

## GYM ETTIQUETTE

A guide to negotiating your way in the iron lair without annoying others

Anthony M. Antonacci, NMD, CSCS, DC, FASBE

Just because they are called **Free Weights**, does not mean you can take them home. Re-rack them after you use them, in the right slot! It is kind of like putting the toilet seat down after your use. Have some consideration and respect for others as it shows the same for you. If you don't break down a free weight machine like a Hammer after your use, it could interfere with another's training because someone your very senior like a 80 year old female may want to use that machine and you racked it up with, what you think is heavy (200#) and they cannot take those 45's off the machine because all they can lift, is 10#.

And speaking of the concept of "**Working In**", pay attention because we have lost the understanding of what that is and how it works. Just because you are working out on a piece of equipment does not mean you momentarily own it, for that time period. And just because you place your water bottle near it or your workout towel that never sees sweat on it does not mean it is yours. "**Working In**" means that you can effectively share a piece of equipment and briefly train with another person, usually a complete stranger, that will actually make you train better and take the appropriate rest instead of parking your protoplasm on a machine for 20 minutes as you text. "Working In" used to be a desired form of training and maybe meet a new friend. Now, you think you own a piece of equipment and you get all up in my grill when I ask to work in. Learn how to train in a public gym or go home. So, the next time someone comes up and asks to "**work in**", it does not mean you are being hit on. It simply means they want to get a set in as you are wasting time on the equipment while you text your life away.

Here is an example: the other day I was doing ass to the grass squats on the Smith. A woman, around 24 or so came up and asked if she could work in. My first impression.....how awesome is this, she understands the concept of working in?! I said, "absolutely", are you squatting? She replied, "no, I want to bench press". I replied, "I am so stoked you asked to work in however to work in and break down the specific exercise from squatting to benching would be quite time consuming and interfere with both of our training routines." "I will get my last two sets done quickly so as not to have you wait long and then the Smith is all yours and I will help you set up your benches." Her reply, you might ask? "I did not realize that, thanks for teaching me how it works." And that is how it works. Since then, she has sought me out in the gym when I am in there to learn, just like I did with those that came before me.

**SWEAT.** I am so stoked you are experiencing the physiological response to raising your body temperature through exercise and you are now seeing a fluid like substance glistening on the surface of your skin. That fluid is called sweat. Probably the first time you have experienced that phenomenon. Here is the deal. That is your toxic body fluid, not mine. So wipe it off the machine and the floor. There is only one instance we might think of that we would like to exchange bodily fluids with another person and it is not in the gym while training.

**Cell phones.** You are not that important that you need to check your messages after each set. You are in the gym to train and hopefully get in shape and improve your health. Leave your cell phone outside. If someone accidentally drops a weight and breaks your cool new ultra-slim smart phone that you foolishly placed on the floor, that is on you.

Texting or talking on your cell phone while on a piece of cardio equipment is not cool. It's simply bush league. So, don't do it. Unless you are expecting a call from the Buddah, My Homeboy J.C. or the Dali Lama, leave your cell phone outside.

And that goes for newspapers, books, magazines etc. You are in the gym to train not get caught up on the fake news or score someone with bad tats they got at a spring break drunk fest. When you read, you distract your body and mind from getting to the point of what you are doing in the gym. If you don't know what you are doing, hire a trainer to get you accustomed to equipment and workouts.

**Guys...** Please pull up your pants. Please. We all agree to say no to butt crack. Having to look at your skanky underwear you bought from the 99 cent store, my favorite place of commerce, is not cool. And if you really understood what that means to wear your pants under your butt, in prison, you would not do it in public. Older guys.....please wear your baseball caps the right way with the bill in front. Wearing it backwards just makes you look like a goofy old guy that creeps people out. Ya, really. It is ok for ICE-Cube or Colin Kapernick. It ain't ok for you. Older guys, you know what else creeps people out? Those faded green ink tattoos that are unrecognizable on those sagging triceps and chests. Wear sleeves to hide them so we all don't get nauseated. You ain't hot and you cannot compete with a 25 year old. And here is another newsflash, the babes ain't lookin at you anymore. You are invisible to anything under around 90 years old and on life support in Sister Carmella's blind nursing home! . Ya, really. Get over it and get age appropriate. You will have mucho more fun and "age appropriate's" really know what they are doing.

**Hombres, uno mas.** If you are going to wear a tank top in the gym or cut your sleeves off, remember to bring your chest and triceps with you. Just showing ink on those sticks you call arms don't make you big or badass. And one more thing....fat and soft is not big. It is just fat and soft. If you want to see big, go to Golds Gym in Venice Beach, California or an NFL combine or a Federal Prison. That is big. Scary Big. You are not. Just be you. Which is perfect.

