

# 10 Things Your Fitness Club **Won't** Tell You!

*And a very **special gift** at the end of this report*

## **1. "If you're still here in April, it'll be a miracle."**

The fitness craze is going gangbusters, with gym attendance up 23% since 2001, to 41.3 million, according to the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA). And most new recruits sign up in January — the busiest month for fitness clubs. That's when well-intentioned souls trying to stick to their New Year's resolutions flood their local gyms, often resulting in long lines at the treadmill, overtaxed gym staff and towel shortages in the locker room. But it won't be long before the throngs thin; most resolution makers trip up in the first 90 days, says Alan Marlatt, director of the Addictive Behaviors Research Center at the University of Washington. And indeed, that's what clubs expect. "They bet on it," says Meg Jordan, editor of American Fitness, adding that most gyms count on a 20 to 30% dropout rate.

In the meantime, there are ways to avoid January overcrowding and make it past the 90-day hump. When selecting a new gym, visit the facility during the time of day you're most likely to attend. If it's crowded, check to see whether waiting lists and time limits on machines are enforced or whether it's a free-for-all.

## **2. "Don't touch anything — this place is crawling with bacteria."**

About 80% of all infectious disease is transmitted by both direct and indirect contact, says Philip Tierno, director of clinical microbiology at New York University Medical Center and the author of "The Secret Life of Germs." That makes the gym, with its sweaty bodies in close proximity, a highly conducive environment for catching everything from athlete's foot to the flu.

In swabs of medicine balls, for example, Tierno found samples of community-acquired MRSA — a strain of staph resistant to some antibiotics. "You take your chances," Tierno says. "Any time you touch a medicine ball or machine, you have to know that your hands are contaminated and should be washed."

What about those spray bottles some gyms provide for wiping down equipment? They may help, Tierno says, but he recommends additional measures, such as wearing long sleeves and pants while working out. Also, bring your own towels, since there's no guarantee that your gym's linens have been bleached or rinsed in clean water. While in the locker room, make sure you wear flip-flops, and avoid sitting nude on any exposed surface.

## **3. "We're not equipped to handle health emergencies."**

Almost one-third of sudden cardiac arrests outside of homes and hospitals occur in fitness clubs or sports facilities, says Mary Fran Hazinski, a registered nurse and senior science editor at the American Heart Association. Yet most health clubs aren't fully prepared for such crises. That was the case at a 24 Hour Fitness in California, where Nick Pombra, 43, collapsed after running on a treadmill in July 2004. Gym staff tried CPR, but by the time paramedics arrived, it was too late, says Mike Danko, a lawyer for Pombra's family. 24 Hour declined to comment.

While effective CPR can buy time, it won't reset a heart after cardiac arrest. That's where automated external defibrillators, or AEDs, come in. Chances for revival drop as much as 10% each minute that passes without proper CPR and defibrillation. But even in states like New York that require gyms to have CPR equipment, as well as AEDs and trained personnel in clubs with over 500 members, two-thirds surveyed by the attorney general's office in 2005 weren't in compliance. Find out if your club has the right equipment and, equally important, staff trained to use it.

## **4. "Our trainers don't know what they're doing."**

If you work out at a gym, chances are an on-site personal trainer will try to sell you his or her expertise. And with their Colgate smiles and buff bodies, they must be able to teach you a thing or two about getting into shape, right? Not necessarily. Trainers need no standard certification,

and the credentials some flash require only a quick online course or a fee, says Neal Pire, a fitness-industry consultant and former trainer.

Jonathan Jacobson, a marketing exec with a degenerative disk disease in his lower back, sought out a trainer to design a routine appropriate for his condition. But after following a boxing regimen the trainer recommended, he was left in pain. When his doctor told Jacobson, 35, to stop, the trainer suggested Pilates — which only further aggravated the problem, ending in a slew of medical procedures. "He had certificates and tons of plaques on the wall," Jacobson says. "It's taken about a year to not be in pain every day."

Seek trainers with credentials from respected institutions like the American College of Sports Medicine or the National Strength Conditioning Association — preferably with some training in sports medicine or phys ed.

