

YOUR HOME January 2007

TIPS AND TRENDS TO HELP MAXIMIZE HOME BUYING AND SELLING



BUILD YOUR OWN GYM

Trying to keep those New Year's resolutions but don't have time to get to the gym? Consider a home gym. The equipment that you'll need will depend on the interests, fitness levels and goals of the people who will be using it. For good all-around fitness, a treadmill, stationary bike or elliptical trainer are top choices and can accommodate a range of fitness levels.

For strength training, a good set of free weights (i.e., dumbbells and resistance bands) can be stored easily and provide a vast selection of exercises. If you have more space (and more money), consider a weight machine. The number one rule here is that you get what you pay for. High-quality equipment that works reliably after several years of heavy use can't be manufactured cheaply.

Used equipment can be a smart option, as long as you know what to look for. The less risky option is to purchase from a dealer who can give you some kind of guarantee.

Now, the question is where to put your home gym. You'll need to consider space using the following criteria:

- no low ceilings, or obstacles that can be hit if lifting weights;
- a secure, non-slip floor (also, avoid having weights in an upstairs room)
- good lighting and a fresh airflow;
- organized and tidy electrical cables and pipes; a power supply for music or air conditioning; and
- at least as much open space as equipment space.

A gym that's just steps away really cuts down on excuses and adds up to a fitter, healthier you!

New Life for Old Computers

According to the National Safety Council, approximately 63 million computers became obsolete in 2005. So what can you do when it's time to ditch your old computer? Many organizations accept computer donations (as long as the computer is in good condition and meets certain requirements), which are generally tax deductible. To learn more about the donation of electronics to schools, charities and nonprofit organizations, visit www.Earth911.org.

If your computer is too outdated to donate, you should consider recycling. Computers are made with a variety of elements, like plastics, glass, steel, gold, lead, mercury, cadmium and fire retardants that can be reused. If thrown away, these computers can release toxins into the environment, potentially polluting the water and air. Recycling the resources in computers also eliminates the need to obtain these elements from nature, decreasing production impacts on the environment. To learn more about recycling your computer, go to www.electronicrecycling.org.

No matter what option you choose, don't forget to remove personal information from your computer. Experts recommend using professional disk cleaning software to delete your Internet browser's cache, cookies, history, e-mail contacts and messages, documents, recycle or trash folder and nontransferable software. The best thing to do is to use a disk-cleaning utility that overwrites data so it can't be recovered.

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The 1860 to 1900 Arts and Crafts movement was a late-19th-century backlash against the forces of industrialization. It revived an interest in handicrafts and sought a spiritual connection with the surrounding environment, both natural and manmade. The Craftsman Bungalow evolved from the Arts and Crafts movement.

