

PERSONAL TRAINER SECRETS—WITHOUT  
THE PERSONAL TRAINER PRICE TAG

# Beat *the* Gym

- The Workouts Trainers Save for Their Celebrity Clients
- The Single Most Powerful Exercise to Tone Your Butt
- The ABSolute Best Exercise to Flatten Your Stomach
- The Machines Fitness Models Use to Lose Weight Fast

**TOM HOLLAND**

**FOR MEN  
& WOMEN**

"One of the top ten trainers in the United States." —*Women's Health* on Tom Holland



# Beat *the* Gym

**Personal Trainer Secrets—Without  
the Personal Trainer Price Tag**

**TOM HOLLAND WITH MEGAN McHARRIS**

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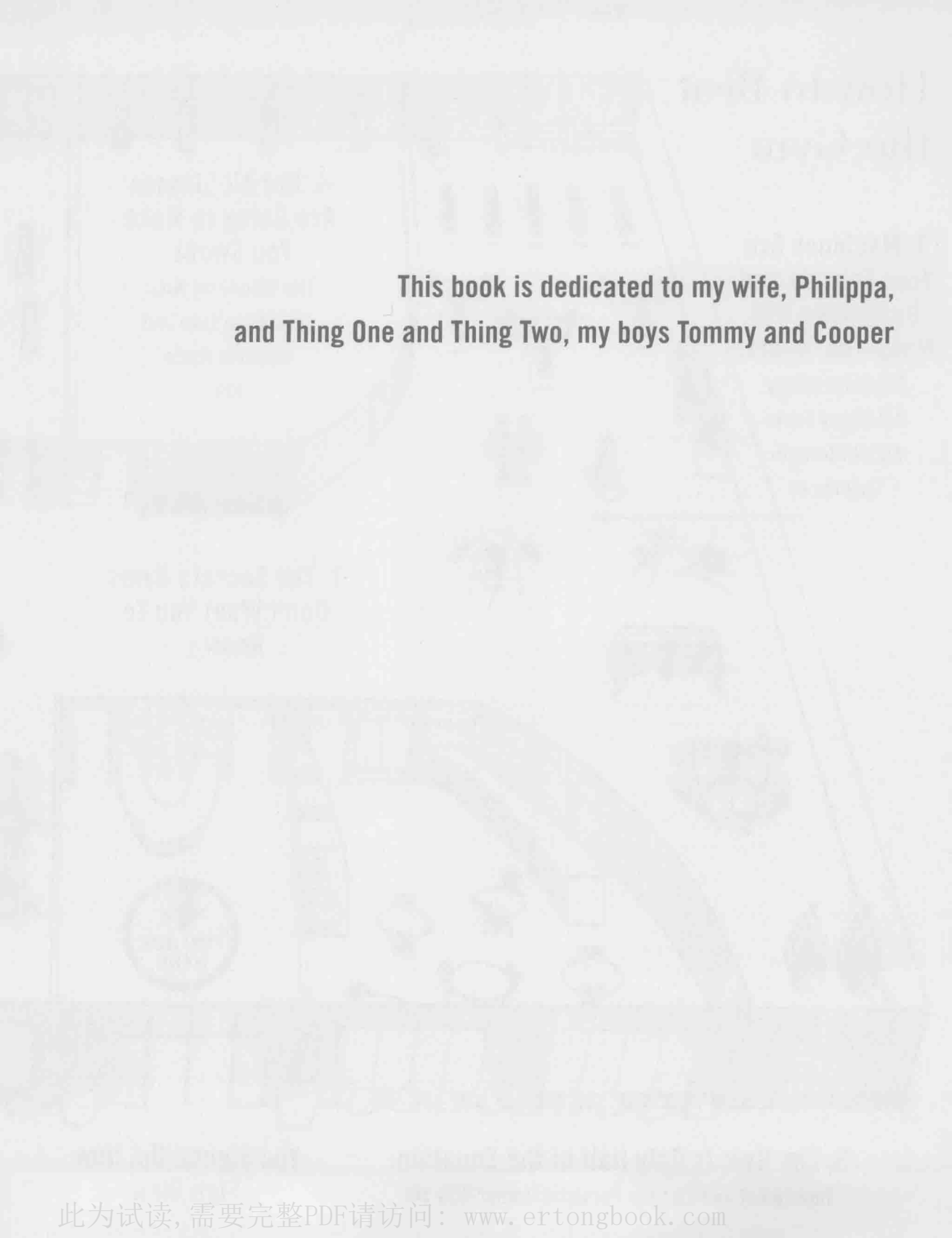
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# Beat *the* Gym



