

## Advantages and Limitations of the Gym\*

The advantages and disadvantages of gym workouts are an important topic worth discussing, especially when considering starting a training routine. The modern gym offers a wide variety of training options, from strength equipment to advanced cardio training. As with any physical activity, it's important to recognize the many benefits that training offers, but also to be aware of potential disadvantages and risks. A deep understanding of both sides will allow us to make an informed decision and plan our workouts correctly and safely.

### **Advantages of Gym Activity:**

1. Safe workout environment - The advanced equipment in the gym allows for varied sports activities under maximum safety conditions without taking risks. For example: riding stationary bikes eliminates road accident risks, running on aerobic machines equipped with shock absorbers and level surfaces reduces injury risks (mainly sprains) that could occur due to varying terrain during regular running.
2. Control over different effort factors - The equipment allows control of resistance (weight), ranges of motion, and number of repetitions and sets. For aerobic machines (like exercise bikes, treadmills, etc.), effort factors include: duration, incline, speed, and resistance. Controlling these factors according to training goals reduces injury risks significantly.
3. Gym accessibility - The gym provides a protected artificial environment allowing access to training at any stage and under any conditions.
4. Control over external effort factors - Not every central city has opportunities to run in nature or in protected environments. The gym is accessible for training and centralizes many diverse types of training under one roof.
5. Weather independence - Many exercisers are affected by weather and sometimes avoid physical activity because of it. Gym members enjoy controlled temperature and ideal visibility conditions during all activity hours.
6. Feedback - Many gym machines provide real-time data about the workout: duration, resistance types, speed, RPM, floors climbed, calories burned, etc. This feedback increases motivation and encourages continued physical activity.
7. Positive social framework - The social activity contributes greatly to members' sense of belonging and increases quality and quantity of sports activity. The gym also allows for individual training for those who prefer working out alone.

8. Muscle group isolation and progressive training - The sophisticated equipment allows regulation of different effort factors and customization for each trainee personally. Machine isolation allows strengthening specific weak muscle groups.

9. Balance between muscle groups - The gym enables proper healthy balance between muscle groups through structured, supervised training programs.

10. Body symmetry improvement - The gym allows working on muscle groups individually to help reduce capability gaps between body sides.

11. Balance in fitness component development - The gym provides optimal conditions for developing all fitness components: strength, muscular endurance, cardio-respiratory endurance, coordination, flexibility and speed.

### **Disadvantages of Gym Activity:**

1. Preference of external over internal motivation - Training often occurs because it's fashionable rather than for health reasons.

2. Development of narcissistic aspects - Extended mirror time during workouts can lead to excessive self-focus.

3. Encouragement of supplement and steroid use - Many gyms exploit trainees' desire for quick visual results.

4. Machine dependency - Comfortable equipment may discourage outdoor exercise.

5. Sacrificing safety for quick results - Early visible results may cause trainees to ignore proper training principles.

6. Overemphasis on strength training - Most gym injuries result from overemphasizing strength at the expense of other fitness components.

7. Disease transmission risk - Poor ventilation combined with many simultaneous users increases illness risks.

8. High costs - Membership fees can be prohibitively expensive depending on gym quality and location.

9. Training with a mobile phone - The comfort that the gym provides during training, including seated exercise machines, allows the trainee to "rest" on the machine between sets (sometimes even during the exercise) while using their mobile phone. As a result, the workout duration extends, causing delays for other trainees, and the training effect diminishes because the rest between sets (stimulus density) extends without justification. Don't wait for other trainees or the coach to point this out - avoid using

your device during the workout and focus on proper exercise execution and its implications.

\*Yigal, P. (2023). *Be Your Own Personal Trainer: The Ultimate Science-Based Fitness Guide to Maximizing Gym Workouts and Minimizing Injuries*. Amazon.