



Functional Planning your Fitness Space



When outfitting a fitness center, the number-one question is how to make the most of the space you have. The cardio area is going to have at least three different options—treadmills, elliptical machines and stationary bicycles.

Given their bulk and constant use, the treadmills will take up the most space. Elliptical machines are becoming more popular thanks to their joint-friendly features and should be given significant real estate, experts say. Though bikes

have become less trendy in recent years, they still have plenty of loyal users and should be fixtures in any cardio area because they take up minimal space and are often more durable than other cardio machines.

Here are a few ways to get the most out of your floor plan.

- **Plan first:** Do not purchase any equipment without first figuring out where to put it. A strong fitness center design incorporates visibility, accessibility and common sense. The floor plan should be as flexible as possible because fitness center needs are always evolving. As such, add as many banks of electrical outlets as possible so you can rearrange your machinery as needed and add new equipment when possible.
- **Leave some breathing room:** Rather than have your cardio space overstuffed with equipment, leave room for future growth and changes in machinery.
- **Mix it up:** Rotate your equipment regularly to keep the space looking fresh and engaging.
- **Embrace diversity:** While most of your floor plan will be taken up by the Big Three components, fitness managers should leave room for other types of equipment such as stair steppers, stair mills and rowers. They may be less popular, but they still have a place in any modern gym.
- **Don't skimp on the price:** A smaller, lighter treadmill may be cheaper than a heavier one, but it also may break down twice as much and need replacement parts sooner. Make sure equipment can take punishment.
- **Have a wall:** Given their vertical nature, climbing walls offer an excellent recreation opportunity without swallowing a ton of floor space. They also can add an interesting architectural element to any facility.
- **Program the equipment:** Reserve a few treadmills, bikes and elliptical machines for group use or classes each day. Not only will it spark interest in the machines, it will give patrons an added benefit to using the facility.

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