

Creating a more inclusive gym

These are some simple ways to make gyms more inclusive to people who are blind or have low vision.

Safer environment



Tidy space

Keep the floor space free from obstacles e.g. avoid leaving dumbbells on the floor. This will keep everyone safe.



Doors

Alert the customer if your automatic doors are used for both entering and exiting the venue. This will enable a gym goer to be mindful to leave space in case of a swinging door.



Contrast colours

Add colour to dumbbells and weight plates (e.g. colour the numbers) and the handles of cross trainers, making them easier to find. A feature coloured wall will help someone with low vision navigate their environment.



Padding

Add protective cases to overhanging equipment such as barbells, which will reduce the likelihood of injuries.



Floor markers

Add tactical floor markings to hazardous spots, e.g. overhanging equipment area. This helps people to be mindful of dangerous spaces.



Space

Try and add space between equipment, making it easier and more comfortable for everyone to use.



Floor padding

Padding is a good way to make spaces safer to use and is a great way for someone to identify the area.



Some customers prefer to attend the gym during the quieter periods as it's easier to access equipment and staff support. Be familiar with the quieter times and days.

Safer workouts



Gym tour

Audio describe the layout of the gym and guide the customer to the specific areas using clear directions. For example, 'to the left is the free weights section, five steps in front of you is the water fountain station, there are five stairs to reach the top of the stairs'.



Offer someone your elbow to see if they'd like assistance with getting around the gym.



Avoid language that isn't useful for someone who can't see. E.g. 'over there is the water station'.



Equipment guidance

Be descriptive as possible when demonstrating equipment. This is essential when equipment has multiple components and can be dangerous to use without complete instructions. Allow enough time to go through the various steps.

Regular feedback

- Offer the chance to meet with the customer periodically, such as every three to six months to see how they're tracking. This is a perfect chance to get feedback on how your efforts are making a real difference and learning ways to enhance the experience.
- Provide an online option to capture feedback. You may wish to add a category to your feedback system that covers 'accessibility'.
- Ensure any relevant feedback is passed through the business.



Cafeteria

- If you're asked to describe what's on the menu, start by giving an overview of the categories such as sandwiches, hot pastries etc. Then check if the customer would like to know more about a specific option.
- Ask questions such as 'do you feel like something hot, sweet or savoury' or 'do you have any food allergies'?

Website

Include a simple and accessible online map of the gym layout with points on key features e.g. water station, dumbbells section, treadmill, key staircases. Provide this during the induction.