



Top Eight Questions You Must Have Answered Before Choosing a Gym for Fat Loss or Building Muscle

Question #1: What is my destination?

This is a question you should ***ask yourself first – where do you want to go?***

It should be the first question a gym asks you when you walk in the door. If they don't ask what your goals are, and **really listen to your answers**, consider it a **red flag** that this is not the place for you. Be sure that they are listening to you, understand your goals, and have a solution to design a plan to get you there.

Your "fitness map" can't be designed to get you where you want to go if they don't know where you are going. The process has to start with the end point in mind.

The first question your gym must consider when designing a fitness program is, "Where does this client want to go?" Using this approach of "starting with the end in mind" gives the bigger picture to be able to work backwards to figure out where you need to be at the halfway point, a month into the program, and all the way down to "What do you need to do today?"

**Thinking
BIG!**

We also refer to this as **big picture thinking**. You are looking for a gym that takes the approach of starting with the big picture and breaking it down into actionable steps for you to take today. A fitness program should reflect the specific goal or goals that you are trying to achieve and the exact steps you need to take to get achieve them.

Use the worksheet on the next page to help you get a good handle on your fitness destination.

CHANGE YOUR LIFE!

Here are some guidelines to consider as you define your fitness destination:

Target Fat Loss Goal (Hint #1: If the gyms you are considering talk more about the number on the scale than actual body fat, this is a warning that they may not be the best choice if you are seeking to get into smaller clothing and feel more “defined.”) Think in terms of body fat, waist and thigh measurements, etc., and not just the number on the scale. Write Your Fat Loss Goals below:

Target Muscle Building Goal (Hint #2: If the gyms you are considering don’t include strength training in your program, regardless of whether you want to lose fat or gain muscle, consider another alternative. Strength training is crucial to a thorough fitness program.)

BUILD MUSCLE!

Write Your Muscle Building Goals below:

Target Health Goal (Hint #3: If the gyms you are considering do not ask you about your health conditions and/or concerns, leave immediately.) Consider everything from lowering cholesterol and blood pressure, combating diabetes or eliminating signs of Osteopenia and Osteoporosis, to working closely with a medical professional, such as a physical therapist on staff, to get rid of joint or back pain, all of which an effective exercise program has been shown to improve.

Write Your Health Goals below:

Target Emotional Goal (Hint #4: If the gyms you are considering don't ask about how you feel and how you'd like to feel, they may not be well-suited for helping you navigate to your destination. A good gym has a "holistic" approach and this include how you feel.) Write how you'd like to feel

Write Your Health Goals below:

BOOST YOUR ENERGY LEVEL!

Once you have a good idea of your destination in these key areas, you're ready, after you learn the other seven questions, to start interviewing. Print each of these question sheets and take them with you when you visit the gyms you're interested in. Make note below of whether you feel they did a good job in these eight key areas.

Name of gym: _____

This gym asked me what my goals are, listened intently to my answers, and seemed genuinely interested in helping me map out a successful program.

Yes

No

Sort Of



Question #2: What assessment do they use to identify your starting point?

Expect the gyms you consider to do some sort of assessment to determine how to develop your fitness program based on your desired destination.



The BEST assessment out there is the Functional Movement Screen (FMS).

This assessment tool gives your gym an exact starting point of where your program needs to begin.

So, ask the gyms you are considering...

Do you do an assessment?

Yes

No

What kind of an assessment is it?

If they don't offer the Functional Movement Screen, how does their assessment compare?

If they can't answer all of these questions clearly and to your satisfaction, then cross them off of your list of potential gyms and go to the next one. Easy as that!

This gym performs the Functional Movement Screen or something equivalent.

Yes

No



Question #3: What is their system to “draw the map” and guarantee you get to your destination?

Ask what type of periodization model they will use with your program.

Once you’ve determined that the gym you are considering uses periodization to design your program, they should also consider what components to include in the workout to be sure you are getting everything you need to get results.

Ask for a list of everything included in their programs. Check off each item included in their programs. (Hint: If they can’t tell you or don’t appear to know **RUN**, don’t walk, to the next gym.)



