

The Home Stretch

We ask leading experts how to set up a home gym that promises health and fitness within the comfort of your own home

Written by Payal Doshi

I am recovering from another legendary new year brought in after days of party planning with immaculate to-do lists. Ah! The food, the drink, the people, the dresses, the ambience, the mood - everything was so decadently excessive! It is funny though, how the morning after, I continue to immaculately plan another list. This time it's my celebrated 2009 Resolutions charter. Right on top, in capital letters, it says 'Get into shape'. Isn't that a surprise?

It is easier said than done. Like most of us, I spend three hours a day commuting through the busy streets of the city. Then there are hours of sitting slouched over a desk or computer, with a bathroom call as the high point of physical exertion. Tall hopes are spun around gym memberships and the promise to work out for an hour after office, but the tortuous ride home is sufficient to shelf the idea for another lifetime.

However, there is some hope for the mildly diligent amongst us. The home gym is now quickly becoming more of a health requirement than a luxury status symbol. It is the most efficient, cost-effective and time saving way to treadmill your way to that coveted six-pack! The advantages include privacy, convenience and the fact that you own your gym rather than pay monthly rent. (And remember: Avoiding a workout when your gym is under your own roof will create enormous guilt!)



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SPACE, ETC

"The gym area should be isolated to enable a private and holistic workout," says Leena Mogre, celebrity fitness expert and proprietor of Specialised Fitness Gym.

"By dedicating a room or a portion of the room to a home gym, you make a commitment to regular exercise." So try and find an inspiring location. This could mean a covered patio with garden views, your bedroom or even a redundant garage full of unwanted furniture. The ideal size of a home gym would be between 150-350 square feet, with a minimum ceiling height of seven feet. This will permit comfortable moving around between equipments and workouts. If you don't have the luxury of devoting one full room, you can create a partition by using a folding screen, which is easy to put up or put away as need be. Lighting and ventilation are as important as the ambience. Soothing colours like light blue,

Workout Gear

- Moisture-transfer fabrics work better than cotton as they don't stay wet or feel uncomfortable. Opt for CoolMax, dri-fit, supplex, lycra or microfiber
- Look for flat-lock stitching at the seams to prevent chafing
- A supportive, streamlined sports bra is an essential for women
- Get a pair of cross trainer shoes. These are built up around the ankle with heavier, more supportive materials that offer stability for weight lifting and cushioning for running, making them perfect for those who circuit train.

sea green, lavender and pink work wonderfully. Skip fluorescent lights and choose ones with a dimmer or halogen bulbs for a warm glow, which will inspire you to keep on working out. Lighting must be positioned carefully so that it doesn't get in the way. On another front, let the beats move your feet. Studies show that music can motivate you to exercise at a higher intensity. Invest in a sound system for your home gym or get an mp3 player to keep the tunes at your fingertips.

Finally, maintain order. Don't let your home gym become a catchall or storage room. It must be sufficiently equipped with everything you may need during your training session so you wouldn't have to leave the room mid-workout - which means making space for a mirror to observe your form and execution, a weight tree to avoid clutter, towels, water bottles and so on. It should also adhere to safety requirements like non-slip flooring and a stabilizer for the treadmill to prevent any accidents.

EQUIPMENT

According to Huzefa Lokhandwala, Assistant Manager, Fitness Training at Gold's Gym, "Your equipment should cover the essentials: cardiovascular and strength training." However don't go overboard. "Start out with the basic equipment so you feel comfortable and not overwhelmed. As your needs expand, add on." Huzefa advises.

One of the biggest advantages of a home gym is that you can completely customise it to suit your needs. Consult a personal trainer to help you decide what equipment to buy. Using a treadmill is recommended for cardio exercise as it keeps your pace consistent and by utilising the incline, it provides a cardio challenge even while running at a slower speed. A good pick: **Proline Fitness Ti Entertainment (Rs. 1,86,900)**, which comes with an integrated 7-inch TV screen and integrated DVD player boasts an innovative folding design that makes lifting and storage of the treadmill easier and safer. **Euro Fitness Georgia Tel (Rs. 1,60,000)** and **Fitness World 5500 (Rs. 2,70,000)** also assure you of an entertaining yet serious workout.

Along with cardio, Prameet Kotak, personal trainer and proprietor of RAPTfx advises functional strength training for all body muscles. Multi-station gym machines like **Body Solid EXM1500S Home Gym System (Rs. 75,000)**, **BodyCraft Xpress Pro Home Gym System (Rs. 1,75,000)**, **Powertec Workbench Leverage**



Home Gym System (Rs. 1,00,000) and Techno Gym's range of equipment use cables, weights and other forms of resistance to provide several workout options for the entire body, while occupying minimal space.

Power Plate "my3" (Rs. 1,00,000) uses high-end technology called vibration therapy to increase circulation and flexibility, ridding the body of toxins. The benefits are plenty, from an immediate improvement in blood circulation, increased muscle strength and flexibility to better range of motion core conditioning and stability.

Another option is the **exercise ball**, which can be used for a variety of exercises. Make sure you choose a ball that matches your size. When you sit on the ball, your knees should be at a 90-degree angle. They cost between **Rs. 3,000-12,000**. Buy one that is durable, since it is less likely to deflate, lose shape or burst.

You will also need a **stability bench** that allows you to vary the incline for many exercises. To increase muscle mass, you need to challenge yourself with heavy weights that require a stable surface. The benches cost between **Rs. 8,000-25,000**. The free weights (dumbbells) cost approximately **Rs. 25** a pound, while those with rubber coated ends and contoured grips cost about **Rs. 40** a pound. It is recommended that beginners purchase a set that includes 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 15 and 20-pound weights.

Top all this off with the right nutrition and comfortable workout gear, and you will be frolicking on the beach with an envy-inspiring body by summertime - all from the comfort of your very own home. Sigh! Finally this time, I'll actually get to cross 'Get in shape' off my list.

- 1 Nike Airborne
- 2 Nike Dumbbells
- 3 Nike Air Pegasus



- 4 Proline Fitness Ti Entertainment
- 5 Power Plate "my3"

