

USER GUIDE



SWEATtime!

PURPOSE

The purpose of this user guide is to explain the steps necessary to facilitate and host SWEATtime. Through a loose set of instructions and anecdotal commentary, we intend that users in diverse locations with varied resources be able to organize and execute this event (or series of events). Though this guide attempts to provide a logical framework for realizing SWEATtime, the components and ideas presented can be expanded and modified to fit individual user needs.

WHAT IS SWEATtime?

SWEATtime is an event where people gather and exercise using old, retro workout videos. For some people the atmosphere at a typical gym can be intimidating, uncomfortable or just plain annoying. Most are set up to accommodate a private quest for self-improvement. In a public setting, this presents the uncanny dynamic of exercise unwittingly put on display – a theater of physical performance. SWEATtime ruptures the spectacle of routine exercise with laughter. For even the most fit and able-bodied, working out to a Richard Simmons, Jane Fonda or Billy Blanks video can be somewhat awkward. The humor in this awkwardness (and of course the amazing fashions of past eras) provides connection and trust that is unavailable at Gold's Gym or the YMCA. Laughter is said to be great exercise, so go yuck it up!

CONTACT US

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HOW TO ORGANIZE SWEATtime

Find a space for people to gather. This could be someone's apartment, a public building or a city park. Wherever you meet, there should at least be a television, a VCR or DVD player, some workout videos and enough open space for everyone to move around. It's also nice to provide mats for floor routines. We acquired a bunch of free sample carpets from the local carpet shop. Once a regular group of participants has been established, hosting duties can be shared (so that one person's hospitality is not exhausted).

Once you've secured a space and supplies you'll need to promote the event. This could be as simple as calling or emailing some friends and family (yes, it can be fun to exercise with your family!). Social networking sites can be an effective means of publicizing events. If you are a bit more daring (and your space has the capacity) put up flyers in your neighborhood (or on campus) – exercise is a great way to break the ice with strangers.

Exercise, we've all learned since elementary school, should be done on a regular basis. As with a book club or reading group, regular meetings provide an opportunity for relationships and trust to develop over time. To gain the benefits of exercise you should probably meet at least once a week or more. Otherwise, SWEATtime can still be a fun diversion from a normal workout routine. Create a schedule. Online calendar systems are a great way to coordinate regular meetings. Otherwise, pick a time and place that is consistent so that it can become part of everyone's routine.

Document your SWEATtime meetings through video, photographs or any other means. Share your experiences with others through a group web log or newsletter.

WHERE TO FIND VIDEOS

Every thrift store I have ever been to had at least a couple VHS workout videos. They usually cost around a dollar. Garage sales are another likely place to find classics like *Buns of Steel*. At this point your parents may have gone through a mid-life crisis, realizing they were not as fit as they used to be. In that case, they're bound to have a few gems lying around. Given the generation gap, there should be plenty of fashion comedy in these videos (not to mention the hilarity of imagining your parents earnestly working out). If all else fails, the world wide web will surely have any title you can imagine.

Another option is to make your own workout video. After you have established a regular group, work together to create a set of exercises, costumes and a soundtrack. Use some rudimentary video editing equipment to edit it all together (don't forget the goofy transitions). You can sell copies to purchase more workout tapes, sweat suits or some nice mats.

JUICE THIS!

After a raunchy workout session it is truly satisfying to gulp down some freshly made fruit and vegetable juice. You'll need a juicer – these can also be found at thrift stores or obtained from formerly health conscious parents. Have everyone bring a couple fruits and vegetables and go at it. Try different combinations. Carrots, celery, apples, cucumbers and beets all make fresh tasting, beautifully colored juice. If you're a bit more daring try throwing in some onions, garlic or peppers – the burn is amazing!

