

The Development of Fission Fitness:
How can Graphic Design Communicate the Importance of Physical Health and Well-being to the
College-aged Community?

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Graphic Design

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The goal of this thesis project is to explore the ways in which graphic design can communicate the importance of physical health and well-being to the college-aged community. As a designer, it is critical to deliver information in an aesthetically pleasing, purposeful, and communicative way. Whether it is a gym's branding, an activewear brand's style, or even informative posters or pamphlets, graphic design can be found all throughout the fitness world. In many ways, graphic design connects people with passion, and fitness is no exception. Brand loyalty is very common among consumers; therefore, if a gym's environment makes someone feel comfortable, motivated, and excited to come back, their branding is highly successful. Understanding this information, I knew that I wanted to use my graphic design skills for a good cause: motivating college students to partake in physical fitness and activity.

Keeping in mind the intentions of this project, Fission Fitness was born. Fission Fitness is a branding project that I took on in order to encourage college students to take their health into their own hands and to get moving. Ideally, Fission Fitness would be a gym that branches out to colleges in order to provide students with information that educates them about common health facts. Not only this, but the deliverables advertise the gym itself at the same time. This would be done through tabling at college events, or in heavily populated student buildings. The overall aesthetic of the brand is very modern and clean with a color palette of charcoal gray and bright

green. A common theme among fitness branding is a bold color supplemented with muted and industrial tones, such as grey or black (“Working it Out”). This color combination emanates power and strength while staying true to the name of the brand and the logo.

The logo serves as the foundation to the brand (Figure 1). In order to create an icon that related to the Fission Fitness name, I designed an abstract mark that references the splitting of an atom, i.e. atomic fission. Logos are one of the main elements of a company that makes a brand recognizable while translating the brand identity to the general public at the same time. The qualities within the logo translate to the other deliverables that play a role in my project. My main deliverable is the informative poster that I deemed the wellness guide (Figure 2). It carries through the brand qualities such as the bold color palette and typography found within the Fission Fitness logo. It also displays information regarding human health from different angles. One of the smaller elements of my project are stickers of the logo and a dumbbell icon that I designed (Figure 3). I also designed a t-shirt with my logo on it as well as creating “one free workout pass” (Figure 4, Figure 5). These are objects that I imagine would be placed on the table where Fission Fitness would be advertising their brand while partaking in community outreach to educate college students about health. These bold colors and references to strength and power can be endearing to people, and may make them want to become a member of the brand. In this case, consumers would want to join the Fission Fitness gym and community.

Since I am someone that is very passionate about health and fitness, I knew that I wanted to create a project based around that. Using graphic design to teach the importance of physical health and activity to college students is a way for me to combine two important aspects of my life. In order to support my goals and acquire reliable information, I interviewed Jeremy Kochis, a CrossFit coach. He emphasized the fact that physical activity has many health benefits such as

decreasing stress, decreasing sickness, and increasing longevity. Working out is something that should not just be for physical appearances, but it should be about overall health as well. This notion is something that college students could benefit from, especially due to the constant issue of body insecurity that causes many people to partake in unhealthy diets or fitness regimens. He noted that by making physical health a priority, it positions oneself to become a more well-rounded, successful individual. Additionally, developing healthy habits earlier in life lays a strong foundation for continued health later in life. Because there are so many personal benefits that one may take away from consistently exercising, it was a motivating reason for me to develop a brand focused on physical health.

Another, more personal reason, that I created Fission Fitness, was to explore the creativity that could go into a brand. Designers learn that people respond better to well-presented visual material as opposed to large quantities of text. It makes them more receptive to information when it is easy to understand. College students are now exposed to digital media at a high rate; therefore, short pieces of information are easily grasped. Understanding this information has helped me develop new and unique designs that can be implemented into the college community. The process of producing an informative poster while pulling from the color palette and style of the logo was like assembling a creative puzzle. A designer has to take information, and turn it into something that people would like to see. For myself, it was all about walking the fine line between familiarity and original design. Design concepts that are out of the ordinary typically demand attention from a large audience, but if people cannot understand the meaning of the project, then the message is lost. Grasping the target audience's attention through unique design concepts will ensure the communication of the information. Cohesive design that resonates with people through aesthetically pleasing imagery will more likely attract the target

demographic of college students. Also, consistent design creates clear, effective communication that emphasizes the company's brand and message.

