

The Home gym Guide

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In this book, you'll learn how to make or perfect your home gym.

Before we get started, let's talk about the pros and cons so you can make your choice.

If you don't have access to a gym, the question doesn't arise.

If you do have access to a gym, the cost of a home gym becomes less than that of a membership after 5 years of use for a minimalist home gym (only squat rack, bar, discs and bench).

That, plus the fact that you own this equipment, which you'll be able to resell if you wish (especially as the price of cast iron continues to rise).

However, it's an absolutely fantastic time-saver. Calculate the time you spend from your doorstep to the start of your workout (road + changing rooms etc.). Especially if you're training optimally, i.e. with a high frequency (if you'd like to know more about training, you can buy books for this purpose in my store, there are some already made and others to teach you how to program your own personalized training).

When you train in your home gym, you're on your own. This has both advantages and disadvantages. The social aspect is important for some, while others prefer to be able to concentrate on their session without any distractions.

Major benefit: you won't have the playlist of commercial gyms blaring through the speakers.

Another major benefit: you'll always have access to your home gym, which is not the case with commercial gyms.

Disadvantage: commercial gyms have a lot of machines and other very useful equipment, which would be very expensive to buy. However, it is important to note that none of these pieces of equipment offer a unique workout that cannot be replaced by another exercise using free weights (for example, a leg press machine is very useful for working your legs, but you will not have weaker legs if you do not use it and instead do barbell squats).

Let's start with the most important pieces of equipment to buy, then we'll move on to less necessary or more situational additions depending on your needs.

Before we begin, I would like to point out that setting up a home gym is expensive. Of course, there are several versions available at varying price points. If you are a beginner, it can be very affordable, but as soon as you want to progress beyond that and optimize your equipment, the initial price is relatively high.

Entry-level home gyms

If your budget is very low, i.e., below \$600, you will have to settle for a limited home gym.

This is possible and sometimes necessary. For example, during lockdown, you were happy to have a pair of dumbbells

rather than nothing, and this kind of situation can arise at any time.

The most affordable and practical option is a pair of resistance bands. You can buy a set for less than \$30 and use them to work out all parts of your body. This version is what we call “better than nothing.”

Just above that, the first purchase in terms of price would be dumbbells, where you can load the weight of the discs yourself. You can get them for less than \$60. This is the ideal piece of equipment for beginners who don't have a big budget. You can add a bench to further optimize your exercises (bench press, Bulgarian lunges, log row, etc.). I would even recommend buying an adjustable bench that can be tilted, as this adds exercises such as the incline press, Chinese row, and preacher curl.

We've reached the end of the entry-level home gym, and now we're moving into the realm of the true home gym.

A real home gym

The first real home gym consists of an Olympic bar, a squat rack, weight plates, a bench, and protective mats. With these pieces, there is nothing you cannot do.

Anything else you add is, at best, a matter of specialization, variation, or comfort. For example, using a hack squat instead of a squat does not in itself allow for more progress, but it is a different exercise.

A relatively good Olympic bar costs around \$160. For the rack, you can buy uprights that will cost between \$120 and \$250. I

would advise you to invest a little more to get a whole rack for around \$500-600, or even a combo that allows you to do pull-ups for around \$700.

When it comes to discs, the simplest option is to buy cast iron ones, which cost around \$3 per kg. You can also buy disc molds to make your own out of cement. This is a little more complicated and you will need to paint them to prevent dust from spreading everywhere, but it is much less expensive.

You will need a pair of each weight plate (1.25 kg, 2.5 kg, 5 kg, and 10 kg) and as many large plates as you need based on your performance (either pairs of 20 or pairs of 25 kg, until you fill the largest bars you use in training).

You can add Olympic dumbbells to be more versatile. You can find them for less than \$100. If you have purchased dumbbells, you don't need two sets of weight plates, but four.

A solid addition to target your posterior chain, and not as superfluous as you might think, is a lumbar table for less than \$200.

I strongly advise against trying to buy a makeshift belt squat. In my opinion, even luxury belt squats are less effective than any other leg machine, so let's not even talk about a cheaper one.

Home gym for the bourgeoisie

Beyond that, we enter the realm of home gyms for people

who aren't afraid to spend money. And as you'll see, the price quickly escalates.

Without rushing into a home gym that will attract the IRS, you can start by adding a pulley system, which some rack models offer as a possible extension.

In my opinion, multi-function machines are unnecessary bling. However, they can be useful for training older people.

If you don't know what to do with your money, you can buy a leg extension machine that also does leg curls, but I would point out that other exercises do the same thing without having to spend around \$500.

If you want to work your arms and your wrists are fragile, you can buy an EZ bar, which will cost around \$70.

The really interesting pieces to buy are the double hack squat/leg press machines, which cost between \$800 and \$1,200. Another less expensive but almost as useful piece of equipment is a dip station, which costs less than \$200.

If you really want to go all out, you might as well buy a pull-up station, or even a double pull-up station. These will easily set you back between \$900 and almost \$2,000.

Strongman home gym

In this category, we will look at what you need to train for strongman competitions.

The most useful item here is also an Olympic bar/squat rack home gym. There's no getting around it.

Next, you will need to purchase the equipment you need for the competitions you are preparing for. If you are preparing for a competition that includes log lifts, buy a log. Make sure that this equipment is as similar as possible to that used in the competition, as there is a wide variety of events and equipment in strongman competitions.

If you are preparing for strongman competitions in general, here is what will be most useful to you because it is the most common:

The log (an expensive piece of equipment, ranging from \$250 to \$600)

One or more sandbags and husafell bags (depending on the weight, between \$50 and \$150)

A yoke: it's best to buy a rack that can also be mounted as a yoke (around \$400), otherwise you can also opt for a chain yoke (around \$200).

Farmer handles (mini version for around \$100 and competition version for around \$200)

Atlas stones (you can buy molds to cast them yourself or buy them from someone who has them)

A sled (from \$140 to \$350)

A fat bar (between \$100 and \$200)

Some of the more secondary items:

An adjustable monster dumbbell (around \$250)

A safety squat bar (between \$250 and \$680)

A pair of Apollon wheels (around \$400)

Kegs (look for used ones)

Truck wheels (same thing, some people even want to get rid of them)

And there you have it, you're ready to make your choices, do your research, and experience your own home gym!