

Will the Complex renovations be enough, ponders reader

Thank you for printing my last letter. I wonder if you are aware that the current renovations mean that the fitness equipment, weights, and aerobics/exercise floor area will be reduced to half what it is now, according to the architect's current design. The new ceiling will, of course, be lower as the fitness club addition is a lower single story with only 1070 + 3200 square feet floor area. The current area used has a very high ceiling, with a track around it of course, and is about 8000 sq. ft, with an additional room for more equipment. Mr. Downey believes that because the new wing for the new fitness area will be long and narrow, the square footage will be used more efficiently and he says that he will be able to fit all the equipment into it.?

I wonder if users, and especially staff, are in agreement that the smaller areas for aerobics and fitness club will be more than enough. The Thornhill Fitness Centre built a brand new addition some years ago and moved their fitness area from the basement to the large, bright, ground-floor space with a very high ceiling. With all their consideration and architects, they forgot to make room for stretching, abdominal work, and whole-body exercises such as with the large balance balls. They moved equipment to make some room.

I have recently been to the new facility in Oak Ridges to see if I will be going there in my future and the first thing I noticed were the people trying to do their sit-ups in a tiny corner by a window beside a treadmill.

The staff told me that the design had neglected an open space for working with the large balls, abdominal work, stretching etc. They told me that some people use the hallway. Here it is a brand new facility and already folks are having to spill out into the hallways. Will this happen at the new and improved AFLC after it opens next year? Personally, I cannot see how I will be able to walk up and down an aisle doing squats with dumbbells in each hand in the smaller new space, crammed with cardio equipment, weight machines and room for free-weights.

I expect I will have to go out into the hallway, or exit the fitness area, walk around a corner in the hall and enter the gym, if it is not in use, and use the gym space to do that part of my work-out. No, there is no direct access from the fitness club room to the new, repurposed gymnasium (a.k.a. the old fitness club).

Unlike in your colleague's cartoon last week, many of us are regularly exercising, if not always in the gym in the warmer weather. I wish to point out that my new friend, retiree Ralph Jessup, goes many times a week to the AFLC and neither of us appreciate the sarcastic humour of Scott Johnston.

Is Mr. Johnston aware that the annual income from fitness club members alone last year was \$564,000? Does he realize that most members are away in the summer and are not regular visitors until the fall/winter and that the club has noticed an appreciable decline in membership renewals this fall?

They are trying to give out deals now to bring back members or keep us loyal. For myself, I do not wish to get used to another facility, make friendships there, work it into a new lifestyle for at least a year, just to come back to a different AFLC and start all over again.

It seems the closest I will be to the AFLC this winter and perhaps for years to come will be the Aurora Dome for women's soccer. It is a shame. My husband and I have enjoyed meeting people in the pool, the change rooms, the gym, and in yoga and zumba classes. We were hoping to continue to improve and enrich ourselves there. We will especially miss the amazing fitness staff at the AFLC. We wish them well over the next year and in the future.

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