The development of the project took quite some time because I wanted this to be a piece that I was sincerely proud of, and excited to complete. As I said before, health and fitness are a passion of mine; therefore, I knew that incorporating this element into my design project would be the perfect way to stay motivated in order to create something new and unique to my design style. In terms of figuring out my target audience, I had to do some research. Health and fitness is a broad topic, so research into different perspectives and audiences was key in narrowing down the target audience. I found out that so many people across the United States have a hard time finding motivation to workout, especially college kids. The top five sources of college student stress are changes in sleeping habits, vacations/breaks, changes in eating habits, increased workload, and new responsibilities (Ross). There is a plethora of time dedicated to doing work and trying to keep up with a curriculum, which causes students to often put their own health aside. Since this lifestyle is relevant to so many people around me, I wanted to create a project that would inspire college students and motivate them to lead a healthier, more active lifestyle.

To begin finding facts and inspiration for this brand design, I went back to my interview with CrossFit coach, Jeremy Kochis. Kochis said, "Working out produces energy, confidence, and has so many health benefits. Physical activity can also inspire people to eat healthier and get more rest. Working out doesn't have to be a big, epic thing, but emphasizing movement is what's important". This information provided a strong foundation in the development of Fission Fitness. In order to form a name for this brand, I wanted to choose something that communicated energy and power. Originally, I had style tiles of different color palettes with names, themes, and

typography options. Eventually settling on bright green and charcoal gray, I knew that the brand name needed to match the tenacity and energy that the colors portrayed. Fission was chosen because of its relation to the splitting of the atom in order to create energy. The Fission Fitness logo, made with the font Russo One, was developed shortly after and became the face and brand of this project.

The poster was the main channel for holding my design style because posters are an effective way to communicate information in a visually pleasing and concise way. The header font is Russo One—like the logo—while the body copy is Eurostile Medium. I created a set of icons that represented different types of physical activity. Under each icon was text that stated the activity and how many calories one would burn doing the activity. The intention of this icon section of the poster is to display simple methods of physical activity for which it would be easy for college students to participate. Another section of the poster shows side-by-side pie charts comparing the average American intake percentages of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats with the ideal intake percentages of these macronutrients. The third section displays health benefit information found in my interview with the fitness coach. This piece functions as a way to provide reliable information to the audience viewing the poster. Finally, the fourth section contains the Fission Fitness goals and mission statement that helps establish the brand's identity. The supplemental cards, t-shirt, and stickers also act as a method of further solidifying Fission Fitness's individuality.

Because the brand identity of Fission Fitness needed to be viewed as bold and clean, I based many of my design elements off of Swiss style. This modern, minimal, and organized style of graphic design reaches anywhere from designers within the corporate world to even the smallest freelancer. Many Swiss design elements are extremely prevalent in corporate branding

within the fitness industry. Using a grid structure and typographic hierarchy, Swiss style created order, elegance, and drama within objects such as posters, advertisements, brochures, and pamphlets (Hollis). The simplicity and structure carried through this style made way for clarity of text within my poster. Not only did my poster need to be simple, but it's crucial to, "...catch the audience's attention, and have a visual element that ties it together" ("Poster Design"). The scale of the Fission Fitness logo compared to the rest of the poster would act as the element to draw people in, while the color palette and grid structure is what ties everything together.

