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GET IN SHAPE AND SAVE TIME WITH A HOME FITNESS ROOM

GYM MEMBERSHIPS CAN BE COSTLY AND TIME CONSUMING. YOU CAN EXPECT LONG WAITS FOR THE "GOOD" MACHINES, AND DO YOU REALLY WANT TO USE EQUIPMENT SOME STRANGER SWEATED ALL OVER AND FORGOT TO WIPE DOWN? IT'S EVEN HARDER IF YOU HAVE CHILDREN AND HAVE TO COORDINATE WORKOUT TIME THAT FITS AROUND EVERYONE'S SCHEDULE.

You don't have to give up professional training when you work out at home either. Today there are plenty of fitness professionals happy to come to you. So maybe now is the time to create your own perfect workout space at home.

If you do, you'll be joining a growing segment of Americans. The Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association found between 2000 and 2006, 30 percent more Americans exercised at home.

Creating your workout space can mean designing a dedicated fitness room perfect for your own routine, or simply finding the right space within a room you already have, like a guest bedroom or den. Many home exercisers find the basement is a great choice. It buffers the sound of early morning or late evening exercise from other family members, and the cooler temperature is perfect for high impact aerobics that work up a sweat. You may want to plan your workout space close to a bathroom, shower, or grooming space to incorporate workout time into your daily routine.

Working out a Room Design

Before you begin designing your workout room, think about how you'll use it. Its style should match your style, whether that's quiet and meditative or energizing with music, video, or group activities. It's important to take into consideration how many people will be using the space at one time, how much time will be spent in the space, and what type of exercise will be done — strength-training (Pilates, weights), flexibility (yoga, stretching), and/or cardio-vascular/aerobics (dancing, martial arts, boxing, jump rope, treadmill, elliptical, etc.).

Accessories are important, too. Electronic equipment may include a TV which can be fixed on a ceiling-mounted swivel bracket, set into a niche in the wall, or mounted on an arm that extends in front of a treadmill during a workout and then tucks away against a wall when not in use. You may want space for a DVD player or VCR and maybe cable wiring for DVR capabilities. Perhaps low-voltage surround-sound wiring for music will be important for you, and for quick heart-rate checks, you may want to add a clock with a second hand.

Ideally you'll want a refreshment center in the room or nearby. A water cooler, beverage caddy or small refrigerator are some items that can be designed into this center. Flooring should be durable; tiles made of vinyl, rubber or cork are appropriate. If selecting carpet, a tightly woven style that cushions is recommended.

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CREATING YOUR
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looking for something dreamy? See homes #22 and #76

A floor-to-ceiling mirror or multiple mirrors will create the illusion of a larger space and reflect posture while exercising. Proper lighting should be taken into consideration as well, installation of a good light over a treadmill for reading, general recessed lights, and perhaps wall sconces and dimmers for lower-light meditation or relaxation and stretching. Storage for equipment, towels, hamper, reading equipment, CD's or DVD's is nice to have as well.

Mechanical considerations should include: good heating, air conditioning and ventilation for proper air flow and comfortable temperature during exercise. Dedicated electrical for large electronic equipment is needed, and adding floor receptacles will ensure power cords won't be a hazard.

Structural planning should incorporate sound proofing for the walls, a strong floor for machines and movement, and high ceilings. Anthropometric stature and body breadth measurements, as well as actual equipment is used as a guideline in designing clearances. Anthropometry is the measurement and study of the human body and its parts and capacities. It is the application of scientific physical measurement methods to human subjects for the development of engineering design standards. The American Council on Exercise (ACE) has guidelines that can quickly help determine the space needed for common equipment.

Homeowners will be more motivated to exercise with a dedicated space, proper equipment, and a regular and diverse personalized training program. Plan for and customize this space to your desires in your next new home construction or remodeling project!

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