

Choosing the best fitness approach for you.

There are more choices than ever when it comes to finding the direction you need to go with a fitness activity or program. If you are new or not so new to the fitness industry and want to avoid failure due to under-informed fitness choices here are some guidelines you can probably use.

If you are trying a “do it yourself” program or activity seek out programs and activities that will realistically fit your individual needs and abilities. With fitness programs, if you get bored easily, don't buy into a system that uses a “gadget” that involves one exercise or a very limited range of exercises. These gadget routines and the devices they employ are too often limited in scope and may only produce limited results at the expense of other areas where your needs could be just as, if not more, important. Keep costs in mind not only from a financial but from a time- spent perspective. Finally, ask yourself if the program or activity will be safe, practical, and effective for you over the long term.

If you are looking into joining a fitness facility it will naturally need to be a place that caters to your chosen activities. A time cost should also be considered when evaluating a facility you might join. Be aware of how long it takes from the time you find a parking spot until you are actually inside using the facility as this can make a significant difference in how much time your workouts require out of your day. Also find out if there are sign up lists used to control the use of the equipment and classes in the facility and how long waiting times might be. Check out the crowding level of the facility at a peak usage time, such as five PM on a Monday, this is a good time to take notice if the equipment in the facility is well spaced or if you think you would get a cramped feeling while training there. Finally, look for the signals of poorly kept or outdated facilities like out of order signs on equipment, torn upholstery, or unused equipment pushed off to the side.

If you are considering using a fitness coach look for a trainer certified through the National Strength & Conditioning Association (NSCA) or with the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM). Certifications with these organizations are more difficult to obtain and are closely controlled. NSCA & ACSM certifications expire if the proper continuing education requirements have not been met so also make sure a trainers credentials are current.