

**PRIVATE GYM** THE NEW YEAR INEVITABLY RESULTS IN A GYM FRENZY BUT THIS TIME, SAYS HELEN JENNINGS, IT'S HAPPENING IN THE HOME

# Get your workout at home

**F**orget the garden sanctuary for a property accessory – fitness fans pinching an inch after the festive season are building home gyms instead.

Architect Your Home, which is a company offering a pay-as-you-go menu of architectural services, is currently working on lots of gyms in hip city-dwellers' pads. But despite the increase, chairman Hugo Tugman says don't commit to a project straight away; forward planning is a must. 'Firstly, there are environmental and acoustic concerns. A lot of exercise machines make noise, so if you put them in a loft conversion above a bedroom, you have to consider floor construction and insulation.'

## Climate control

Then there is the temperature, humidity control and lighting to consider. 'If you're converting your cellar, there will be no natural light and you'll need good ventilation.'

The biggest issue is space, which is a problem Tugman conquered with his own rowing machine. 'It was in the kitchen and irritated my wife no end as people were always tripping over it. So when we had a small extension built, we formed a waterproof pit that was exactly the right size for the machine under the timber floors and then fitted trap doors. I come down in the morning, open the doors,

row for half an hour or so, jump out and close the doors behind me. They're completely flush to the floor so you'd never know the machine is there.'

## Wise workout

He's also converted a cupboard to house a customer's cumbersome 'exer-skier' and turned a basement into a bright, clean area with a running machine, sauna and shower.

But, he says, of all the conversions, a penchant is emerging for hi-tech gyms.

'What is really popular now is integrating audio visual into every room, such as plasma screens and iPod docks, so you can watch TV and listen to music while you exercise.'

Another modish move is to build an outhouse for fitness. The Garden Escape's made-to-measure luxury wood and glass constructions have become popular domestic gyms. 'It sets exercise space apart from the house and frees up bedrooms,'

says The Garden Escape's Clive Reeves. 'The heating system and lighting are of the same standard as an indoor room, there is no condensation and the wood floor is built on concrete pile foundations, so it's solid but flexible. Perfect for exercise.'

One satisfied customer is Mrs Martin. She wanted a Garden Escape for her cross-trainer, exercise bike and running



**Extracise:** The latest trend is to link music and vision throughout the home so you can work out in any room

machine but there was also a hidden agenda. 'As soon as it was done, she forced her husband to move his Scalextric in there as well. So he can play racing cars while she's pedalling along beside him.'

Now the question remains – what kit to install? Technogym delivers the whole home package. It provides an 'online architect service' that allows you to design your own gym from 3D drawings and installs

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premium equipment such as the Kinesis Personal, which boasts 200 exercises in 3.6sq m. Its system of grips and cables sits flush to the wall and, made from oak and steel, it's also easy on the eye.

## Low impact

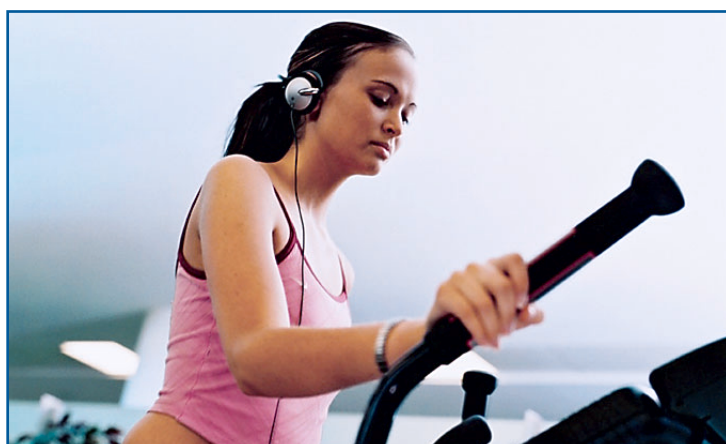
Daisy Redman of Technogym suggests the Resistance Trainer for a soft workout. 'It's a non-impact, movement-based exerciser that is kind on joints. The weight is increased using a series of springs controlled by a digital display instead of a weight stack.'

The company also offers personal trainers, Web-based personal programmes and DVD workouts. Who said there isn't time to get fit?

■ **Architect Your Home.**  
Tel: 0800 849 8505,  
www.architect-yourhome.com

■ **The Garden Escape.**  
Tel: 0870 242 7024,  
www.thegardenescape.co.uk

■ **Technogym.** Tel: 0800 316 2496, www.technogym.com



**Fit it out:** Clever design can make the most of a limited space

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