

MANSION GLOBAL

Designer's Corner Designing a Stylish Home Gym

A space to work out should be more than utilitarian. Here's how to incorporate pops of pattern and soft seating while maintaining good equipment flow

By Jennifer Tzeses
2.29 million unique monthly visitors



Designed by Stephen Brockman for Jolie in New York, this gym offers double-height windows with views for days to inspire every workout. *Binyan Studios*

There's no denying that home gyms are having a moment. Whether you have a sprawling space or a tiny corner of a bedroom, installing a workout area isn't just about the equipment. Making it your own means adding flair. Here are tips from the pros to inspire your workout with style and substance.

March 2, 2022
Mansion Global

Warm up the Space

“An important starting point for a well-designed and stylish gym is to determine a focal point or feature wall—whether it’s paneling and mirrors or a great view. And aside from just filling the room with gym equipment, consider using furniture and accessories to warm it up.

“I like to add texture, like grasscloth or linen wallcovering, and warm materials such as hardwood floors or paneled walls. And add artwork and a statement piece of furniture, like a console table below a television. Stack fitness magazines on top and stock bottles of water to make it feel more like you’re at a home spa gym, rather than the basement.

“The ideal flooring type depends on how you plan on using the gym. If heavy weights or medicine balls will be used, it’s wise to use something with give like rubber or cork flooring. Most often, however, we prefer to use a hardwood or tile floor, which offer the greatest flexibility, ability to clean and help add a little more ambiance to the space.”

— Vancouver-based designer Stephanie Brown

Let There Be Layers

“The layout depends on the variety and amount of equipment. Leave a generous portion of the open floor for pilates, floor exercise, stretching and yoga. Layering a space always helps evolve the overall aesthetic. Opt for a patterned wall to elevate a plain white wall and add inspired lighting such as brass globe lights from The Future Perfect.

“The home’s architecture and flow will determine where to put your home gym. Ideally, separate it from the main living spaces with a custom build. With Covid, many clients have adjusted existing spaces—we’ve built gyms on lower levels and in unused rooms.

“Floor-to-ceiling mirrors with matching mirrored outlets create a streamlined look. We have also installed hidden TVs behind the mirror, which seamlessly brings in the audio/ video component.”

— Kendall Wilkinson of Kendall Wilkinson Interior Design in San Francisco

Good Location Equals Motivation

“Consider the backdrop—it’s amazing when a gym offers visual connections to water, nature and the distant horizon, and even better if the space is uncluttered and calm and trimmed with live plants.

“Choose a location that maximizes views or one that’s motivating to you. For example, we designed a gym at Jolie [on Greenwich] in New York, which is at the very top of the building. The double-height space affords spectacular views that everyone in the building can share—with streaming natural light from the west and vistas of the Hudson River and the World Trade Center.

“Natural light is always ideal to have in a gym as are oversized windows or floor-to-ceiling windows, if possible.”

March 2, 2022
Mansion Global

— Stephen Brockman, partner at Deborah Berke Partners in New York

Add Seating

“Adding a beautiful seating area is a great way to not only connect a gym to the rest of the home, but also to make the space feel less utilitarian. Adding color, soft textiles and pattern softens the overall look and feel of a gym, which has so many hard surfaces and materials. This also helps create a social space where you can work out with friends.

“I like to be strategic with mirrors so that the entire room isn’t consumed by them. For equipment like treadmills and stationary bicycles, most people want to be looking at a screen, so positioning them in front of a mirror isn’t necessary. For other areas of the gym where there are free weights, a reformer or other types of equipment, positioning them in front of floor-to-ceiling mirror elevates a home gym to a more professional looking environment.

“Add space for a sink and refrigerator loaded with water, energy drinks, fresh fruit—whatever you need to stay energized and focused.”

— Los Angeles-based designer Carrie Livingston

Soften the Space

“Paint your walls something fresh and clean, like Jolie’s Moonstone, Misty Cove or Spa. Greenery can be used to improve air quality, while an essential oil diffuser can help create a relaxing environment.

“Opt for flooring that can be wiped down and sanitized and add rubber mats, corkboard, and floor pillows to soften the space, absorb sound and cushion your landings. If you need to hide concrete or transform existing floors, paint them and add a floor varnish for easy clean-up after workouts.

“Windows are great for bringing in natural light. Opt for roman shades in linen or natural fibers for a more relaxed style. When it comes to lighting, recessed cans are a great option, especially if they have a dimmer so that you can easily adjust the brightness depending on your workout type and time of day.

“And place larger equipment as close to the edge of your space as possible to leave yourself room for stretching and floor work.”

— Lisa Rickert, CEO and creative director of Jolie Home based in New Orleans

<https://www.mansionglobal.com/articles/designing-a-stylish-home-gym-01646223369>