighting facilities are present when necessary. (See [Australian Standards for Sports Lighting AS2560](#))

Equipment Selection

Equipment should be regularly checked and adhere to Australian standards. The equipment selected should be suitable for all clients. Exercise modification may be required to ensure equipment suitability. Use of public equipment and facilities should be recorded and permission for use received from Local Government in accordance with policy terms.

Weather Conditions

Consistent monitoring of weather conditions is important and sessions should be modified, relocated or postponed if required. In the case of continued participation, a thorough explanation of session modifications and outline of remaining risks should be provided. Clients should be informed of session adjustments in a timely manner. Registered Exercise Professionals and registered businesses should manage weather related risk, plan contingencies for specific conditions (eg: heat, humidity, rain, cold, thunderstorms, lightning) and refer to related guidelines, including:

- Sports Medicine Australia [Exercising in the Heat Guidelines](#)
- Sports Medicine Australia [UV Exposure and Heat Illness Guidelines](#)

Planning and Delivery

To enhance the effectiveness of outdoor training, the following planning and delivery variables should be considered:

Activity Selection

Outdoor training services offered by Registered Exercise Professionals may range from broad adaptable activities for larger groups to more specific training for single participants.

Consideration of the following will help determine the suitability of specific activities:

- Space – the dimensions and size of the area available
- Setting – the environment in which the area is set
- Quality and condition of the grounds, surface or public facilities being used
- Participants suitability to undertake the activity considering risk, exercise history and capability
- The number of activities/stations to be used simultaneously
- Whether the activities can be modified for the range of participants present
- The Registered Exercise Professionals scope of practice and experience

Trainer/Participant Ratios

Local Government Authority outdoor training regulations commonly stipulate Group Trainer/Participant ratios. Registered Exercise Professionals are required to comply with these terms. In the absence of specific local government regulation, Registered Exercise Professionals should ensure that the group participant number allows for appropriate supervision and instruction for each individual during the group session. Other variables that may influence this professional judgement are: the setting and space; complexity of the activities; equipment selection and individual participant health status.

Delivery Considerations

An effective outdoor training service is heavily reliant upon the use of specific delivery skill. The following delivery variables are particularly important in the outdoor setting:

- Clear preliminary exercise instruction and demonstration
- Monitoring and modifying activity for individuals as required in the group context
- Constant clear instruction through remaining proximal, visible and audible
- Combining verbal instruction with clear signalling
- Use of clear markers and bright clothing for visibility
- Positioning to remain audible in windy conditions
- Simultaneous monitoring of the activity area and periphery

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Professional and Ethical Practice

In accordance with the Fitness Australia Registered Exercise Professionals Code of Ethics, Registered Exercise Professionals and businesses conducting services outdoors are expected to maintain professionalism and ethical practice and must comply with local government regulations. The following should be taken into consideration:

- **Noise Level:** the amount of noise created from activities conducted in the outdoor environment should be limited to a level that does not disturb residents or the general public. The activities should not create noise that is offensive as defined by relevant State/Territory Environment Protection Legislation.
- **Lighting:** The Australian Standard for Sports Lighting (AS 2560) provides specific information regarding appropriate lighting. The standard refers to measurements of Lux and Lumen and provides guidelines for specific sports. Consideration regarding a potential risk of collision or safe use of small objects should be made. As advised by Standards Australia, the applicable guideline for outdoor training for the Fitness Industry is 'Lighting for Football' ([AS2560.2.3](#)).
- **Disturbance:** Registered Exercise Professionals are to be considerate towards the general public and other service providers utilising public space. Registered Exercise Professionals must remain courteous and respectful to members of the general public and avoid interrupting access to public areas.
- **Business Signage:** If advertising signs or banners are to be displayed, prior written permission must be granted by the relevant local government authority where necessary.
- **Public Image:** Outdoor training is often highly exposed to the general public, therefore Registered Exercise Professionals should maintain professional and ethical practice in order to uphold a positive public image and reputation for the business and broader industry.

- **Insurance:** Appropriate public liability and professional indemnity insurance should be obtained and cover all of the activities to be conducted.
- **Sustainability:** Registered Exercise Professionals should actively support the sustainability of public land and surrounding environment.
- **Respect for monuments and sacred areas:** If selected outdoor training areas include a monument or sacred area, Registered Exercise Professionals should at all times respect their presence and take suitable care.

Additional Resources

The following resources may provide further guidance for registered exercise professionals and businesses conducting outdoor training services:

- [Adult Pre-Exercise Screening System](#) Exercise and Sports Science Australia (ESSA), Sports Medicine Australia (SMA) and Fitness Australia
- [Australian Standards for Sports Lighting AS2560](#) Australian Standards
- [Exercising in the Heat Guidelines](#) Sports Medicine Australia
- [Guideline for Local Government Issues](#) Fitness Australia,
- [Kettlebell Training: Addendum to Safety Guidelines for Strength Training](#) Fitness Australia
- [Recommendations for the Provision of Commercial Fitness Services in Public Areas](#) Fitness Australia
- [Safety First: A Work Health & Safety Guide for Fitness Businesses](#) Fitness Australia & RiskLogic
- [Safety Guidelines for Strength Training](#) Fitness Australia
- [Safety Guidelines: Boxing, Kickboxing and MMA for Fitness](#) Fitness Australia
- [UV Exposure and Heat Illness Guidelines](#) Sports Medicine Australia
- Australian Standards Website www.standards.org.au
- Children's Health & Fitness Services Guideline <https://fitness.org.au/exercise-guidelines>
- Fitness Australia Continuing Education Directory www.fitness.org.au/ccdirectory.html

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