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HOMES

## Home Gyms Hit Their Stride During Covid

Some homeowners are vowing to 'never go back' to the gym after building their own fitness spaces



*By Jessica Dailey*

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Before the pandemic, Tracy Tutor was a regular at the Dogpound, a boutique gym in Los Angeles popular with celebrities. It's where she met her boyfriend, personal trainer Erik Anderson. But when Covid-19 forced gyms to shut down, the couple found themselves without a place to exercise.

"When there was nothing to do but eat and drink and work out and sleep, we got this wild hair: Why don't we turn the garage into a home gym?" says Ms. Tutor, a real-estate agent with Douglas Elliman and star of Bravo's "Million Dollar Listing Los Angeles."

The National Association of Home Builders found that 47% of homebuyers in 2020 considered a home gym essential or desirable.

"People are re-evaluating their homes to be more inclusive to take care of themselves," Ms. Tutor says.



Tony Soluri

Jason Friedman, a Realtor with Daniel Gale Sotheby's International Realty on Long Island, says that home gyms have become a deciding factor for a lot of buyers. "We did have multiple instances where one home having a gym was the final push the buyer needed to transact on that property as opposed to other options without one," he says.

Designers and architects are seeing similar demand. In the last 18 months, each of Chicago-based dSPACE's 10 residential projects has included a dedicated fitness area. They range from 100-square-foot areas with smart equipment like Pelotons or Tonals to full-blown professional gyms with basketball courts. The spaces cost anywhere from \$15,000 to well over \$100,000, depending on the size and amenities included.

"A home gym becomes a lifestyle," says Kevin Toukoudidis, dSPACE's principal architect. "It offers more freedom."

Acoustics and lighting are the top priorities for any exercise room, Mr. Toukoudidis adds, so the space is comfortable and noise is not disruptive to the rest of the home. Natural daylight is best when possible, but mirrors and a warmer temperature light can evoke a daytime feel.