

Working Out Workouts

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Can a twenty-four year old tech savvy male find the same fitness results by using new media technologies and internet support groups as they could by using a traditional gym?

Home or Gym?

Working out Workouts: Home or Gym?

The twenty first century, if nothing else, has made the world smaller. Twenty-four hour news networks report on every location on earth; the internet can allow individuals on opposite sides of the planet to communicate instantly. Technology advancements have allowed for individuals to do more with less human resources. Both the mail and news industries have had to drastically shift to react to new media and the internet. One sector that many believed would never be affected by 2.0 web services and digital media was health. Increasingly however, individuals are able to gather the information they need to cure minor illnesses with the help of a computer. It is only a matter of time before people can achieve a completely healthy lifestyle through digital means. I believe that time is now. It is my belief that a tech savvy young American male can, through internet support groups and digital media, achieve similar results to that of joining a traditional gym.

Why would this be an undertaking worth exploring? Traditional meet space has always been considered a motivating factor, and gyms have never been accused of not having the facilities to help people succeed. The reason to look into evolve the process of getting fit is because the modern American has evolved. Gyms in their current form have had the same basic concept and layout since 1848, (Chew) but the life of the average gym member has changed dramatically. Free time is a luxury that many young Americans, especially in metropolitan areas, do not have in abundance as they once did. Scheduling in the time to get “into shape” today usually involves sacrifices be made to accommodate the process. This process of fitness has not adjusted to the times. By utilizing modern tools, gyms could make it possible for fitness goals to be attained more efficiently, and this value proposition for the consumer could have more potential customers join gyms because of it. It is well known that those new to the gym culture are at their greatest risk to not return, and as long as the members are still paying their fees every month, the gyms do nothing to ease them into the process of living a healthier lifestyle. There is no excuse for not offering effective ease-in programs now.

How can we accurately observe whether there have been breakthroughs in personal fitness to make it more personal without setting definitions for what fitness is? The American Government defines fitness as “The ability to carry out daily tasks with vigor and alertness, without undue fatigue, and with ample energy to enjoy leisure-time pursuits and

respond to emergencies.” (Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity) We know through common knowledge that commitment to a diet and targeted exercises can lead to a better quality of life. Results vary depending on the individual taking part in the exercise program, and we cannot set a bar that every American should exceed in order to be labeled as fit. Physical Fitness is quantified subjectively based on the physical, mental and emotional factors. You may consider yourself physically fit, but what are you fit to do? Are you fit to lift heavy weights or are you fit to attract the opposite sex at the beach? Physical fitness must, then be directly related to the physical ability of the subject we are studying on a case-by-case basis.



June 12, 2008

To accurately define physical fitness for the purpose of finding a measureable to compare between my parallel subject and me, we will need to break down the term “physical fitness” into something we can use. The “physical” refers to physical activity, and is defined as any movement that spends energy (Encyclopaedia Britannica). Physical in this sense is derived from physics, and takes the same actions from a molecular level and applies it to an entire organism. “Fitness” is hard to appraise as every hundred people asked what fitness is will provide one hundred unique answers. It must be related to physical activity. Therefore, fitness must be a positive achievable goal based on a preconceived notion thought up by the person taking part in the physical activity. Exercise is a subset of physical activity, but it is an activity that is structured and planned. Living things, by default, try to avoid unnecessary movement in order to conserve energy that might need to be saved for a later panic situation. As a result, Fitness is the end goal of anyone taking part of voluntary physical activity, for no particular reason other than their betterment in achieving greater physical feats in the future. For that reason, looking physically fit may not necessarily be the same as being physically fit.

Children, humans in their most raw form, and uncorrupted by the social norms imposed on those older than the age of innocence, exercise by default. While many children engage in physical activity, usually by playing with their friends, the amount of physical activity they get as they grow into adolescents usually declines. Many researchers believe that physical inactivity is a national health problem that can increase the risk of illness and

disease. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), doing some kind of physical activity or exercise on a regular basis helps to increase strength and flexibility, improve endurance, control weight, increase bone mass, and improve self-esteem, as well as reduce stress, anxiety, depression, and the risk of developing high blood pressure.

As conscious adults, firmly in control of our own bodies, and with the ability to gain the knowledge about how to be physically fit, we can get back to that raw need for physical activity. The best way to keep physical activity and exercise a permanent part of one's life is to make it fun and enjoyable. This is the most logical reason for the creation of sports. If people are given different options of what they can do and have easy access to those options, they are more likely to participate in physical activity and exercise. This allows people to have a positive attitude toward physical fitness. It's also helpful if people are knowledgeable about the rewards of physical activity and exercise. The acquisition of this knowledge has been relatively unexplored other than by those in the medical field. As recently as the last quarter century, the effects of physical fitness and specifically individual muscle groups as they relate to activity has started to be explored by the casual athlete. With the dawning of the internet age, this information can now be passed quickly.

