

## Preventive Maintenance Keeps Fitness Equipment Healthy

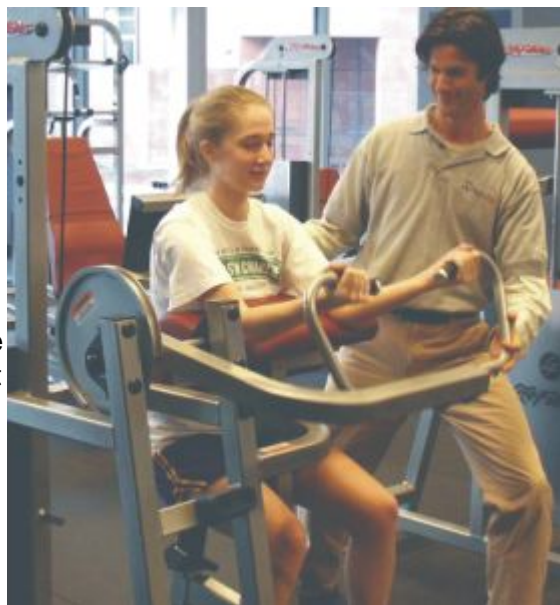
By Chris Keel

Just as proper diet and exercise help human beings live healthier lives, **preventive maintenance is the key to getting the most out of exercise equipment.** Preventing service calls and keeping exercise machines running with minimal downtime requires more than just wiping down equipment and reporting malfunctioning units to your technician. A regular program of care truly can **extend the life of your equipment and save money in the long run.**

### Combat problems before they occur

One way to ensure that fitness equipment lasts longer and sees minimal downtime is to purchase commercial-quality products from reputable manufacturers. Although equipment from leading manufacturers sometimes costs more, name-brand products can offer superior durability, reliability and warranties, which help reduce costs for equipment repair and replacement later on. Some pieces even can perform various maintenance functions themselves.

Next, **every fitness center should implement a routine preventive maintenance program.** Not only will this minimize equipment downtime by identifying problems before they occur, but it also can avert safety issues such as worn cables or loose bolts which can result in injuries to gym patrons.



The Pottruck Center at the University of Pennsylvania

PHOTO COURTESY OF PENN RECREATION

Facility management should stress the importance of routine maintenance to all staff, and employees performing equipment maintenance and service should undergo thorough training by a technician from a manufacturer or qualified local vendor. For some recreation fitness centers, **purchasing a service contract from an equipment manufacturer or local vendor may be more convenient and ultimately more effective than handling maintenance internally.**

## The bottom line

Regardless of the number of machines in your fitness center, and no matter what their workloads, a concerted **preventive maintenance effort is crucial**. Customers will be content that their favorite equipment isn't constantly being repaired, and **the facility will be safer** because potentially dangerous malfunctions are identified before machines can cause injury. Finally, **machines that run longer with less downtime and fewer repairs also will keep your facility's budget in shape**.

*Chris Keel is Life Fitness' manager of technical support and training and is responsible for ensuring that all field and in-house technical personnel are service competent. He can be reached at [chris.keel@lifefitness.com](mailto:chris.keel@lifefitness.com).*

© Copyright 2003 Recreation Management. All rights reserved.

Reprinted courtesy of "Recreation Management" Magazine.

By, Chris Keel, Manager, Technical Support, and Training, Life Fitness.