

# universityQ&A

By Matt Brzycki

## How can my members make smaller weight increases on selectorized machines?

While many of the newer selectorized machines offer a self-contained system of making smaller progressions (such as “drop-down” weights), many fitness centers have older machines that don’t allow for that luxury. Yet, it’s important to be able to “micro-load” in smaller increments.

Progressions should be thought of in relative terms, not absolute: making a 10-pound progression from 200 to 210 pounds is an increase of 5 percent; making a 10-pound progression from 20 to 30 pounds is an increase of 50 percent. Being able to make a smaller increase represents a more reasonable — and manageable — progression.

If your selectorized machines don’t allow users to make smaller progressions in resistance, you can purchase saddle plates (or “add-on weights”) that can be placed on the top plate of a weight stack. Standard weights for saddle plates are 2.5 and 5 pounds, but you can sometimes find ones that are 1.25 pounds. Also available are magnetic add-on weights of as little as 1.25 pounds. These magnetic weights are actually intended for making smaller progressions with dumbbells (by placing them on the ends of the dumbbells), but they can also be secured to the front of the weight stacks of selectorized machines. If add-on weights aren’t available, you can take an Olympic plate and secure it to the weight stack of the machine by first inserting a selector pin through the hole in the Olympic plate, and then into one of the selectorized plates. This is often referred to as “pinning” an Olympic plate to the weight stack. Actually, you can place any light object of known weight on the top plate of a weight stack — as long as it won’t fall off while the equipment is being used.



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## Is it important to keep track of how many people use the fitness center?

You should definitely keep track of the number of members and guests who use your fitness center. You can use this information to lobby for a number of things, including new equipment, larger space and additional staff, since quantifiable data has greater meaning: “When students are on campus, nearly 1,300 individuals use our fitness center in one day. This means that, on average, one person comes through our doors every 45 seconds for 16 straight hours.” Or, you could say, “Last year, the fitness center hosted more than 250,000 users.”

You don’t really need any fancy, high-tech equipment to get usage data. Accurate data for daily usage can be collected with a simple turnstile. By the way, half-hour headcounts can also yield valuable information. Specifically, you can get a better picture of traffic flow to determine staff distributions.



## What information should be included in the fitness employee handbook?

At a minimum, the employee handbook should cover the general duties, responsibilities and expectations for all positions in the fitness center (fitness supervisor, personal trainers, etc.); consequences for breach of those elements; opening/closing procedures; pay policies and pay periods; an emergency plan; injury report forms; and important phone numbers (such as campus security and the health center). If desired,

the handbook can also include such things as a list of exercises that can be performed in the fitness center (and, perhaps, what muscles are involved with brief descriptions on how to perform them); general guidelines for designing programs; and anything else that may be specific to your fitness center.



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Do you have questions that you need answered? Email them to [edit@fitnessmgmt.com](mailto:edit@fitnessmgmt.com).