

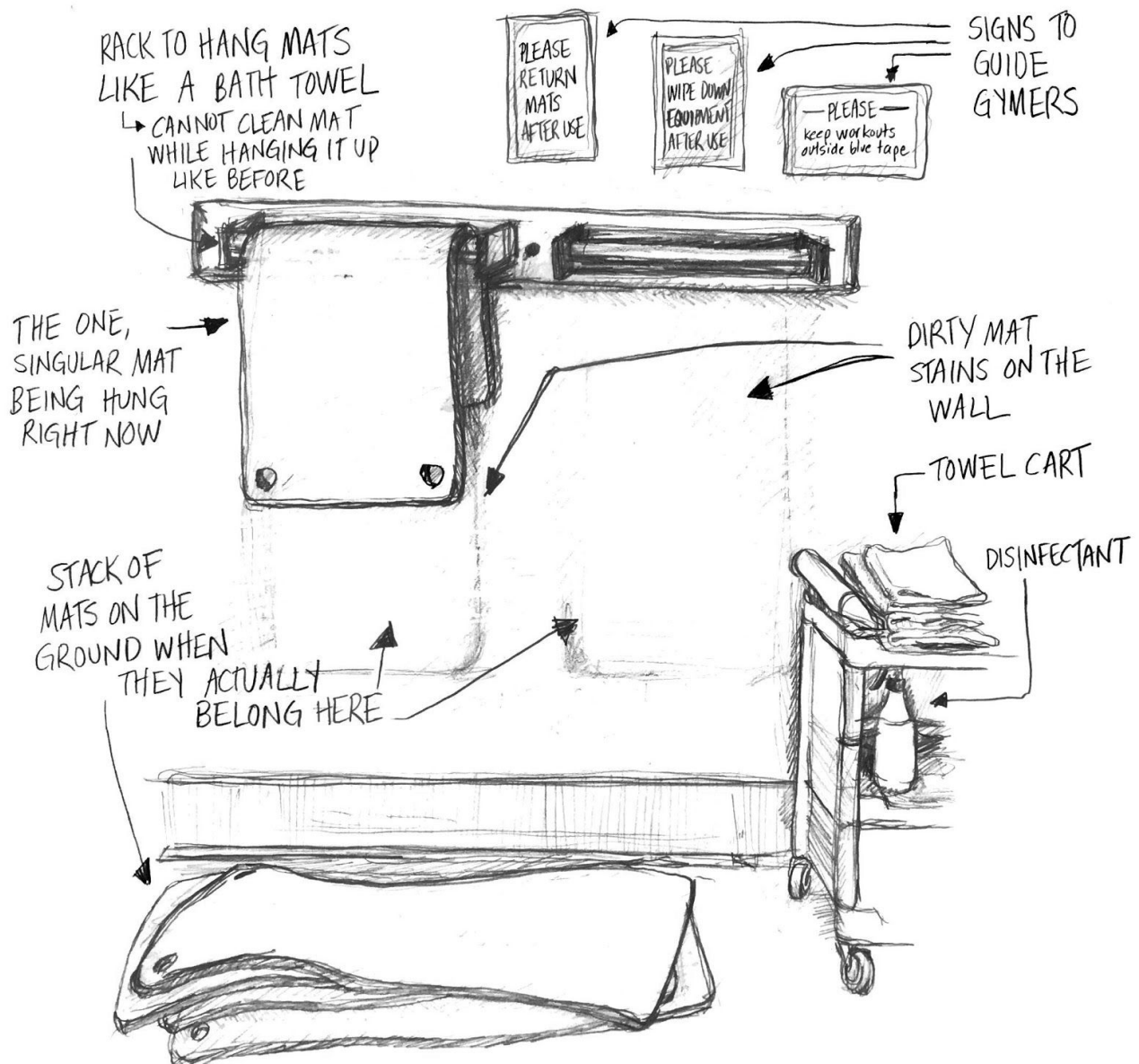
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Gym mats present a plethora of conundrums. For this project, we chose to consider a mat rack from the perspective of multiple personas, and then use that feedback productively.

