



## 10 things to think about when joining a health club

### 1) Location

Ideally, you should choose a club that is within 10 minutes driving distance from work or home. You shouldn't choose a club ONLY because it is close but the club should definitely be convenient for you. You are more likely to go on a regular basis. The exception is if the club has special features that you need (i.e. a year-round outdoor pool).

### 2) Cost vs. Value

Rather than judging a club by cost, look at the VALUE you will get from a particular club. An \$80 per month club that you will visit four times a week is a much better value than a \$30 per month club that you might visit once a week.

Another way to assess the value of a club membership is to look at what you will be doing at the club. For example, a private yoga studio typically charges around \$15 for a yoga class. If you can join a club for \$80 a month and take unlimited yoga classes, you're getting great value for your membership dollar.

### 3) Reputation

Talk to current and former members about their experiences with the club. Check to see if the club is a member of IHRSA (the International Health and Racquet Sport Association). IHRSA member clubs must abide by a code of ethics that protects the health and safety of their members and protects consumers from unscrupulous business practices.

### 4) Cleanliness

Inspect the locker room as it is the area of the club that requires the most attention. If the locker room isn't clean, chances are that the rest of the club will suffer from neglect as well. When you are walking around or working out at the club, look around and see if the machines are clean and the floors are swept.

### 5) Trial membership

Whether it is one day or one week, a club should offer some sort of trial period to see if you will like it there. A trial allows you to experience the club on your own terms. Check the club out during the hours you will be using it. Get a feel for the type of members working out there and see if the club is too busy/not busy enough for you.

## **6) Classes**

Does the club have the classes you want when you want them?

## **7) Staff**

Are the club's personal trainers certified by a national organization? Is the staff friendly and helpful?

## **8) Membership details**

Check out the club's cancellation policy. It should be clear, available, and presented to the member when they join (and by request on the tour). Remember that once you sign up, it is your responsibility to honor the terms of the agreement you enter into.

The club should offer a three day right to rescind. A right to rescind is a grace period that allows you to get a full refund if you decide not to stay with them.

## **9) Equipment**

Does the club have enough variety for you? Is there enough equipment to support the membership of the club? Are there restrictions on equipment that might hinder your ability to complete a workout? Are the machines clean and in working order? Check to see if there are lots of out of order signs around the club.

## **10) Little Details**

Pay attention to the music, atmosphere, and feel that you get from the club. Is the club a place that you will enjoy spending time?