Quickies: How to Avoid Gymtimidation

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Quickies: How to Avoid Gymtimidation

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Going to the gym can be a pretty intimidating experience. From the moment you walk in, you are inundated with impressive displays of human ability. Some guy is in the corner benching what looks like 3,000 pounds. You see someone else flex and rip his shirt off. A girl is just finishing up lap 300 on the track. The air is filled with the sound of weights crashing, the faint smell of body odor and frequent usage of the word “bro.” For some people, adapting to this strange environment is a breeze, but for those of us not yet at “Johnny Bravo” status, here are a few tips on how to fit in at the gym.

1. **Wear normal gym clothes.**
   This sounds like common sense, but it seems like every time you go to the gym there’s at least one jean-wearer. Unless denim undergoes a serious change and re-emerges as athletic wear, it’s probably best to stay away from jeans... or dress pants of any kind. For girls, stay away from a lot of make up—no one is impressed when you walk into the gym looking like you just came from a high school prom. If you do wear make up, try to keep it waterproof, or you could risk looking like your face is melting off. Also, everyone should refrain from dressing up in ridiculously expensive athletic gear. This is a college gym—not the Olympic Training Center. A T-shirt and shorts are the way to go.

2. **Wear deodorant.**
   We’ve all had those unfortunate gym encounters with people that smell like they just came straight out of 18th century France. Whether you think so or not, your natural musk just really isn’t that alluring. Fortunately there’s an easy fix. There’s a wonderful product called “deodorant.” Apply it before a workout and watch in amazement as people are steadily less and less repulsed by your presence (but alas, for some people, not even the most intoxicating Old Spice fragrance will take away that repulsion completely).

3. **Don’t worry about supplements.**
   Looking at some of the serious gym-goers, it can be easy to get caught up in their rituals. After workouts you see them drink protein shakes, swallow rocks, gargle yak semen—whatever it is that they do to pack on the muscle. For the casual exerciser, there’s no need for that and it’s probably illegal anyway. Plus, when people marvel at your chiseled body, you’ll be able to tell them it’s “all natural.”

4. **Know that the water fountains are motion sensitive.**
   Remember this. Don’t try to look for a button. Don’t be caught off guard when the water comes shooting out at your face. Don’t pretend you’re a wizard whose mere presence summons water from the bowels of the earth. Just get a drink and move on.

5. **Be sanitary.**
   There is almost always a cloth and spray near whatever exercise contraption you’re using, so it’s not that hard to do this. No one wants to work out in a Jacuzzi of your back sweat, so just wipe off the machine when you’re done and nobody will get hurt.

6. **Have confidence.**
   Don’t be affected by the huge, ripped guys effortlessly throwing around the metal equivalent of your body weight. If you look confident, no one will even think twice about the exceptionally large amount of effort it’s taking you to do lunges with a 12-pound dumbbell. You may think they’ll make fun of you, but your lack of physical prowess could actually make the other gym-goers feel better about their own strength, which feeds their egos and keeps everyone happy.

If you follow these tips and combine them with a healthy scoop of common sense, you’ll be a natural at the gym in no time. You got this, bro!