## Task 1: Preparation

**Our interface** is the mat rack at the Nelson Fitness Center. The rack is just two steel rods hung up side-by-side. It is designed such that users must hang their mat up like a towel. Next to the rack, there is a cleaning cart with a stack of towels and disinfectant spray. Our questions will ask the user about what *they* do and what *they observe others* do.

Here is a **sketch** of the interface with annotations:



## Task 2: Record Observations

In our **observations**, we saw that people use mats for varied amounts of time, ranging from five minutes to an hour on average. There were several ways people returned their mats. For example, some people would place their mat on the stack or the rack without cleaning it; place their mat on the stack and clean it there; or bring cleaning supplies to their workout area and clean their mat there. If the user did not clean their mat, they would return it quickly. However, if they did clean their mat, they would often pause at the cleaning station before beginning the process.

### **Our Questions**

1. How often do you go to the Nelson? (i.e. how many times per week)
2. What do you normally do after your workout?
3. What are the ways you've seen other people hang up and/or clean the mats?
  - a. Why do you think people do it in different ways?
4. What's the best way you think people should put the mats away?
  - a. Can you walk me through your process?
5. Do you think the process is easy to learn?
6. Is there anything else you would like to add?

### **Response Summaries**

Most interviewees are frequent gym-goers who have noticed the Nelson's new mat rack. All users have reported seeing others put mats on the floor, and one admitted to putting mats on the floor herself. They were mixed about whether it was acceptable to leave mats on the floor, and most interviewees reported that the best way to clean/return mats is to wipe their mat in their workout area. One reported that they would clean the mat before and after their workout. Interviewees said that they would not clean their mats if there were no towels left. They reported that the system was easy to learn by watching others. Many interviewees noticed the Nelson's guiding posters for the mat return system for the first time during our interview.

## Task 3: Personas

**Model and Behavior:** This person thinks the mats have quick turnaround; they are put down and picked up frequently. To them, the floor is part of the interface. Since most of the mats are stacked on the ground, the user assumes that the mats are already dirty

and

## Thinks

This mat will end up  
dirty no matter whether  
I clean it or not

I barely used the mat,  
I don't need to clean it

I'll just shower  
afterwards

"Dude, your squat  
form is so off."

"Just leave it there,  
someone or a Nelson  
trainer will pick it up."

"Workout, protein, shower,  
then SciLi study sesh tonight?"

## Says

that

## Feels

Stressed—has exams and  
applications to do, uses the  
gym to destress

Indifferent towards  
clean or dirty mats

Tired after the  
workout

Strength training,  
finishes off with  
abs and stretches

Less likely to clean  
mat if he's alone

Rushes back home to  
have his protein shake within  
30 minutes of his workout

## Does



cleaning them will not make a difference. If they are in a rush, they don't bother to clean the mats — they just throw it into the stack.

Ben the Bro is athletic and played sports in high school. He finds the mat rack confusing, so he usually picks up mats from the stack and returns them there. Dirty mats do not bother him, as he showers afterwards — unless he is rushing to the Sci Li. He will occasionally clean mats after use if he's in the mood. He represents users who only focus on their workout and believe that the gym's staff thoroughly and regularly cleans equipment.

**Model and Behavior:** This person thinks that cleaning and hanging mats is crucial to sanitization. They do not consider putting mats on the floor, even if they are wiped down. Mats on the floor are dirty, and mats on the racks are clean. If only “floor” mats are available, the user sanitizes them before use.

## Thinks

This would be easier if people followed directions

Do people not see the rack?

