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BE CREATIVE



FEASTING IN THE
BIG EASY

OCTOBER 2004

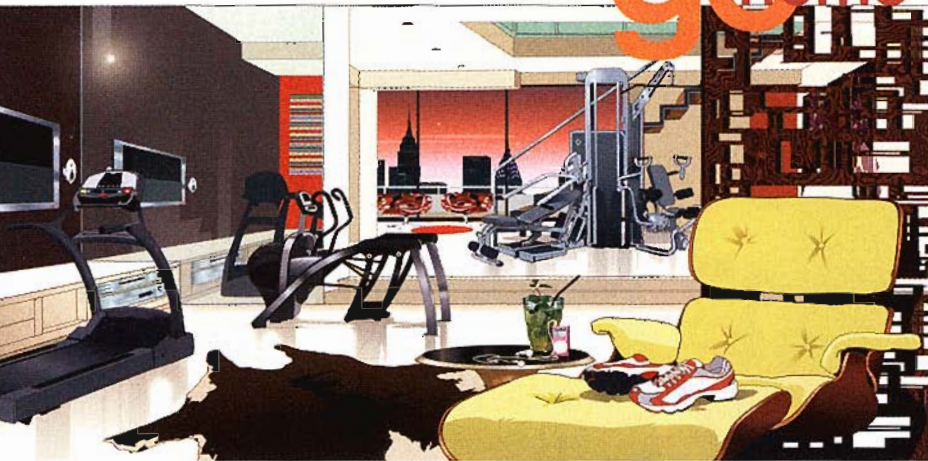
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Home, Sweat, Home

GONE ARE THE DAYS WHEN EXERCISE EQUIPMENT MEANT A STATIONARY bicycle or stack of barbells gathering dust in the corner of the garage. Today, going to the gym might well mean opening the door to a dedicated rec room. "There is a definite trend in getting the home gym out of the basement," says Murray Hughes, supervising editor of Home Gym Review, a Web site that reviews home gym equipment. Americans today are both more health-conscious and more pressed for time. As a result, what they want is a full-body workout in the convenience of their own homes.

"There is a definite trend in getting the home gym out of the basement."

— Murray Hughes

The trend is easy to spot, says Larry Weindruch, director of communications for the National Sporting Goods Association. From 2001 to 2003, consumer purchases of home exercise equipment rose from \$3.9 billion to \$4.7 billion, an increase of more than 20 percent. "Baby boomers are setting their sights on an active retirement," Weindruch says, "not one spent in a chair in front of the TV."

There are many types of home gym equipment — from the ubiquitous rod-based **Bowflex** machine seen on late-night television to full-service weight stack machines similar to those available at the local Y. The most common types of equipment use either a resistance-based system, achieved by flexible rods or elastic bands, or a weight-based system that usually features weight stacks, or stacks of flat metal plates. Because the two types of resistance feel different, it's important to try them out before making a purchase. "The best thing to do is join a gym for a month and try out the equipment," suggests Tom Mutchler, senior project leader of the Recreation and Home Improvement Department of *Consumer Reports* magazine. "See what exercises you like to do, what fits you correctly, whether the motion is going to be smooth enough."

Another variable is the number of stations; some machines provide room for only one person to work out, while others, such as the larger models by **Hoist, True,** and **Body-Solid**, accommodate two at a time. Having two stations also usually allows a wider range of exercise features.

Whatever you choose, be sure it allows you to get the full-body workout you're after. If it doesn't and you're working only one part of your body, you'll end up heading downtown to the gym. Then what's the point?

— Melanie Haiken



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