**Women.** If you do not want men starring at your breasts or rear end, then cover them up and stop dressing provocatively in the gym. But then again, that is your point isn't it? You want them starring cuz that gives you the self esteem your daddy did not teach you. And then you get all uppity when someone does precisely what you want him or her to do. Which is stare at your breasts and rear. Simply amazing. Just stop as it is really quite silly of you and everyone knows it. Or, just say "thank you for noticing my body parts I have put out here for your viewing pleasure". You might just meet a new friend in or out of the locker room! Ya, think about that one for a while, ya'll. It is all good. All of it. Embrace it and just have fun as long as you are safe.

**Perfume and cologne.** Please, that is so last century. Get into your body odor. It is actually considered an aphrodisiac in some cultures. We would rather smell you than

your 99 cent store “me smell so good, love you too long” Perfume that makes us throw up. So, don’t wear any of it in the gym! Ever!

**Grunting and Groaning:** if you are going to grunt and groan loudly, you best have a whole bunch of weight on that free bar, a whole bunch, and be squatting ass to grass and better not be in a select weight machine. Don’t embarrass yourself sitting in a machine and loudly grunting as you push 70 pounds on a seated chest press while arching your back. There are better ways to have your back arched while groaning.

**Cool & Soul:** cool is the art of being soulful, not acting bad or skanky. So, just cuz you got some ink on the back of your neck or thinking you are all that, surely does not mean you got soul or cool. Start with putting the toilet seat down and re-racking the free weights! Finally, remember to have fun in everything you do and laugh, mainly at yourself and this. Seriousness is a disease, not an attribute. So, relax and have fun, because **life is simply a game**. Love yourself, Respect yourself and stay strong in your relationship with God. If you don’t believe in a higher power whatever you choose to call it, take a look at the sheer, immense and incredible fantastic beauty that surrounds you to include yourself. Where on earth did that come from, pray tell? Star Wars?

**Seek** out and learn the rules and wisdom from elders like me who will teach you the truth that will provide you with a safe and productive journey here.

**Trust** yourself and God and never place your trust in your fellow man be it friends or family. Never. Cain and Abel? Since the beginning of time family has betrayed each other to the death. And friends are simple strangers that will use you for their benefit. Absolute? Of course not. Simply beware of those that come bearing gifts.

*Life has become immeasurably easier since I was forced to not take it so seriously*  
-Hunter S. Thompson

## **Locker Room Etiquette**

You do not own the locker room, your favorite locker or the area around your locker. This is not your home. It is a public venue where consideration for others is paramount. Having said that, don’t get all “pissy” when someone opens his or her locker adjacent to yours. Be considerate and don’t lay your wet sweaty clothes all over the benches and on the floor, taking up the space of several others. Stay contained within your locker. If towels are a part of the gym service, place them in the used towel receptacle and show some consideration for others and the staff that you think is there to be your servant. They are not. Pick up after yourself.

**The Eyes Have It:** Do not check out another naked person below shoulder level, at any time. One of two things will happen. You might instantly feel less than or you just might make a new friend you did not want.

**Cell Phones:** Do not, at any time, bring your cell phone and take a call into the locker room. You really are not that important and no one needs to hear you spout off on the recent deal you just brokered while you sit there stark naked. That is bush league. You are in the gym to train and take care of your health not to be a wannabe Donald Trump. Unless you are listening to Metallica, AC/DC or Guns

and Roses to get you 'jacked' for the next set, do not ever bring your cell phone in the gym. Train hard and focused or stay home.

**White Folk.....**get some SUN exposure so others don't get snow blindness seeing that naked ice box tan of yours. Or pass out sunglasses when others are in your vicinity. Have you ever seen that big bright orange thing in the sky that lights up the day? It is called the Sun. God placed it here for growth of everything known to man, woman and amoeba. The Sun is healthy and no, you do not get skin cancer from the Sun.

You get skin cancer from your poor diet and lack of nutrients as you eat at MaccosDonalds and the other denatured food you ingest. Your well meaning dermatologist fears the growth and warmth of the Sun because they really do not understand the roll of proper nutrition in skin cancer as well as the toxic overload. And they actually prescribe topical sunscreens and moisturizers that cause skin cancer. Do not fear the Sun.

**Deodorants.** Aerosol deodorants like Right Guard, Axe and the like are toxic. We don't need to inhale that garbage you spray all over what you call a body. 86 (means get rid of) all of it and never spray anything in the locker room especially hair spray. Hair spray is what your grandmother used in between those bad purple and orange perms.

VAYA CON DIOS