



Treadmill Safety Considerations

From their powerful motors and fast-spinning belts to exposed power cords, treadmills cause many injuries each year. The following safety tips will help your organization minimize the risks.

Spacing and Clearance

Some of the most dangerous treadmill accidents involve people who lose their footing, fall and end up pinned between a wall and the machine, whose spinning belt can cause serious skin burns and shearing. Some extreme cases have resulted in death from head trauma and blood loss caused by a fall.

Clearance requirements vary by machine, so always follow the manufacturer's recommendations. Aside from manufacturers' recommendations, industry standards can be a valuable resource. The American Society for Testing and Materials ([ASTM](#)) published a new standard in 2012 entitled "Standard Specifications for Motorized Treadmills" designated as F2115-12. The 2012 standard recommends minimum clearances around treadmills to a minimum of 19.7 inches on each side of the treadmill and 78 inches behind treadmills to provide for an emergency dismount.

Equipment Placement

Consider use of cable protectors or channel cord covers to minimize exposed power cords that can result in a trip hazard. Facility design and equipment spacing should also comply with the Americans with Disability Act ([ADA](#)).

Post Signage Encouraging the Following:

Use of the Safety Key: Even with adequate clearances around the treadmill, encourage users to use the safety key. In case of an accidental dismount, the key will pop out of the console and the treadmill should come to a safe stop.

Straddle the Deck When Starting: Avoid starting the treadmill while standing on the belt. Get into the habit of straddling the deck and allowing the belt to start moving before stepping on it.

Don't Overdo It: Users should keep track of their heart rate while exercising. For normal healthy people, working at a moderate level of intensity is recommended. To work at a vigorous intensity, users should have clearance from a physician or have been exercising for a while.

Come to A Complete Stop: Always let the belt come to a complete stop before dismounting. It's also important for users to know where the emergency shut-off button is located on the machine so that they can disable it immediately in an emergency.