

What's It Worth?

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By Keva Silversmith

I've been travelling for business this week, and had to do some soul searching regarding one of life's fundamental questions: How much should I pay for a workout?

At home, my gym membership costs about \$40 per month. If I go two of every three days, I'm paying an actual \$2 per workout. Not bad.

Some of the more expensive gyms in my area cost up to \$800 a year. Throw in an initiation fee, and with a 66 percent attendance rate, you're looking at close to \$5 a workout. Kind of bad.

To me, \$5 is dangerously close to real money. For five bucks, you can swill a grande latte, view a matinee, or pay for a couple gallons of gas. The discouraging part about gyms in this price range is that you're probably funding a bunch of things you never even use, like swimming pools and squash courts. You'd be much better served if the gym simply added a donkey calf raise machine to the main floor.

The maximum one-time guest fee for gyms used to hover around \$10. In my heart, I figured I would pay \$10 for the perfect workout: an empty gym with the latest equipment, a mix of my favorite songs playing over the speakers. Lately, however, I've seen guest fees of \$15, and today, I found a gym that charged \$20.

If I had to pay \$20 per workout at my home gym, I'd be paying \$400 per month, or almost \$5,000 per year. No wonder \$20 feels ridiculous.

Nevertheless, people do pay four- or even five-figures for their gym memberships. Some of these clubs are built for celebrities and don't really apply. But what about the super high end place that offers cutting edge equipment, caps its membership (or number of people allowed on the floor at one time), and lets you grunt away in a spa-like environment? I have to believe that working out in a veritable penthouse would boost my motivation and reduce the agony.

Well, maybe.

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