

When it comes to your condo's gym facilities, location is everything

BY MARK J. STABLES

If you're an urban condo dweller, there's a very good chance that your building has a fitness facility built right in. (And if you're lucky, it will have a Movement Haus!) It may be located in the heart of the city, or it may be on the waterfront. It may be situated on the second floor, it may be on the 55th floor. It may be oriented facing north, it may face south.

At this moment, you may find yourself asking, "Isn't a gym, a gym?" In short, the answer is no. Not all condo gyms are created equal.

There are several important factors to consider when designing a state-of-the-art condo gym. The first and most important step is to determine the building's demographic – how old is the population, what is their disposable income, and are they first-time homebuyers?

Once this information is known, the fitness consultants (like those at Benchmark) can accurately calculate how many residents will utilize the space on a regular basis, determine if the fitness amenity space will be used predominantly for classes or private coaching, and lastly, decide on the various health and fitness

programs that will be offered, such as yoga, Pilates, spinning or Muay Thai.

Ultimately, the fitness consultants will successfully incorporate these and numerous other pieces of information into the design stage of your fitness amenity space before it ends up in developers' sales and marketing collateral.

POINT OF VIEW

Once your condo's architectural drawings are complete, developers then decide on where the fitness amenity will be housed. Thankfully, as condominium gyms become increasingly more popular they are evolving and more emphasis is being placed on proper design and optimal location within the building. Some of today's most progressive and highly sought after fitness amenities are located on high floors, affording views of city skylines, harbourfront or a ravine.

U Condominiums by Pemberton Group is a fine example of a condo gym with a view, with both towers' fitness amenities being located on the penthouse level.



Now, think to yourself, would you rather see a city skyline from the 55th floor, a bunch of dumpsters on the second floor or even worse, no view or windows at all?

WHAT'S YOUR EXPOSURE?

As with condominium units, the exposure of the building's fitness amenity space is also worth noting. It's wonderful to have a condo gym on a high floor although, if the water is south-facing and the gym is facing north, you'll miss out on a great view while you're getting fit on the treadmill. Secondly, a south-facing amenity is always welcoming, bathed with natural light throughout most of the day. This often makes the space more inviting and adds extra motivation for people working out on a regular basis.

Most condo dwellers using a fitness amenity space prefer to have natural light, ideally with a south-facing view, than to work out with fluorescent lights in a dimly-lit dungeon.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION!

Lastly, does the physical location or address of the building matter when it comes to designing the gym? Absolutely. The building's demographic information is revisited for further consideration. First-time home purchasers with limited available income for one-on-one private services (such as personal training or Pilates) will opt for classes and small group training in their condo. In contrast, a development in an affluent neighbourhood with baby boomers and empty nesters (who have more disposable income than their younger counterparts) may seek private coaching, where privacy and personal attention is paramount.

Location will not only dictate whether your building has studio space for classes and which fitness equipment

is housed in the amenity, but it will also determine which bespoke health and fitness services (like those from Benchmark) are offered. After your condominium's fitness amenity has been allocated, the interior design team will work with fitness consultants to co-create a design, layout and equip the gym based on the residents living in your building – thus rounding out the strategic design, equipment and programming (like our Movement Haus package) offered to developers and property management companies.

While your condo may house similar fitness equipment to the building across the street, you'll surely appreciate it when your fitness amenity is located on a high floor with a south exposure of a harbour or skyline view. Add optimal, made-to-order health and fitness programming into the mix and you know have a winning combination that will translate into a more pleasurable experience and better quality workout that will keep you coming back for more!



Mark J. Stables is founder of Benchmark Group and Movement Haus. He is a renowned fitness and wellness expert with over 15 years experience in the industry. Working with hundreds of urban condominium dwellers, Mark has experience and insight into the design of condo fitness amenities and the way people use them. As the landscape of fitness continues to evolve, this in-depth knowledge of health and fitness coupled with his passion for architecture and design yields an optimal exercise environment for today's urban athlete. Visit online at movementhaus.com, email info@movementhaus.com or call 416.428.3536.