**This book is dedicated to my wife, Philippa,  
and Thing One and Thing Two, my boys Tommy and Cooper**

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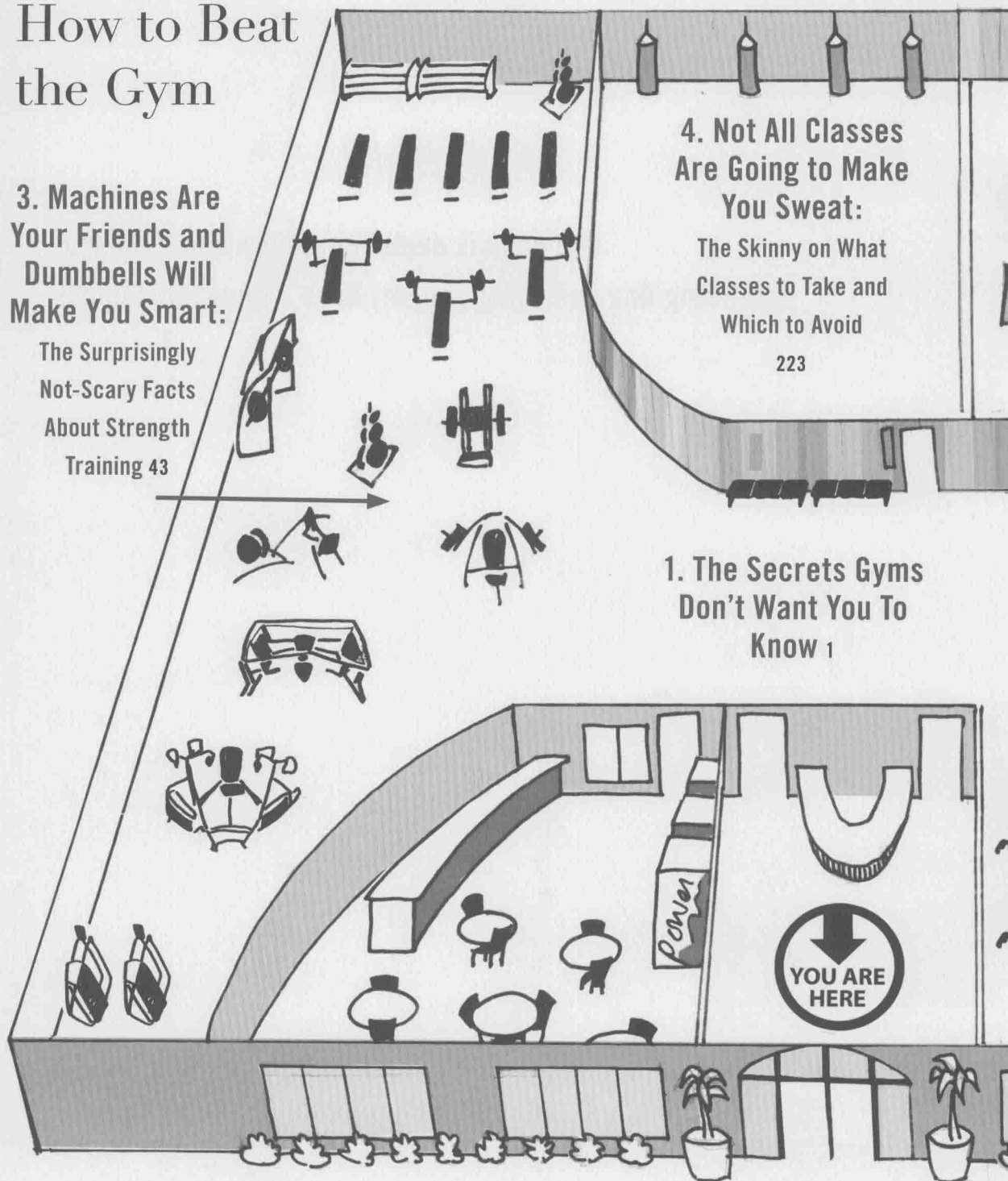
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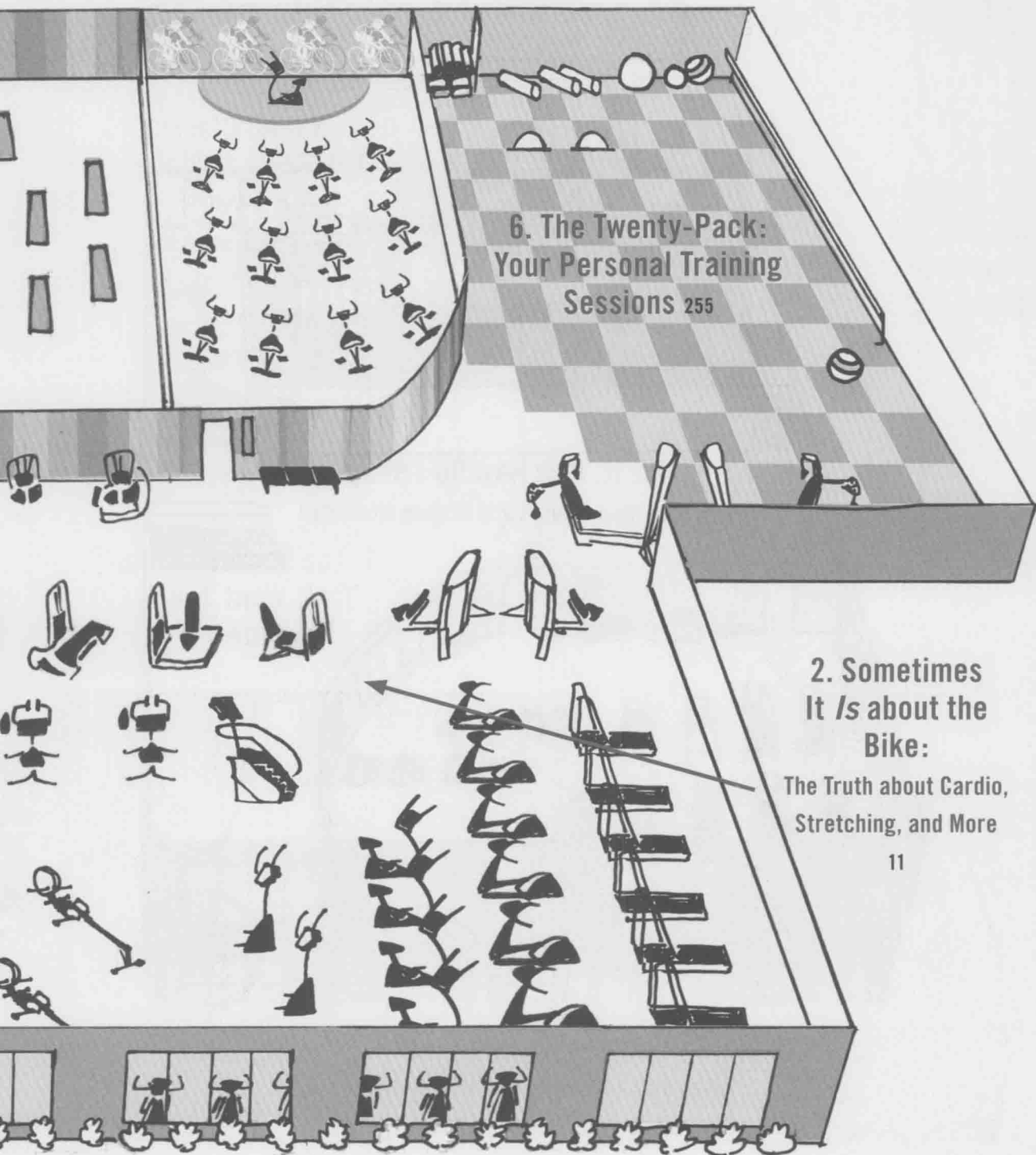
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# You Signed Up, Now Sign On

**Y**ou have invested hours of your time and a significant amount of money in your gym membership and workouts but have yet to see a big return on your investment. But don't beat yourself up; instead, **BEAT THE GYM.**

I have worked in the fitness industry for almost two decades now, first as a personal trainer at many of New York City's top gyms, then as a fitness instructor for elite athletes and celebrities, and now as the owner of my own gym, the Tom Holland Athletic Club in New Canaan, Connecticut; and I know that the big bad secret of seeing results is having a personal trainer provide you with a personalized workout and stand next you to motivate you to get it done. But personal trainers are incredibly expensive, and often it is difficult to find the right one. What I have set out to do in this book is give you the advice, training sessions,

and support that are unique to the personal trainer experience so you will have the motivation and knowledge to finally reach your fitness goals.