It is common knowledge that adding regular physical activity to one's daily routine will improve health and well-being. That physical activity doesn't necessarily need to be strenuous for a person to enjoy benefits to health. Of course, by increasing the amount of physical activity (within reason), one will increase the amount of health benefits.

One of the most important benefits of physical activity is that it actually lessens a person's risk of developing or dying from many of the most common causes of serious illness and death in the United States. The risk of developing colon cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes is reduced through regular physical activity. Being physically active has also been proven to help build healthy bones, joints, and muscles. Furthermore, regular physical activity reduces the overall risk of dying prematurely from any cause. In fact, in 1995 the American College of Sports Medicine estimated that five times as many Americans die from being inactive than from losing their lives in car accidents.

Societies have been concerned with physical fitness for thousands of years. What does change is why people are concerned with fitness and what benefits they think being fit will bring them. Different cultures at various periods believed that physical activity and

exercise would provide individuals, or even the government as a whole, with different attributes. These attributes provide insight into the evolution of exercise and activity as well as a view of what was valued by certain ancient cultures. The martial art kung fu was developed in China over 4,000 years ago. There, people saw that individuals who were physically active on a regular basis didn't get sick as much as those who were inactive. Kung fu, then, was developed in order to help more people get exercise on a regular basis and avoid frequent illness. In ancient India, physical activities such as exercise and sports were not seen as being beneficial to the mind. Matters of the mind were of the utmost importance as far as Hindu and Buddhist priests were concerned. Yoga, a series of exercises that incorporate regulated breathing, concentration, and flexibility, became popular with disciplined Indians and priests, who used it as a method for emptying their minds of thoughts before meditating. People living in ancient Greece recognized that physical fitness was just as important as knowledge and learning. Ancient Greeks strove to be well-rounded individuals and, to them, that meant training the body and the mind. Furthermore, physical fitness was seen as its own reward. In fact, there weren't any professional competitions in which victors won valuable prizes. In the Olympic Games, which originated in ancient Greece, winners were awarded only a wreath fashioned out of olive branches. Considering that fitness has been worshipped since the beginning of societies, perhaps it is something that cannot be defined. Justice Potter Stewart, when defining pornography, said "hard-core pornography was hard to define but that I know it when I see it." (Jacobellis v. Ohio) Perhaps fitness falls under the same umbrella.

Americans have been striving for their own personal fitness goals since the Turner Movement in 1848. (Pumroy and Rampelmann). The German group opened up their first facility in Cincinnati, and the gym culture in the United States was born. As I have previously stated, gyms has not changed much since its inception, and because of that, new fitness options have become available outside of the gym. The modern citizen has more choices than ever before, and must make a few decisions before hitting the weights. The great debate individuals looking for a healthier lifestyle often ask is where they should work out. Should they join a gym or can they replicate the same experience at home. The traditional answer has always been that it is easier to get a more complete, full body workout at a gym. One has access to a wider variety of equipment. A member of a gym also should have access to trained professionals to teach them how to use the equipment properly and isolate specific routines to help them reach their goals. It is the ideal place to get the best and healthiest workout.

What the gym has often not been is the best experience to get fit. First and foremost, the proprietors of gyms are business owners. They collect membership fees from customers in exchange for use of their equipment, services, and instruction in some cases. This fact has been hidden under the guise that gyms are fulfilling the social contract of helping Americans get fit. The public relations image that most gyms try to portray is that they are “healthcare lifestyle” centers that happen to exist in the private sector. Given that many corporations offer membership subsidies to their employees in hope to lower future healthcare costs, (Rockey Moore) we should hold corporate fitness accountable to constantly find the best possible way to keep America healthy. It seems that the heads of these companies have forgotten the public good they pledged to do in favor of pleasing stockholders. Great author Nathaniel Hawthorne often talked about public goodness and private wickedness in his texts, and the gym industry seems to be a very good parallel to the deals with the devil Hawthorne alludes to in stories like Young Goodman Brown. Because of this, competing business models have emerged to pull customers into alternate methods of obtaining similar results. Many of these products offer value benefits to the consumer such as working out from home.

