



inclusive fitness

Inclusive Fitness Initiative

Fitness Equipment Standards Stage One

1st April 2004 to 30th April 2006

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1. The Inclusive Fitness Initiative – Background

Research conducted by Montgomery Leisure Services (MLS) on behalf of the Gary Jelen Sports Foundation during 1998 identified a lack of provision in fitness facilities for disabled people; a lack of disability awareness among facility staff providing a barrier to participation and a lack of knowledge amongst disabled people of the benefits of exercise. It was clear that without intervention, the traditional forces of supply and demand were unlikely to address the needs of disabled people in the health and fitness environment. The Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) has been developed as a proactive response to these challenges, thanks to a £6 million grant from the Sport England Lottery Fund. A wholly owned subsidiary company was set up by the English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS) to direct the policy and strategy for the IFI with MLS appointed to manage the operational delivery of the scheme.

Grant aid is available to not for profit facilities to support them to become inclusive, but all the IFI components have relevance to the private sector also. The four primary areas of delivery include:

- **Inclusive Fitness Equipment** - Ensures that both disabled and non-disabled people can access a full body workout in the same way, at the same time and using the same equipment. This document provides information on the development of inclusive fitness equipment standards.
- **Staff Training** - Ensures that staff are confident and competent when catering for the needs of disabled people. Training is delivered at two levels; level one supports all front of house staff with disability equity training and level two targets fitness instructors specifically (accredited to NVQ level 3).
- **Inclusive Marketing Strategies** - Ensures that not only do facilities cater for the needs of disabled people but also that they communicate the benefits and opportunities of gym based physical activity effectively with disabled and non-disabled people.



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- **Inclusive Development** - Not for profit facilities receive support to enable them to develop alternative physical activity opportunities for disabled people in an inclusive context.

The combination of these elements ensures that the IFI addresses inclusion in a truly holistic fashion, not only concentrating on physical access to facilities but also the barriers associated with culture, communication and wider physical activity participation.

2. What Makes Fitness Equipment Inclusive?

2.1 IFI Equipment Accreditation

Since the beginning of the IFI, the project has strived to ensure that fitness equipment suppliers consistently address the needs of disabled users. The provision of fitness equipment was the initial objective in the early stages of the IFI project development. The fundamental requirement for the IFI is an identified range of equipment that provides a total body workout for disabled people.

The IFI now has over 60 experienced testers, each with different impairments and needs, who provide both qualitative and quantitative feedback. This supportive framework allows disabled people to give views honestly and confidently, but also evidences to suppliers the developments required in a non-threatening way, providing ownership of the challenges after seeing them at first hand. Suppliers then receive feedback from the IFI about the changes required to bring the equipment up to the required standard and solve the design challenges in an informed way.



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Learning from the huge amount of data received at the accreditation sessions, feedback from suppliers and designers and feedback from users of accredited equipment during the IFI pilot scheme (2001 to 2003), the IFI has recently 'lifted the bar' in terms of the standards and features now required from an IFI accredited item. These Stage One Standards have been defined to meet the needs of each of the 'main' impairment groups:

- learning disability
- hearing impaired
- visually impaired
- physical disability

2.2 IFI Equipment PhD Research Project

At the request of equipment suppliers, stimulated by the IFI to learn more about how to provide suitable inclusive fitness equipment, a PhD Research project has been now initiated to provide clear guidance and standards to participating partners.

Based within the School of Engineering at Sheffield Hallam University and working with Professor Graham Cockerham Program Area Head for Engineering, Design and Technology and Nicholas Pickett leader of the Sport Equipment Development undergraduate course, Dawn Hughes (MSc Medical Physics & Clinical Engineering, MEng Mathematical Engineering) was appointed in December 2002 to drive a detailed investigation into all aspects of inclusive fitness equipment design over three years, building on the lessons already learnt from the IFI pilot scheme (2001 to 2003).



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The project is currently being funded through a partnership between the IFI, Sport England, Sheffield Hallam University, Montgomery Leisure Services and twelve major fitness equipment manufacturers and suppliers:

Cybex

HUR

Leisure Lines

Life Fitness

Matrix

Nautilus Health & Fitness Group

Pulse Fitness

Precor

Shokk

Sportesse

Technogym

Versaclimber

The programme takes a holistic approach, researching barriers and solutions by consulting with disabled users, fitness professionals at the delivery end and manufacturers' research and designers. The study shows that many of the problems faced by disabled people when seeking meaningful independent access to a piece of fitness equipment are not insurmountable. The target is that the new data and subsequent Stage Two Standards will provide a raised benchmark for inclusive, barrier-free, age appropriate design, which is practical, understood and 'owned' by all involved in the design and supply chain.

