
Help! I Don't Want to Join a Health Club!!

Health Clubs vs. Home Gyms

By Jon Gestl, CSCS

Most T.V. commercials advertising the latest hip and trendy health club would have you believe that joining will automatically guarantee you the body you've always wanted. You've seen them. The commercials with gorgeous people with beautiful bodies, gleaming white teeth and big hair.

Lest I be accused of bashing health clubs, let me clarify. I'm a fan of health clubs. I've worked in a variety of them, and still do teaching classes, but they are not for everyone. Especially for those who are brand new to exercise and feel scared to death of walking into a gym.

Recently an in-home client of mine expressed her frustration when she visited a health club she considered joining before we met.

"After trying to find parking for twenty minutes, I walked in and thought it was a dance club...the music was so loud my ears hurt," she said.

"They took me on a tour and had me ducking and bobbing through these machines that looked like I needed a degree in engineering to operate. The only thing louder than the music was some guy in a really bad spandex outfit grunting."

What about the group fitness classes, I asked. "Well, we walked by the aerobics room and the class looked like a Broadway audition for 42nd Street," she said. "I'd have fallen on my face in there...I can't even walk without tripping."

A contract was finally handed to her. The membership dues, "initiation fee," locker and towel rental fees, and parking costs helped make up her mind for her. "I knew that I probably would have gone once or twice, gotten too intimidated and would never go back," she said. "I left feeling really depressed because I thought this was the only way to get into shape. I thought, there has to be an easier way to do all this."

Fortunately for her, and a lot of others, there is.

You can effectively exercise in your own home without the need to operate equipment you don't know how to use...what about pushups, squats, lunges, and crunches? You think you don't have weights? Heavy cans off your pantry shelf can be a quick substitute for dumbbells. Try a backpack loaded with books.

Or that suitcase in the closet. Look around your home and you'll find a dozen options for no-cost equipment.

You can always purchase exercise tools for a minimum investment, which will afford you even more variety. A couple exercise bands, one or two sets of hand weights, and an inflatable exercise ball cost far less than a health club membership. These are items you can find in any sporting goods store.

What's more, working out in your own home offers a variety of benefits that make it far easier to get in shape for most people:

Save money

- Forget about membership dues, initiation fees and parking costs.
- A minimum investment in dumbbells, exercise tubing, a swiss ball, and a workout mat, will cost less than one or two membership payments.

Save time

- When you work out at home, there's no need to spend time traveling to and from the gym.
- You'll never have to wait for equipment.

Convenience

- Your club is always open, as early or as late as you want.
- No need to listen to loud obnoxious music you don't like (you can listen to loud obnoxious music you *do* like.)
- No bad pick up lines.
- You can exercise in complete privacy with no intimidation.

Starting an exercise program is hard enough. But when it becomes intimidating, inconvenient, and too expensive, it's far easier to give up.

Working out in your own environment can mean the difference between successfully embarking on a fitness program and becoming fit, or feeling like you have no control over your health.

Obtain the assistance of a qualified trainer who will come to your home and help you set up an effective and affordable collection of equipment and also devise a workout program for you. You have a much greater chance of succeeding when you make your fitness plan convenient to your own situation.