

How to choose a gym



You have decided that you would benefit from the gym. Where do I go? You may ask yourself.

You have decided that you may take steps toward a healthier lifestyle and have considered that the gym may be a reasonable option. Making a decision can be daunting particularly for those who are new to structured fitness (gym) programs as they often may be too shy to attend a social environment to exercise. They may also be bewildered by the array of equipment and unsure whether they fit in.

As with every service, first impressions count. You can tell a lot about a gym even by the way the phone is answered. Is your inquiry welcomed? Do they have the answers to your basic questions? Are they pushing you into a decision rather than guiding you through their processing system and leading you to your best available option(s)? Be sure that the gym is convenient to your home or work. Most people live within 10-15 minutes drive from the gym.

If your initial phone inquiry seems to be taking you along the right track, you may want to go and see the gym first hand. If the facility offers you a free session it will enable you to analyse a few key things before outlaying any money or making any kind of commitment. When taking up this free session be sure to visit when you think you are most likely to use the gym. This will give you

information as to how busy the gym gets, the type of clients that attend and the service(s) offered.

You may like to take someone along who has had some experience about gyms.

Some things that you may want to check regarding the facility may include:

- 1 Type of clients
- 2 Facilities/extra services eg massage, child minding, cafe areas
- 3 Opening hours/timetable
- 4 Price
- 5 Staff
- 6 Friendliness (Staff/clients)
- 7 Free trial session
- 8 Awards/certificates
- 9 Community awareness/ approach - eg 50's plus clients, body building, business, family, women only clients to suit your lifestyle (flexibility)

Whilst in the gym, you may like to check:

- 1 Adequate equipment and in good working order e.g cardioequipment

- 2 Cleanliness
- 3 Staff/ client ratio, staff qualifications, experience.
- 4 Friendliness of client members and staff
- 5 Patience of staff
- 6 A pre-exercise clearance form should be filled in prior to any exercise.
- 7 Be sure to have a full assessment prior to starting your gym program which maximises safety and discusses possible goals.

Considerations for Exercise with 50's Plus

Atmosphere - sound, colour, smell, activity, exercise layout, personal considerations (eg changing areas)

Similar clients - age group mostly between 50-70, no body builders or showy aerobic ladies in lycra

Personal attention to needs, for example- specific needs/ goals, medical issues, fitness levels, degree of assistance/guidance. Rate of progression

Social interaction - this may be a requirement to increase social circles once retired.

Equipment - user friendly, large writing, clear/ open areas

Building - not too many stairs, not too large a facility

Parking should be available, ask for parking ares if not obvious.

Remember there are numerous health benefits including a reduced risk of coronary heart disease from following a structured health program

*By Monte Elissa, B.App.Sc.
(Physiotherapy). M.A.P.A.*

*The First Step/ MediGYM
Mosman Daily and the Lower North
Shore Business of the Year 2003*

