



Chicago's Best Gyms 2010

Best budget gyms in Chicago

By TOC staff. Photographs by Taylor Castle. Illustrations by John Ueland.



Wicker Park Fitness

Admittedly a fancy-gym junkie, I missed my sauna and steam room and cucumber-flavored water for the first few weeks after joining this less-than-two-year-old family-run gym. But between the amazing special (\$400 for the year) and convenience (I live across the street), it was pretty much a no-brainer. More than a year later, I'm still a happy camper: It's spotless and surprisingly never musty-smelling. I even find the Wicker Park pedestrians who taunt me while I run on the street-facing treadmills occasionally amusing. The only problem: From 5–7pm on weekdays, the place gets too crowded for comfort. —*Jessica Herman*

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Classes A Except for the lack of Spin classes, the roster—from yoga and Pilates to 30-minute abs workouts—suits my desire for diversity. And, the glutton for killer workouts that I am, I'm officially obsessed with Jordan's twice-weekly boot-camp classes.

Locker room B- Between the measly two showers (with containers of hair product sitting on the floor), three bathroom stalls and a few dozen lockers, I'm happy to return to my own bathroom for postworkout freshening up. On the upside, it's definitely clean.

Cardio machines B+ I'd like to see a few more options such as a StairMaster and rowing machine, and I'd rather leave than wait on the occasion (right at the end of the work day) that there's a line for an elliptical machine or treadmill. I do appreciate the proliferation of personal TVs.

Weights A I never have a problem finding space to lift free weights, and I can easily mix up my routine with the dozen or so weight machines.

Workout accessories B- The BOSU balls sometimes need air, and I'd rejoice at the addition of a few more accoutrements (foam roller, anyone?). But my biggest complaint? With the main stretching area crammed behind a monstrous weights machine, I have barely enough room to do a push-up at peak hours.

Customer service A+ Super-genuinely friendly and free apples to boot. I even got a happy birthday shout-out walking in the other day.

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