Dear Member Services:

I recently attended a few cycle classes at one of your facilities, and I feel the need to share my experiences. First, I'll tell you a bit about me. I have been a certified group fitness instructor since 1994, a certified personal trainer since 1995, a certified Spinning instructor (Mad Dogg Athletics) since 2008, and a Registered Yoga Teacher (RYT200) since 2016. I am heavily involved in the cycling community at large, including membership with the Indoor Cycling Association, and I have regular discussions with master trainers in the indoor cycle world whose main goal is to ensure that safety standards are upheld. I also attend at least one major fitness conference every year. Continuing my education in the fitness industry to keep up with the trends, learn what has changed, and to ensure that I continue to lead safe and effective classes is a priority for me; our industry is ever-evolving, so staying up to date is critical.

What I know from my experience and education is that every major, reputable cycling certification in the world has parameters and safety standards that are put in place based on exercise science and studies on the appropriate “load” that is within the acceptable range for safety. Those programs include but are not limited to: Spinning, Schwinn, Keiser, Stages, Cycling Fusion, and ICG. Some of these safety guidelines include:

* Cadences capped at 110–120 rpm
* Super high cadences encourage low or no gear, which typically results in participants bouncing in the saddle without control. This places stress on their joints and connective tissue. Also, very high cadence with low or no resistance means a very low power output; that translates to little work being done (i.e., very low caloric consumption). In other words, high risk, very low return.
* Cadences no lower than 60 rpm, with small variations allowed for very strong riders
* These are put in place to ensure that participants are not using too much gear, as it places excessive stress on joints and connective tissue. Knees, hips, and back are especially at risk with excessive resistance and very low cadence.
* Standing with sufficient gear/resistance
* Resistance is what provides support and offers control for the rider, without which there is a lot of stress in the joints and connective tissues.
* Hands should be on handlebars at all times
* Risk of falling is greatly increased when participants are not using their handlebars. There is virtually no benefit to riding with no hands; it does not train balance either on a bike or on solid surfaces.

In addition, there are many controversial but popular moves that are being employed in our industry that are not supported by these certifications. Some of these moves, also known as contraindications, include push-ups, hovers, squats, very fast jumps, isolations, etc. They are high risk with low or no reward.

After attending a few classes at this facility, I unfortunately witnessed firsthand that almost all of these safety standards were ignored and many of the contraindications listed above were employed. As I'm sure you can appreciate that when safety standards are not followed, there is an increased risk of injury to participants In fact, some of what I witnessed was so dangerous, it is a lawsuit waiting to happen; injury is only a matter of time. One of your instructors even asked participants to put BOTH hands behind the head while riding with very high gear. This is excessively dangerous and if someone was clipped in and lost their balance, serious injury is highly probable.

For the well-being of your clients and in order to reduce the high liability of the club, I implore you to ensure that all of your instructors are certified by one of the top cycling certifications such as Spinning, Schwinn, Keiser, or Stages; Cycling Fusion even offers an online certification, which may be more accessible. Your instructors appeared to be friendly and engaging and are likely well intentioned; I suspect they are more than capable of leading safe and appropriate classes, but they do require proper training to do so.

If any of what I've outlined is concerning to you, I encourage you to contact me for more details. I would be happy to provide you with some excellent organizations for additional training, as well as some articles that outline safety considerations for indoor cycling classes.

Yours in health and safety,