

# Why join a gym?



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## ● Introduction

The health and fitness industry has demonstrated spectacular growth in recent years, attracting millions of new members in Great Britain as it becomes increasingly known that regular exercise is good for you. Both men and women, young and old alike are becoming more aware of the benefits of exercise.

## ● What are the benefits of regular exercise for me?

The physiological and psychological benefits of regular exercise are vast. It's been proved that regular exercise can:

- Increase your life quality and expectancy.
- Help to reduce the risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis and certain forms of cancer.
- Play an important role in your mental well-being.
- Relieve tension and stress, reduce depression and anxiety.
- Reduce or maintain bodyweight.
- Reduce the risk of developing heart disease.
- Reduce high blood pressure or the risk of developing high blood pressure.
- Boost self-image and improve psychological well-being.
- Reduce the risk of developing colon cancer and breast cancer.
- Build and maintain healthy muscles, bones and joints.
- Improve flexibility.
- Relieve insomnia.
- Reduce high cholesterol or the risk of developing high cholesterol.
- Help prevent diabetes.



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## ● But what is regular exercise?

To simply be healthy, the experts suggest you should build up to being physically active at a moderate intensity for 30 minutes, five days a week. Exercise scientists have discovered that for health purposes, mild to moderate levels of activity are all that is required.

Thirty minutes, five days a week sounds like a lot initially, but when you hear it's just mild to moderate activity, it's actually not that hard. So shed those fears of spending intense and exhausting sessions in the gym full of whipper-thin women and competitive bodybuilding males. Thankfully those days are gone and modern gyms are now full of a wide range of shapes, sizes and fitness levels. And they provide an enormous range of ways to keep you fitter, healthier, happier and living longer.



## ● Why join a gym?

Everyone has a different reason for going to the gym. They may wish to become healthier, lighter, more toned, more flexible, more energetic, more social or less stressed. They may be athletes or they may be amateurs preparing for a big event like running a marathon. They could be recovering from an injury, trying to escape a long day sat at a desk, or they may be continuing their training away from the rain and the long dark nights of winter.

Whatever your reasons for joining a gym and whatever your interests, the modern gym will help you find a programme that is best for you. The options and facilities nowadays range far beyond the cliché of pounding a treadmill and lifting dumbbells. Clubs now have a huge range of options to take any monotony out of exercising and to appeal to the different interests and reasons people join a gym. At a gym you can cross-train by incorporating classes; aerobics, kickboxing, Pilates, spinning, yoga or you can work independently on new advanced machines, Swiss balls, in the pool and more.

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Gyms and health clubs are also more aware than ever that due to our busy schedules, it is important that their club shouldn't just be a place to work-out – but a place where one can also relax. They are friendly, sociable places and encourage you to try new things, meet new friends and enjoy yourself. They are ideal places to escape to, which is why many also offer spas, saunas, Jacuzzis, beauty salons, hairdressers, massages, physiotherapists, restaurants and bars too, so that your membership extends well beyond a typical workout. And some gyms cater for the family too, offering services that look after young children, organising events and clubs for youngsters to join so their parents can get on with a workout or a relaxing time in the spa.



## ● You're not alone

Sometimes all this choice can be overwhelming if you are not familiar with all the facilities in a gym. You can get daunted by what to do, where to start, how much you need to do and how often. By joining a club, professional trainers will be on hand to help you at square one. From an initial consultation you can discuss your goals with them and together you can work out how to get there. A professional trainer will guide you through the machines, how they work, the different classes you can take, their different levels, their benefits and tailor a programme for you, taking into account the time you have, what you enjoy and what they know will be effective. An introduction like this can give you the confidence boost you need to know you are optimising your time at the gym. The programme keeps track of your progress and you became more motivated, knowing you are achieving your goals, something that is hard to do on your own. And as your needs and goals change, you can develop new programmes and set new targets.

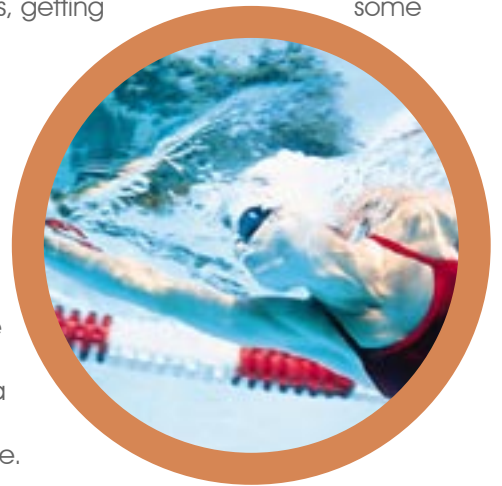
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## ● The latest technology

The manufacturers of many of the machines found in gyms have also evolved and gyms are constantly updating their equipment. Modern machines are now not only easier to use and more gentle on your body, but they allow you to measure your heart rate, the number of calories you use and can track your cumulative progress over a number of machines. And you no longer need to worry about missing your favourite TV show or being bored by the scenery remaining the same within the walls of a the gym; TVs and music systems are ubiquitous throughout the modern gyms to keep you entertained.