I am here to be your personal trainer. I am here to help you look better, feel better, and, best of all, live longer. I have worked with thousands of people around the world to achieve all of the above, and I can help you do so as well. The best part is, it makes no difference which of the three is the reason you first decided to join a gym and start working out, you get all three.

But it's not that easy.

More than 60 percent of people who join a gym never return after three months. If you're like most people, you joined the gym with the best of intentions, all fired up and ready to change your body and your life, but so far all you have ended up with is frustration. I know how you feel; I see it every day at my own gym. It drives me crazy to watch people work out in vain. Members who have paid good money for their gym memberships take the time to show up and work out, yet they see few to no results. That really stinks. I often return to my old clubs in New York City and see the same people doing the same routines, looking *exactly the same as they did years ago*. They show up and work out three, four, five times a week but have literally nothing to show for their efforts. That's not okay. I want you to enjoy going to the gym and be committed and passionate about the workout. The way to do that is to be knowledgeable about what the gym truly offers and how you can make it work for you. How you can BEAT THE GYM.

I have the greatest job in the world, and I am in the unique position of being able to help you to look better, feel better, and live longer. There is nothing I enjoy more. That's why I have made that endeavor my life's work. I have both worked in and worked out in every type of gym imaginable. I spent years grinding away as a trainer and group fitness instructor in New York City, seven days a week, often seventeen-hour days. Crunch. Sports Club LA. Reebok. Equinox. New York Sports Clubs. The Cardio Fitness Center. Private homes and private gyms. Celebrities, CEOs, real people, I have shaped every body type imaginable. And I can transform yours.

At the same time as I was working my butt off as a trainer, I also set out to learn as much as I could about fitness. I have been certified by all of the top fitness organizations: the American College of Sports Medicine, the National Strength and Conditioning Association, the National Academy of Sports Medi-

cine, the American Council on Exercise, and the Aerobics and Fitness Association of America. I went back to get a master's degree, not only in exercise science but with a concentration in sports psychology as well. After working with hundreds and hundreds of private clients I realized how important the mind is to this whole process of getting in shape.

Everyone is different; we all have different body types, different fitness histories, different personalities, different likes and dislikes, different schedules, and different goals.

So this book has many different plans. Should you do cardio or weights first? What's the best exercise to get a flat stomach? Are you a guy who wants bigger arms? Do you want to get the most out of your cardio workouts? Do you have an event you need to drop weight quickly for?

I also answer many of the most common questions you have when it comes to the gym: What classes should I take based on my goals? Do I need a trainer, and, if so, how do I go about choosing one? Which are better, free weights or machines? What should I eat before a workout? And after? After I achieve the body I want, how can I keep it? If I want a home gym, what equipment should I buy and why? I answer all these questions and many more. *You signed up, now sign on.* It is time to BEAT THE GYM. I have to warn you, I may come across a little strong in certain parts of the book. A little harsh, even. Just remember that I have your best intentions in mind. I want you to succeed. I know that you can. It's just that I get frustrated with all the misinformation out there that is keeping you from attaining your goals.

*Beat the Gym* is your road map to getting the most out of your workout. The most out of your gym membership. As I tell all my clients, you are now my advertising. I have a vested interest in your looking great, feeling great, and living longer. No more wasted time and wasted money. Today is the first day of your new program, the one that will actually deliver results. Results that will last a lifetime!

1.

# The Secrets Gyms Don't Want You to Know

**W**hen I first started working as a trainer at one of the major clubs in New York City, my goal was to learn as much about the fitness club world as possible, not simply the personal training and group fitness side but every aspect of the operations of a fitness club.

