

Renters look for space to exercise

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If you want to stick like glue to your excuses for not exercising, don't read this article. Especially don't continue reading if your primary excuse for not lifting a dumbbell is that your apartment is too small.

Exercise pros say there is no one road for renters to get in shape.

Regardless of whether you live in a luxury apartment complex with its own gym or a less expensive place where space is limited, you can still lose the pounds — if you lose the excuses.

The trick is to get motivated, designate a workout area, and think outside the box for exercises that don't count on lots of jumping or clunky gear.

* In a small apartment

"I don't think people think they can't work out in an apartment. I think they don't know what to do," said Adam Campbell, fitness director for Men's Health and author of "Big Book of Exercises." "The truth is you really don't need any equipment to get a total body workout. There are tons of ways to make any exercise more difficult," he said.

"Body weight training is one of the best things you can do in your apartment with no equipment," said Roderick Lapid, a personal trainer in northern New Jersey who goes to homes, including apartments, to pump up exercise routines.

He directs renters to push-ups, crunches and Pilates, all well-suited for a roll-up exercise mat. "Yoga is great," he said.

To beef up the intensity of a workout, try handstands, inverted push-ups and even walking on your hands, he said.

Dumbbells and especially kettle bells take up little space and can add intensity to traditional exercises like squats. A stability ball fits right in the closet. Also ideal for small spaces are stackable power blocks as well as suspension straps, which require only a door.

Out of courtesy to neighbors, small-apartment dwellers are likely to have to forgo aerobics, but they still need cardio.

"You need to get the heart rate going," said Lapid, who likes the kettle bells for combined benefits of strength and heart-rate training.

Get creative in designating your exercise setting. Even if it's a corner, he said, "leave a yoga mat laid out and have your exercise tools available."

With any form of exercise, he advised that one should focus on a goal and ask, "Am I getting what I want out of this?"

Hoboken resident Jeff Thomsen, president of Fitness Solutions Direct, said: "You can find different workouts to try online or in magazines. Bottom line is if you have space and some sort of resistance you can put yourself through a great workout."

John Rowley of The American Institute of Healthcare and Fitness, said it's key to "work every body part even in the tightest studio apartment. You can also take your dumbbells into the staircase and take every other step for a lunge effort that will work your legs and buttocks while doing cardio. Time effective and space efficient."

*** When a fitness center is nearby:**

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At AVE by Korman Communities in Clifton, much thought went into designing a gym where renters would really want to work out, said president Lea Anne Welsh. This gym has a cardio room overlooking the pool and a strength-training room with a view of the tranquility garden, both from 18-foot-tall windows. The high ceilings were designed to energize residents as they enter the gym, Welsh explained.

Personal training and massage therapy are available here just like at a health club. And if it seems like AVE employees are promoting fitness to the tenants, they are.

"We want people to take advantage of everything," Welsh said. "They'll be more likely to stay and not move out if their workout buddy is a floor away. It helps to create a sense of community."

If you have such a fitness center, Rowley said, "The whole key to maximizing your workout in a fitness center at an apartment complex is to have a plan of action."

And, of course, leave those excuses behind.