

International
Council on
Active Aging



Changing the Way We Age®



How to select an age-friendly fitness facility

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How to select an age-friendly fitness facility

The International Council on Active Aging (ICAA), the world’s largest senior fitness association, has created a comprehensive checklist to help you compare and rate your local facilities and choose one that meets your needs. To evaluate a facility(s), check “yes” or “no” in the spaces corresponding to the questions on this checklist. At the end of your visit(s), calculate the facility(s) score(s) by counting how many questions you answered “yes” to. See the chart on page four to determine the facility(s) appropriateness for you.

Example: Is the staff, polite friendly and caring? Answer: Yes (score 1 point); No (score 0 points).

Facility and operations

1. Is the facility easy to get to?
2. Does the facility offer transportation services to and from the center?
3. Is the parking lot and pathway to the center:
 - a. Accessible?
 - b. Level and smooth?
 - c. Safe?
 - d. Well lit?
 - e. Close to the entrance?
4. Is the facility well lit on the outside and inside?
5. Does the facility have power door openers at exterior and interior entrances?
6. Are the exterior and interior doors heavy and/or difficult to open?
7. Is the facility clean and well kept?
8. Does the facility have nonslip flooring?
9. Is there elevator access to other areas of the center?
10. Are all areas of the facility accessible to wheelchairs?
11. Are the hours and program times flexible?
12. Does the facility offer free trial memberships?
13. Will the facility pro-rate your membership fee, based on how much of the facility is accessible to you?
14. Do you feel comfortable in the atmosphere of the facility?
15. Are the locker rooms clean, accessible and monitored by staff?

Facility comparison					
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Facility comparison					
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- 16. Are the membership contracts and marketing materials available in large print?
- 17. Are signs visible and easy to understand?
- 18. Does the facility have handrails throughout the center?
- 19. Is the music acceptable and set at a reasonable level?
- 20. Are the facility and equipment well maintained?
- 21. Does the organization belong to a professional fitness association that specializes in older adult fitness?
- 22. Does the facility offer a stretching area or stations off the floor?
- 23. Does the facility have a warm pool?
- 24. Is the equipment area uncluttered?

Equipment

- 25. Does the facility’s cardiovascular equipment (treadmills, upright and recumbent bikes, ellipticals, etc.) have the following age-friendly features?
 - a. Display panel that is easy to read, easy to change and easy to understand?
 - b. Treadmills with a slow starting speed, “ideally 0.5 mph”?
 - c. Emergency stop button or clip?
 - d. Wide and comfortable seat with armrest (recumbent bikes and steppers)?
 - e. Minimal pre-programmed workouts?
 - f. Seat and arm adjustments that are easy to access and easy to adjust (recumbent bikes and steppers)?
 - g. Keypad within easy reach?
 - h. Wide and comfortable footrest?
 - i. Gentle on the joints?
 - j. Long hand rails?



26. Does the facility's strength building equipment (free weights or weight machines) have the following age-friendly features?
- a. Simple and easy to operate?
 - b. Easily entered and exited by individuals with a variety of functional abilities and disabilities?
 - c. Easy to determine where to sit and where to place hands and feet?
 - d. Range-of-motion adjustments that allow individuals of various body sizes and those with limitations to be in the proper position while exercising?
 - e. Easily adjustable hand, seat and pad positions?
 - f. Ability to change resistance from a seated position?
 - g. One pound or small incremental increases in weight?
 - h. Instructional placards with simple diagrams, easy to read text and font, and correct usage information?
 - i. Low starting resistance, less than five pounds?
 - j. Wider seats and benches for people who need a little extra surface to maintain balance?

Programming

- 27. Does the facility offer programs designed to meet the needs of those with a variety of chronic conditions? i.e. osteoporosis, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, balance abnormalities, muscular weakness
- 28. Do the classes have different levels of intensity, duration and size?
- 29. Is there an extensive screening and assessment process? i.e. Balance, functional abilities, osteoporosis?
- 30. Will the staff work hand-in-hand with your physician if you have a health issue?
- 31. Has the staff asked you about your goals, created a plan to help you reach them, and showed you this plan?

Facility comparison					
1		2		3	
Y	N	Y	N	Y	N



- 32. Do qualified staff members offer counseling on the following:
 - a. Nutrition?
 - b. Behavioral modification?
 - c. Pain management?
 - d. Stress management?
- 33. Does the facility offer a free orientation class or session to help you become familiar with your surroundings?
- 34. Does the facility offer free ongoing staff assistance and training with your program?
- 35. Does the facility offer any type of ongoing educational program? i.e. Educational newsletter, website, seminars, bulletin board, newspaper or magazine

Staff

- 36. Is the staff polite, friendly and caring?
- 37. Does the facility have on-site, or affiliated with, a doctor, nurse, or physical therapist?
- 38. Is the staff certified by a nationally recognized senior fitness organization to work with people who have various health issues that may arise with age? i.e. osteoporosis, hypertension, arthritis
- 39. Do staff members ask you about your health history and which movements cause pain, fatigue or other symptoms, and which activities or exercises are feasible for you?
- 40. Is the staff properly trained to identify the warning signs of fatigue or distress, and to handle emergencies that may arise? (If yes, ask what they do in case of an emergency.)
- 41. Do staff members have CPR and first aid training?
- 42. Is the staff knowledgeable about the impact that medication can have on exercise ability?

Facility comparison					
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Total score