#### **5. "We won't let you quit."**

If you think giving up the Ben & Jerry's is tough, try quitting your gym. Trouble canceling membership is one of the top complaints against fitness clubs logged with the Better Business Bureau and states' attorneys general offices. Before Chris Hinkle and his wife moved to North Carolina, they met with the manager at their Gold's Gym in Austin to cancel their prepaid membership. They were told a refund check would be in the mail. That was March. After months of unreturned calls, Hinkle contacted the BBB, which also got no answer from Gold's and gave it an unsatisfactory rating. "I was an ecstatic booster of Gold's," Hinkle says. "Now I tell people to never go there." A Gold's spokesperson says the club sends a refund in such cases once it receives proof of a move — documentation Hinkle says the Austin manager didn't ask for in March.

For those paying monthly, calls from collectors or a battered credit score may be the first clue membership was never terminated, says Todd Mark of the Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Greater Atlanta. Follow contract terms to the letter, providing proof of a move or a doctor's note. Create a paper trail, and alert credit agencies about the dispute.

#### **6. "Be sure to read the fine print on our contract."**

The devil is in the details, and it's never truer than when it comes to fitness club contracts. Fast-talking reps may offer you a deal you can't refuse, but often that's exactly what you should do. "Sometimes you end up with salespeople trying to make quotas that engage in pressure," says Helen Durkin, head of public policy at IHRSA. Occasionally, this can lead to a glossing over of details. One Bally offer that has elicited complaints on Consumer Affairs' web site is a 30-day trial membership with a catch: You must visit the club a minimum of 12 times during the first month to cancel without penalty; otherwise, you're locked into a multiyear membership. Some consumers complain they did attend the required number of times but that when they decided to cancel, the club had no record of the visits. A Bally spokesperson says the company's policy is to check all members entering the club and record their usage.

Your best defense: Read every word of the contract. Never rely on a suave salesperson's "word" no matter what authority they profess, and don't let anyone pressure you into signing before you're ready — take the contract home and read it overnight.

#### **7. "Our equipment can be downright dangerous."**

Unlike many businesses, fitness clubs do not need a license to operate. Furthermore, although the American College of Sports Medicine and other groups publish guidelines for the industry, they don't have the teeth of the law. "In most cases [the gym] is not a safe place to go because there is little standardization," says Marc Rabinoff, forensic expert and professor of human performance and sport at the Metropolitan State College of Denver.

Take equipment maintenance, for example. Although manufacturers must include instructions with exercise machines, nothing forces gyms to follow them, Rabinoff says. Injuries can result

from poorly or improperly maintained equipment, says Cedric Bryant, chief science officer for the American Council on Exercise. Harold Leon Bostick knows that all too well. Due to a design defect in a machine he was using, a stack of weights came crashing down while the law student was doing squats at a California gym in 2001, severing his spinal cord.

Bryant recommends asking to see maintenance and cleaning logs — hallmarks of a good club. Gold's Gym, for one, says it follows manufacturers' maintenance guidance to the letter and replaces equipment every five to seven years. And avoid machines that stick or don't move smoothly.

#### **8. "Everything is negotiable."**

Balloons and freebies often signal promotion time at your local gym — most frequently before the holidays and at the start of summer.

Already a member? Jot down these specials, and ask for one of them when it comes time to renew your membership. Some gyms will honor the rate months after the posters come down, says Mark, of the Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Greater Atlanta. If you're looking into a new membership, remember that the cheapest deals will likely be those that lock you in for a long time. For example, Bally's flexible plans, including month-to-month memberships, typically cost \$5 to \$10 a month more than its popular long-term "Value Plan." As for trainers, you might be able to get a break if you decide to share sessions with a friend or two, says Carol Espel, Equinox's national group fitness director.

#### **9. "If your wallet gets lifted, it's not our problem."**

In 2003, the FBI put out a bulletin about a group of burglars stealing credit cards from lockers of health club members on the East Coast. Since then, there's been no similar FBI bulletin — but that doesn't mean your valuables are safe at the gym. You never know who's lurking around the locker room while you're sweating away on the elliptical machine. "For so many people, the health club is like a community," says IHRSA spokesperson Brooke Correia. "You feel very comfortable, but there are situations where potential thieves will break into the club and take advantage of that safe atmosphere."

