

HEALTH CLUBS – GET IN SHAPE

Trap Scenario

Mike is 55 and considers himself in good health. But, over the holidays he put on some weight and would really like to lose 25 pounds. Mike has tried diets and sporadic attempts at exercise but now wants to commit to a regular health and fitness program. He is eager to start the process but has never worked out with treadmills, elliptical machines, weights or any of the other cardio equipment available at most health clubs. He also has questions about the contract he would be required to sign. Mike wants to learn more to be certain he makes the right decision. But where does he start?

Tips

Prior to starting any exercise program, you should always get guidance from your doctor.

- Before signing a health club contract, read it carefully and ask about free trial periods. Most health clubs will allow prospective members to use the health club free of charge for a limited time before making a decision.
- Don't be pressured into signing the contract. However, if you do sign and change your mind, the law requires the health club to provide a written disclosure allowing you three business days to cancel, excluding weekends and legal holidays.
- Ask if free personal training sessions are included with the membership. Most health clubs offer a few free supervised training sessions to become familiar with the equipment to limit the chance of injury.
- Health studios/gyms are regulated by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. You can verify a club's license status by calling 800-435-7352. More information is available at <http://www.800helpfla.com/>.
- Try getting a friend to join as well. This might just provide the extra motivation to achieve your goals for a healthier new year, and you might get a better deal too.

For more information, call Palm Beach County Consumer Affairs at 561-712-6600 (Boca/Delray residents call 1-888-852-7362 toll free)