Throughout modern times, for a variety of reasons, many people prefer to exercise at home. One could, with slight modifications in some instances, create a very comparable program from home for a fraction of the cost. Especially if multiplied over multiple years, the benefits of a home gym can pay for themselves after the initial investment to acquire the resources needed for a quality workout. The added value benefits go much farther than just cost. The privacy of a home gym can be great for beginners that would prefer not to work out in front of strangers. The embarrassing feelings that arise from revealing yourself in front of strangers are eliminated in the home environment. One can also work out at any time they like as they do not have to schedule their workouts based on a gym’s hours. With travel eliminated, there is no excuse other than willpower on days with bad weather. There may be areas of a gym you would not use, while a home gym is catered to your specific needs.

There are a number of benefits to exercise at home as opposed to a gym. But they cannot ever reach the depth of services a fully equipped gym can offer. They can be a very good choice for many people, but some individuals will not be able to realistically achieve the same results at home. It will depend on the fitness needs of the individual. Someone

working out with a medical condition, for instance, will want the guidance and supervision of a trainer when doing any physically demanding exercise. Someone with limited fitness knowledge will need some type of guidance as to what they should do. In the 21st century, this is becoming less of an issue, with at home media to guide you through the process, but working out “blind” is not recommended. You will also need to factor in the initial investment, as mentioned before. As a home gym user, you will need to buy all the equipment you need before you can work out at all. You will also need a certain amount of space to store the equipment, as well as a space to do exercise in. This can be a tough proposition in New York City and its surrounding suburbs, as space is at a premium.

The major negative that is brought up from exercising at home is the lack of access to trained professionals to help you learn to use the equipment and develop an exercise routine that is best for you. Gyms have not only become places for physical fitness, but also a status symbol for those that have memberships to the prestigious names in fitness. This rapid expansion has led to a lack of qualified individuals in important posts at gyms nationwide. (Kapadia) To assume that all gym personnel are qualified to instruct others is fallacy as well. The National Strength and Conditioning Association have a Code of ethics, but this body has no oversight of the thousands of gyms throughout the country. Many gyms do not even require their trainers to have a degree in fitness to be allowed to take other individuals health into their hands. (Kapadia) Author Nathaniel Hawthorne, in his story The Scarlett Letter, also says rather sarcastically, “It contributes greatly towards a man's ... health, to be brought into habits of companionship with individuals unlike himself, who care little for his pursuits, and whose sphere and abilities he must go out of himself to appreciate.” This can be directly compared with the relationship a new member may have with their trainer at a gym. The interaction is forced based on a service that the customer is paying for, and the new member cannot feel comfortable with the fact that he and the trainer have nothing in common when it comes to goals. In these situations, a DVD player or computer can be a much better companion as technology never exudes the image of being better than the user.

The major criticism of working out from home is the lack of direction. In 2009, this argument is fairly weak. Exercise equipment that you purchase frequently comes with an instructional video. The most popular method of achieving home fitness is with a video series. Over 18.5 million Americans have exercised from home, and of those, 11 million claimed to use DVD videos as their primary tool for maintaining a healthy workout

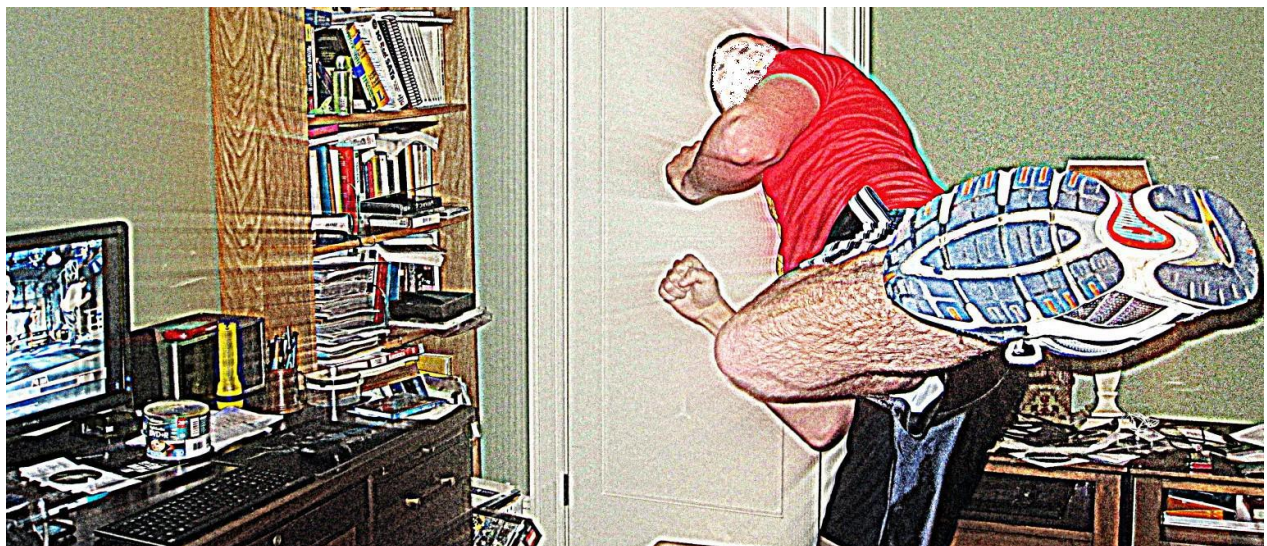
regimen. (Masteralexis, Barr and Hums) This number is smaller than the 36.3 million Americans that use health clubs, but home fitness is a healthy minority. With the emergence of internet support groups, we will see the static instruction of the video evolve into an interaction that can lead to not only successful workouts, but also healthy lifestyles.

