

ULTIMATE HOME GYM (AND GARAGE GYM) GUIDE



Table of CONTENTS

01	About Us
02	Create a Plan
03	Getting Started
06	Investing in Good Quality Kit
08	Avoiding the Mistakes Others Made
10	Final Thoughts and Tips





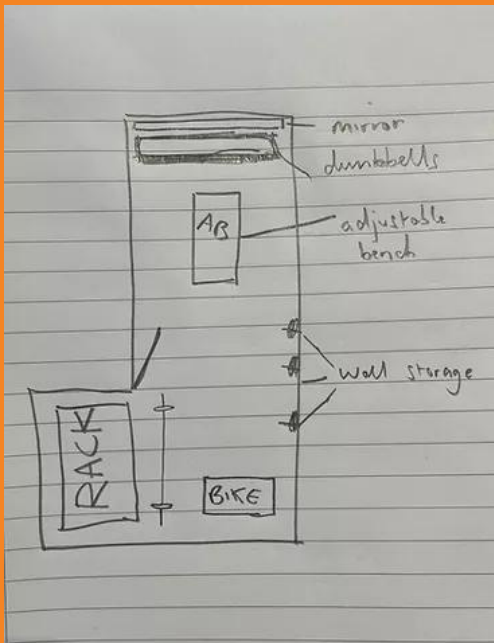
ABOUT US

We are incredibly lucky to work with a mixture of sports stars and celebrities in their home gyms. Open budgets, huge spaces, perfect. However, for many of us, both space and finances are key considerations. So we want to help you maximise both.

Recharge Fitness thrives on making a positive impact on the health and fitness of the general public, so as much as we like rubbing shoulders with the sporting elite, we also love helping those with a modest budget make the most of their space, so whether you are converting a garage, or have a spare room at home to create your perfect home gym, we hope you find this home gym guide of value.

Make an Impact.

CREATE A PLAN



Products	Cost
Flooring	2700
Painting and decorations	60
Mirrors and lighting	320
20kg Olympic barbell	165
EZ bar	60
2.5kg - 40kg dumbbells	950
150kg bumper plates (5kgs, 10kgs, 15kgs, 20kg, 25kgs) = 150	425
Adjustable bench	250
Squat rack	400
Storage solutions	700
Accessories	50
Assault bike	650
Delivery	50.00
Total	6780
Contingency 10%	678
Remaining budget	£42

The home gym guide itself is informed by our years of expertise, but also by the public, those who have tried their way to home gym utopia, they’ve successfully created their own little gym sanctuary. We’ve run focus groups, spoken to those of you with award worthy gym set ups, and gleaned every last insight from gym based community groups such as home gym UK.

So here are our top tips for building your home gym.

Fail to prepare and you prepare to fail, that old adage holds true when it comes to building your perfect home gym or garage gym.

One really important thing to prepare is for arguments with your other half regarding where your savings have gone! All jokes aside, unless they are as into the gym as you are, or you are doing this alone, you need to ensure you have an agreed amount of money set aside for the project. This budgetary planning will inform your gym equipment purchasing guide and how far you take it.

You can always spend more, and equally, there are shortcuts, cheaper options, more wallet friendly ways of doing things. So get a clear view of your budget, then look to optimise it.

You’ll need to prepare roughly what you are going to put where, measure your space, (and don’t forget the height), then sketch a potential layout, it’ll help you create an ideal gym kit list. We’d always recommend having an essential list and an ideal list.

Focus on the essentials first, and build up from there. The temptation is to create too big a shopping list. Lat pulldown machines, peck decks, leg extension machines are all large items. Ask yourself, what do I really need and how do I really utilise my space.

Shane Cody Barrett, a home gym user recommends “Plan your Gym/Kit to specifically meet your training/physique goals. It’s not a commercial gym, so you won’t need everything! So, don’t buy things you’re not going to use a lot. Try to pick up kit that has multiple uses”

GETTING STARTED

Now this is the exciting bit, right? What gym equipment should you start buying?

Unfortunately you're not straight into buying squat racks and bumper plate sets, not yet anyway. You need to think functional. Functional here means the boring stuff; the foundations; floors and walls. Priority focus: ensure your home gym or garage gym (in particular) is well insulated, that you have heating and make sure your floor is level.

