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### **GYM ETIQUETTE**

**Dress for success** - Wearing the wrong clothing to the gym can hurt you, or at least negatively impact your workout. Here are a few things you should leave at home, according to [Women's Health](#):

- **100% cotton clothes.** Even though it may stink less than synthetic fabrics, cotton absorbs all your sweat—which may lead to bacterial growth. Instead, try sweat-wicking materials like spandex and polyester.
- **Worn-out sneakers.** As tennis shoes get older and lose tread, they provide less shock absorption and can impact the alignment of your feet, knees, and hips. If the designs on the bottom of your shoes are wearing off, it's time for a new pair.
- **Rings.** Wearing jewelry while you lift can cause an injury if you lose your grip on the weights, or the iron bar might scratch the metal or stone of your ring. Leave your jewelry in the locker room or at home or try wearing a silicon ring to the gym.
- **Ill-fitting clothes.** Too-tight gear can cause chafing, leg cramps, or even breathing difficulty. On the other hand, baggy clothes can get in the way while you're running or lifting. Find a middle ground: workout clothes that fit and flatter you.

And once you've found the best exercise outfits, make sure you're wearing fresh gear to each workout. You don't want moist, sweat-filled clothes to grow bacteria in your gym bag!

**Give people personal space** - Gyms can get busy, but it's polite to give other gym-goers as much space as you can.

Try not to get on a bike or treadmill right next to someone if other machines are open. If you do have to squeeze in your cardio next to another person, [keep your eyes on your own machine](#), TV screen, and workout stats. Your neighbor doesn't want you watching over his or her shoulder!

Similar gym etiquette rules apply in the weight room: Keep a wide berth around the heavy lifters to keep them (and yourself) safe. You also want to stay out of their line of sight; while this may seem counterintuitive, it's distracting to weightlifters when they notice someone close to their bench or bar.

And regardless of where you are, don't flirt with others who are trying to exercise. The gym is a great place to meet new people, but it should also be a safe space to work out, not a place where people worry about being harassed.

**Clean up after yourself** - During your workout, it's best to keep your water bottle, towel, mat, and other items [close to you](#) instead of spreading them all over the place. This helps other gym-goers know which equipment you're using and which spaces are available for them to exercise in. And if you spill your water or protein shake, clean it up immediately so nobody slips and falls.

Once you've finished your reps, put away any weights, mats, or exercise balls you borrowed. And while we mentioned this before, *please* wipe down all machines you used! [Bacteria can live for several hours](#) on sweaty gym equipment (and viruses can last several days), but when you use disinfectant spray and paper towels, you're fighting these germs and helping your gym stay clean.

**Avoid making calls and use headphones** - Using your phone for anything other than music at the gym can be disruptive to others. That's why you shouldn't make any calls—or keep them in the lobby, locker room, or [community area](#). If you do have to take a call, try using headphones and excusing yourself from the crowded cardio or weights room.

Speaking of headphones, you should use these whenever you listen to music or stream a TV show during a workout. But it's also important to pay attention to others who are wearing them; they may be intently focused on their exercise or jamming to loud workout tunes. For this reason, don't startle or quickly approach someone with headphones in, even if you know them. You don't want someone to lose control of their equipment just because you wanted to say hi.