

LIFESTYLES

Working out can be a long-haul for truck drivers

by ERIC SCHMIEDL

WOODSTOCK, Ont. (CP) — It's 3 a.m. and you're on a trucking haul headed for a destination across the border. You pull the rig into a travel centre, looking for a bite. It'd be nice to stretch your legs a bit before you get underway again, too. But how about a full workout?

Kitchener-based QuickFit Health Centres Inc. is banking on it. The company recently installed treadmills, elliptic trainers and weight machines in a local truck stop for truckers to use to help get their blood flowing during long hauls. "The truck drivers don't know what to make of it yet," said Jean-Maurice Martin, president of QuickFit. "It's a learning curve."

Open 24 hours a day, the machines are coin-operated and can be used by anyone. A loonie buys 10 minutes on a machine.

The facility has the approval of Dr. Jerry Singh, who started with Trans Canada Chiropractic at the travel centre in January.

"The trucking industry's been so neglected. I'm telling all the truckers to exercise and this is a perfect opportunity for them," said Singh.

So far, most of the fitness facility's customers have been from Woodstock and the employees at the centre itself but Martin hopes word of it will spread among truckers.

For the most part, truckers going through the centre are not yet familiar with the equipment and reaction is mixed on how much they might use it in the future.

Doug Rozema of Oshawa said he will not put much time in the fitness equipment as his road schedule won't allow him to.

"It's not like I'm on a day trip," Rozema said, although he might use the facility if he is on an overnight stay. Ray Fite of Illinois said he would use the facility.

"I don't get too much exercise on a truck," said Fite.

Etiquette shouldn't go out the window when you enter a gym

by CHRIS ZDEB

CanWest News Service

EDMONTON — Question answered by Asha Menon, a personal fitness trainer and program director at the Ford Credit Edmonton Fitness & Wellness Centre for call centre employees.

Question: There's this guy at the gym who's constantly flexing his muscles in the mirror and yakking me up for a date when he sees me, distracting me from my workout, even though I've repeatedly told him I'm not interested. What can I do about this lunkheaded Lothario?

Answer: Socializing is part of the gym experience. The gym is a good place to meet people who are also interested in health and fitness, but socializing should never interfere with someone's workout.

If you've tried, with no luck, to get someone to leave you alone, mention the problem to gym staff.

If you are interested in someone, don't "stalk" them, following them from machine to machine or moving in on equipment beside them.

"You see an attractive guy or girl walk in and all the girls/guys look and migrate to equipment around him or her making them uncomfortable," Menon says.

If you want to meet someone, try timing your water or rest break with theirs. Introduce yourself and suggest getting together for a booster juice after your workouts, she suggests. If they're not interested, that's the end of it.

Manners and etiquette are as important at the gym or health club as they are everywhere else, but some people think because it's a place where you sweat, you don't have to be sweet, Menon says. Bottom line: Everyone is equal in a gym and should be treated with respect.

Here are some of her pointers for a positive gym experience:

■ Safety etiquette is as important as manners, Menon says. Don't just walk up to a piece of equipment and start using it. Ask staff to teach you how to use it properly.

■ Don't be intimidated to approach gym staff — they're there to help, Menon says. "Everyone was a newbie once, including the trainers and the guy or girl who's in great shape doing exercises you want to do."



CanWest photo

Personal trainer Asha Menon says that the rules of everyday etiquette are also in force at the gym.

■ Nobody wants to follow you on a machine covered with sweat. Besides the ick factor, there's a health concern if someone has a rash or chicken pox. There are spray bottles and towels around the gym: Use them before moving on to another piece of equipment, Menon says.

■ Put free weights, dumbbells, barbells, back on racks or stands so somebody doesn't trip over them and hurt themselves. Return plate loading machines, bench press or leg press machines to starting positions for the next person, who may not be as strong as you.

■ We're all busy and for some people work doesn't stop, even when they're at the gym. "I understand there are emergencies, or times when it's important not to miss a call that has to be taken, and for those purposes, it's OK to bring your cellphone to the gym," Menon says.

Set it to vibrate instead of to ring so as not to bother people working out around you. If it's an important phone call, make it or take it in private. "You need a lot of mental focus to work out properly and if a client is paying for time with a trainer, it's frustrating to be distracted by someone making plans for the weekend," Menon says.

■ Don't be a Grunting Gus or Chatty Cathy. Remember why you've come to the gym. "They don't call it a workout for nothing," Menon says. Hold the chatter until after you've finished. As for grunting and groaning while you lift weights, you're probably lifting more than you should be. You may be able to pick up a heavier weight, but if you have to compromise technique to do it, you're not getting any benefit from it.

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