Assuming these are all okay, we'd suggest painting first and then laying the floor. Painting isn't as easy as it sounds, certainly not for garage gyms. Lots of the UK based garage wall construction is of bare breeze blocks, these tend to absorb a great deal of paint.



This is both time consuming and inefficient. Insights from some building experts on the Garage Gym UK group around wall prep is to seal the walls with 1/3rd PVA and 2/3rd white paint. Once this has dried, you are ready for your preferred paint colour finish. Use either standard emulsion or if the room isn't heated fully, masonry paint.

We'd add that whilst your home gym is going to be a haven for exercise, painting is boring, so use a sprayer if you have a large space to save time and your energy.

“Dark walls are in right now, dark greys, light blacks, they provide a real premium feel. I'd always use a spray gun because I can't stand painting, it gets an even finish, but make sure you do this before you have any gym gear in your gym”

– James, UK gym owner & focus group attendee

So assuming your painting is all done, the walls are looking great, it's now time to lay the floor, again it's vital this happens before you invest in all your amazing gym kit. "Paint and put the flooring down before any kit goes in. Saves time and mess" James Edwards home gym group legend. Your flooring choice is probably one of those that should be led by your budget. We are perhaps biased, but we'd recommend some proper gym flooring, this is vital for gyms in the home to the protection of your floor, weights and noise absorbing properties of gym flooring, equally it creates a good aesthetic/functional benefit in garage gyms too.



Now what gym floor thickness and where to start? You can spend big on 40mm gym mats, or go super cheap with 5mm/10mm. Our advice is to go for 20mm which provides plenty of protection, but doesn't break the bank.

This is the sweet spot for us. If you are lifting heavy weights, 5mm isn't going to be enough. There are equally cheap alternatives, if you don't want to invest on proper gym floor tiles, horse mats do the job.

Paul Cullen, an experienced home gym user, shares his wisdom:

"Make your gym a place you want to spend time in, invest in good quality flooring".

When you have your flooring, you may need to cut the tiles, most gym flooring is 1m x 1m and if you've gone for our recommended 20mm thickness, you can use a Stanley knife to easily trim around any obstacles, pillars, door frames etc, so that you have a clean and smart finish.

You can invest in tile adhesive, but our thoughts are this could be a waste of time/effort providing the tiles are of good quality. Each tile is 20kg+ and grippy rubber, they won't be moving around!



So the walls are looking great, the gym flooring is now in place, is it finally time to start buying gym kit you ask? Not just yet. Sorry. First we need to make sure the finishing touches on the walls are in place. Mirrors, lighting and decorations.

If you are tight on space, or it feels cramped, mirrors do provide a nice visual touch. Although we'd recommend maybe not going for full height in areas your dumbbells or barbells/bumper plates can roll. A cracked mirror is never good news. It's nice to have one wall which is largely mirror space, it's great for form, and we are pretty sure working out in front of a mirror helps you get extra reps when you're going full beast mode.



Mirrors are up, how is the lighting? Lighting helps show off the gains, and it also helps your gym look that extra bit special. Lighting around the mirrors can be very popular; LED surrounds, or spot lights are currently in fashion. A top tip is to use warm lighting that replicates the natural sun, choose daylight colours, you don't want super bright lights that put you off your game or that flicker.

JayJay Anthony agrees, he keeps it simple:

“get yourself some decent lighting”.

Finally, it's time to get that all important home/garage gym flag design. Something that motivates you, something you look at each time you walk in the door.

We've kept it classy with our RF 'One more F#cking Rep' gym wall flag. Also don't forget whiteboards for writing down all your progress. NB whiteboards not blackboards = way less mess!



INVEST IN GOOD QUALITY KIT

We run the risk of being biased here and so it's important we provide plenty of insights from others. Here you really need to ask yourself what kit you're going to use.

We've had some valuable thoughts from Paul Jewiss, who reiterates the need to "Buy fewer, but more versatile bits of kit rather than trying to buy everything. Buy kit that you need, not because every other home gym user has it. You won't use it and it will be a waste of money."

One of the administrators for Home Gym Community, Ben, has the same recommendations: "think about the space you have as much as the kit you think you need. Start with the basic necessities and then fill in any gaps with the 'nice to haves".



So with this in mind, check back to your original plan. Which gym equipment will make the most of your space? Which will you use for various exercises?

