

GYM STEREOTYPES BUSTED

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Joining a gym is almost always one of those things that people keep postponing. It's either "I don't have the time for it right now", or "Do I really need to waste money on a gym? I'll just work out at home from tomorrow" or even "I've heard that if you go to a gym for a while and then stop going, you gain so much more weight. I'm better off as is". For years, I used all of these excuses to not go to the gym even though I had several affordable options very close to my house. However, recently I decided it was high time I did something about the hereditary cocktail of heart disease and diabetes that was barreling towards me, and so I finally got off my behind and joined a gym.

Till you join one, a gym remains this mysterious place obscured behind a cloud of our own impressions. However, from the very first day that you set foot in one, that cloud begins to clear and a lot of stereotypes you had about the institution are done away with. By my first week, I expelled several misconceptions I had harboured regarding gyms. Although these apply solely to my experience, I do believe joining almost any gym would dispel such stereotypes.

ONLY OBESE PEOPLE GO TO THE GYM
 There is this idea among people, especially here, that unless you are in a dire situation, the gym is not for you. For women at least, we rarely get encouraged to join a gym, even though most women I know could benefit from it. I used to think I'd go into a gym to find ailing people trying their best to get their lives together,

At the gym:
 who is looking at whom.



melting off of the elliptical and toiling away on the treadmills. However, what I noticed upon joining was an entirely different environment. There were people of all body types; including skinny people who many would say don't need to be there. I've seen numerous girls with perfect figures work out or do power training, and it just makes you appreciate that getting into shape and staying that way takes constant effort. You don't just abandon it once you've reached your goal weight, and thus the gym is usually full of people with all kinds of body types.

THE GYM TIRES YOU OUT
 I thought this was just me, till I talked to multiple other people who work out for a few hours every day, and all of them confirmed this fact: the gym does not tire you out. On the contrary, for some lucky people, it apparently energises you. I am not so fortunate as to be able to verify that last bit, but I can definitely say that if you have concerns about coming home exhausted from the gym, and not being able to finish any of your work for the following day, you're probably wrong.

Case in point: this article was written after an extensive gym session.

GYM INSTRUCTORS ARE MEAN
 Many people don't respond well to strict authoritative figures such as teachers whose primary mode of teaching seems to be yelling at or insulting their students. In every sitcom that I have watched, gym instructors are portrayed as these tough people who make you do two sets more than your limit, breathe Gatorade vapour instead of oxygen, and use corny catchphrases like "no pain no gain" while laughing maniacally as you wither away before their eyes. This was a major concern for me before joining a gym. Never have I been happier to have been mistaken.

Gym trainers are ridiculously nice and understanding of your limits. Yes, they will push you, but in the most encouraging way possible. You're not mocked for your inability to follow a group session and sometimes they will even give you time to catch up without drawing attention to it. If you're lucky your trainer might even bless you with a custom-tailored routine and diet!

PEOPLE AT THE GYM WILL JUDGE YOU

A lot of people who think about going to the gym have a weight problem. It's highly likely that they have been mocked or bullied about their weight. As such, it is very natural that they would have insecurities about being judged for their looks at a gym. I was worried there would be cliques of girls in the gym just waiting to judge everyone. The beautiful thing though, which I realised should have been obvious once I thought about it, is that everyone who is at a gym is there with a purpose. Sure you'll find a couple people who take a few selfies and leave without working out at all, but these people will usually be gone within the first week. Everyone mostly minds their own business. So you really don't have to worry about how you look in your workout pants. Trust me. They're all too concerned about how they end up looking in the Happy Baby Pose to judge you.

If you are thinking of joining a gym, but are held back by some negative perceptions you may have, I'd say don't judge it by whatever you've seen or heard. The idea of a gym and the institution itself can be very divergent. On the other hand, if any of you are actually convinced to join a gym after reading this article, and then end up going through some harrowing experience, know that coming after me is futile. I run a lot faster now after my treadmill hours and you won't be able to catch me.

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