

Merry Fitness!

Many people will be thinking 'fitness' as they shop this Christmas. There are many products and services available and you'll want something that will work for *your* loved one; there is no 'one size fits all' when it comes to fitness. A preliminary discussion with the recipient of the gift would be helpful as this could be a touchy subject if not approached carefully. Receiving a gym membership or treadmill as a gift could be misinterpreted, so be sensitive. It's best to focus on the health benefits and stress relief that exercise brings, rather than the potential for weight loss or physique changes.

There are a few considerations to keep in mind as you plan and shop. Do you want to purchase something for the home or a membership to some kind of facility or program? This is probably the most important consideration. If you're considering the later, you must take into account the time available that the recipient can reasonably spend doing any kind of exercise and then also factor in other variables, such as travel time. What are the hours of the facility/program? Is there childcare available? Is there knowledgeable and experienced staff to help with programming? Would this person feel comfortable in this facility, especially if they are going alone? Often January is the busiest month for new gym memberships, but attendance falls off sharply thereafter because the facility is not a good match for the client. You should thoroughly research available facilities and programs in your area before purchasing any kind of membership. There are other options besides a traditional gym membership such as boot camps, climbing facilities, yoga studios etc. that could be investigated and may be a better fit for the person you're shopping for.

If you are thinking about purchasing something for your home, then another set of factors need to be considered. Prior to buying any large piece of equipment, it's best to take a test drive. Go to the store wearing workout clothes and try out each piece of equipment that you're interested in. If you have limited experience regarding fitness equipment, bring a knowledgeable friend along. By testing each piece of equipment, you'll find out if it fits your needs. Some home fitness products look terrific, but perform terribly. Consider the space required by any equipment as well. Form a plan before going shopping. A slick salesperson will have you buying an expensive treadmill when you really wanted resistance training equipment.

Have you considered purchasing the services of a personal trainer? Many times this would be the best option for the beginner through the advanced fitness enthusiast. A good trainer can get the beginner off on the right foot, and headed down the correct path, as well as accommodate the most advanced fitness enthusiast by offering new ideas to keep their training fun and fresh. Remember, a good trainer can train you at home or in a facility effectively. Another advantage of purchasing the services of a trainer is the gift recipient will be more likely to take advantage of the gift knowing there is a trainer waiting for them. And remember, a good trainer can work with a client using very little equipment. Instead of spending a load of money on one piece of equipment or gym membership, it may be wise to purchase some basic equipment (personal mat, hand weights, skipping rope, exercise tubes) and buy some personal training sessions.

Investing in your health or the health of a loved one pays big dividends. Research your options before making any purchases. Careful selections now will ensure that New Year's Resolutions are kept later.

By Shawna Kaminski – [Calgary NW Adventure Boot Camp](#)

Shawna is shaking up the fitness routines of several people in her Adventure Boot Camps. For more information, please visit her website.