

FITNESS TRAIL TECHNICAL GUIDELINES

- CRACKING OF TIMBERS

Round timbers are a natural material that are expanding and contracting 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. When the change in humidity i.e. becoming wetter or drier is greater than the timber can swell or contract, a crack will occur. Cracking, unless severe, is normally cosmetic and not structural. To the untrained eye however, any split will cause concern, although when normal climatic conditions return the vast majority of cracks heal up.

An engineered laminated option is available on all our products for clients who are concerned about the potential of splitting timbers, or where timbers are installed into very changeable climates.

References to the general properties of timber are made in our general product specification, which is always made available to the customer.

Our pine log is grown extremely slowly which makes it close grained and very durable. Pine is an organic material and will swell when becoming humid and shrink when becoming dry. It may twist and shake but the organic nature of this material does not reduce its toughness. Pine sometimes produces resin, which is a natural phenomenon.

The natural movement of timber products will not affect the protection of the pressure treatment as this is applied under 12-bar pressure, which naturally forces treatment into any flaws in the material so the treatment envelope is not affected.

Where round log timbers do crack, we recommend a risk assessment is carried out using the following as a benchmark.

Category	Age Range	Manufactured Standard	Tolerance	Our Recommendation
Toddler Equipment	2 to 6	BS/EN1176	Up to 8mm	Because of small fingers we only recommend laminated timbers for toddler equipment; however, where round log is specified we recommend that timbers are monitored at 5mm with consideration given to changing defective timbers if they are within childrens' reach and do not heal during normal climatic conditions.
Senior Equipment	6 to 16	BS/EN1176	Up to 8mm	If cracks appear beyond 8mm and do not heal during normal climatic conditions they should be changed.
Trim Trail	4 to 14	BS/EN1176 (benchmark)	Up to 8mm	If cracks appear beyond 8mm and do not heal during normal climatic conditions they should be changed.
Fitness Trail	16 plus	No standard available	Until becomes structural	Timbers should only be changed if the cracking presents a structural problem



sportsequip.co.uk

The Manor, Tur Langton, Leicestershire LE8 0PJ

☎ 01858 545789 (supply only) ☎ 01858 545854 (supply & installation) ☎ & 📠 01353 666136 (Cambridgeshire office)

📠 01858 545954 ✉ sales@sportsequip.co.uk 🌐 www.sportsequip.co.uk

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