

# 5 Things to Consider When Choosing a GYM

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January is one of the biggest times of the year for new gym memberships, but says Brian Cole, a personal trainer and owner of Brian Cole Personal Training Associates fitness studios in Newport News, Virginia, the danger is that your enthusiasm will “wane and you aren’t consistent, and therefore you aren’t productive.”

To ensure long-term success for your workouts—and your health—take some time before signing a gym contract to think about what will work best for your needs.

## ✓ Location

Location is as important in the fitness world as it is in real estate. If you don’t show up regularly for your workouts, you’ll never improve. But life gets busy when you least expect it, so look for a gym that is near your house or work, or somewhere along your commute. It’s hard to forget about your workout when you drive by the gym every day.

## ✓ Facilities

Your workout will change over time, so you need a gym that has a wide range of exercise equipment. Cole says his studios, which focus entirely on one-on-one training, have “space to do plenty of bodyweight exercising, plenty of free weights, lots of balls and bands and tubing, and different things like that, but also a good bit of equipment.”

## ✓ Trainers

A personal trainer can help you progress more quickly and safely. Make sure the ones at your gym are qualified. Cole suggests looking for one or more of these national certifications: American Council on Exercise (ACE), American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) or National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM).

## ✓ Friends

Don’t forget to check with your friends and family about their experience at their own gym. Also, working out at the same gym as your friends can give you an added layer of encouragement, similar to what Cole’s clients have with their scheduled sessions. “If there’s somebody you’re accountable to—you have a regular appointment—it’s not like you say should I go today or not?”

## ✓ Price

Cole’s clients pay for each one-on-one session, but for those with a smaller budget, a regular gym membership with occasional check-ins with a qualified personal trainer can fit the bill. Don’t be tempted by specials on long-term contracts. A shorter contract may cost more, but short-term contracts let you test drive a gym first to find the perfect fit. **H**