

By Matt Brzycki

Should there be a limit on how much time patrons spend on cardio equipment?

If you've found there are lines of people waiting to use certain pieces of equipment, then it would be wise to enact some type of time limit. You may not have to place a limit on all of your equipment, or for the entire hours of operation; perhaps the time limit only needs to be from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Once you've determined which equipment needs to have time limits and when they should occur, you'll have to decide on a method of control. Some facilities can get away with the honor system: When patrons reach the time limit, they simply "honor" the rule and exit the equipment. Other facilities may need to implement some type of formal sign-in or appointment procedure. Be prepared for loopholes. For example, a patron gets off a machine at the end of the time limit, takes a look around and sees no one waiting. Will the patron be permitted to use the machine again, since no one is waiting at that moment? If so, what if someone walks in five minutes later and now must wait? Some facilities only allow a patron to sign up for one type of equipment per day. Once the time limit is reached, the patron must get off the machine whether or not someone is waiting.

The need to employ a time limit will dictate its length. Some facilities have a 20-minute limit on cardio equipment; others have a 30-minute limit. Look at it this way: Placing a 20-minute limit on six treadmills for 10 hours a day can meet the needs of 180 patrons; placing a 30-minute limit on six treadmills for 10 hours a day can meet the needs of 120 patrons.

Regardless of your system, you'll need to post signs with the specifics. On signage example is: "Please limit your workout on the cardiovascular equipment to 30 minutes when others are waiting. Thank you for being considerate of others."

Finally, be prepared to police the time limit. Just about every facility has patrons who look for loopholes, or who don't play by the rules. Chip Harrison, strength and conditioning coach at Penn State University, State College, Pa., says, "Some equipment can be programmed to limit the amount of user time. But once the time limit is reached, the equipment doesn't shut down. Instead, it goes into a five-minute cool-down stage. If there's a 20-minute limit, then it should be a 20-minute limit — not 20 minutes of activity plus five minutes of cool-down."



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How do you decide what TV channels to have on in the fitness center?



Only a handful of "themes" are watched on television. You'll find that most people prefer news, sports, talk shows and soap operas. Simply set the channels to cover a wide spectrum of interests. Obviously, channels can be changed by request. Make it a policy that members of your staff are the only ones permitted to change the channels. This will sidestep any possible confrontation between patrons, and reduce the chances your televisions will get damaged. To dissuade patrons from reaching up and changing channels on televisions that are within their reach, place a metal cover or other type of sturdy barrier in front of the control buttons.

Is there an easy way to replace the handgrips on strength-training equipment?

After removing the old hand grip on strength equipment, apply a light amount of hairspray to the handles or bar, as well as to the inside of the new grip. When wet, the hairspray will act as a lubricant, allowing you to easily slide on the new grip. When dry, the hairspray will help adhere the grip to the handles or bar.



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Do you have questions that you need answered? Email them to edit@fitnessmgmt.com.