



Gym once a day keeps the doctor away!

Are you the type to exercise daily in a gym? Personally, I prefer outdoor activities like downhill skiing or cycling 😊. However, for many hotel guests, having a well-equipped gym where they can work out is a big plus, and most hotels offer this amenity.

History^{1,2,3}

Over 4,000 years ago, the Egyptians introduced structured acrobatics and fitness training. At that time, it is believed that the Chinese also practised Cong Fu, an exercise that combines breathing and fluid movements. However, it was not until the Greeks introduced formalized training for competitive athletes that fitness received cultural acceptance. Still, once Greek culture lost prominence, so did structured fitness.

It took nearly 2,000 years for fitness to become popular again. In 1569, an Italian published the book *“De Arte Gymnastica Aput Ancientes”* in which he described the use of gymnastic-like movements for physical training. Approximately 200 years later, a German introduced a curriculum at his school that used movements and training from Greek gymnastics. Twenty years later, another German authored *“Gymnastics for Youth: A Practical Guide to Healthful and Amusing Exercise for the Use of Schools.”* These two publications catalyzed the re-emergence of fitness as a means of improving one’s physical health.

In 1799, Franz Nachtegall of Denmark established what is believed to be the world’s first private gymnastics club. Around 1850, the Boston YMCA introduced the American public to one of the first multipurpose-style fitness gyms in the U.S.

Hotel Gyms⁴

In the 1980s, travelers started demanding more of hotels than just rooms. They wanted pools, spas, and eventually, a gym. At that time, almost half of people in the States worked out (compared to 24% in 1960). On November 2, 1981, the cover of Time magazine read *“The Fitness Craze”*.

¹<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gym#:~:text=The%20first%20recorded%20gymnasiums%20date,of%20local%20champions%20of%20sport.>

²<https://www.cntraveler.com/story/the-hotel-gym-reborn#:~:text=But%20the%20fit%2Dminded%20traveler,use%20a%20hotel's%20fitness%20facility>

³<https://www.lesmills.com/us/clubs-and-facilities/research-insights/audience-insights/history-of-health-clubs-how-gyms-have-evolved-through-the-ages/>

⁴<https://www.cntraveler.com/story/the-hotel-gym-reborn#:~:text=But%20the%20fit%2Dminded%20traveler,use%20a%20hotel's%20fitness%20facility.>

By 1991, 40% of U.S. hotels had gyms. The fitness center was often housed in an unused guest room or meeting space, sometimes in the basement. It was not until 2003 that Westin, fueled by a \$10-million-plus investment, launched WestinWORKOUT, a 24/7 gym with cardio machines and weights, but also a focus on experience: an airy design, natural light, Bose speakers, exercises courtesy of Reebok. Industry experts tend to agree that Westin pioneered the modern-day hotel gym as we know it.

Ten years later, wellness travel and tourism gave way to brands like *EVEN Hotels* which, in 2014, opened with the fit traveler in mind. Every room had yoga mats and resistance bands, on-demand fitness videos, and dedicated in-room space for movement.

Gyms Use^{5,6,7, 8}

According to the *American Hotel and Lodging Association* in 2017, 85% of US hotels had gyms, up from 63% in 2004.

Although the vast majority of hotels offer this convenience to their guests, gyms are not widely used. According to a Cornell University survey, although nearly half of hotel respondents said they planned to use the gym during their stay, less than a quarter followed through.

Interest in exercising varies with age. For instance, in the US, a report showed that among business travelers who work out regularly at home, millennials (18-34 years old) are the most committed to exercising during a trip, followed by GenX (35 to 54 years old) and Baby Boomers (55 years and older).

For a hotel gym to be attractive it must be well maintained and clean. Who wants to enter a gym room that wreaks sweat...? It is therefore essential to have the

⁵ <https://www.travelpulse.com/news/hotels-and-resorts/how-likely-are-guests-to-actually-use-the-hotel-gym#:~:text=Interestingly%2C%20nearly%20half%20of%20respondents,less%20often%20than%20they%20intended>

⁶ <https://energym.io/blogs/news/do-hotels-have-gyms#:~:text=Indeed%2C%20people%20who%20purposefully%20book,than%20one%2Dquarter%20followed%20through>

⁷ <https://www.exercise.com/grow/average-age-of-gym-goers/>

⁸ <https://www.smartmeetings.com/news/hotels-resorts/97407/business-travelers-hotel-gym#:~:text=Forty%2Done%20percent%20said%20they,to%20their%20hotel%2Dgym%20workouts>

staff to take care of this amenity. Unfortunately, staff shortage is the number one issue in hotels nowadays. This is why offering an electronic tipping solution like Tip&Go makes a lot of sense as it can increase wages by up to 30%, therefore enticing employees to stay.

Tip&Go may not resolve the labour shortage issue but it will definitively go a long way in reducing it!

Francis Léonard CEO



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