What are the most versatile bits of kit? Dumbbells, kettlebells, barbells and plates are likely to be your core non-negotiable items. Then you need to think about a good quality bench and rack. Steve, a UK coach who uses his home gym as his PT studio recommends "free weights are your most important equipment, they are non-negotiable, I can train clients for months using just dumbbells, kettlebells and a bar with plates". Storage options are important aesthetically and especially when trying to keep a clear gym, although they won't directly help your quest for the body of a Greek god/goddess.



In terms of what you specifically need, the jury is out, it's a personal requirement, but from our focus groups we managed to split gym equipment into the following three categories:

- Essentials: Dumbbell set, barbell, 100kg bumper plates, bench, squat/bench rack.
- Ideals: Kettlebells, storage for all items, extra bumper plates, accessories such as wall balls, slam balls, bands. Adjustable bench.
- Nice to have: cable pulley system, hex barbell, EZ barbell, change plates, lifting platform, wall storage to keep floor uncluttered, cardio kit, isolation machines, pull up bar, punch bag.

This is just a guide, again it's about what's right for you, your goals, your space, your budget, your training preferences. YOU. It's YOUR gym.

Ashley Thompson recommends that you should...

"Look at the kit you use the most and get that! Sounds obvious but I keep buying conditioning stuff that collects dust. Skipping ropes, kettlebells and slam balls are cheap and don't take up much room and will get you started."

AVOIDING THE MISTAKES OTHERS HAVE MADE

Don't underestimate the floor space that items take up. Even space saving solutions like a bumper plate tree, or bumper plate toaster storage take up space. Make the most of your walls and store what you can on the walls.

So maybe opting for a wall hung rack over a full power cage, or instead looking at a half rack rather than a full rack. Do you really need that full rack?



Make sure you don't just fit your kit in, but that it's usable too. It's not good squeezing in a 7ft barbell but then finding you have no space to actually add and remove bumper plates. You need to think about the movements that you plan to conduct in the space you have available, when the kit is in use. Not just horizontally but vertically too. Ryan, a Recharge director famously installed his rack with a pull up bar - only to hit his head on his ceiling each 'successful' pull up.



Lee Gallagher shares a word of warning about racks.

“Make sure you really need a full rack and not a decent half rack”

That’s one of his biggest mistakes. You can quite quickly eat up space in a non functionality/necessary way. Lee also has a really pertinent point and something to watch out for.

“Don't look at other people's home gyms on Facebook, it just adds fuel to the everlasting fire”. Being green with envy isn't a good look.

Don't buy cheap and from pop up businesses. If gym kits are cheap, there is probably a reason for it.

Bodybuilder and coach DeeJPT states *“Buy cheap, buy twice. The very cheap home gym equipment either breaks or you grow out of it very quickly”*.



It's a valid point, gym kit shouldn't be cheap, it's heavy, the raw materials are expensive. Change your thinking to an investment mindset, an investment in convenience, health, fitness, alongside the fact that good gym equipment holds its value over time.

FINAL THOUGHTS AND TOP TIPS!

Whilst not cheap, nor simple, investing in an impressive home gym could be one of the best decisions you've ever made. Make sure you properly plan things out, don't just lunge head first into buying all your favourite bits of kit. Think of what prep work is needed, what space you have, which bits of kit will provide the most value both in terms of your strength and fitness goals, and their versatility. Go big on free weights that are multi-purpose; dumbbells, kettlebells, barbells and bumper plates. Ensure you have a bench and rack that are suitable for their surroundings and your needs. Be smart with storage. Store things on the walls, whether that is a wall hung rack or bumper plate storage. Put storage solutions against the walls, or in corners and keep your home gym looking tidy. For 99% of people, wasted space is the enemy, so utilise gaps with storage solutions.

We hope that you found this guide useful, there are plenty of good brands out there, and equally plenty of not so good gym equipment brands, so be careful. Do your research, check out reviews, ask for a helping hand etc.

The sheer convenience and ease of having a place to workout in your own home is incredible, studies show it increases adherence and produces results. It helps you prioritise your health, and don't be surprised to see you suddenly have new friends who conveniently want to hang out with you at your house!





@recharge.fit



www.facebook.com/rechargefitnessuk



www.rechargefitness.co.uk

