

Gym Etiquette

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New to the whole fitness thing? Even if you can't tell a dumbbell from a deadlift, you'll earn the respect of veteran gym-goers by following these tips from Diane Gottsman, national etiquette expert and owner of The Protocol School of Texas.

1. Do Dress Appropriately. It may be tempting to throw on an old T-shirt, but taking a few minutes to look the part can go a long way. Don't spend hours primping beforehand, but do wear something that makes you feel comfortable and confident.

2. Don't Save Machines. "Putting your towel on the treadmill to 'save' it for someone [who] may or may not show up is impolite," Gottsman explains. The same goes for the weight machines. If someone is using a piece of equipment you need, sit tight or ask to cycle in.

3. Do Put Away Your Equipment. Leaving dumbbells, medicine balls and resistance bands scattered throughout the gym is frustrating for other members and employees. Be mindful and put things back where you found them.

4. Don't Be Distracting. Keep the grunting, weight-dropping and singing to a minimum. It's perfectly acceptable to exert yourself, but you shouldn't be loud enough to turn heads.

5. Do Mind Your Own Business. "Unless someone is in danger of hurting himself or herself, keep your instruction and step-by-step tutorials to yourself," says Gottsman.

Whether you're hitting the treadmill or the trails, it's important to mind your manners. If you prefer to break a sweat outdoors, study the tips below.

1. According to *Runner's World*, outdoor tracks should be traveled counterclockwise unless stated otherwise. Joggers and recreational runners are expected to stay in the two outermost lanes as a courtesy to those doing speed workouts. If you're just out for a causal stroll, stick to the far outside lane to avoid being trampled.

2. Although there are no official rules, seasoned outdoorsman tend to agree that ascending hikers have the right-of-way. Most people happily welcome an excuse to take a breather, but err on the safe side and yield to uphill traffic.

3. Unlike runners, bikers should always ride *with* traffic. It's illegal to do otherwise, not to mention extremely dangerous.

4. Next time you're about to toss a banana peel to the side of the trail, think again. Biodegradable waste can take months to decompose and nobody wants to trek through rotting fruits and veggies. Remember: if you pack it in, pack it out.