

**A girl who injured her back performing a headstand claimed £50,000 damages against her former school.**

A girl who injured her back performing a headstand claimed £50,000 damages against her former school. The girl was pressurised into carrying out a high-risk exercise even though her teacher knew that she was hopeless at gymnastics. During the activity she fell backwards on the wooden floor and suffered a spinal injury. The girl's counsel claimed that his client had not had adequate instruction in how to carry out the headstand and the school had not carried out a proper risk assessment of the exercise.

*Reported in The Daily Telegraph 26 February 2002.*

This case shows the need to understand and make allocation for the physical ability of the staff being trained. Today very few physical skills courses are competently supervised.