This is so gross

"I'll clean and hang our mats up"

## Feels

Frustrated when equipment and mats are not put back in accordingly

Anxious about things out of their control

Nervous about getting sick

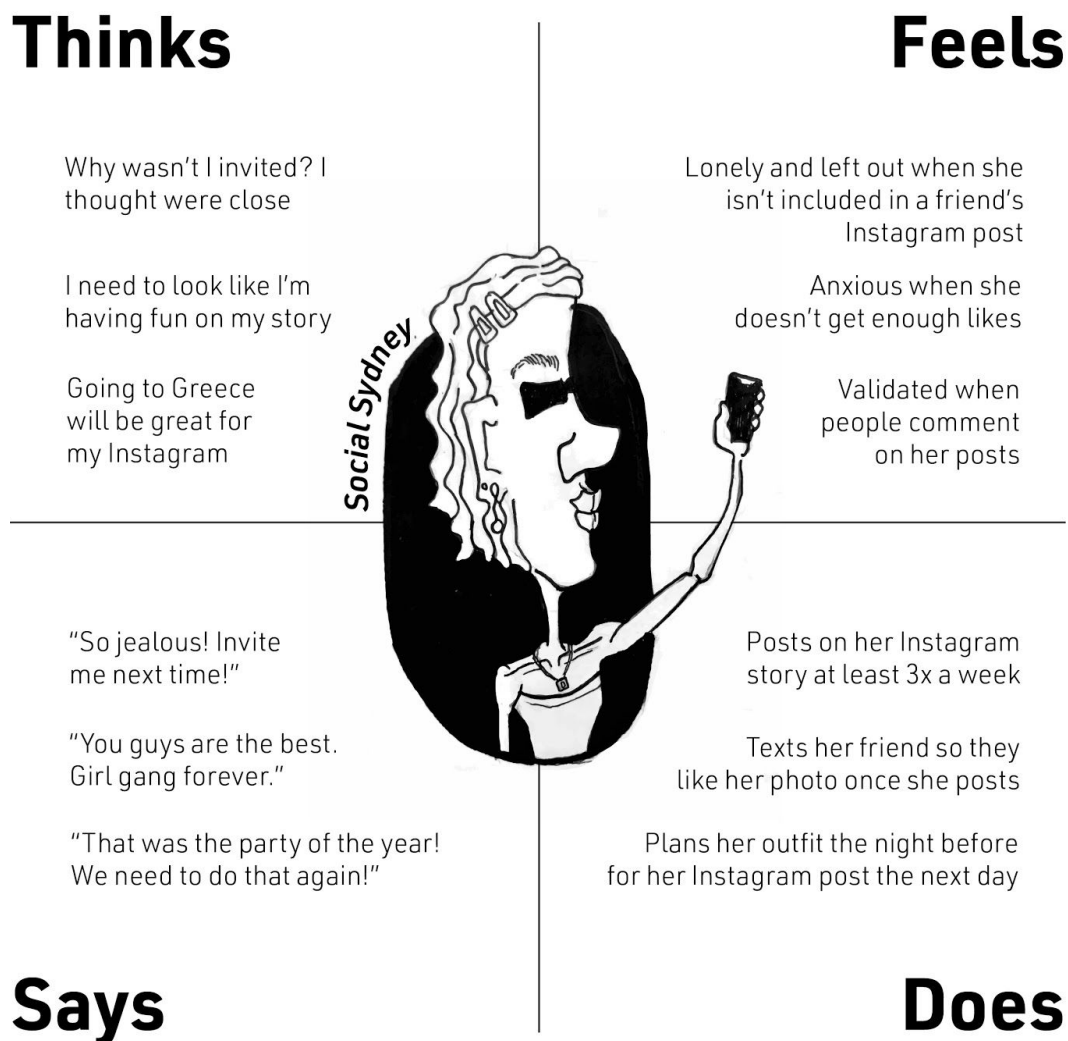
Asks for help and not scared to do so

Exercises regularly;



**Persona description:** Clean Cara is a Brown University student who is involved in many activities on campus. She enjoys scheduling her days and exercising regularly. She is frustrated by others' lack of cleanliness and consideration in the gym, and she takes extra time to properly clean her mats. With her heightened awareness of others' gym habits, Clean Cara represents a group of users who care about the environment they exercise in.

