

Russian Firms Obligated to Pay Gym Fees for Employees

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Labor Ministry will oblige Russian companies to pay for their employees to go to fitness clubs and take part in other sporting activities starting in 2015, according to a statement published Thursday on the ministry's website.

The ministry added the new requirement to the standard list of functions that companies must carry out to improve the working conditions of their staff, the statement said.

Under Russia's Labor Code, companies must spend the equivalent of at least 0.2 percent of its production costs on the health and safety of its employees, said Valery Korzh, head of the ministry's workplace safety department.

He said each company will be given its own tailor-made list of activities it has to fund.

Olga Slutsker, head of Russian Fitness Group, a company that manages gyms like World Class,

told Izvestia that spending money on the plan would be beneficial if it means avoiding higher medical costs in the future, but only if employees actually make use of the new perk.

Others said the plan may only be attractive to large companies that already have comprehensive bonuses. Natalya Zolotykh, deputy head of business lobby group Opora Rossii, said small- and medium-sized businesses are more likely to pay higher wages that employees can spend as they like.

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