



FITNESS

FAILS

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO GYM IDIOTS

BY ALEX SIM (ADAPTED FROM CHRIS BUCHOL)

Your first steps into the world of workout can often be quite intimidating, but everyone has to start somewhere. In this feature, the first of a groundbreaking trilogy, BestFit's Alex Sim investigates some of the unique individuals you'll encounter on your fitness quest, with advice on how to handle them.

THE GRUNTER

Ambling through the gym looking for the least intimidating and people-free piece of equipment, you'll start to hear strange and unsettling noises, much like a panda in heat. That's the Grunter, an individual incapable of performing an exercise without exhaling like a female professional tennis player. There are some logical arguments for grunting, mainly exertion being easier when breathing out. This would be fine if they were in the gym alone, but they're not. An important part of gym etiquette is staying out of other people's hair. You may find the theme from Rocky inspirational, but you're not going to chant "DU-DU-DU...FLYING HIGH NOW!" while doing pull ups.

HOW TO DEAL WITH HIM:

Put your headphones in and listen to music, perhaps a track of you singing the theme from Rocky. Or place a plunger over his mouth as he exhales.

THE WEIGHT BELT GUY

On one of your gym visits, most likely your first, you'll encounter someone who's sporting what looks like a boxing championship belt around his waist. This is Weight Belt Guy, and he's there to do some serious lifting. In an ideal world these man-mountains would hang out in their own gyms, having conversations with other Weight Belt Guys about deltoids and shouting things like "PUSH IT BRO!" and "FEEL THAT BURN!" However, now and again they frequent regular-person gyms, which is where you learn to fear them. The big problem with these guys is the intimidation factor. When Weight Belt Guy does something with one arm that you're struggling to do with two legs, you're going to feel slightly pathetic.

HOW TO DEAL WITH HIM:

One method would be to hang out anywhere but the free-weights section and wait until they go home. The problem with Weight Belt Guys is that they never seem to go home. Believe it or not the most logical step is to quietly go about your business oblivious to their existence. Weight Belt Guy's have spent years working on themselves in the hope of being noticed by people like you. The second you don't look them they won't be able to function. Now who's insecure?

THE UNSOLICITED ADVICE GUY

Working out, especially if you're new to it, can be quite a humbling experience. There isn't really an exercise out there that can be done with an audience that you wouldn't be more comfortable doing alone. So, when some obnoxious douche slides up and tells you you're working the wrong part of whatever, you're not going to like him very much. In fact, the second he tries to "correct your form," you'll want to set him on fire.

HOW TO DEAL WITH HIM:

There's no need to involve a bottle of paraffin, some live wires ripped from an exercise bike and a lengthy jail term. Instead, the best thing to do is just let it happen. Act interested, then when he leaves go find one of the qualified staff to clarify. Remember, it's their job, not his.

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