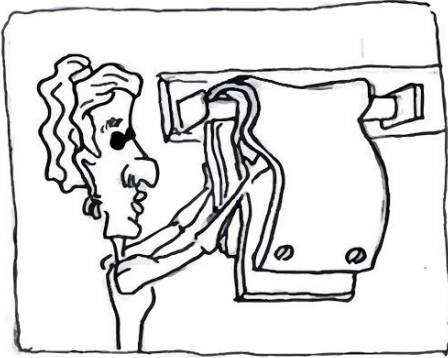
**Social Media Persona:** Social Sydney is a high school student who is very concerned about her spot in the school food chain, even though she is popular. Her friend group uses social media as a means of competition. She internally worries about how she is perceived but projects a fun-loving vibe. Sydney represents a demographic of young users whose social status is linked to their social media profiles.



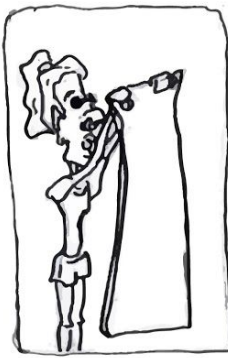
**Unethical Exploitation:** Sydney's anxious tendencies show that she craves higher engagement from her peers. This can be exploited with an algorithm that rewards engaged social media users — the more Sydney likes and comments on other posts, the higher probability her posts show up first on others' feeds. This is a positive feedback loop that keeps Sydney on the social media platform.

#### Task 4: Storyboards

## CLEAN CARA HITS THE NELSON



After her 3-mile run, Cara decides to do a quick workout out on the mat; she chooses the cleanest mat on the rack, ignoring any mats on the ground.



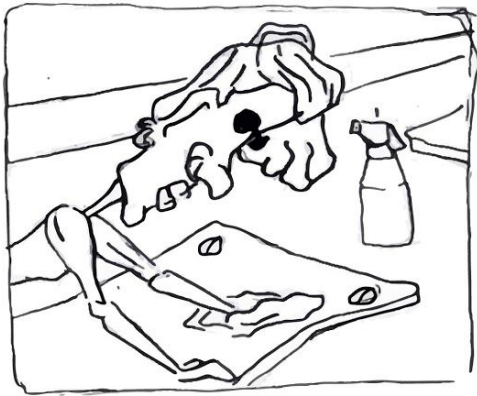
After choosing between two mats, she scans it for sweat and dirt.



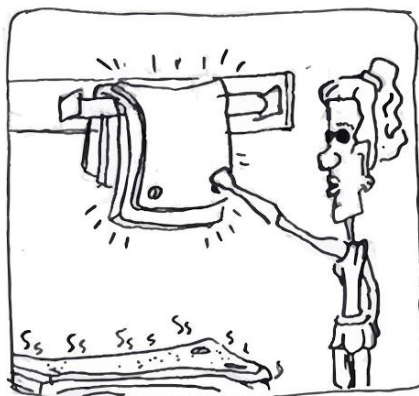
Before starting her workout, Cara thoroughly cleans the mat with special attention to the sweat spots.



Cara begins her core workout, finally.



Cara finishes up her workout, and with a new, clean towel, does another thorough wipe-down of her mat.



She hangs her spick and span mat back on the rack like a towel.



On her way out, Cara sanitizes her hands to stay clean.

Cara wants to have a clean and comfortable space to exercise. She is patient and observant, as she takes the time to thoroughly wipe down her mat and only works out if there are clean mats on the rack (mats on the floor are dirty to her). She wants to make the gym a more clean place and hopes to lead by example. However, she is content with just taking care of herself if she can't inspire change in the Nelson.

## **Concluding Thoughts**

This project demonstrated the necessity of considering multiple perspectives. Throughout our information gathering process, we encountered very distinct types of users. In the future, we'd love to strengthen our results by interviewing users at multiple types, and potentially flesh out even more personas.