## ● What can I achieve?

Depending on what you choose to do at the gym; an aerobics class, a workout on the machines, utilising the support of a professional trainer, swimming in the pool, a yoga class, getting some healthy eating advice or even just relaxing in the spa – you can expect a number of results. You could experience weight loss, become more toned, manage stress better, strengthen your muscles and your bones, improve your flexibility, boost your energy, have better control of your blood pressure, start eating healthier, meet new people and gain more confidence in your physical abilities. The results and benefits of joining a gym are as broad, varied and plentiful as the range of options available.



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## ● Affordability and flexibility

Gyms are not just for the young and wealthy. Prices will obviously vary according to the facilities available and their location, but more variations in gym membership are now available. There are cheaper and less regimented options allowing you to pay less if you don't need to visit during peak hours, for instance and most gyms no longer require lengthy contracts that once tied you into an expensive, inflexible year-long membership.

## ● The physical and psychological benefits of exercise

There's no doubt about it – exercise has the power to enhance your life and your physical and mental well-being, look through the newspaper any day of the week and you are likely to find a new study touting the health benefits of regular exercise.

The following are just a few examples of what the experts say about the beneficial effects of exercise on major diseases and disabling health conditions.

### **Cancer**

'While inactivity can increase cancer risk, regular physical activity protects against some cancers. Regular exercise also helps to keep body weight at a healthy level, and being overweight or obese can greatly increase the risk of cancer. But the exercise itself also has a protective effect, which is independent of its effects on bodyweight.'

Cancer Research, [www.cancerresearchuk.org.uk](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org.uk)

# Why join a gym?

'Based on the current evidence, many health organisations have recommended people should do at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity, five times a week, to reduce their risk of cancer.'

Cancer Research, [www.cancerresearchuk.org.uk](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org.uk)

## Diabetes

'Physical activity is good for all of us but it is especially important if you have diabetes as it helps reduce the risk of health complications such as heart disease and circulatory problems. As well as diet and medication, physical activity is an integral part of diabetes management. Even small changes in activity can help you lead a healthier lifestyle.'

Diabetes UK, [www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)

## Arthritis

'Exercise prevents joints becoming unnecessarily stiff and painful and keeps your muscles strong. If you allow your muscles to grow weak then it will become harder to move around; you are also more likely to trip or fall and so cause even more injury.'

arc – Arthritis Research Campaign, [www.arc.org.uk](http://www.arc.org.uk)

'Exercise is one of the best ways of relieving the symptoms of arthritis. It keeps you mobile, eases pain, relieves stress and protects your joints by keeping the muscles strong. And it can help you lose any extra weight and take the strain off your joints.'

Arthritis Care, [www.arthritiscare.org.uk](http://www.arthritiscare.org.uk)

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## **Osteoporosis**

'One of the best ways to build and maintain healthy bones is through exercise' International Osteoporosis Foundation, [www.osteofound.org](http://www.osteofound.org)

## **Mental health/depression**

'Exercise is believed to help depression and provide natural pain relief. It does this by triggering the release of endorphins, anti-stress hormones that block pain signals from the brain and serotonin, a chemical compound that affects mood, emotion, sleep and appetite.'

NHS Direct, [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

## **Stroke**

'Just 30 minutes of activity five days a week is enough to reduce your risk of stroke. You don't have to do it all in one go – it is just as effective to exercise a few times a day in ten, 15 or 20 minutes sessions.'

The Stroke Association, [www.stroke.org.uk](http://www.stroke.org.uk)

## **Coronary heart disease and stroke**

'Regular activity slows down the narrowing of the arteries to the heart and brain that occurs with age. The more exercise you do, the stronger and more efficient the heart becomes so it can pump more blood with each beat.'

British Heart Foundation, 'Get Active' brochure.

# Why join a gym?

## High blood pressure

'Physical activity can help to reduce high blood pressure. It also reduces the likelihood of developing it in the first place.'

British Heart Foundation, 'Get Active' brochure.

## Weight control

'Exercise helps to burn off excess fat. Regular exercise combined with a healthy diet is the best way of losing excess weight and to maintain a healthy body weight.'

Exercise for Health – Patient UK, [www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

## ● Conclusion

We all know that getting involved in physical activity has numerous benefits; physically, psychologically and socially. Joining a gym could be your first step on the road toward a fitter, healthier and ultimately happier you.

So what are you waiting for – get out and join a gym today.