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Six Steps To Help You Select Fitness Flooring

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Six Steps to Selecting Fitness Flooring

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Fitness professionals are trained to help their clients get in shape, improve their nutrition and lose weight, but few are experts in selecting proper fitness flooring for their facilities. Here are six steps that you can follow to make the right flooring decision.

- 1. Devise a list of every activity that occurs in the room in question.** Sometimes a room (such as a free-weight room) is used for just one activity. However, group exercise and multi-purpose rooms often host aerobics, spinning, Pilates and a variety of other classes. Once you list all the activities that will occur in that room, you can more easily determine the appropriate flooring. For example, although rubber flooring might be appropriate for some activities in the group exercise room, it does not provide the correct traction for pivoting and sliding that would be required in aerobics. You don't want to think about this only after installation.
- 2. Look at aesthetics.** Does the proposed surface fit with the general appearance of your facility? Fitness flooring, while specially designed for the needs of fitness activities, is still in essence a building material and should fit the aesthetic of the rest of the room. Go over your options with your architect or designer, but keep in mind the material's appropriateness for fitness.
- 3. Look for alternatives.** Ask friends who manage or own clubs what surfaces have worked well for them, or visit other clubs to see which surfaces they've selected for various areas. Look at what has worn well and what has not and how the floors fit in with the general look of the club. Throw away preconceptions, and look at the advantages or disadvantages of various types of floors. For instance, you may initially want carpet in your cardiovascular area, but you may find rubber in that area at many clubs because it shows less wear and prevents fibers from getting into the equipment's motors. Just be open to alternatives through this discovery process.
- 4. Get measurements or floor plans for the area in question.** You need measurements when requesting proposals from manufacturers. The more detailed these plans are the better, because elements you didn't consider may need to be added. For instance, doorways need some type of transition, and walls require some type of baseboard. Also, vertical obstructions, such as columns, may affect the installation price.
- 5. Use the manufacturers as consultants.** That's really what their job should be anyway. Ask them which floors they feel are appropriate for your area and why. Ask them if alternative surfaces might be appropriate for the area and what the benefits and disadvantages are of those alternatives. If two manufacturers offer costs that differ greatly, ask them to explain the difference. Perhaps one manufacturer included something that the other did not, such as the product being delivered right into the space as opposed to being dropped at your door.
- 6. Get references.** Everyone knows this step is important but few people actually do it. The best way to ensure a hassle-free installation is to ask others about their experience with a particular company. Ask for references who have had the floor in place for some time so that you can see how well the product has worn or whether or not any problems occurred with the installation. Ask the references: How did the company respond to any problems? Did the material or installers show up on a timely basis? Did the product perform as advertised? Did anything occur that you did not expect?

The best way to be confident that you made the right choice for your facility is to gather as much information as possible before you make your final selection. It's not necessary to go into great detail about the mechanics of one system over another, but it is important to know what has performed well in similar situations. That way the flooring you've selected will be a great solution for your fitness facility for years to come.



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