

USED EQUIPMENT

Not all club operators are looking at new equipment for their purchasing or leasing needs. A growing number of operators are eyeing used or remanufactured strength equipment. According to the leasing company executive, used equipment sales at his company have increased about 50 percent from previous years.

"In general, there are savings on used equipment," he says. "The price varies. Club owners are looking at 30 percent to 40 percent savings over new equipment, based on the age and condition of the used equipment."

This option is not for everyone.

"In the 12-year history of BodyScapes Fitness, we've never bought used strength equipment, and we never will," says Shapiro. "We feel very strongly about only buying new equipment for our clubs."

Chris Stevenson, owner of [Stevenson Fitness](#), Oak Park, CA, agrees, saying that he's not a fan of using used equipment at a commercial facility due to the volume of use that the equipment has probably had at its previous location and will have at the new location.

Brown of Defined Fitness says that when her company gets rid of its equipment to buy new, the used equipment is quickly purchased by equipment remanufacturers for a decent price.

"It seems used equipment is in higher demand than before," she says. "However, we have not chosen to purchase refurbished equipment."

But for those club owners interested in refurbished equipment, Tidwell recommends that they look on [Craigslist](#) online for equipment that failing club owners are selling.

"With so many 'mom and pop' gyms and exercise studios closing their doors, there is a good amount of gently used commercial equipment that is worth buying," she says. "Seriously, go to Craigslist and type in 'exercise equipment' and see how much stuff comes up."

Jowers, who buys both new and used equipment, has purchased equipment such as squat racks, deadlift platforms and barbells from Craigslist at lower prices than manufacturers offer, he says. Since Craigslist connects local buyers with local sellers, shipping fees aren't necessary — although club owners must transport the equipment to their facilities, which may mean transportation or moving costs.

Other club operators purchase the refurbished equipment through suppliers who specialize in

that area. Keller advises club owners to investigate refurbished equipment suppliers before they purchase to learn what kind of use the equipment had before it was refurbished.

"Having a really good relationship with the company that purchased [and] refurbished the equipment is essential," Keller says. "Otherwise, the price may be good, but the equipment won't last. One of the worst things a club can have happen is for equipment to be constantly breaking down."

Used or refurbished equipment often is cheaper than new equipment. However, the cost of used equipment isn't necessarily lower today than in years past, says a leasing company president. Prices may drop, though, as more clubs close, causing used equipment inventory to pile up, he says.

"It normally takes a couple of months for closures and removal of that equipment to work its way into the system, so I wouldn't be surprised if used equipment starts to experience price drops in the near future," he says.

The lower price, though, isn't necessarily worth it for some operators. Rather than investing in used and refurbished equipment, Shapiro says club operators should invest in new equipment to keep their clubs more viable. Still, he knows new equipment can be expensive, which is why his club purchases new equipment on a piecemeal basis, rather than buying a lot of equipment at one time.

"In a good leasing environment, you could basically replace all your cardio at once, but now we've just replaced two pieces, and then in four months, another four pieces, and so on," Shapiro says. "The process takes more time in these hard times because we're a little bit more cautious. In our clubs, it's a necessity to replace all the equipment, and we must keep up with that standard."

Keeping up with a certain equipment standard may become more important as club competition intensifies in today's economy. According to one leasing company executive, in the near future, smart club owners will be those who invest in new equipment and use that as a selling point to customers, letting them know that they are investing in the facility to benefit the potential member, while the customer's current gym is not.

RELATED ARTICLES

[FITNESS EQUIPMENT R&D HAS NOT BEEN AFFECTED BY THE RECESSION, MANUFACTURERS SAY](#)

[REVENUE INCREASES AT FITNESS EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS MAY BE DECEIVING](#)

[FITNESS EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS RIDE WAVE OF UNCERTAINTY DURING RECESSION](#)

FALL PREVENTION ONE OF MANY CLASSES CLUBS CAN OFFER

SENIOR STRENGTH TRAINING

Find this article at:

<http://www.clubindustry.com/forprofits/health-club-equipment-decision-economy-200903/index2.html>

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

© 2008 Penton Media, Inc. All rights reserved.