

## 5 Annoying Problems in Gyms Across the US

### 1.) ***“Functional Equipment Being Used for Bodybuilding Exercises”***

I guess this is more or less a pet peeve, or it can be viewed as a lack of variation in exercise selection. How many times have you walked around your fitness center and marveled at all the new functional equipment that it had? **I classify functional equipment as any cable apparatus that has moveable arms, pulleys, or is multi-vector** (*most notably Free Motion, Paramount, Keiser, and some Precor, Life Fitness and other reputable equipment manufacturers*). So, the most annoying thing to see in the gym with this arsenal of movement improving equipment is some guy performing your typical cable crossovers or double biceps curls. We have all seen him (or her). The selection of functional exercises that can be performed due to the mobility and angles at which each pulley can be placed is numerous. But why perform your typical sagittal plane crossovers? Are the cable towers occupied? Is your chest workout incomplete without the crossover exercise? Is this the idea of variation from say...the peck deck machine? Obviously, there is lack of knowledge of the usage of these pieces. Although, crossovers and double-bi curls can be performed on them, why choose to do it on a machine that is designed for multi-planar functionality? Learn more exercises!

### 2.) ***“Too-Wide-of-a-Grip Lat Pull-Downs”***

Unless you are 6'2" and above, there is no reason to go wide on your lat pull down grip. The old fallacy of “go wider—get a wider back; or “go narrow—get a thicker back” are exactly that: **old bodybuilding fallacy**. According to the NASM, using a wider grip actually brings in more scapular movement and involvement (which it is involved during the movement) but the majority of work comes from abduction of the scapula and rhomboids---not the lats. The lats are what you want to work together with strong scapular retraction and depression. Also, going too wide of a grip also tends the lifter to constantly elevate the shoulder blades with each rep. The proper way to perform the lat pull down is with shoulder blades depressed down and kept in that

position throughout the set. We tend to raise our shoulder blades and thoracic spine because these muscles are eccentrically weak. Thus, we should focus on strengthening the scapular retractors/protractors and stabilizers to perform a perfect lat pull down.

### 3.) **“Medicine Balls Used for Crunches”**

I don't know if this one is me...Vern Gambetta popularized a lot of medicine ball movements in the mid-1990's including wood-chops, oblique twists, and lunge twists. Medicine balls have become so popular that they are also manufactured with handles! In my opinion, and hopefully other strength coaches, weighted medicine balls should be used primarily for power movements --**aka: throwing against a concrete wall to maximize power output of a specific movement: chest pass (soccer throw); oblique transverse passes (tennis racquet), vertical leaps (basketball dunk), and many more.**

I have a problem with this vital tool being used by many gym-goers across the US as a way to load the ab crunch. We have all seen them....guy or girl gets on the bench or ball and holds the med ball overhead with straight arms and crunches. *Is a dumbbell not suffice for this movement?* Did you know we used to use dumbbells for stuff like this before med balls were ever in gyms? The only thing is we couldn't throw dumbbells or we got thrown out of the gym! Medicine balls are designed to be thrown—to take a beating—witnessed by the material they are made up! Use them for what they should primarily be used for: Power!

### 4.) **“Boyfriends Teaching Their Girlfriends How To Lift”**

I am guilty of this, but I hopefully know what I am talking about. Every week, I spot half a dozen couples working out together and they are made up of big buff guys teaching their “*pilates-addicted*” girlfriends “**how they workout**”. So what is wrong with this? Many guys who are in between the ages of 25-45 have grown up with watching the likes of Arnold, Dorian, Lee, and Ronnie (pro-bodybuilders). So if you are like me, you grew up wanting to be big, strong, and cut. Well, if you subscribed to all the magazines like I did, you learned a lot of the sagittal plane exercises from the bodybuilding sample routines. So flash-forward to the present day: boyfriends teach their girlfriends the

bench press, lat pull-down, bent-over row, lateral raises, squat, leg press, curls, kickbacks, and many more. **So girlfriends begin training like men who train like bodybuilders.** What is wrong with that? Nothing...but if you know conventional bodybuilding routines you'll know that they contain a lot of sagittal presses and most bodybuilders have the resulted syndromes of such training: upper and lower-cross syndrome & protracted shoulders. So why are you going to mess up your girlfriend's body? The solution ladies? Seek out a qualified fitness professional to show you how to perform an abundance of multi-planar exercises including bodyweight, bands, balls, and core work. Don't pass up the free session that you get upon joining a gym. It is your opportunity to ask questions and be instructed on the proper way to perform a **variety of exercises.** Back in the day, when a woman said **"I don't wanna look like one of those bodybuilding people"**, now I know what they meant.

### **5.) "TVs in front of Cardio Equipment"**

I can write an entire article on this and I probably will. Managing a YMCA fitness center for the last 2 years, I have found the reason why people are not losing fat. They are coming **into the gym to watch TV and workout.** *Did you hear what I said? They are coming in to watch TV and workout.* You and I go to the gym to workout and maybe, if "Rescue Me™" is on... watch TV. Today's general population clientele (GPC) has misunderstood what exercise is thanks to the ACSM. People pick the cross trainer or treadmill in front of a TV, plug in their headphones, put on their favorite show and walk at a 2.5 pace. After a half hour, they have not even broken a sweat and their cardio session is complete. They feel content because, according to present-day guidelines, they just achieved an important factor in their longevity and got to watch the latest episode of "24™". Their real intent is to pay attention to the show on TV and walk. To pay attention to the show, they need to walk at a reasonable pace that will not cause them focus on maintaining balance, endurance, and effort. **The very things needed to generate power output to expend the most calories in the least amount of time, thus losing fat!** I am not saying this is the majority of gym-goers, but it is what I witness 80% of the time. It is to no surprise that many of the people I

witnessed still look the same year after year. Fitness centers need to get rid of all these TV's and cardio theater systems in front of cardio equipment and focus more on member goal attainment and not dollar signs. More to come on this subject...