

[Home](#) / [In Print](#) / Organizing the Fitness Floor

Organizing the Fitness Floor

By [Contributing Author](#) on September 6, 2016

1 SHARE TWEET SHARE SHARE 0 COMMENTS



Recreation facilities are an important component in the recruitment of students, so the initial impression is important. But to retain students, the quality of life once on campus is what really matters. Technology and specialized training gyms have increased the expectations and sophistication of today's workout. If you haven't revisited your equipment layout in a while, there may be ways to organize and prioritize types of equipment to make the workout experience better for a wide array of users.

But before we talk about layout, size is important. The baseline area dedicated to weights and fitness should meet the NIRSA recommendations of approximately one square foot per full-time student. With the baseline met, you can then address the organization of the fitness area.

□ **Equipment neighborhoods:** Many recreation centers are organized in areas by the type of equipment — cardio, selectorized, free weights, etc. There are many reasons for this and there is nothing wrong with this arrangement, but is there a better way? As an alternative to this, consider developing areas around specific user types. Create groupings for a complete workout based on skill levels. Group equipment for beginners, intermediate and advanced users in neighborhoods. This builds a progression within the fitness floor that focuses on user comfort and builds camaraderie around similar abilities, while at the same time closes the intimidation gap to

encourage moving on to more advanced workouts as skills are acquired. In addition, it provides a more efficient workout by reducing trips across the floor to get both cardio and strength training.

□ **Provide for the workout students want:** **Functional training** has eclipsed the traditional weight room in many ways. So how do you find the space without converting a studio or racquetball court?

Rather than look for a separate space to provide functional training, adapt your facility to integrate functional training into every workout. Make functional training part of each "fitness neighborhood" appropriate to each skill level. This makes it easier for beginners to try it, and becomes part of the culture around functional training. Create areas for simple body movement for beginners; add pull-up racks and battling ropes for the intermediate users.

To free up the space on the floor, reduce the quantity of specialized single-joint equipment. For the advanced users rethink the traditional weight room that caters to the bodybuilder. To provide the space here, reduce the number of benches, replace Smith machines with more compact half racks, and create an area for suspension training, plyometric boxes and kettlebells.

□ **Technology:** Implementing functional training does increase the need for instruction, supervision and oversight. To a degree this can be mitigated through video screens with instructions at equipment and group orientation programs. The content can change over time, and be tailored to a specific fitness program offering. It can be produced in-house or purchased through subscription services. This technology can also be integrated with fitness tracking apps and devices to improve the ability of users to implement heart zone training.

□

Salvatore Canciello is a principal at [S3 Design](#), an architecture firm dedicated to the design of facilities for recreation and athletics. He can be reached at scanciello@s3design-inc.com or visit s3design-inc.com.



Emily Harbourne is the editor for Campus Rec Magazine. She can be reached at emily@peakemedia.com.