In terms of marketing, corporate branding is very important and it plays an essential role in communicating and generating awareness of an establishment's identity. It aids in advertising the brand while targeting a specific audience. When placing the emphasis on targeting an ideal customer, "...it's best to focus your efforts (and your marketing budget) on the people who are most likely to become customers" ("Working it Out"). In order to figure out how to design and sell to the right audience, it is important to create a customer persona, because, "the brand you create should speak to your customers in a way that feels personal" ("Working it Out"). A few questions that are necessary to ask yourself in order to create a customer persona are, "Who are they? What do they want from a gym or fitness company? What problem do they have that we can solve? What other things might my customers enjoy?" ("Working it Out"). Since college students are the primary target, t-shirts, stickers, and a 'one free workout' coupon are all items that would attract the average university student. Free t-shirts and stickers are found all over campus tabling events. Not only are they something for people to take, but they act as advertising for the Fission Fitness brand as well. The coupon appeals to the college target audience, because students are known to be financially strapped. It also can bring more attention and even foot traffic to gym; therefore, the brand has a higher chance of recruiting more members.

The competitors that would parallel Fission Fitness would be other gyms such as Lifetime Fitness, LA Fitness, Planet Fitness, Crunch Fitness, or CrossFit. Understandably, these are not all of the competitor brands, but they pose as great examples within the fitness category. Each one of these organizations have a strong brand identity and a loyal following for different reasons. They also vary in their advertising approaches to the outside world and to their members. Lifetime Fitness and LA Fitness, for example, are known to be elite gyms with any amenity that one could think of, especially Lifetime Fitness. Lifetime even has their own brand of supplements. Their branding and design styles are similar as well, with photos of strong models participating in high intensity activities and workouts (Figure 6). Everything is clean, clear, and simplified. Additionally, there is a strong sense of kinetic energy mixed with bold type and bright colors. A difference between these two brands, however, is that LA Fitness does make a point of advertising the affordability of some of their memberships; whereas Lifetime Fitness holds true to their image of high-scale luxury and exclusivity with the price not being at the forefront of advertising. Also, the LA Fitness website noticeably has less aesthetically pleasing design elements and frills than Lifetime Fitness's website (Figure 7). The Lifetime website appears to parallel the brand's upscale environment and organized lifestyle image that they portray (Figure 8).

Planet Fitness and Crunch Fitness have a different approach to their brand style, each priding themselves on their inclusivity and motivational atmosphere. Both gyms have a highly recognizable color palette that is actually found throughout the facilities themselves. Planet Fitness utilizes the in-your-face yellow and purple color scheme, while electric orange and blue signify Crunch Fitness (Figure 9). Not only do these palettes strongly emphasize the brand, but they create a visual sense of community among its members. CrossFit is a company that doesn't

have one specific branding style, since most of the gyms are operated and branded separately; however, they do portray a strong sense of self. When someone thinks of CrossFit, images of bulky lifters and hardcore, intense workouts come to mind. Alongside this viewpoint, though, they say, “the program works for everyone—people who are just starting out and people who have trained for years” (“CrossFit”). The communal attitude of, “anyone can be a CrossFit athlete”, leads to the cult following that this successful brand boasts.

Different health clubs find themselves facing a variety of target audiences; therefore, it is crucial that specific branding and marketing focuses on one core, target audience rather than attempting to please a range of consumers. By taking a look at the ways in which other fitness companies target consumers, it helps to establish the type of style that would best represent Fission Fitness and its goal to attract a college-aged audience. Brands that were mentioned previously, such as Lifetime Fitness, Planet Fitness, and CrossFit, all have a specific target audience that they cater to. The grand appeal and strong brand identity of each company to their specific target audience is arguably one of the biggest reasons for these companies’ widespread success.

Starting with one of the most expensive, if not the most expensive, health club brand: Lifetime Fitness. Lifetime Fitness is widely known as sporting very high membership fees, most likely due to the amount of services and amenities that is offered within in each club. These amenities can include a café, spa, indoor and outdoor aquatics area, salon, kids’ spaces, fitness training, yoga rooms, saunas, and so much more (“Lifetime Fitness”). Even the physical appearance of Lifetime Fitness clubs separates the company from other brands. They are often large, imposing, sleek buildings with many glass windows. They appear very modern and updated with manicured landscaping and specialized stone and brickwork. This is one of the

aspects of branding that can attract a consumer. It suggests that the inside matches the pristine outside; therefore, Lifetime is using the appearance of the building to reflect the business as a whole.

