

WEIGHT ROOM etiquette

A guide to pumping up and slimming down at the Rec Center

By STUART HUTSON

The Battalion

It is not a high school gym. It is not a country club. And, most importantly, it is not a meat market.

It is the Texas A&M Student Recreation Center, better known to the general populace of A&M as simply "the Rec." Every day, thousands of students and faculty flock to the giant temple of fitness to engage in the exercise of their preference, jamming its rooms, halls and courts to full capacity.

There is no doubt that college students are a remarkably odd bunch. They are a combination of intelligence, maturity and energy — all mixed with the remnants of adolescent hormones. So, it is no surprise that when a large number of these individuals join together to actively exercise themselves, there is much fun to be had.

In order to successfully participate in this orgy of activity, it is important that the members of the Rec recognize the unique set of etiquette rules due to the peculiarity of the clientele.

"You should remember to use your playground rules that you learned in the third grade."

— Allisa Johnson
Senior sports management major

INTIMIDATION IS FOR THE WEAK

Although the primary goal of many participants is the carving of an impressive body, the Rec staff would like to remind these enthusiasts that the time to show off is not while in the weight room. After all, those with good bodies are not at the Rec because they have those looks and muscles; they have those looks and muscles because they are at the Rec.

"We get a lot of guys who come in here and try to do too much weight or scream while they are lifting so that they will intimidate other people," said Nick Merz, a Rec employee and a senior industrial engineering major. "All they end up doing is making other people angry because they are disturbing their workout. As for the ones that come in and try to lift too much weight, all they are doing is endangering themselves and others."

Scott Harrison, a lifeguard at the Rec and a senior international studies major, said that it is important to remember not to show off the muscles that others do not really want to see.

"Every once and a while, there will be someone wearing a thong or something else that is way too skimpy," he

said. "This isn't a nude beach, and we would all have a lot more fun if everyone remembered that. There are times when someone will walk out of the locker room who forgot to put on their swimming trunks. And there are others who feel it is OK to swim in their underwear."

For those who wish they had the body and abilities to show off, Cory Ormsby, a Rec employee and senior marketing major, said they should forget about the show-offs and just do their own thing.

"It's best to get a slow and safe start, doing low weight and forgetting about the guys who can bench 300 pounds," Ormsby said. "You'll eventually get there if you stick with it and work out safely."

BUFF UP; DON'T HOOK UP

While taut bodies glistening with sweat may be a turn-on during porno flicks, Merz said that one should concentrate on his or her own physique and not those of others.

"It's inevitable that when guys come here they will check out girls, and that when girls come [to the Rec], they will check out guys," he said. "For a lot of people, talking to friends and checking other people out is half the reason they come here. It's not that that isn't OK, but they need to remember that they are also here to seriously work out. Otherwise they might as well go to the mall."

Kristen Crosby, a Rec employee and senior kinesiology major, said that modesty should be a catch word for those seeking a good workout and not a good date.

"Girls who come here should at least wear a sports bra, and for a lot of girls they should really wear more than that," she said.

MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL...

While the mirrors lining the walls of the Rec weight room may make the area seem more like a temple to vanity rather than a serious facility dedicated to pumping iron, they do serve a purpose.

"The mirrors are there so that you can watch yourself when you work out to make sure that you have good form and are exercising correctly," Ormsby said. "So you shouldn't stand in front of someone working out just to admire yourself, and you should be cautious of blocking someone else's view when you are working out."

READING IS FUNDAMENTAL

Just because a student is at the Rec and not in the library, it does not mean that he or she does not have to read. The Rec's walls are plastered with signs dictating what to do or not to do while engaging in your favorite athletic activity, but Harrison said those signs are not just for decoration.

"People constantly ignore the signs or ask if they can go ahead and do what the sign says not to do anyway," he said. "The fact is that the signs aren't just there to make

our jobs easier. They are usually there for safety reasons and everyone's best interest. For example, people will dive into the pool off the spot where it says 'shallow water, do not dive.'"



RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

Merz said that those using the cardiovascular machines, such as the Stairmasters, should remember that there is a half-hour limit, and that those doing multiple sets on machines should allow other people to work in.

"The best time to come in is between six in the morning and about one in the afternoon because there are the fewest people here, and you don't have to worry as much about taking up machines," Merz said.

Crosby said that people occupying basketball and volleyball courts should remember to allow others to play.

"A lot of times a group of guys will get on a court and not allow some girls or even some of the guys in on the game," she said. "It's no fun standing on the sidelines."

As Allisa Johnson, a Rec employee and senior sport management major, said, "You should remember to use your playground rules that you learned in the third grade."

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