Ben Osburn tried to end 2004 on a healthy note by working out at his local YMCA on New Year's Eve. But the day quickly soured. When the Chicago real estate agent returned to his locker, he found that the padlock had been cut and his cell phone, keys and wallet were all missing. Only his jacket was left behind; the thieves showed him some mercy since it was December, Osburn says. He adds that the gym staff wasn't particularly surprised by the incident, since petty theft is common in health clubs. Osburn learned his lesson; he now brings very little with him to the gym.

If you do intend to store items in a locker while you're working out, IHRSA recommends using a padlock with a key, which is harder to pick than a combination lock. Good to know — not that it would have helped Osburn any.

#### **10. "Go ahead and sue; you'll never win."**

Fitness clubs sure do know how to watch their backs, legally speaking. It's nearly impossible to visit a fitness center without signing a waiver that absolves the club of liability — involving everything from malfunctioning machines that cause injury to improper instruction by staff members.

In Michael Stokes's case, it was a defect in the basketball court's floor at his Kent, Wash., gym that caused ruptured tendons in his knee and shoulder. While a judge found that Stokes may not have known what he was signing, a subsequent Court of Appeals ruling upheld the waiver and dismissed the case, says Mark Davis, a lawyer at Curran Mendoza who represented Stokes.

And that's how it usually goes, since the majority of states' courts tend to side with the gyms on the matter of liability waivers, while only a handful, including those in New York and Virginia, are likely to rule against them. Occasionally, a judge will rule on behalf of plaintiffs in instances of gross negligence, but that bar is set pretty high in some states, such as Washington, Davis says.

Bottom line: Understand that you're taking your health in your own hands when you go to the gym, so you need to watch your own back — literally. So why not go to a private fitness studio and experience a proven system in a fantastically clean environment!

## *Here's What People Are Saying About Fitness Forever The Private Workout Suites, Ingo Logé*

### *And His Amazing Weight Loss, Health and Fitness Systems*

*Nothing Has The Power To Make You Feel Better About Yourself!*

#### **TESTIMONIALS AND REAL LIFE FITNESS FOREVER SUCCESS STORIES**

After having a baby at 39 I felt overweight and overwhelmed. I had tried many different diets and gym staffed personal trainers, all with the same ending; Lots of money spent, very little results.

**From the moment I met Ingo and toured his studio, Fitness Forever, I knew this would be different.** I stopped by un-announced one day and saw first hand why he is so successful. His electrifying motivation leaves each individual inspired. He teaches each student with renewed energy, so they can reach their individual goals. This was what I was missing; one on one, personalized training, tailored to me.

My daughter is 14 months old and since I began training with Ingo I am now down to my pre-pregnancy weight and I am ready to reach my next goal. I have recommended Fitness Forever to my friends and family. Since I started both my parents, one co-worker, and another industry partner have joined. **This is a true testimony to a job WELL DONE!**

**Kathleen Ahlgren, Director of Sales Rilmington Communities**

When I first came into contact with Ingo I told him that I knew what I was doing when it came to working out and that I needed assistance with my nutrition. I also told him that I had a grasp on what is healthy and what is not and if I could get some menus I would be set. **Wow, what little did I now about nutrition and exercise!** After four months I have lost more than 13% body fat and almost 10 inches of my waist. What helped me most is Ingo's ability to check up on me about every other week through telephone calls and when I checked in to weigh in. Those calls were both encouraging and candid accountability checks. If you start to drift away from the program Ingo will call you on it in his friendly but stern way. I have had such great results for

me that I have signed on with one of Ingo's newest personal trainers, Jeannie who is working with me on Core training two days a week. Using Ingo's training philosophy Jeannie has taken my fitness goals to a whole new level!

**Victor Simmons, Director of Human Resources and security,  
The Westin Mission Hills Resort and Spa, Rancho Mirage, Ca.**

For me Fitness Forever was more than just a place to work out with a trainer, **it was an education.** Fitness Forever provided me with the knowledge I needed to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Even when I'm not using their personal training services, **I continue to receive support** and useful information about staying healthy and in shape.