I have been taking this journey as I conduct my research. Given that my anthropological research period was limited to the twelve weeks, I had to choose a program limited to ninety days. Although the limits could be considered somewhat compromising, as the challenge involves setting up a healthy lifestyle, the time ended up as a good balance. This time offered what I felt was an adequate timeframe to document the drama that takes place committing to a workout regimen. If a shorter period was chosen I fear that any average person would have “powered through” the workouts just to get them over with without testing endurance. Too long a heavy workout routine and there would have been too great a risk of falling out of routine for scheduling conflicts.

There are an abundance of products which advertise that they can be used as an adequate substitute for joining a gym. Most of these products are accompanied by some proprietary device that is used for the workouts. I opted not to select anything with a new piece of hardware as many times the instruction forces the user to use the new item even when it is not the best piece of equipment for the exercise. I also did not want to do anything that was targeted to young tech savvy males. Too often, home fitness is catered to the stay-at-home mom crowd. It would not be motivating nor physically beneficial for an aerobics video series to be my solution for overall fitness. I looked online in web forums where young men frequently visit to research what worked for them. The same product came up again and again. That product was Power 90 Extreme by Beachbody Fitness. What made this product fit my criteria is that it accomplished two things. It did not require the user to purchase anything they could not find in a sporting goods store. All the workouts were completed with a yoga mat, a set of free weights, push up bars, resistance band, and water. Secondly, the products claims were to attack the major enemies of obtaining results. Many athletes, while working out with the same routine, experience what is known as *the plateau effect*. It can be defined as “the leveling of tangible results based on exercise tolerance, weight control, and athletic performance.” (Nitti and Lewis) Too many times, people try harder at the same routine only to get less results. Human muscles adapt to the situations of stress that they are put under, and will eventually not be stressed by the same workout. That is why it is important to employ *muscle confusion*, a technique which ensures that there is variety in the workouts attempted and that hypertrophy is attained. (Body

Building Pro) Power 90 Extreme, or P90X is one of the first home workout regimens that uses the muscle confusion principle to achieve greater gains. The only criticism I have seen regarding the Beachbody product is its use of Plyometrics, which have fallen out of style because of their high impact on the joints. According to the National Strength and Conditioning Association however, carefully applied plyometric exercises are no more harmful than other forms of sport training, and can improve performance in competitive sports. (National Strength and Conditioning Association) The only real pitfall I could experience would be keeping up the program for ninety consecutive days.

On that note, I can attest to the challenges that come up balancing between a healthy lifestyle and calendar dates. I was able to roll along scheduling my workouts whenever I wanted for the first week, but as my five summer classes began having their first sessions,



Action Shot of Doing Workouts

scheduling became the key. There is a workout every day which lasts about one hour. Warm up time and cool down time extend the required allotted time to about 1.5 hours for each workout. With this chunk of time being pulled from each day, it became necessary to plan accordingly. I conducted hours of research from reliable sources online. My conclusions helped me form a solid dietary intake that emphasized protein and nutrients, while limiting calorie intake. I also found proper supplements to support my workouts and maximize effectiveness. This all fell to the wayside on Memorial Day weekend. The platters of hot dogs, hamburgers, cheese fries, and beer were far too tempting to resist. The peer pressure to support ones country by ingesting fat and bread proved too great to resist. I rebounded on Tuesday, but the damage had already been done. Afterwards, I realized structure was necessary to have success. I needed to believe in what I was doing and stick

to it. As the French poet Anatole France once said, "To accomplish great things, we must not only act but also dream, not only dream but also believe." In response to my lack of discipline, I created a table which would outline my supplemental and dietary intake.