The company even separates its own gyms into categories; therefore, different Lifetime clubs require different membership dues at specific membership levels (Bear). Within the 108 locations across the United States, Lifetime Fitness has each gym starting at a membership level of Bronze, Gold, Platinum, Onyx, or Diamond. To some consumers, this type of exclusivity based on membership expense and status may seem unappealing. Due to this type of marketing and branding strategy, however, the upper-middle class and the wealthy upper-class consumer, are being heavily targeted. The average membership is around \$90 per person a month. Lifetime Fitness is selling a lifestyle and status symbol along with a membership, and this can be an attractive offer to their targeted audience. The CEO of Lifetime Fitness Bahram Akradi, had mentioned that the brand plans on opening up less clubs per year in order to convert existing centers to higher value clubs (“Bear”). The focus with this plan is to increase the revenue from existing members and retain the higher income members that will not be affected by an increase in membership costs. This plan further supports the branding strategy in which the upper-class consumers are the main emphasis; therefore, supports the idea behind the importance of focusing on one core consumer.

Planet Fitness, however, is essentially the perfect antithesis to Lifetime Fitness. Instead of targeting the wealthy and avid gymgoer, Planet Fitness targets a more casual audience. Chris Rondeau, the CEO of Planet Fitness, had worked to change the common gym environment that catered to fitness buffs (Much). The focus had changed to inexperienced, first time gymgoers. The low-cost health club created a new model that the consumer did not know was needed until

it hit the market. Targeting a new group of people clearly became a successful strategy, because over 40% of current Planet Fitness members had never been a member of a gym before signing up to this unconventional fitness giant. Unlike Lifetime Fitness, Planet Fitness does not necessarily stick to one distinguished appearance for the outside of their clubs. Based on its structure, the company can essentially move into any large, building that can accommodate the gym. They can be found in strip malls, or as stand-alone buildings, which further supports the idea that there is no established exterior requirement for the chain. The brand just focuses on placing their stores in accommodating buildings for quick and easy access for consumers.

The president and CFO of Planet Fitness Dorvin Lively had delved into the numbers that represented the company's continuously rising success. In 2018, Lively stated that they had opened around 200 stores a year for the past three years. They boast a large community of nearly 10.5 million members total (Much). Although Planet Fitness doesn't offer spas, cafes, child care, or aquatic centers; they still provide free fitness training, tanning, massage beds, and specialized fitness equipment. Not to mention, the largest draw to their club is having access to all of these amenities for a \$10 a month membership ("Planet Fitness"). Free pizza day and free bagel day are two extra elements of a membership that are offered monthly. The club also prides itself on being a 24 hour "No Judgement Zone".

Just like Lifetime Fitness, Planet Fitness has specific elements that draw in a specific type of audience. Additionally, the audience that Planet Fitness markets to spans across a wider demographic; therefore, supporting their image of inclusivity as opposed to Lifetime's exclusivity. On the outside, someone may wonder why people would spend so much money on clubs like Lifetime Fitness when Planet Fitness exists; however, some elements of Planet Fitness can deter consumers. Due to their opposition towards intimidation, loud grunting, and weight-

slamming, Planet Fitness doesn't have unassisted squat racks or deadlift areas. They also have a loud siren in the gym that goes off if weight-slamming, loud grunting, or any type of seemingly intimidating behavior occurs. This environment does create some controversy in the fitness world, but the type of consumer that this model may offend isn't the type of consumer that Planet Fitness is actively marketing towards. From the outside, it is clear that Planet Fitness is opening itself up to a range of gymgoers; but they are specifically catering to inexperienced, first-time gymgoers looking for a decent gym experience at a low cost. It can be seen that their strong brand identity and consumer focus has aided in the recent success and growth of the Planet Fitness gyms.

