



{ *New Year... New Goals... New Habits* }

The Habit of Gym Equipment Care

The beginning of a New Year is always the time to start forming new habits, and your gym equipment maintenance should be no different than your diet, exercise, or personal development habits. It all starts with a quick look in the mirror to reveal the areas that need the most attention.

An overview of your gym will quickly enable you to make a list of points of emphasis. Just as our personal health breaks down into three categories, 1. appearance, 2. Conditioning 3. Medical health, so does your gym equipment. How does it look? How does it function? And what is its long term prognosis. The goals should always be the same - safety, marketability, and investment protection. Personal goals are usually: feel and look healthier, be more productive and interesting to others, and live longer. In a similar way, you want your equipment to look good, work properly, and last a long time.

As with building all new habits, cues trigger routines that yield rewards. The cues will always be there, but it's up to you to connect a routine to each cue. Hopefully the resulting rewards will be satisfying enough to keep the cue / routine connection intact. New habits form easier than you may think. More on that in another article.

Gym Equipment Care breaks down into three actions: 1. Inspect 2. Detect 3. Correct. Making a daily routine or habit out of visually inspecting your equipment will reveal a lot and save you from many problems down the road. While you are inspecting, you are looking for out of place items, items that need cleaning, items that need adjusting or repair, and items that need to be removed. Most of the discovered violations are easy to remedy. Picking up and cleaning with soap and water and a vacuum are the easiest cures. The more frequently you inspect, the less you will have to correct. The key to proper detection is having a good foundational knowledge of not only how the equipment works but how it is used. Your daily and weekly inspections should not replace having your equipment inspected regularly by a professional equipment specialist, but they will help.

If you follow the same routine for your inspections, you will find efficient ways to correct the most common problems. You will become more aware of loose bolts, frayed cables, misused items, and homemade cures for equipment ailments. In follow up articles we will discuss specific items to look for but for now let's just say we are trying to anticipate problems and eliminate them before they create an injury or damage to equipment.

The cue for gym inspection routine can be any reminder that puts you in action. Maybe it's making that first pot of coffee, or turning off your alarm system, or checking your telephone messages, but something needs to trigger your action routine of inspecting your equipment. It should be something that is done every day. For the cue and routine to work, there has to be a recognizable reward. I think you will agree that there are three very real and worthwhile rewards.

1. Safety – Making sure that your equipment is in proper working condition and it is properly purposed will increase the probability of preventing injuries to your athletes, staff, and visitors.
2. Appearance – The better your gym looks, the more marketable it is. Parents want to send their children to clean and organized facilities. If all else is equal, then nice clean gyms will attract more customers.
3. Protecting your investment. Just as you care for your car to get the most life out of it, you should maintain your gymnastics equipment and mats to increase their longevity and functionality.

It always helps to record your successes, so even if you don't fix every equipment problem, keeping a check list will serve as a reminder that you accomplished a goal. If you haven't already started a daily check list, today would be a good day.

As we launch into what no-doubtedly will be an amazing year for gymnastics in the United States, it seems like this should be the perfect time to start building some new habits that will positively impact your customers and your business. Hopefully care and attention to your equipment is on your 2016 list of goals. More specific suggestions will follow in subsequent articles.

Make it a great day!

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