One day, when I was a very wet-behind-the-ears personal trainer, I stopped to talk with the general manager, who was standing at the front desk running reports.

“Quick question: how do you know when to stop taking memberships?”

She continued to type on the computer without looking up.

“What do you mean?”

“You know, is there a formula for the size of the gym and how many mem-

bers it can have? Like, ten thousand square feet means two thousand members or something like that?”

She looked up at me and laughed.

“You mean when do we ‘cap’ memberships? What is our cutoff number? There isn’t one. It doesn’t exist. We just sell, sell, sell.”

She laughed again and resumed typing.

There is no formula. Fitness club salespeople make money based on sales. They have monthly goals to hit. All they want to do is get people in the door.

And they hope many don’t come back in. *Ever.*

Think about it: if just 25 percent of all the members of a gym showed up all at the same time, there would be complete chaos. Mayhem. There would be long lines for every treadmill, elliptical trainer, and leg-press machine. This leads to Rule 1 about most gyms:

## **Rule 1: Gyms Hope You Sign Up but Never Show Up**

It’s absolutely true. Most gyms are actually selling you a membership, asking you to come and join the club, welcoming you with open arms and big smiles, yet they really don’t ever want to ever see you again. You would be shocked to find out how many total members there are in your gym. There are hundreds, sometimes thousands, of people at every fitness club who literally join, go a handful of times, then never step through the doors again. *Ever.* A huge percentage continue to have their credit cards billed month after month, often year after year.

Gym owners love those members.

Of the fraction who do use the gym, there exists an even smaller fraction who are referred to by management as the “heavy users.” You know who these people are. You may even be one of them. The so-called hard-core members. They are the ones who do use the gym four, five, six days a week. Sometimes twice a day. They are getting the most for their money. If you are already one of those people, great. This book will help you take your workout to an even higher level.

Chances are, however, if you are reading this book, you are not one of these regular users. You are sporadic. You are like the majority of gym members: after New Year’s, just before summer, those are the times you go to the gym. Then, inevitably, you fall off. Days, weeks, maybe even months go by without a single visit.

It all really comes down to motivation and incentive. Who can be motivated when putting in effort and getting nothing back? When you see results, you suddenly become motivated. Funny how that works. This book will help you change your body in ways you only dreamed were possible, regardless of how frequently you use the gym now.

## **Rule 2: Listen to the Pitch, Then Walk Away**

Remember that most salespeople, no matter what they say as they schmooze you around the facility, couldn't care less about whether you lose weight, bulk up, slim down, whatever. All they really care about is closing the deal. They have monthly goals to hit. They are also on commission. You represent dollar signs, not much else. Such is life.

So during your initial visit to the gym, sign nothing, no matter how great the deal seems to be. They'll throw in free personal training, massages or free months, offer to wash your car, anything to get you to join right away. Don't. The fact remains that when you walk out the door that offer will still be good, regardless of what the salesperson says. More important, the offer will quite often be made even better after you leave. That person knows you are interested. He or she wants your money. The first pitch is just the starting point.

## **Rule 3: Do Not Sign the Contract in the Gym**

Take the contract home with you and read it carefully, word for word. There's lots of small print. Trust me.

## **Rule 4: Once You Do Sign Up, It's Really Hard to Break Up**

Ever try to get out of your gym membership? It can be much worse than trying to end a bad relationship. Many gyms require things like a doctor's note or proof that you have moved hundreds of miles away before they will even consider terminating your membership. And when you do end your contract, you often have to pay for a few months more before you are truly free.

Have the salesperson explain what the exact terms of ending the contract are.

## **Trainer Tip: The initiation fee is negotiable.**

Most gyms have a onetime initiation fee. It can range from a few to hundreds of dollars. This initiation fee is in addition to your monthly gym payments. Be aware that, at almost every gym, this fee is completely negotiable. Ever notice how around New Year's or just before summer, gyms start to advertise "\$0 initiation fee"? Take advantage of this when joining a gym. Start by refusing to pay any initiation fee at all. None. It's pretty much up to you and your negotiation skills. If you can't get the salesperson to knock it out completely, try cutting it in half. If you don't get what you want, walk away. Most likely the salesperson will have taken down your contact information. If you walk away, chances are very good that you will receive a phone call from the salesperson, reducing the initiation fee or wiping it out completely.