Another fitness brand that has made waves in the fitness and health industry is CrossFit. Unlike other gyms or health clubs, CrossFit is highly community-based, mixing exercise with competition and healthy eating ("CrossFit"). Specifically, CrossFit only offers classes in its gyms, and it is known for its use of the term WOD, or workout of the day. Workouts vary per day, but focus on high intensity, strengthening movements and weight-lifting. People of any age and fitness level can join a class, and workouts can be scaled up or down per each individual's needs. This type of class structure encourages competition among the participants to get the fastest time completing each workout, without separating people by their fitness capabilities. Since CrossFit is open to any age range and physical ability, it poses the question: what is their target audience?

To begin answering this question, each CrossFit gym is a little bit different. Some focus more on Olympic weightlifting techniques and movements, while others may focus on conditioning and general health (Stewart). CrossFit is also involved in the sporting world as there are CrossFit competitions and the CrossFit Games. Because of this, some gyms may place more

emphasis on training CrossFit athletes. Since there are different types of gymgoers and CrossFit attendees, the focus for each individual gym is to determine who exactly they are trying to appeal to. The decision needs to be made to find out whether or not they cater more to the motivated gymgoer looking for a high intensity CrossFit workout, or the seasoned CrossFit athlete. No matter which target audience is chosen, the commonalities behind each CrossFit consumer is motivation, passion, and a willingness to learn and advance. These qualities are something that have been targeted extremely well in CrossFit's marketing.

First off, CrossFit is not only a workout, but the brand is selling a lifestyle. A huge way that makes this lifestyle appealing to people is the sense of community that not only comes from the individual gyms themselves, but also from people connecting via CrossFit around the world. A great way to involve new CrossFit attendees with experienced ones is through a multitude of mobile device apps. One app, *CrossFit Beyond the Whiteboard*, allows you to post the results of all of your workouts and also share these results with other people (Timmons). It enables the consumer to view the leaderboard with CrossFit competitors around the world; however, the user can also go smaller scale and create squads in order to see your friends' results and compete against them. In addition to these features, *CrossFit Beyond the Whiteboard* includes food tracking, nutrition information, and lists of grocery stores and restaurants in the user's area. Other apps such as *Wodlog* or *Wodster* are dedicated to tracking, timing and logging WODs. These apps also enable the user to save and share their workouts across multiple platforms.

The intriguing element of CrossFit and its marketing scheme is that it is a workout program and lifestyle that can be for anyone; however, the trick is that the consumer must identify the aspects of CrossFit that they enjoy, then find the gym that is the right fit. Since individual gyms place emphasis on different features of CrossFit, targeting specific audiences

comes down to the marketing of each gym. Unlike the previous health clubs mentioned, CrossFit marketing for its target audience happens at two different levels: one for the overarching brand, and one for each specific location. Due to its popularity and fame in the world today with over 15,000 worldwide affiliates, this unconventional style has been successful to the CrossFit brand (“CrossFit”).

As displayed, Lifetime Fitness, Planet Fitness, and CrossFit all have three different, successfully targeted, core consumers. These brands prove that it is important to have a strong brand identity in order to establish, and market to, a specific target audience. They represent something that all brands strive for: a growing presence with a loyal consumer base.

Due to the fact that the aim for Fission Fitness is to appeal to a college-aged target audience that may not be looking to spend large amounts of money on a gym membership, I was mostly inspired by Planet Fitness’s model. Both brands have a strong color palette that is emphasized throughout deliverables and branding elements such as: a free logo t-shirt, promotional coupons, and free large-scale stickers. Planet Fitness highlights its affordability, while also providing a community aspect feel through cohesive design—which would be the goal for the Fission Fitness brand.

