



Why it pays to be versatile

WHY invest in fitness equipment that can only be used in one way, when you could buy kit that performs multiple roles?

Put it like that and it sounds obvious doesn't it? But the reality is that most gyms that we come across don't do this. Instead, they are filled to the rafters with individual pieces of equipment that perform just a single function.

Now, there are lots of good pieces of gym kit on the market that can only be utilised in one way.

However, given that the most common problem we come across when evaluating facilities is under-utilised gym equipment, it makes sense for operators to scale down and invest in versatile kit that performs more than one function.

By doing so, operators would still be able to offer the range of equipment needed to cater for all workouts, but would also be able to free up valuable floor space for other important equipment such as the ever popular free weights and stretching mats.

Our research has shown that the more versatile a piece of equipment is, the more popular it is among gym users. We have a comparison tools that analyses two pieces equipment across all 500 of our studies, but only if they have been in the same gym together.

It showed us, for example, when we compared



usage of the lateral pulldown machine, which features a bar with changeable handles to work different muscle groups, with the pulldown station with fixed handles that the average demand for the more flexible piece of equipment – the lateral pulldown – was used 150 per cent more!

When we compared usage of Pec Fly / Rear Delt machines with just a Pec Fly the Pec Fly is used 87 per cent more than just a pec fly and 89 per cent more than a Pec Deck.

The dip pull up station, which allows users to work the back, arms, shoulders, triceps, chest and abs, with the captain's chair, which solely works the abs is used 40 per cent more.

The Kings of Versatility

With all the millions of hours of data we have on equipment usage GYMetrix now produces equipment popularity rankings for clients.

The leader by some margin in resistance / selectorised is Dual Adjustable Pulleys and Cable Crossovers. Why? Because they are the most versatile and can be used to perform literally hundreds of exercises... However, operators consistently under supply them.

In Free Weights the clear leader in terms of usage is simply an adjustable bench and dumbbells. Once again, these can be used to exercise many different body parts in many different ways, however, these

too are consistently undersupplied.

GYMetrix has a metric – Cost per hour used which factors in the cost of the equipment and how much it is used – the lower the cost/ hr used the higher the operators return on investment for that type of equipment.

Benches normally come in around 5p – 10p per hours used. Cables around 20p per hour used – an arm extension around 80p per hour used! In other words the ROI for a cable is 4X that of an Arm Extension!

Now that we are in the USA where operators buy the same equipment types from multiple manufacturers we can start compare the manufacturers.

For cross-trainers the clear leader is Precor's EFX cross-trainer, because it has the added versatility of an adjustable gradient, that enables users to work different muscle groups.

So when buying gym equipment always think Versatility – the more versatile the piece of equipment, the more usage it will get and the higher you return on investment!

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