

MAKE SURE YOUR FITNESS MEMBERSHIP FITS YOU.

11 THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU JOIN ANY CLUB.

At Club Julian, we uphold the highest standards for our facility, procedures and operations. When considering any fitness club membership, we encourage you to consider these simple guidelines to ensure that you make the best selection for your long-term satisfaction.

Bring this checklist with you to compare and contrast your fitness club options.

1. Does the club promote a friendly comfortable workout environment? Are current members satisfied?

Take a tour and evaluate the facility - and look for interaction between members as well as the staff.

Also, ask the members – many will gladly offer an opinion. If they are happy there, you probably will be too.

2. Does the club have a set membership rate or do different members pay different rates?

Be cautious of large 'discounts' for extended long-term contracts. Ideally, a club should have standard fees and charges that are equitable for all members – and that are clearly detailed in its contract and cancellation policies.

3. What are the 'real' costs?

Be aware of all costs involved in a membership. Be skeptical of clubs that charge large up front fees and promise to get you in shape in a week. Some clubs may offer a great promotional rate to join, but impose restrictions, fees or lengthy terms on the actual membership.

Clubs usually charge a one-time enrollment fee and monthly dues but there may be additional charges for classes, pool usage, or other special services. Be sure to get the itemized costs for everything so you know what is the best value for you and the 'total cost' for the services you will use.

4. Is my membership protected? Is the club reputable?

Especially in a choppy economy, be sure to confirm if the club is **bonded**. This ensures that your dues or any prepaid services will be refunded if the club is sold or goes out of business.

Check the club's rating with the **Better Business Bureau**, including 'chain' or franchise clubs, and read all reviews and business disputes. Is it a BBB member? If there is an abundance of negative consumer comments or unsettled disputes, it should raise concern. This provides an overall perspective of how it handles service issues or complaints from its members. Consider a club that has been in business for a long time, which is a testament that it has happy members and runs a dependable, ethical business.

5. Is the sales staff paid on commissions?

When the potential for greater earnings comes from each new membership, consultants may resort to high-pressure tactics to close more deals – instead of ensuring that a membership meets your individual needs.

6. Am I safe there?

A club should be staffed **at all operating times** with personnel equipped to handle any emergency situation and ensure member safety. The staff should be **CPR certified** and the club should have **emergency response procedures in place**, including onsite life-saving defibrillators and lifeguards during pool hours.

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7. Are the staff and trainers certified?

Beware of clubs where sales consultants also serve as fitness trainers. ***Dedicated trainers should be certified and completely focused on the member's fitness program – not on sales quotas.*** Becoming a qualified fitness instructor requires extensive training and Clubs whose “trainers” and sales consultants are one in the same usually emphasize sales over service.

8. Is the club clean and equipment well maintained?

Be sure to take a tour. Cleanliness will be obvious – and a top priority - in any club that is service oriented, including the pool and locker room areas. The equipment should be modern and in excellent condition. **You should absolutely feel entitled to clean facilities in working order wherever you join.**

9. Are the hours and location convenient to your schedule?

Visit the club during the hours you plan to work out. If a club doesn't fit your schedule, nothing else matters. A club that is not conveniently located to your work or home, even if it offers a lower membership cost, only provides an excuse not to workout.

10. Will they remember me after I join?

Are you really a member or just a number? Sales-oriented clubs tend to leave members on their own after they join.

Service-oriented facilities, like Club Julian, track individual member activity to keep members involved and motivated with complimentary personalized fitness evaluations and programs, group classes, internal events and competitions, equipment training, newsletters and follow-up reminders that keep them on track.

11. Does the club periodically survey members for input on programs and individual services?

Locally owned clubs are much more responsive to the needs and wants of its members - compared to national chains or franchised clubs, where ownership or individuals making decisions on policies or programs may be located in another state. A locally owned club can quickly add preferred programs or policies because the management is on-site and more familiar with the members and the community.