Much like the competitor brands, Fission Fitness’s relationship with the outside world would be one of fitness education and inclusion. The main goal of my project was to communicate the importance of physical health and fitness, and I was able to do this through forming a brand to serve as the foundation and channel from which the information would be presented. This point of this project was not just to serve as a piece of design alone, but to contribute to a larger conversation of student health and wellness in our society today. It functions as something that could help people, especially students. Looking for motivation to

research health and fitness can be difficult for people, so if it is handed right to them, they scroll by it, or see it on a wall, they may be more inclined to apply it to their own lives. By providing them with facts and statistics, it can also lead to an increase in knowledge, which is the key to making the right health decisions in the future.

Regarding feasibility, the Fission Fitness project is a very realistic. Were this to be a legitimate, large scale organization, the deliverables and their ideal layout at college tabling events is a plausible option. If this brand were to expand, more merchandise could be created. T-shirts, sweatshirts, sweatpants, headbands, and other types of products may establish inclusivity among people who may be nervous about getting into fitness. A social media presence could be established, and even a design layout for the interior of the Fission Fitness workout facility could be created. Since health campaigns are easy to spread through social media or physical deliverables, more statistic-based fitness content could be implemented into college campuses. Delving into the digital world, a well-designed Fission Fitness website and a health app could be created. I do not see an end to the possibilities that this brand has to offer, and if I had the money and resources, I would love to make this business flourish.

I can imagine myself being happy working in many different fields within the graphic design industry; though, my dream job would be to work as a creative director for a company, especially if it was fitness based. This could mean working for an athletic apparel company or a gym and wellness center. I also think that in order to broaden my horizons while still staying within the health and fitness realm, working as a designer for a health foods company or healthy restaurant chain is a really appealing path as well. Creating Fission Fitness was a great way for me to explore a small section of what a creative director does: develop the creative direction of a brand. Creative directors also have a team under them that help to carry out the design path for

specific projects in order to make aspects of the brand come to life. I consider myself a strong, articulate speaker and a good teacher, so I feel like I could use those assets to benefit my design career.

Concerning the near future, however, the development and execution of brand style and loose guidelines shows companies that I am creative, and that I also have the technical skill to complete work given to me on time. I think that this Fission Fitness project in my portfolio would help me get an interview with employers, because many corporate jobs utilize clean, modern design, and I think that my project reflects this style. It's helped me realize what aspects of the design world I enjoy versus the ones that I don't. I've found that designing in a time crunch is not an issue for me—I actually think that it encourages my productivity and organizational skills. It also examines three main elements of my graphic design education: corporate branding, common graphic design styles, and understanding the ways in which graphic design can be used in order to represent information.

Fission Fitness is a result of the combination of two passions of mine: fitness and design. I believe that graphic design can truly help people in different ways, and using it as an educational tool is one of them. Communicating the importance of physical health and fitness to college students is an issue that needs to be more often addressed. Students experience so much stress, anxiety, and even depression, so forming healthy habits earlier in life is one of the keys to overcoming these issues. Fission Fitness's color scheme and logo represent energy and motivation, the staple elements of fitness. When all of the visual elements of Fission Fitness come together, they communicate the necessary information for one to lead a healthy and active lifestyle.

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Image Appendix

Figure 1



Figure 2

Ideal Food Intake vs. Actual Intake

Displayed through carbohydrates, proteins and fats in percent of daily caloric intake

Ideal Intake

50%
30%
20%

Average American Diet

60%
25%
15%

■ carbohydrates
■ proteins
■ fats

An unhealthy balance of these macronutrients can lead to a lack of energy and unwanted weight gain.

The Fission Fitness Way

Our mission and goals

Our goal is to create a motivational atmosphere for our every day lifters to our modest beginners. The Fission Fitness gym encourages everyone to find enjoyment through any activity they do; just keep moving!

College students are the future of our world! Along with receiving a student discount on membership fees, students get a coupon for one free workout session. Who knows, it could be a healthy distraction from the heavy loads of homework and studying!

Advice from a Fitness Coach

Crossfit Trainer Jeremy Kochis

Challenge yourself to be active every day for 90 days and feel the change!