The main payment you will make to the gym is the membership fee. You will most often have two options for payment, monthly or paid in full. Many people choose to have their credit card charged monthly because they don't want to shell out all the money up front. This is a choice you have to make. Realize that many gyms will offer you a discount, for instance 10 percent off the total membership price, if you pay all at once. So you can save some more money there. Another benefit of paying up front is that it makes "breaking up" with the gym a little less complicated. Yes, you are locked in for a year unless you move or have a medical reason for leaving, but at the end of the year the contract is up. You can choose to renew or not. You won't have the hassle of trying to stop the monthly charges as you would if you choose to have your credit card charged every month.

## **Ask a Trainer: So you can negotiate the initiation fee; can you also negotiate the monthly fee?**

The short answer is "Maybe." You can always try. If the monthly fee is \$75, you can ask to have five, maybe ten bucks knocked off per month, especially if you are joining with a spouse or other family members. This is much harder to do than for the initiation fee, but you have a shot.

# Choosing a Gym: It's All about Location, Location, Location

I don't care how beautiful the gym is; if it's not close, you're not going to go. Period. Don't kid yourself into thinking otherwise. Most people just aren't disciplined and motivated enough to travel even ten extra minutes to get to the gym on a consistent basis. I don't care how nice the showers are or how new the equipment is, it's all about convenience. Sure, you might go to that beautiful club that's a little farther away than you wanted for a few weeks. But as work and life start to get in the way, that commute can start to really get annoying. Even five extra minutes can be a problem, especially when time is tight, like when you want to take classes in the morning before work. Find a gym as close to you as possible, either where you live or where you work, depending on when you will be using it.

You don't have to love it. You just have to like it. Then you will use it.

**Trainer Tip: Choose a gym as close to you as possible.**

## OTHER QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. What are the hours? Does the gym open early enough and/or stay open late enough for you?
2. Can you go whenever you want, or is your rate for “nonpeak” hours only?
3. Does the gym offer towel service? And if so, is there a fee? (Yes, some gyms actually *charge* you to use a towel!)
4. If the gym offers classes, are they included or is there an additional fee for them? Some gyms have one price for use of the gym only, another for classes only, and a third for both. Some gyms charge for certain classes (usually the popular ones), while others are free. Be sure to clarify this beforehand.
5. Does the gym offer babysitting? If so, how much does it cost?
6. If the gym has other locations, can you use them all or does that involve an additional fee?



## Rule 5: Take the Gym for a Test Drive

Joining a gym for a year is a big commitment. You can't really tell what it's truly like by just spending a few minutes walking around. You really should try it out before signing on the dotted line. Most gyms will offer you a few free day passes or a free week. Take advantage of this. You want to work out at your potential new club at all the different times you would be using it. What's it like at peak hours? Can you get on a treadmill when you want to, or are there long lines? What are the people like? Is it too hot? Too cold? Too crowded? Not crowded enough? Can you get into the classes you want? Use everything you would be using if you joined, including the showers. Also see what your commute to and from the gym is like. Rule out all surprises before you make the big commitment.

### **Trainer Tip: Many gyms offer their freebies online.**

**If you are considering joining a specific gym, check out their website first. Many gyms will have things like free passes and special offers posted on their sites. Free day passes, free weeks, free introductory training sessions, and more. You can often print them out and bring them in for your free trial or discounts.**

## Rule 6: The “Free” Orientation Is All About Selling You Personal Training

When you are sitting in front of the salesperson at a fitness club deciding whether or not you will join, he or she will inevitably start to list for you all the wonderful things that come with your membership in an effort to sweeten and ultimately close the deal. One of those incentives is usually a free personal training session. Or two, possibly even three sessions. While the salesperson may tell you that this session is a great way for you to learn how to use the equipment so that you can do it on your own, that's the exact opposite of what the club management wants. The sessions are in fact opportunities for trainers to show you how much you need them, how little you know, and how you can't possibly work out on your own. They are trained salesmen, taught the difference between open- and closed-ended questions. At the end of the session you will not be asked “So do you want to buy personal training sessions?” No, a seasoned trainer will take you through a fantastic workout, one that you can't possibly do on your own, then take you to the personal training desk and say “So, do you want to buy a twenty-pack or fifty-pack of personal training sessions?”