

The undeniable importance of a comfortable workout environment

Modern technological breakthroughs have enhanced just about every aspect of how we live today, so why then are people not quick enough to take advantage of the technology associated with what we do when we go to the gym? Please allow me to explain.

Many years ago there were common misconceptions about training. One was that you didn't drink any water during workouts as it "put out the fire inside you" that you create when working out. Another was that it was good to train in a hot and stuffy gym as this would make you "sweat the fat off". Fortunately we know these days that those two pieces of "knowledge" couldn't have been more wrong.

Firstly anyone that is even slightly serious about their training takes in their own drink, the vast majority of us simply take in 2 litres of mineral water, and it does have to be mineral water, just the cheap stuff is fine, but please DO NOT use tap water (don't get me started on that one). I personally drink 6 litres of water per day and 2 litres of that is before, during and after my workout. Some people do add other things to it at different stages and that's ok if it serves a definite need, after all each one of us is unique. I do however urge people not to drink from water fountains that are permanent fixtures within the gym unless there is a mineral water bottle on show and the bottle is shown to be changed every single day. This is important; you do not want to be feeding your body stale water as it will contain a bacterium which, whilst it may not harm you too much, is certainly NOT what your muscles are demanding during a workout.

However, of a much greater importance is the air quality that surrounds you. Your muscles demand and absolutely NEED a constant supply of good quality oxygen at all times to respond to whatever level of activity you are asking of them. So training anywhere that is too hot, stuffy or with a poor supply of constant fresh cool air is not only a waste of time, it can actually be detrimental and cause you to become catabolic as the muscles desperately try to get oxygen from anywhere that they can, just to keep them functioning. There is no point in just turning on a fan, that is just recirculating the same rubbish that you and everyone else is breathing in and out. Think about this; remembering that we breathe in oxygen but breathe out carbon dioxide, what does oxygen do to a fire and what does carbon dioxide do?

You see this is not rocket science. Have you ever seen what happens to a formula one race car if it has the wrong fuel and not enough clean air? Basically it blows up! Compare your body to a racing car, after all it's every bit as complex and far more important. Do you want people to admire how you look and how you perform or do you want to blow up?!

If you have ever been skiing you will know that it is much harder the higher your altitude because there is less oxygen in the air. Even nursery slopes at high altitude can be demanding whilst the same thing at ground level can be skied whilst you are having a conversation on the phone, I know because I have actually done that!

So it is extremely important that you train in a gym that has a good level of air quality, but that doesn't necessarily mean air conditioning is essential, the two gyms that I use both have excellent systems. At body limits in St Albans for example they have an extremely simple system and are set up so that a constant cool breeze can flow through the building whenever it is warm and the system is closed off when it is not required. At Golds gym in Bedford they have a more expensive system but the result is the same, good quality fresh air with high oxygen content thus enabling hugely beneficial full workouts, and not workouts where after 10 minutes your body is telling you to stop.

So wherever you train please just do an experiment. Spend an hour working out and see how you feel afterwards, write down notes or do whatever you have to do to make sure that you don't forget exactly how you feel. The next day, instead of going to the gym, do a power walk somewhere that there is lots of fresh air and again see how you feel, and again make notes. Then compare the two sets of notes and see which one you feel is best for your body. You may be astonished but at least you will then realise that your gym is not doing you the good that you thought it was, I'm sure that you can work out what to do from there?