



The Rise of the Boutique Gym

Pro athletes and celebs go out of their way to work with elite trainers at destination gyms. Now those spots are open to you. **by ASHLEY MATEO**

FOR MANY OF US, a big-box gym or a group fitness class has enough to get the job done. But if you're serious about athletic endeavors, you may consider seeing a specialty gym that offers a super-niche experience. And these four, located across the country, are among the best.

They employ trainers at the top of their fields, and typically work with participants in a one-on-one or small-group setting.

Join up if you're a local or a frequent flier to that town, but if you're just passing through, all of them offer drop-in or remote options. The only prerequisite: Be ready to get sweaty.

Sweat Like a VIP

PERFORMIX HOUSE, NEW YORK

Membership here is capped at 400, and applicants are required to do an in-person interview. Some spots have gone to high-profile clientele (ahem, Naomi Campbell), but you don't have to be famous to join. "If you're invested in long-term health, you're in," says Matt Hesse, Performix House founder and chief executive.

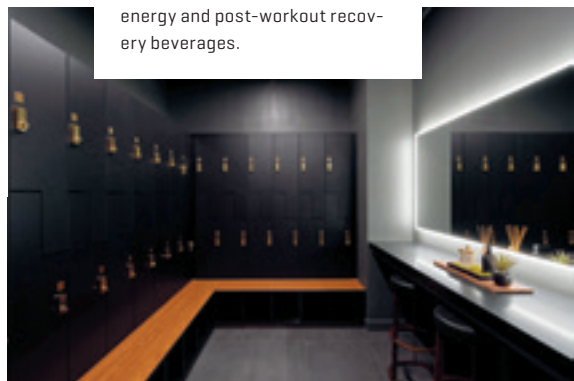
The gym is fully loaded, boasting prowlers, cable machines, medicine balls, squat racks, self-powered treadmills, gymnastic rings, heavy bags that come down from the ceiling—it's basically a playground for fitness fanatics.

For \$240 a month, you can work privately with talent like Nike's Joe Holder, and top trainers Andy Speer and Mike Bell (left). Top-tier members shell out \$900 for "keys to the house," which grants them all access to the space, all of the time, plus a personalized locker in a sleek locker room (below), and laundry service. Different membership tiers include a range of fitness boosters, such as cryotherapy, infrared sauna, Performix supplements, massage, and apparel. Nonmembers can drop in on group classes for \$35. And later in 2019, the gym plans to launch an online platform for live and on-demand workouts.

The House gets it: \$900 is a lot for a gym membership. But "our members are making performance—being better all around—a key part of their life," Hesse says.

INSIDER TIP: Take advantage of the free slushy machine pumping out Performix brand pre-workout energy and post-workout recovery beverages.

FROM TOP: VINCENT TULLO/THE NEW YORK TIMES; RENOUX; COURTESY OF PERFORMIX HOUSE





Train Like an Athlete

MICHAEL JOHNSON PERFORMANCE CENTER, MCKINNEY, TEXAS

The world champion sprinter founded this eponymous mecca of speed outside Dallas. It boasts top-of-the-line amenities: a 6,000-square-foot multipurpose indoor turf, a six-lane indoor track, a 23-meter outdoor swimming pool. But it's the advanced

technology that will make even a short trip worth your time. Their trainers have access to a three-dimensional motion capture system that uses 20 high-definition cameras to analyze form and ground force, along with embedded track and turf force plates to calculate energy transfer.

"To train at MJP, you only need to be an athlete in the sense of training for a specific event, sport, or goal," says Lance Walker, vice president. Think Boston Marathon qualifying time, more playing

minutes in a competitive soccer league, or entering a U.S. Tennis Association Masters' tournament. "You're placed in a group with a custom-tailored plan for a specific frequency and duration, and we monitor you to ensure you're reaching your objectives," Walker says. Group programs start at \$330 a week.

INSIDER TIP: Call ahead to schedule a package of six one-on-one training sessions (\$948). An expert will make use of the facility's top-notch tech, like force plates (to assess vertical jump potential and asymetrics) and its underwater treadmill.

Box Like a Champ

WILD CARD BOXING CLUB, LOS ANGELES

Learn to throw a punch like a pro from the guy who trained Manny Pacquiao, Oscar de la Hoya, and Mike Tyson. Freddie Roach, once a

pro boxer himself—with a record of 41 wins and 13 losses—opened up shop in 1995 and has whipped world champions into shape since.

It's unlikely you'll go a few rounds with Roach himself, but you can work one-on-one with expert trainers including Roger "Speedy" Gonzalez for just \$50 a month, plus the trainers' rates, which can range up to \$100 per hour. And those passing through Hollywood can use the club equipment (speed and heavy bags, cardio equipment) for \$5 a day.

The space is old-school basic—those looking for bougie boxing clubs with high-end amenities can keep moving—but there's loads of memorabilia on the walls for inspiration.

INSIDER TIP: Don't be intimidated by the pros; all levels are welcome. If you're a newbie in the ring, ask to train with Eric Brown, who coached World Champion Peter Quillen. He's great at breaking down the fundamentals, like proper stance, footwork, combinations, and technique.



Work Out Like a Green Beret

MOUNTAIN TACTICAL INSTITUTE, JACKSON HOLE, WYOMING

This no-frills space belies a higher purpose: to develop and test strength and conditioning programs for mountain and tactical athletes (ski patrol, search-and-rescue, law enforcement, military, etc.). The tools are low-tech, like barbells, ropes, hand weights, and sandbags. Training cycles span six to eight weeks, with intense one-hour sessions. People from around the globe stop by when they're in Wyoming, and you can, too. Email MTI your dates, and if there's a cycle going on, you're in. It's free, but attendance is mandatory. Founder and president Rob Shaul may toss you out if you flake.

"Many of the people we work with could die doing their jobs, so our programming caters directly to what the work demands," Shaul explains. That could mean developing base fitness—like endurance and hiking under load—for timed sports like rock climbing and trail running, or professional development for Green Beret or hostage-rescue team selections. "Our programming is intense, but it transfers directly to our athletes' jobs," Shaul says.

Not heading to the West anytime soon? The MTI website has multiweek fitness plans online for backpackers, ultrarunners, and more.

INSIDER TIP: If you're a novice, this might not be your spot. "We don't judge," says Shaul, "but you need to know your way around the weight room to do the gym-based work."