Globally, the UK fitness industry is now established as the world leader in inclusive equipment design and development. This project provides suppliers with a major competitive advantage in UK, European and world markets. Interested suppliers are invited to become a Research Associate at any time, subject to payment of a fee. Contact the IFI office for details.

From a UK perspective the fitness industry has seen a major increase in profile through its positive commitment to inclusion. In addition, the project and the **INDUSTRY is the first to develop an inclusive guidance document** using a multidisciplinary approach and providing a benchmark for inclusive safety standards. Ultimately the IFI seeks to fully integrate these raised standards into EN 957, the European safety standard for stationary fitness equipment to ensure that the needs of disabled people continue to be fully embraced in the design and manufacturing process.



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2.3 IFI Fitness Equipment Standards – Stage One

The findings from the accreditation data and the IFI Research Project have been collated to develop these IFI Fitness Equipment Standards – Stage One. Equipment suppliers that are looking to distribute equipment through the IFI programme must conform to these Stage One Standards. Additionally, facilities not part of the IFI scheme are specifying IFI Accredited Equipment as an essential element of tender documents for refits and new build facilities to maximise their provision for inclusive use, broaden their market reach and meet the ‘reasonable adjustments’ required under the terms of Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. These Standards have had an impact industry wide.

Most notably, all inclusive fitness equipment must be accessible for disabled and non-disabled people alike. So as much as the IFI will not accredit equipment that is inaccessible to disabled people, the project will also not accredit equipment that is inaccessible to non-disabled people. The IFI Equipment Panel has compiled this document to clearly identify the design features required to receive IFI accreditation for fitness equipment on or after 1st April 2004.

Approach

This document aims to make clear the standards that have to be met to gain IFI accreditation and also which design features are relevant to different impairment groups. The production and publication of these Stage One Standards supports and maintains consistency of IFI equipment accreditation. Each impairment group (visual, hearing, learning disability, upper body and lower body impairment) has been considered. Each table is based upon a category of equipment as defined in EN 957, European Standard for Stationary Training Equipment, and details the standards required to meet the needs of each impairment group.



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Essential Requirements and Desirable Features

'Essential' requirements must be met to successfully achieve IFI accreditation on or after 1st April 2004. 'Desirable' features are those that the IFI Equipment Panel has identified offer benefits to disabled users. These features are not required to achieve IFI accreditation at this stage of development, but would enhance the products use. The IFI Equipment Panel consider that these features are important however, but that there is currently not sufficient time or knowledge for suppliers to make all these changes on every item of equipment. These 'Desirable' features also provide targets for future development and investigation and are currently the focus of consideration. The majority of these 'Desirable' Features are also likely to be incorporated into the enhanced Stage Two Standard in the future.

The IFI Equipment Panel is aware that this document is descriptive of some requirements and as such is still open to a degree of interpretation in some areas. Feedback from testers at IFI Accreditation sessions will also continue to be taken into account when assessing the suitability of potential IFI Accredited Equipment. Although the requirements presented in this document are not an outcome of the IFI PhD Research Project it is intended that as this project progresses, the requirements will become more detailed. Detailed guidance notes are available to suppliers involved with the IFI Research Project. Summary standards (as per this document) are available to other suppliers.

European Standards for Stationary Training Equipment (EN 957)

In addition to the inclusive design features, every item of IFI Accredited Equipment must comply with the relevant parts of the EN 957 Standard for Stationary Training Equipment. This Standard has been adopted by the IFI to ensure that the equipment meets the highest possible safety requirements. The European Standards Committee for Stationary Training Equipment (EN 957) has now formally recognised the importance of inclusion. Class I – Inclusive Use for Special Needs - has now been added to Part 1 of the Standard (General Requirements). Each member state will be required to reference the appropriate inclusive standards in their country. These IFI Fitness Equipment Standards – Stage One, have been added as a reference to the bibliography of the EN 957 Standard.



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Whilst the other Parts of the Standard are yet to reflect inclusive requirements for individual items of equipment, this overarching requirement puts inclusion firmly on the map Europe wide. This recommendation by the EN957 Committee is subject to ratification by the overall Standards Committee in March 2005. This represents a major achievement for the English Federation of Disability Sport Operating Company, the UK Fitness Equipment suppliers and the IFI Equipment Panel for the work and drive in this area over the last four years. Particular thanks must go to Howard Davies, a member of the IFI Equipment Panel and the British representative on the EN957 Committee, who has skilfully presented and argued the benefits of inclusive equipment development.