Fitness starts with having a good mindset. You are the person that you think you are.

People who stay consistent are the ones who engulf themselves in the fitness community and root themselves in the atmosphere. They truly believe that health and fitness is important!

Activity and Calories Burned

Based on 150 lb person

 Weightlifting 360 Calories/Hour	 Running 340 Calories/Hour	 Yoga 270 Calories/Hour
 Bicycling 477 Calories/Hour	 Swimming 400 Calories/Hour	 Rollerblading 477 Calories/Hour
 Dancing 340 Calories/Hour	 Dog Walking 220 Calories/Hour	 Jump roping 310 Calories/Hour

Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

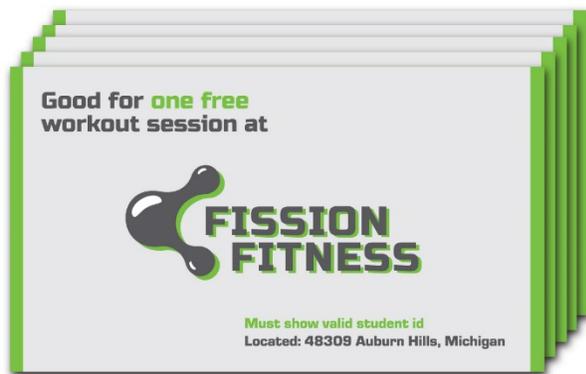


Figure 6

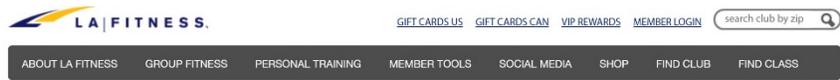


<http://monkmpls.com/gallery/life-time-fitness-rebrand/>

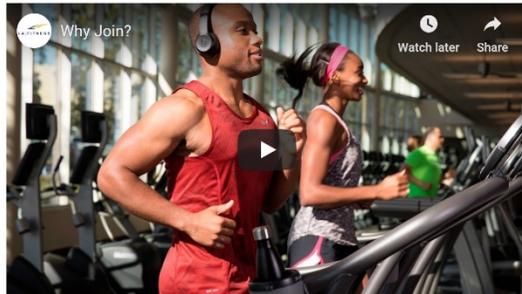


<https://www.40visuals.com/textured-wall-vinyl-graphics-at-la-fitness-clubs/>

Figure 7



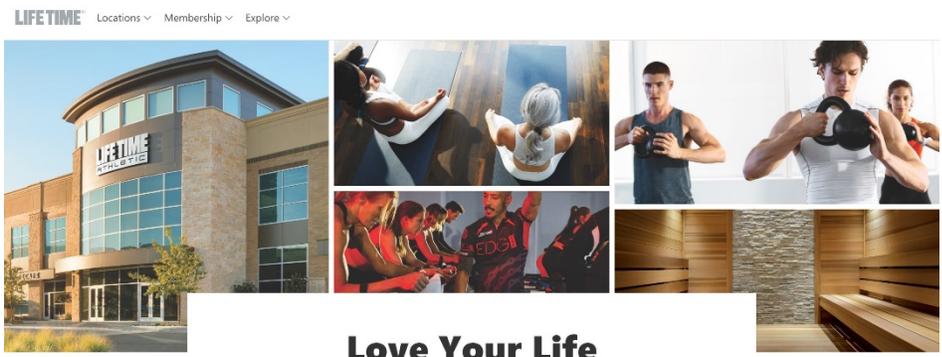
Why Join



Not a member yet?
You can get started for as low as \$29.99/month.*

<https://www.lafitness.com>

Figure 8



Welcome to your very own luxury athletic resort. Life Time is designed with health, fitness, and community at its core, so you can experience what is most important to you.

<https://www.lifetime.life>

Figure 9



<https://www.planetfitness.com/gyms/effingham-il>



<https://www.crunch.com/locations/killeen>