

SUPPLEMENT TO
Boston Business Journal

How-To Book

MAY 29 – JUNE 4, 2009

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

From choosing a financial adviser to the right health club, let the experts tie up the loose ends

INSIDE



HOW TO CHOOSE AN

ARCHITECT

Draw on talent: Architects always looking for work.

P6



HOW TO CHOOSE A

FINANCIAL ADVISER

Experience counts when choosing a financial adviser.

P9



HOW TO CHOOSE A

HEALTH CLUB

Exercise your knowledge: Health clubs not all the same.

P11



HOW TO CHOOSE A

AIR CHARTER SERVICE

Air charter only way to fly – if you can get over costs.

P16



HOW TO START A

BUSINESS BLOG

Blogging: Expand your sphere of business influence.

P23

Health Care & Benefits

May 29-June 4, 2009

BostonBusinessJournal.com

Boston Business Journal 11

Exercise your knowledge: Health clubs not the same

BY KEITH REGAN
SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

At first glance, many health clubs look alike. From the latest cardio equipment to staffs of personal trainers and group exercise programs, many facilities offer similar menus of services.

But health club industry insiders say closer inspection reveals a host of differences in terms of price, cleanliness, con-

venience and level of support services that, once

uncovered, can help guide a would-be member to choosing the right gym.

Boston-area residents eager to boost their fitness have no shortage of choices, from corner gyms to national chains, each seeking to distinguish themselves with its facilities and services.

Which club a person chooses probably depends first on what they need from their gym, said **Lloyd Gainsboro**, the president of **Dedham Health and Athletic Complex Inc.**, a 240,000-square-foot facility that features adult and children's programs as well as on-site medical services and physician partnerships.

"If you're a 20-something and you're already in shape, you can join a Gold's

or a World Gym and use the equipment and be fine," he said. "But the majority of the population, especially for older people, need guidance to make their workouts successful and to make sure they don't actually hurt themselves when they're trying to get fit."

Dedham Health and Athletic includes personal training in all memberships and only hires personal trainers with four-year college degrees in exercise science or physiology.

"The industry has gotten better, but it's still easy to become certified as a trainer," he said. "We want to make sure our clients are being taught by people who know what they're talking about so they'll keep coming back and meet their goals."

Many clubs are now working extra hard to ensure their members continue to come to the gym, lowering as many barriers to working out as they can.

"We want to make it as easy as possible for them to come and work out," said **Pam Moryl**, corporate director of sales at **Health Works Fitness Centers Inc.**, based in Boston. That means choosing a gym with convenient locations and the right amenities.

While different factors may influence a club choice, some common themes are

often cited by club owners as carrying significant weight for consumers.

For instance, a good club should have very high standards for cleanliness, with workout and locker-room areas every bit as clean as the best hotel, said **Derek Christensen**, owner of **Revolution Fitness LLC** on Columbus Avenue.

Club shoppers should take the time to become fully aware of what a facility is offering for contract terms and what is included in the price, said **Gainsboro**, whose Dedham facility offers 30-day memberships and does not require long-term commitments. "People need to ask about extra class fees or babysitting," he said.

Christensen, meanwhile, dispelled the myth that health clubs want people to sign up and not come to the gym. For a locally owned shop like his own seeking to compete against national chains such as **Boston Sports Clubs** and **LA Fitness**, more service and attention from club staff is a key differentiator.

"In the end, the price points are all pretty similar," he said. "We get a lot of high-end users — people that sign up actually come and that's good because I can have fewer members on my roster and pay each of them better and more personalized attention."



BY MARC BERGLAU / BUSINESS JOURNAL

Derek Christensen, owner of Revolution Fitness, took a year to renovate his club before it was up and running.

GET PHYSICAL

- Be sure the health club you join has certified instructors to ensure safety.
- These days, clubs are trying harder to accommodate people's busy lives. Before joining, make sure you're club works for your schedule.
- Read the contract carefully. Know what the membership price includes.