| |
|---|
| 8AM: Wake Up |
| 8:15 Breakfast (500 Calories) |
| Protein Shake: Vanilla Whey, Banana, 1% Milk |
| Solid Food |
| Orange Juice |
| 1 CLA, 1 Thermozyne, 1 Zyrtec, 1 Fish Oil, 1 Multi-Vit, 1 Singulair |
| |
| 9:30 Pre-Workout |
| NO Shotgun Drink |
| 1 CLA, 2 Cardio Sys, 1 Creatine |
| |
| 10AM WORKOUT |
| Propel Water |
| |
| 11:00 Post-Workout |
| PowerAde Zero |
| 1 Creatine |
| |
| 11:15 Shower |
| |
| 11:30 Leave for Train |
| Protein Shake |
| Granola Bar |
| |
| 3:00 Lunch (500 calories) |
| |
| 10:00 Dinner (500 calories) |
| 1 CLA, 1 Thermozyne |

To be thorough with my research, I needed an equivalent to me that would serve the purpose of working out using the classical approach. I called my friend Christopher Copijia, a twenty-six year old male that is equal in height and body type to me. He joined the brand new gym Lifetime Fitness in Florham Park New Jersey. Lifetime Fitness is a luxury gym that features such services as spa treatments, personal training, and whirlpools. Chris joined about one month ago, and will report his successes and failures from the period of May to July. This will not corrupt the results because I never revealed my thesis to Chris as to corrupt his findings. To compare our workouts, Chris attends about ten sessions every

week and each session lasts about 1.5 hours. His workouts split into about sixty percent cardio and forty percent weight training.

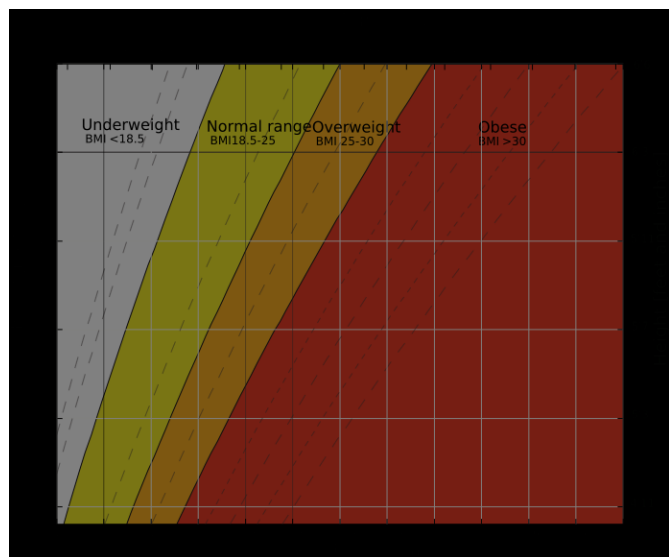
Over the period of ninety days, I will be doing concentrated workouts using a program called “P90X” or “Power 90 Extreme”, which promises to transform an individual from out of shape into the best shape of their life in only ninety days. Through the use of twelve different exercise DVDs, the creator Tony Horton hopes to employ the theory of muscle confusion to attain higher levels of strength not obtainable otherwise. According to Horton and other professional trainer’s research, muscles eventually become acclimated with a particular workout routine after a period of about three weeks. This leads to a halt of progress, also known as a plateau. By mixing up the exercises to isolate different muscle groups, P90X promises to never plateau, allowing users to continue building strength throughout the program. To help support the workout, the creators of P90X also offer supplements to accompany the workouts and help users succeed, as well as spend more money. The P90X recovery drink is similar to Gatorade and other recovery drinks, but also includes additional ingredients. It substitutes a heavier salty makeup for more sugar, which is actually acceptable immediately after a workout, and adds a little bit of the controversial supplement creatine to rush water to the muscles. There is also a multivitamin and protein bar, which are as generic as the stuff you would find at GNC. Lastly, Carrie Wiatt included a nutrition book in the P90X package which guides each person as to what the right things to eat are. With a master’s degree in nutrition, Wiatt is able to provide nutritional guidelines that accompany each phase of the workouts. Looking through the guidebook, the meal plans appear to be strict as to limit the carbohydrates and fatty foods. I will not be following the recipes of the guide, but I will be following the principles.

Beachbody, a leader in home fitness video training, was created during the dotcom blitz of the late 20th century, but proved to have staying power because it offered a value proposition to its customers no other program could compete with; it had interactivity. Many competing products provide a video and users are expected to follow verbatim regardless of age, gender, and fitness level. Beachbody systems employ many different techniques to help customers customize to get greater results. Beachbody product P90X, for instance, has online forums which help to create a connection between the trainers at Beachbody and the customers at home. Customers are asked to first complete a fitness test to see exactly where they are in terms of fitness. Max heart rate is computed, as well as Body Mass Index to customize a program for their specific needs, much like in a gym. Users are expected to post what is known as “accountability” everyday to their trainer, where the

users log on and submit a digital form pledging that they completed their assigned workout every day. A customer could also ask a question to the trainer at any time, regarding diet or supplementation, and it is usually answered within 24 hours. Beachbody members also tend to stick around after the program is completed, to help coach others on their fitness journey, for this reason, Beachbody has decided to offer cash incentives to users that complete the program to help motivate others and supply a support system to answer basic questions. Other than having a human in front of you at all times, this is the next best thing.

