

New York City lawyer spins SoulCycle ban as discrimination in lawsuit

Douglas Wigdor says he was prohibited from the popular exercise studios last year, after he filed a lawsuit against it on behalf of an instructor who said he'd been cheated out of wages. Though that case was settled, the stationary bike center chain won't backpedal on the ban.

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Lawyer Douglas Wigdor stands forlornly with his bicycle in front of one of the SoulCycle studios he can never enter.

A prominent Manhattan lawyer says SoulCycle is discriminating against him for doing his job.

Douglas Wigdor says he was banned from the chain of popular exercise studios last year, after he filed a lawsuit against it on behalf of an instructor who said he'd been cheated out of wages.

That case was settled earlier this year, but the avid biker is still barred from all SoulCycle locations worldwide.

Wigdor says that's unfair — and now he's taking SoulCycle for a ride with a first-of-its kind lawsuit.

"It's not about money. It's about principle," the former SoulCycle regular said.

Wigdor, a former law partner at Brooklyn DA Kenneth Thompson, noted that's he's sued Con Ed, Starbucks, and numerous banks and hospitals on behalf of clients over the years.

"If institutions banned me from using their services, the places I could go for coffee, keep my money and seek medical care from would be very limited," he said.

"This might be less important than Con Ed shutting off my electricity, but it's troubling."

As the Manhattan Supreme Court has ruled, "Taken to its logical conclusion, if a company is permitted to ban an attorney who represents a client with good faith claims of unlawful conduct, attorneys will be dissuaded from representing clients with legitimate claims and pursuing claims against many companies."



Douglas Wigdor claims SoulCycle's ban against him after he represented an instructor who sued the exercise chain over wages is actually discrimination.

Wigdor claims he was first told he wasn't welcome in SoulCycle in May 2013, after he started representing a former instructor named Nick Oram.

He found out it was an actual ban later that month, when he tried to schedule a class and was told neither he nor Oram were allowed in any SoulCycle facilities, the lawyer says.

A Manhattan federal court judge ruled in October 2013 that the studio had not shown any "legitimate, nondiscriminatory reason, for banning Mr. Oram and his counsel from SoulCycle premises," but the studio refused to backpedal on its stance.

Oram's suit was settled under confidential terms in July, but the studio refused to roll over even then, telling Wigdor he still wasn't welcome.

Adding "insult to injury," while the studio — one of which is located just two blocks from his Chelsea office — won't let him in, it's kept him on its email list, routinely blasting him with messages about classes he can't go to.

"It does seem kind of cruel," Wigdor quipped.

The suit, filed Thursday afternoon, seeks a court order "enjoining and permanently restraining" the ban and forcing the club to allow him back in.

A spokeswoman for SoulCycle had no immediate comment.