2.4 IFI Accredited Equipment

Following the publication of the IFI Stage One Equipment Standards the IFI currently boasts 107 pieces of equipment from 18 different suppliers (December 2004) ensuring that all leisure managers have a good choice of inclusive equipment. A full list of current IFI suppliers and accredited equipment is available on <http://www.inclusivefitness.org/suppliers/equipment.php> This list increases on a regular basis.

2.5 The Future

Why Stage One Standards? The Standards will be in place until April 2006. There is still much progress to be made and still much work to be done in the area of inclusive fitness equipment design and development. Notice is already out that the 'bar will be lifted again'. The IFI Equipment Panel is currently drafting IFI Fitness Equipment Standards - Stage Two, which will be published in Spring 2005. The UK fitness equipment sector should be congratulated on the positive way in which they have embraced inclusion and invested in the design and development of equipment that meets the needs of everyone. Ultimately it is now up to the purchasers of equipment to select accredited inclusive fitness equipment to ensure that the needs of disabled and non-disabled people can be met as service providers.



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General Requirements

Essential elements applicable to all items of equipment

Essential	Upper Body Impairment	Lower Body Impairment	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Learning Disability
Equipment to comply with EN 957 European Standard for Stationary Training Equipment, with appropriate certification / validation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Clear tonal contrasts to indicate moving parts and different functional components of the design			✓		✓
Clear colour contrast between the frame and upholstery			✓		
Obvious raised iconography, colour and texture on emergency stop	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Quick start function	✓	✓		✓	✓
Tactile grips	✓				
High handles and bars easy to change from a seated position		✓			
Accessible and usable by non-disabled people					



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General Requirements

Desirable	Upper Body Impairment	Lower Body Impairment	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Learning Disability
Choice of frame colour available			✓		
Choice of upholstery colour available			✓		
Continuity of design detailing and product characteristics throughout the range			✓		✓
Pictorial messages (visible and audible)					✓
Adjustable handles to assist use by people with a wide range of back and arm lengths	✓				
Adjustable gripping angle to reduce the strain on the wrist	✓				
Easy to grasp pin and adjustment mechanisms to aid independent use by people with limited or no finger function	✓				
User able to independently set the range of motion with one hand	✓				
Range of motion adjustments centrally mounted	✓				
Bilateral and unilateral limb activity available	✓	✓			
Seat suitable for wheelchair transfer including:					
• Height adjustment that is able to be operated from seated		✓			
• Side handles		✓			
• Wide base		✓			
• Supportive foam		✓			
Seat padding to:					
• Provide support in the form of ergonomic moulding		✓			
• Provide reasonable protection for users with sensitive skin in short to medium term use (lower density, softer foam to help reduce movement and shearing)		✓			
• Adjustable to ensure appropriate body alignment and support		✓			



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Consoles

Essential	Upper Body Impairment	Lower Body Impairment	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Learning Disability
Centrally located emergency stop or emergency stops located on both the left and right hand sides of the equipment or kill cord or similar 'hands free' mechanism	✓	✓	✓		✓
Raised obvious iconography (pictures, images, logos) and, or raised digits, and or raised buttons on console for main controls (start/stop, up/down, increase/decrease speed) with clear colour contrast. (The raised digits should not be Braille. If Braille is to be added this should be along side the raised digits)			✓		✓

Consoles

Desirable	Upper Body Impairment	Lower Body Impairment	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Learning Disability
Raised iconography and raised digits on console for all controls			✓		✓
Clear colour contrast of information from background display			✓		
Large font size for information (to be clarified in the future) in sentence case, not capitals.			✓		
Audio function available to provide feedback during and at the end of the exercise			✓		
Variable audible feedback for all programmable functions			✓		



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Strength Training Equipment

Essential	Upper Body Impairment	Lower Body Impairment	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Learning Disability
Enclosed weight stack meeting the requirements of EN957 Part 2 – for third party protection	✓	✓	✓		✓
Stability testing as per BSEN 957 Parts 2 Weight Machines and Part 4	✓	✓	✓		✓
Locking key weight selection mechanism	✓	✓	✓		✓
Weight selection pin to be tactile and have definite colour contrast to the weight stack			✓		✓
Raised tactile numbers on the weight stack			✓		
Following machine parts to have definite colour contrast from remainder of the machine:					
• Seats - contrast against frame			✓		✓
• Adjustment mechanisms			✓		✓
• Bar ends			✓		✓
• Interfaces					✓
Adjustable start positions where necessary to prevent starting in a stressed position	✓	✓	✓		✓
Stability handles or points for use during functional exercise	✓			✓	