Not included in the package, but probably the most effective tool is the internet support groups on the P90X website. There are thousands of members all cheering each other on in forums for “average joes” to those trying to replicate the bodies from the Spartans in the movie 300. I joined a custom group all starting the P90X program the same time as me. Members post before pictures so that everybody sees where they are starting from, as well as accountability posts to make sure they never miss a workout. Custom recipes that follow the guidelines for the diet plan but mix up the flavors are suggested, and caloric breakdown charts help identify which ingredients in popular foods can be eliminated while still making the same recipes some people are used to. Lastly, members will admit to their failures during certain routines. It is one thing to see every person on the DVDs be able to do an exercise to completion, but it can be disconcerting when it is impossible for the user to do so. Seeing that others are struggling can sometimes give a confidence boost and make one try a little harder. The community program is made to replicate the feeling of those around you in a gym, in hope to help users push past plateaus.

There are concerns that will have to be overcome. As far as my anthropological study is concerned, I would have preferred if there were more test subjects so that the results could have more weight to them. I am constantly questioning whether I am trying harder in my workouts to prove myself right. Without a hard definition as to what physical fitness is, it is also refutable that resting heart rate can be used as a measureable for fitness level. Given the speed at which the internet is moving into different



Body Mass Index Scores

sectors, it is only a matter of time before my findings in this study become outdated as well. Still, there are stigmas that may be dismissed as result of this research, so I can continue knowing that a purpose is being served.

In response to these criticisms, I have decided to expand the list of comparable stats between my alternate subject and myself. I will compare bicep circumference, body mass index, fat ratio, and time able to do wall squats. While any of these statistics on their own are not good measurable, together they may supplement the previous quantifiable statistics. While I cannot promise to completely disregard my efforts to be right in my study, the extra effort actually does not overly affect my results. It may help to equalize the motivating factors a gym has over a home workout regimen. With the hope of keeping variables to the minimum for the sake of scientific integrity, we can hope that both my competing subject and I give maximum effort to our goal of getting the best possible



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results. While Mr. Copijia has the added benefit of justifying the monthly membership fee for the gym, I have the initial start up cost of a home gym to keep me motivated. The quest to be right in my hypothesis is a minor addition to the major investment that will keep me motivated throughout the program. Lastly, we cannot conduct research under the fear that it will eventually become common knowledge. It does not matter how quickly

things change, we are duty-bound by our curiosity to explain the world we live in.

During the workouts, and with the help of scientific research, I have already determined that home workouts have added value benefits that a traditional gym cannot offer. There are also simultaneous researches being done in centers throughout the world which point to the flaws of the current gym system. Currently, most gyms do not motivate people to live healthier lifestyles. Once a first time member leaves the meet space, the habits of that member take full effect in their daily lifestyle decisions. According to a study done by Tulane Health Sciences Center in 2007, seventy-seven percent of over 1000 participants with diabetes were never asked or recommended a diet plan based on their individual needs (with/without personal trainer). Only surveyed participants that switched

to home workouts and did independent study did they switch to a healthy lifestyle. (Krousel-Wood, Berger and Jiang) While many fitness facilities do have dieticians on staff, it is often practice to wait until the member volunteers for this service. As private industry, there is often a selling process included with eating well, as opposed to free consultations to teach healthier eating habits.

Other research done by the School of Health Technology at Stony Brook University suggests individuals with lower limits to their physical capabilities had greater success working out at home than in a gym environment. While the common misconception that the meet space benefits everyone to work harder, the opposite is true for those that are considered out of shape. Over two thirds of members that were given a free trial at a local gym quit after their first week at a gym because they claimed that they were intimidated. Over half the people that decided to exercise from home and consult their doctor were able to lower their body mass index in the eight week study. (Gostic) There is more than a physical stress when entering a gym for the first time, there is also a mental and emotional stress of knowing that you are out of shape and entering a new place as the lowest member on the totem pole.

