

Exercise module

WHERE DO I EXERCISE?

Home

A variety of exercise programs are available on DVD, on the Internet or available for download to a mobile device to be watched later. Some are specifically geared to athletes and some are geared to beginners; however, most include options to increase or decrease the intensity and amount of exercise you perform. Local libraries often have supplies of these types programs, which can be borrowed. Also, home exercise programs are offered on several television stations, on YouTube and subscription websites. Some of these can be downloaded to your tablet or smartphone.

Simple equipment and household items can also be used for exercise purposes. Elastic bands can be used for strength training routines as can food containers and food cans. Home exercise equipment (i.e. treadmills, stationary bikes, rowing machines, elliptical machine) also provide rainy day alternatives and can introduce variety into your exercise program.

Gym

Some gyms have indoor tracks that can be used for walking or running. They also offer a variety of equipment for use during a rainy day. Examples of exercise machines found in gyms include stationary bikes, treadmills, elliptical machines, rowing machines, weight machines and stair climbing machines. Be sure to get instruction on how to operate and adjust the machines before you use them.

Some gyms have indoor pools. Swimming is an excellent aerobic activity that is a great alternative to walking, especially if you have severe hip, back, knee or ankle problems. Gyms with pools often offer swimming lessons as well as water aerobics programs. These are fun ways to exercise and introduce variety into your exercise program.

Gyms often offer other types of group exercise programs, like Zumba, yoga, spinning classes or classes that combine cardio and weights. Investigate the exercise facilities close to you and see what they offer.

Home, Gym or Both?

When the weather prevents you from going outside, exercising indoors can help you maintain your program of consistent physical activity. Also, if you enjoy cross training, you may want several options to choose from. Two options for indoor exercise are joining a gym or creating an exercise facility/space at home.

Other Considerations

Convenience

First, consider convenience. If you are looking at a club, consider how far it is from home or work. Chances are you are more likely to use a club that is 10 minutes away by car versus one that is 30 minutes away. Also, if you have a gym that is on the way to or from work, it can offer a great way to start your day or blow off some steam at the end of the day. Convenience counts at home as well. If you can't leave an exercise bike out or don't have a space large enough to move to an exercise program on DVD, chances are you won't use them at all.

Cost

Cost is also an important issue. If considering a gym, investigate the initial costs, payments and membership renewal fees. With home exercise equipment, cost comes from the purchase of equipment — machines, mats, weights, bicycles, etc. If you are considering a home exercise facility, don't forget to figure in the cost of equipment maintenance and repair.

Schedule

It is important that you exercise consistently. When considering whether to join a gym or create an exercise facility at home, take into account how much time you can spend exercising. If you are considering joining a club, remember that you have to gather workout clothes, drive to the club, workout, shower and change after your workout. Be realistic. If the extra time needed to go to a health club isn't there, exercising at home is probably best. Likewise, if you have some equipment at home but enjoy the variety of machines that you can't afford or you don't have space for, consider a combination of home and gym exercise.

Personal Preference

If you don't like exercising in front of others or don't like health clubs, then don't join! Some people find it more relaxing to exercise at home on their own. Others gain extra motivation from exercising with others and enjoy sharing "exercise talk." For continued success, select the exercise environment that's most compatible with your personality.