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Strength Training Equipment

Essential	Upper Body Impairment	Lower Body Impairment	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Learning Disability
Low start weight relevant to the piece of equipment	✓	✓			
Hand rails accessible to ensure that users are able to actively support their torso during activity	✓	✓			
Seating system independently moveable (e.g. swing away seat) or removable by wheelchair user wishing to exercise from their own chair for all upper body strength equipment		✓			



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Strength Training Equipment

Desirable	Upper Body Impairment	Lower Body Impairment	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Learning Disability
Following machine parts to have definite colour contrast from remainder of the machine: • Interfaces (such as karabiners)			✓		
Non-slip material for seating			✓		
Pictorial representation of 'start' and 'finish' exercise positions on machine. Representation should be tactile, raised and have a definite colour contrast			✓		
Handles easy to change and adjustable with one hand (less fiddly than karabinas)	✓				✓
Maximum increments of 2.5 kg (at low weight values)	✓	✓			
Active and passive options available	✓				
Wider seat available for use by people with sitting balance problems. Recommend 15-20 inches but further guidance to follow	✓	✓			
Handles or surfaces available for transfer beside seats		✓			
Handles beside seat to be flush or below seat height		✓			
Bilateral access for transfer from a wheelchair or other mobility aid		✓			
Range of motion adjustment available		✓			



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Pedal Crank Training Equipment

Essential	Upper Body Impairment	Lower Body Impairment	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Learning Disability
Following machine parts to have definite colour contrast from remainder of the machine					
• Pins			✓		✓
• Seats - contrast against frame			✓		✓
• Adjustment mechanisms			✓		✓
• Handles			✓		✓
• Interfaces (such as foot straps)			✓		✓
Visual feedback about performance at the end of the workout				✓	✓
Bilateral access for transfer from a wheelchair or other mobility aid		✓			

Pedal Crank Training Equipment

Desirable	Upper Body Impairment	Lower Body Impairment	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Learning Disability
Auditory feedback about performance at the end of the workout			✓		✓
Lockable pedal cranks to provide a solid base for adjusting straps and aligning limbs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wider seat available for use by people with sitting balance problems. Recommend 15-20 inches but further guidance to follow	✓	✓			
Foot straps available to stop users feet from falling off the pedals and ensure correct ankle, knee and hip alignment		✓			
Handles or surfaces available for transfer beside seats (recumbent cycles)		✓			
Handles beside seat to be flush or below seat height		✓			



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Treadmills

Essential	Upper Body Impairment	Lower Body Impairment	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Learning Disability
Distinctive marking on belt to allow user to determine if belt is moving			✓		✓
Visible contrast between the running belt and the casing					
Quick or single button start			✓		✓
Maximum 1kmph start speed		✓	✓	✓	✓
Low incremental changes in speed		✓	✓	✓	✓
Functional hand rails provided for a minimum one third the length of the training surface. (As per EN957 – Part 6)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rear roller guard or similar protection (as per EN957 – Part 6)			✓		
Visual feedback about performance at the end of the workout				✓	✓
Guard rails provided for one third the length of the training surface (as per EN957 – Part 6)					✓
Bilateral access		✓			
Impact absorption system available		✓			
Centrally located emergency stop or emergency stops located on both the left and right hand sides of the equipment or kill cord or similar 'hands-free' option for emergency stop	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Treadmills

Desirable	Upper Body Impairment	Lower Body Impairment	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Learning Disability
Auditory feedback about performance at the start and end of the workout			✓		✓
Low level step on and off		✓			



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Upper Body Ergometers

Essential	Upper Body Impairment	Lower Body Impairment	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Learning Disability
Following machine parts to have definite colour contrast from remainder of the machine:					
• Seat - contrast against frame			✓		✓
• Adjustment mechanisms			✓		✓
• Interfaces (such as foot straps)			✓		✓
• Handles			✓		✓
Visual feedback about performance at the end of the workout				✓	✓
Seating system independently moveable (e.g. swing away seat) or removable by wheelchair user wishing to exercise from their own chair		✓			