Interestingly enough, it was also suggested by examining the potential of new technologies that workouts from home can also jumpstart motivation to continue a fitness program. According to research done by the University of Thessaly, most beginners found new media combined with physical education to be more fun than a traditional gym. Defining fun in this case was a poll assessing their willingness to go back and try it again. Again, the misconception is that fun cannot be had without the social interaction of meet space. A 2009 study showed that ninety-two percent of young adults said they were likely to continuously use a fitness program which included Nintendo product Wii Fit (based in a video game environment), while only forty-seven percent they would be willing to continue workouts at a gym. (Papastergiou) With modern technology, being healthy can seem less like an arduous process, and more fun. Challenging a score taps into the competitive nature of humans much better than trying to reach maximum repetitions of an exercise. Colorful graphics can break up the cold feeling of steel equipment. Even multiplayer games can be implemented to motivate people into exerting maximum effort and thus maximum burn.

It was suggested through my field research that using media-at-home methods to jump start resistance training is a viable option, but it could not be maintained. Even in a

phase system that employs muscle confusion to avoid a plateau, there will be an eventual gain stoppage because the goals cannot change. Of the three Beachbody coaches I interviewed, two still actively use gym memberships to maintain their results. One of the personal trainers at a gym admitted to using a video system to spur results, but use gyms to maintain results. It appears that this consensus is formed not because of a physical limitation to what new media is capable of in terms of fitness goals, but instead a psychological maximum one cannot break past without peer pressure.

The general purpose of all video-based fitness systems is to set defined reachable goals for the end user. These goals are usually not gender, age, or weight specific; they only stand as diluted fitness standards which set a bare minimum for what the CDC can call fitness. As the goal is to sell as many videos as possible, the targets cannot be lofty for the fear of driving off to many customers. A compromise is often made to attract more customers. As a result, higher goals cannot be achieved with the use of videos alone. Once the standard is reached, and the user is able to do all the routines without strain, the workout has become ineffective, and a new standard must be created.

Beachbody does this to some effect with their P90X+ workouts, which raise the bar for graduates of the regular program. All this does in essence is force the customer to buy another product in order to delay the inevitable. Without question, the participants of the P90X program finish in amazing shape, but fitness is a never ending journey. The goal is constantly changing and remains just beyond the reach of completion. Fitness is the last half rep one cannot complete, the tiring in a marathon, and the mental breakdown in sports all in one. Fitness really is the quest to bring the body past a previous failure point. Without a negative reinforcement to create a new ceiling to break through, the journey is lost.

With this new realization, I have determined that a home video can be used as a catalyst to jump-start a workout regimen. It can allow for a casual user to take part in strenuous activity without fear of judgment from others. This peer pressure to push hard in the beginning of the workout journey may intimidate a new member, but it is instrumental in pushing past plateaus at later stages. Through my interviews, I have found source material to find an insider's view of the gym versus new media debate.

At the end of ninety days, I compiled my results to compare with my workout partner, Mr. Copijia. The findings were what I expected. I had gained a full inch in my biceps while Chris only gained one half an inch. Chris was able to lower his BMI 1.5 points, while I dropped a full 3. I was able to get down to 22% body fat, while Chris was at 27%. Chris was only able to do a wall squat exercise for 1 minute, leading me to believe it was not a group of muscles he had worked out during his entire time at the gym. I however, broke 3.25 minutes before failure. Chris has said that the post workout facilities



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at his gym were fantastic, and the services made him feel like he wanted to go back, but none of the positive characteristics he listed of his gym experience had anything to do with progress based objectives. I feel a silent sense of accomplishment to know that I have created a strong foundation of fitness, and can go forward with the knowledge of what my body needs to eat right and work hard. I would feel confident going into a gym environment now and understanding what exercises I need to get maximum results. I will recognize that I will however need a gym to get me to that next goal. I could possibly do one more round at home and still get tangible results, but I understand that if I do continue, I will need competition and personal attention of a trained professional.

Through the experience I have gained throughout my own fitness journey, as well as consultation with experts throughout the field, I have determined that the gym is still necessary, but the process of getting new members must be changed in order to fulfill their social promise to do everything they can to help Americans get fit. Too often, gyms are complacent as members sign a contract to join, only to never use the resources of the gym. If we look at this from a profit/loss perspective, the gym fitness companies have no reason to alter the status quo. The same dollar amount comes in whether members use the equipment and services or not. It is my opinion that gyms could attract more lifetime members if they made the transition into gym culture easier for the individual. Still looking

from the view of profit/loss, this could result in more selling opportunities for extra services with little extra investment into infrastructure.