Each workout should include:

- Initial Soft Tissue Quality Improvement
- Metabolic Ramping (aka RAMP – Range of Motion, Activation and Movement Preparation)
- Core
- Elasticity/Power Development
- Combination
- Strength Training (Should include all seven (7) movements: squat, lunge, bend, push, pull, twist, and single leg stance.)
- Energy System Development
- Recovery

This gym uses periodization to create a clear “mapping” process.

Yes

No



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Question #4: What are they going to do to ensure that you are going to take the direct route to your goals and not the *scenic route*?

To be sure your prospect gym is going to give you what you need, check to ensure their programs:

- Include the basic movements of squat, lunge, bend, twist, push, pull, and single leg stance.
- Training longer DOES NOT NECESSARILY EQUAL more return. Performing more challenging exercises does not mean faster results. When it comes to exercise selection – they should select the appropriately challenging variation for you – that’s where the best return on investment is going to be. For example, you’re better off with a simple body weight squat, and will get more out of it, than using something more complex like a balance board, one legged, pulley squat (not even sure what that looks like, but you get the idea...) Keep it simple. **Less is more.** Many times trainers get bored with their exercises and start to have their clients perform exercises that are not appropriate. The client might be having a hard enough time getting up and down out of a chair; they just need enough to challenge them so that their body gets stronger. Simple exercise progressions are more effective than complex exercise progressions.
- Use “*Bang for Your Buck Exercises.*” Choose the exercises and training methods that give you the quickest results in the shortest time, or the most “bang for your buck,” which is also part of staying on the direct route.
- More is not better, **better is better.** There are definite parallels between work and fitness training. Over the past few years we think as a whole, in both areas, that we’ve confused working “hard” with working long.

This gym is going to offer the most direct route to my destination goals.

Yes

No



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Question #5: Will your program change every 4-6 weeks?

The body is smart and is constantly adapting. Whenever we apply a stimulus – the body adapts. However, if we don't change that stimulus often enough – the body will become stale, getting used to the demands and stop adapting, leading to no progress. The basic premise then is to continually increase or change the stress to continue making progress. However, most coaches and trainers tend to define stress as “load on the bar”. This is short sighted.

Everyone knows that training load needs to be progressively increased, but not everyone seems aware that training stimulus needs to be periodically varied. This variety helps us to avoid the “equal and opposite effect” problem which we will talk about in the next question. It also allows us to implement new methods in the program to keep you from getting stale.

Ask your prospective gyms if they adjust exercise order, exercises themselves, sets, reps, rep speed, rest period, load used and implements (e.g. dumbbells vs. barbells or sandbags, kettlebells, medicine balls, etc.) It is smart practice to be aware and utilize all of the variables when designing programs.



This gym varies its workouts every 4 - 6 weeks to help me achieve my destination goals.

Yes

No



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Question #6: Do they make sure your program is balanced?

Here are the key questions you should ask to determine if the gyms you are investigating have a procedure for a balanced workout program:

- Do they constantly perform checks and balances when it comes to your program, making sure their program is not creating an imbalance?



This gym creates balanced programs.

Yes

No



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Question #7: Do they work together as a team?

Here are the key questions you should ask to determine the TEAM mindset of the gyms that you are investigating:

- Do they offer the more effective semi-private group training?
- Do their trainers work together as a team and do they have a supportive team environment in which to train?
- Does their staff work together as a team so that you don't only have just one personal trainer?
- Does the gym have a physical therapist on staff who works closely with the trainers to ensure your safety?

This gym works together as a team.

Yes

No



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Question #8: Throughout your program, what types of things are they tracking – or – what would they do if you needed a tune-up?

Okay, make sure the gyms you are considering stack up when it comes to tracking your progress:

- Do they track all of your workouts, writing down which exercises you did, how much weight you lifted and for how many sets and reps, along with how you are feeling?
- Do they provide post-workout nutrition at the gym?
- Are they keeping an eye on your stress levels, your sleep, your body fat percentage, and your clothing size?
- Do they have a method to track these things, including a way to test your body fat so you aren't just focused on the scale weight?
- Do they have a physical therapist on-site to give you a tune-up and get you back on the road?

This gym will track my progress.

Yes

No

Do you know someone who would benefit from ***knowing what questions they should ask their gym?***

Please feel free to forward this series to them and help us to *change the way fitness is done!*

Dedicated to your fitness success!

Rachel & Alwyn

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