**P. Edwards**

**Purchasing Agent World Development, Palm Desert, California**

When I met Ingo, I was so out of shape that I had to first get into shape so Ingo could get me into shape. I was athletic as a young man, baseball, hockey, football, golf, etc., but the good life took hold and I had been living an unhealthy life ever since. **Thanks to Ingo, I now have control over my health. I am more mobile and I feel much better about myself. Ingo plays a dual role- not only as a trainer and nutritionist, but he is very empathetic.** On occasion, he telephones me to see what I've been eating during the day! I appreciate the privacy of working one-on-one and knowing how to exercise properly. I heartily recommend his private training services to anyone wanting to live a healthier and, hopefully, longer life.

**J.C. Sterling, President of Sterling Global**

I know you say that it takes personal drive and determination to achieve what I have. However, I was always an athlete and always had the drive and will to do it, but for some reason I couldn't. I got a huge wake up call from God and a second chance and **I STILL wasn't stepping up to get in shape.**

I know it is your nature to be humble and make your clients feel 100% good about what they are doing and what they have accomplished. While admirable and for most the right thing to say or do, but for me that is not the case. I have wanted to get back in this type of shape for over 15 years and couldn't do it....

**You have given me far more than I could even articulate. I know that without a doubt I have changed my life and how I approach nutrition and my overall health. That wasn't just me, in fact it was due in large part to you....**I appreciate all you have taught me and all you have shared with me and I know we just scratched the surface.

Certain people make a big impact on who we become in life and I **"Thank You" for playing a HUGE roll in who I will become moving forward.** Both professionally and personally you have given me the chance to meet challenges and achieve goals I would not have been able to do without your help.

I will certainly keep in touch and look forward to our next workout! You are great at what you do and a good friend I hope to know for many years to come.....

**Thank You from the bottom of my heart for all you have done for me!**

All my best!

**Steve Pufpaf**

**Market Director of Group Sales - Western Region  
Marriott International**

"As a retired dentist, I had been dealing with lower back issues for a few years. Thanks to Ingo and his knowledgeable expertise, **I learned some valuable stretching and strength building exercises that have virtually resolved my** this improvement for me physically is more than significant. Additionally, Ingo taught me better postural positions that have resulted in hitting the golf ball consistently better. **I would highly recommend Fitness Forever** for anyone interested in making good health conscious improvements....and I am so grateful to my wife, Cyndy, who purchased my initial visits and consultation/evaluation as a great Valentine's Gift last February!

**Dr. Tomo Hamasaki**

I just want to thank you both for the great learning's over these past few days. As Steve knows, I worked with a trainer for over a year and **I feel like I got more out of a few days with you than I did in that year. I'm psyched!**

I listened to the CD's last night on my way home and am on the alkalize/energize band wagon. I was amazed by the science and information discussed and definitely want to go down the path of a cleansing and green drink regime. I'm still working on reading the other books you gave us, but hope to get through them this weekend.

**Lisa A. Lopez**

Senior Account Executive  
Marriott Lodging  
Western Region Market Sales - Group Team

I just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed meeting you and all of the information you shared. So much of it are things you know a little about but you really clarified allot for me.

I have tried some of the exercises on the sheet and am making a habit of warming up. Once I see how to do the exercises with our fearless leader demonstrating, I will be using them all...I guess my old mind can't remember like it used to.

Also, I am really going to work on getting soda out of my diet. I know that is something I need to do; I just wish I didn't love it so much. Just replacing soda with water will make a big difference.

**You really made a big impact on us all and we all had a blast.** I just wanted to share with you some of the small steps I am taking to a healthier lifestyle.

I am sure being that you lived up in this area before that you know about the American River bike trail. My husband and I went for a ride on Saturday. We did 26 miles. It was funny but all I could think about was keeping my heart rate at the MEP and I think I did it allot of the ride. We did the way that had lots of hills.....I will also be emailing you my scores soon. I am afraid to see what they are:)

Anyway, thank you again for everything. I wish you much success in your business and in life!