The modern gym should utilize a beginner program which does not necessarily involve the gym at all, but is a work at home solution to get the users comfortable with fitness techniques at their pace. Using basic equipment such as free weights and resistance bands, virtual trainers can start beginners on their fitness journey and get users well acquainted with the services the gym can offer at later stages. With the help of motion tracking software and web cameras, good technique habits can be formed with little supervision, and the consumer can feel comfortable for not being judged. By setting attainable goals, we can hope to have many graduates from these programs looking for their next step in fitness. With the help of social networking, we can link new members at the same level of fitness to motivate each other to succeed, and later become friends to push each other harder in the gym environment. They know each other's goals, and are already friends when they jump into the herd of gym members. When they are ready to jump into the competitive nature of gym atmosphere, these new members have a much greater chance of going and have a much greater chance at success. After a taste of accomplishment, the body and mind are fueled to find something else to conquer. We need to groom beginners into gym culture, and not just throw them into it.

While still trying to adjust the status quo, it could be suggested that there are alternate ways to serve the new member while isolating them from the intimidations of gym culture. There are business models from companies like Curves Gym which do not have see through windows to prevent judging those that are out of shape. There is constant trainer supervision, and some online elements are used to supplement the times when members cannot make it out to the gym. These no stress environments still include the forced interaction between overweight beginner and fit expert, which can be intimidating when comparing body types. The gym is not a typical classroom. A student is not often jealous of or intimidated by their professor's knowledge. Societal viewpoints when it comes to the interaction between fit and non-fit created feelings of inadequacy. The idea of quarantining these individuals would only emphasize that feeling more. As Nathaniel Hawthorne, in his story The Scarlett Letter says, "The founders of a new colony, whatever Utopia of human virtue and happiness they might originally project, have invariably recognized it among their earliest practical necessities to allot a portion of the virgin soil as a cemetery, and another portion as the site of a prison." Albert Camus also alludes to a

feeling of isolation even when taken out of an isolated environment. In his book The Plague, he writes, “The... son had gotten ill and had to go into quarantine. Thus the mother, who had recently come out of it, found herself isolated once again.” Without companionship outside the isolated confines of this training ground, the new member would still be lonely when they come out into the general population. Considering that members are paying for a service, this degradation is not necessary when there are better ways to handle new members exploring what fitness is about.

All gyms, if they claim to be in the business of helping people, should investigate the possibility of using an online element for new members. Gyms were considered as the first social networking site. Now I only suggest that we apply the use of some online elements, including social networking, to supplement the starter process. From my own personal experience, transformational results start taking shape in as little as two months, and to see change is the biggest motivational factor of all. To go into a gym and have a shoulder muscle where it never existed before, and abdominal muscles starting to form into a sexy core helps to make a new member feel like one of the herd. It is a lot easier to go into a locker room when you don't have to look around before you take your shirt off.

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Defined Words

Exercise- A way of life which emphasizes physical activity to work towards a healthier lifestyle. Do not look at exercise as a chore or task that hurts you. Exercise is probably the most inexpensive and fun thing you can do for your life. Find something in exercise that you enjoy doing such as meeting new people, getting out of work, or your means of stress relief. It will be like brushing your teeth or eating breakfast. The sooner you view exercise as an activity of health and way of life, the sooner your results will show up.

Workout- A collection of small exercises that cause enough stress on the body to see results. Think Small. This is probably the hardest part of exercise for people to understand and follow through with. Most people want the results to happen now and start their workout program going all out. This is the number 1 reason men and women stop exercising. They expect too much. Breakdown your goals into sections or parts and choose some realistic goals. Before you know it, you lost those annoying 10 pounds and your health has improved ten fold.

Burnout- An exercise term that has to do with giving too much energy early in the workout regiment that the body breaks down of exhaustion through soreness. It is important that the person doing workouts for the first time not hit their maximum, for fear that the body might not come back to the gym for a while.

Partner- A girl or guy that one can do their workouts with. If there is somebody waiting for you at the gym, the same time you are supposed to be there, you can bet you will be there 100% of the time to workout with him or her. It also can be immediately physically result producing since you will automatically be pushing each other to do better and better.

Change- Mixing up the workouts to achieve greater results. Change: The essence of goal attainment. If you modify your workout more often, you will undoubtedly see changes. It prevents your muscles from getting stagnant and gets the doldrums out of working out. Change will also happen in the form of putting on more muscle.

Fitness- a never ending journey towards a goal. The goal is constantly changing and remains just beyond the reach of completion. Fitness is the last half rep one cannot complete, the tiring in a marathon, and the mental breakdown in sports all in one. Fitness really is the quest to bring the body past a previous failure point. Without a negative reinforcement to create a new ceiling to break through, the journey is lost.

Health- Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (According to World Health Organization). Health is also to be relieved of stress, anger, and other force that would deter one from having a life where the body.