

2017 fitness trends your amenities should offer

High-quality fitness amenities can drive apartment leasing and retention. As a key attraction in most multifamily apartments today, fitness amenities should not only include state-of-the-art equipment but also a plan to provide the best possible experience for the people who live there.

• **Cardio.** Residents desire a variety of cardiovascular choices in today's multifamily fitness centers. Treadmills, ellipticals and traditional bikes are no longer enough. According to the American College of Sports Medicine's top fitness trends list for 2017, high-intensity exercise is No. 3. Residents want high-intensity machines including rowers, stair mills, motorless treadmills and indoor cycles.

It's recommended that centers have at least five different cardio choices and duplicates of each unit. Attaching personal viewing screens or wall-mounted TVs is still the norm, while high-end facilities are embracing embedded cardio entertainment screens. Open-interface cardio systems now allow the users to link their smartphone or tablet to the cardio machine screen, creating a mirror image of the device. This allows for most wearable technology applications to be present on the screen. The American College of Sports Medicine's No. 1 fitness trend is wearable technology.

If there's space in the amenity for a studio, group exercise programs such as Fitness on Demand™ can be installed to provide virtual instructor-led classes including dance, yoga, Pilates and cycling. Boxing



Ryan Conover
Business
development
manager, Sport
and Fitness Inc.,
Littleton

areas can be added if the noise doesn't detract from the other residents' experience. Group exercise programming is No. 6 on the list of trends this year and yoga is No. 8.

• **Strength.** At No. 5 on the top fitness trends list is strength training. One of the biggest complaints by residents can

be a lack of free weights in the fitness amenity. To correct this, offer dumbbells up to at least 100 pounds and consider barbells from 20 to 115 pounds. Include at least one squat rack and some multiadjustable benches. If liability is an issue, a "freedom rack" can offer the movement of free weights with the safety of a guided track.

For strength machines, include a circuit that incorporates all major muscle groups: chest, back, shoulder, arms, abdominal, low back and legs. There are a variety of equipment options, and residents will notice if a facility has opted to purchase less than health-club-quality equipment.

If square footage is an issue, there are great options for smaller, dual-purpose machines that work more than one body part. For cable systems, a dual-adjustable pulley can meet the needs of most multifamily centers. For more cable options and a wow factor, a larger five- or nine-station system can be explored.



Sport and Fitness Inc.

This apartment fitness amenity features premium floors, which look like wood, a small training area, strength equipment and cardio with onboard personal trainers.

• **Body weight exercises.** Body weight training scored No. 2 on the trends list. This includes isometric exercises like pushups, situps, planks and lunges. Most new properties offer a separate studio for these types of movements as well as for core work and stretching. If a dedicated space is not available, carefully planned small areas in between existing equipment can suffice.

• **Functional fitness.** Functional fitness was No. 12 on the list and is defined as using strength training to improve balance, coordination, force, power and endurance. The newest fitness amenities offer some form of functional training, which can include a larger functional trainer machine that accommodates multiple people at the same time with med balls, plyometric platforms and

cable systems. Functional training accessories also can be placed in a separate studio and suspension trainers can be anchored to the walls or on a TRX multimount.

• **Other considerations.** It's important to remember that the fitness amenity represents the brand of the property. While rubber flooring is still acceptable, there are higher-end vinyl products that resemble hardwood flooring or carpet with a comfortable, cushioned rubber on the bottom. Keep the temperature of the center between 68 and 72 degrees Fahrenheit and consider ceiling fans for comfort.

The fitness amenity should be cleaned on a schedule. This entails regular cleaning of the treadmill hoods, displays and decks, and the

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Lowen

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Other products, such as moderate rehab programs, have emerged recently in response to this investor shift to value add from Class A. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have acquisition/rehab programs that allow for greater flexibility during renovation.

• **Green.** If you had to characterize the themes and trends across the multifamily space in a few sentences, what would you say?

• **Lowen.** We will continue to see the delivery of high-end Class A units through 2018-2019. I do think we've hit the inflection point for high end so we will likely start to see this tapering

off and lots of projects with construction debt in need of permanent debt. This will provide additional opportunity for nonbank lenders, who are not highly regulated and have greater autonomy, to handle these deals and get the construction debt off the bankbooks and into permanent financing. Lenders with experience in

prestabilized and recently stabilized financing will continue to play a large role as this unfolds.

In my opinion, more critical and creative thinking, as well as a scrappier attitude, will be the names of the game in the multifamily market here in Colorado and across the country going forward. ▲

Dynia

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repeating modules of 18-foot sections are accessed through private gardens, creating a sense of a townhouse configuration. Innovation should extend to unit design to create flexibility. The

unit designs are flexible, including spaces such as crib rooms that can alternatively be used as home offices. Only one hallway, the length of the four-story building, exists to access the one-bedroom apartments and

top-floor units.

In most parts of the country, we are in the middle of a housing boom that hopefully will be used as an opportunity to repair community fabric and mend social ills. In concert with our

development partners, we are committed to designing quality housing projects. We strive to enhance communities and promote social connectivity, while at the same time delivering timeless and innovative work. ▲

Dyk

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views to the media (and who will be given the task), and how often your company will update social media streams and websites.

• Assign staff to reach out to public aid organizations, such as the Red Cross to assist residents affected by

the emergency.

• **Expect surprises.** Even the best-laid disaster recovery plans aren't foolproof. There inevitably will be unaccounted for scenarios or circumstances. When this happens, take note and use the information to update your organization's plans so that everyone will be better prepared

for the next curve ball thrown your way.

The more planning you do up front, the more competently you and your team will perform in the heat of the moment. If you don't already have a disaster recovery plan in place, don't let the idea of putting one together overwhelm you. Quali-

fied disaster response partners with a proven history of working with multifamily properties should be aware of the nuances of the industry and can help you build a good basis for your plan. After all, knowing what to do and who to call after a disaster can make all of the difference in a speedy recovery. ▲

Conover

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base of the bikes and ellipticals. Everything in the fitness amenity should have a storage place to keep accessories and clutter organized. Broken equipment should be repaired as soon as possible, so make sure equipment is purchased from a company that provides superior after-sale sup-

port. This is just as important, if not more important, as the initial equipment purchase.

Quarterly or semiannual preventative maintenance will not only extend the life of the equipment investment, but also prevent more equipment downtime and resident dissatisfaction. Careful daily inspection by the property manager can ensure that

cardio TVs are working correctly and that all units are functioning properly. This includes plugging headphones into each cardio unit and trying each machine to ensure smooth movement.

When machines are broken, let the residents know by placing an out-of-order sign with the problem and anticipated repair date. To avoid dis-

satisfaction and costly repairs, and to remain competitive, cardio units ideally should be replaced about every three to five years depending on use and service history.

Consider a survey system or online comment box for residents to provide feedback on the fitness center and equipment. Act on these requests in a timely fashion and be responsive. ▲



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