**Dana Ohmann**

Senior Account Executive  
Marriott Lodging  
Western Region Market Sales-Group Team

My size 5 body of my 20's and 30's after working hard and a bad fall that left my back in bad shape I had crept up to a size 10 by the time I reached 53. I thought maybe I wasn't too old to do something that would improve both my looks and my health. My goal was to lose 25 pounds and to be able to wear sleeveless clothes and shorts again! I had immediate success! At the end of 3 months I had met my goal of a 25 pound weight loss, my cholesterol was down and so was my blood pressure. I have been size 5 wearing sleeveless blouses and shorts. I look and feel better at 55 than I did at 45. **Oh by the way I thought I had retired but because of what Ingo had taught me I went on to become a personal trainer and Pilates Instructor!**

Thank you for all I have learned and accomplished. **Hali Winston, (Body by Pilates Manger,)  
Carson City, Nevada**

***"I want to shake your hand"***

"Just wanted you to know that I made a comment to my husband that I will one day meet you and shake your hand for your support and help in making me the best I can be The things I have learned through him and what you have done in his life has spilled into mine and I am forever changed@." **Sandy T, Lake Tahoe**

***"Everything I hoped it would be"***

#1: "Dear Ingo Now I know why I was so eager to go on one of your tours and train with you -- IT'S AWESOME! It's everything I hoped it would be and more!!! I've already spent 3 hours reading, and I'm going to start implementing today. There are so many terrific ideas. I don't know where I am going to start, but I can see how I can change my body by using your ideas. I'm so excited! I'm going to start with your 6 week nutritional boot camp and find out my metabolic type. What a terrific idea! I loved the grocery store tour and hand out it was so helpful, etc. Thank you, thank you! Watch this eagle soar!"

**Brenda L Pam Desert, Ca.**

***"When the student is ready  
the teacher appears"***

#2 (received 30 days later): "When the student is ready, the teacher appears. I'm so glad it was you. What awesome material! I can't imagine running my life and family's life without it! Remember...I owned my own studio for 9 years in California and moved to Las Vegas with my husband's relocation. I did your nutritional boot camp in January, and I'm already preparing to move into a new studio here. I changed all my "humbug" nutritional diets into "super, dynamic, can't wait to get into the real facts of nutrition and how to eat, move and be healthy, wow, very powerful and life changing!!! I'm currently working with three business owners here locally who are all losing weight, sleeping better than ever, and are stress free! I'm so excited!!!" **Brenda L,**

*Okay, that is about it.... Oh almost forgot,*

**PS....** You've got to be asking yourself that if all these people -- your fellow life travelers and business professionals -- can be so successful using my Fitness and Nutritional Systems... isn't it just possible that you or a friend could do the same?

**YES!!! It is possible. I stand behind our products, services we offer and business 100%.** You not only get tested and proven eating and fitness strategies and secrets, you also get all the support and motivation you will ever need! **TOOLS** (newsletters, email pep talks, flyers, phone calls from us, reports, DVD's, CD's great motivating workouts) everything that you need to hit the ground running and start making a difference in your life within days.

**P.P.S.S.....** Don't put your dreams on hold any longer. **TAKE ACTION NOW ON YOUR OWN BEHALF.** I promise you will not be alone anymore. You will be joining the most exclusive, most motivated and most results-oriented group of people **ON THE PLANET.** All of us will help you succeed! **Now for a Special Offer and Gift!**

## “Top Personal Trainer Swears Under Oath That His **Amazing Fitness System** Is Not A Miracle”

“Some effort is required says Ingo Logé, to rapidly get your body lean and toned . But my system has produced astonishing results with my clients. I probably can't make you look Like Madonna or Arnold (unless you are REALLY committed) but I've never had a disappointed client and I do **guarantee very specific results** in a short period of time,” claims Ingo Logé owner of Fitness Forever personal Training studios.

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P.S. **TIP:** If you would like to give one or more of these as gifts to a family member or friend in need, you can print these pages on **fine linen paper** (available at any office supply store) for that extra special appearance. What a great gift these will make.

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- A Fitness Forever Fitness Rocks! T shirt (just putting this on will motivate and inspire you to exercise)*
- A subscription to our client-only Eat, Move and Be Happy Newsletter containing instructional and motivational stories, tips, techniques and strategies for living in optimal health with zero resistance*

*There is a common misconception that personal nutritional and fitness training is only for the rich and famous. That simply is not true. Although we do cater to men, women and teenagers over the age of 15 who appreciate the life-changing value of consistent exercise with a certified expert who guides, instructs, motivates, holds accountable and deliver results, our fees are affordable and we offer a variety of packages including daily, weekly, bi-weekly and even monthly sessions specifically designed to meet your particular economic and scheduling needs.*

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