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Upper Body Ergometers

Desirable	Upper Body Impairment	Lower Body Impairment	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Learning Disability
Auditory feedback about performance at the end of the workout			✓		✓
Tactile adjustment of (pedal) arm crank length			✓		
Lockable interface to provide a solid base for adjusting straps and aligning limbs (lockable pedal cranks)					✓
Lockable pedal cranks to provide a solid base for adjusting straps and aligning limbs	✓				
Adjustable crank-arm (length of crank arm and height of point of rotation)	✓				
Wider seat available for use by people with sitting balance problems. Recommend 15-20 inches but further guidance to follow	✓	✓			
Handles or surfaces available for transfer beside seats		✓			
Handles beside seat to be flush or below seat height		✓			
Bilateral access for transfer from a wheelchair or other mobility aid		✓			



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Rowing Machines

Essential	Upper Body Impairment	Lower Body Impairment	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Learning Disability
Following machine parts to have definite colour contrast from the remainder of the machine:					
• Pins			✓		✓
• Seat - contrast against frame			✓		✓
• Handles			✓		✓
• Interfaces (such as foot straps)			✓		✓
• Adjustment mechanisms			✓		
Visual feedback about performance at the end of the workout				✓	✓
Bilateral access for transfer from a wheelchair or other mobility aid		✓			
Postural support compatible		✓			

Rowing Machines

Desirable	Upper Body Impairment	Lower Body Impairment	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Learning Disability
Auditory feedback about performance at the end of the workout			✓		✓
Simple lockable seat	✓	✓	✓		
Tactile direction marker on seat to allow user to know which direction they should be facing			✓		
Option for single arm use	✓				
Handles or surfaces available for transfer beside seats		✓			
Handles beside seat to be flush or below seat height		✓			
Wider seat available for use by people with sitting balance problems. Recommend 15-20 inches but further guidance to follow		✓			
Foot straps available to stop users feet from falling off the pedals		✓			



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Stairclimbers and Steppers

Essential	Upper Body Impairment	Lower Body Impairment	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Learning Disability
Visible contrast between the training surface and the casing			✓		✓
Definite colour contrast on handles and handrails			✓		
Lip around edge of each foot pedal EN957 Part 8 – only front/sides	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Visual feedback about performance at the end of the workout				✓	✓
Hand rails accessible to ensure that users are able to actively support their torso during activity	✓				

Stairclimbers and Steppers

Desirable	Upper Body Impairment	Lower Body Impairment	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Learning Disability
Dependent stepping action (i.e. no involuntary movement of the stepping surface when stepping onto the equipment)			✓		
Auditory feedback about performance at the end of the workout			✓		✓
Foot straps available to stop users feet from falling off the pedals		✓			
Hand rails accessible to ensure that users are able to actively support their torso during activity		✓			
Bilateral access for transfer from a mobility aid		✓			



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Cross Trainers and Elliptical Trainers

Essential	Upper Body Impairment	Lower Body Impairment	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Learning Disability
Visible contrast between the training surface and the casing			✓		✓
Definite colour contrast on handles and handrails			✓		
Lip around edge of each foot pedal EN957 Part 9 – only front/sides	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Visual feedback about performance at the end of the workout				✓	✓
Hand rails accessible to ensure that users are able to actively support their torso during activity	✓				

Cross Trainers and Elliptical Trainers

Desirable	Upper Body Impairment	Lower Body Impairment	Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Learning Disability
Auditory feedback about performance at the end of the workout			✓		✓
Dependent stepping action (i.e. no involuntary movement of the stepping surface when stepping onto the equipment)			✓		
Bilateral access for transfer from a mobility aid		✓			
Hand rails accessible to ensure that users are able to actively support their torso during activity		✓			



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IFI Contact Details

Members of the IFI Equipment Panel 2001 onwards:

Will Behenna	IFI Regional Co-ordinator & User Representative
Sue Catton	IFI National Director
Howard Davies	BSI UK Representative – EN 957 Standards Committee
Spencer Holmes	IFI Co-ordinator YMCA Fit (2001 – 2003) & Fitness Practitioner
Dawn Hughes	IFI PhD Researcher, Sheffield Hallam University
Suresh Paul	Inclusive Design Expert & PhD Research Project Advisor
Sara Wicebloom	IFI Co-ordinator YMCA Fit (2004 onwards) & Fitness Practitioner

For further information on any of the information contained in this document visit the IFI website www.inclusivefitness.org or contact:

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This document is available in alternative formats.

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