COMMERCIAL CARDIO BUYER'S CHECKLIST

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Work through this before you sign for a single machine: how many to buy, whether they fit, what to ask every vendor, and how long each one takes to pay for itself.

Gym: _____

Members on roster: _____

Date: ____/____/_____

1 How Many Machines

One machine per 10 members on your roster is a starting point. Your busiest hour tells you if it's right.

STEP	HOW TO WORK IT OUT	YOUR NUMBER
1. Starting count	Members on your roster ÷ 10	
2. Busiest hour	Check-ins in your busiest hour (one hour, e.g. 5 to 6 p.m.)	
3. Want cardio	Busiest-hour check-ins × 0.5 (lower in strength-focused gyms)	
4. Your count	Trust step 3 over step 1 if they're far apart	

2 Will They Fit?

Planning rules of thumb, including walking lanes.

MACHINE GROUP	PLANNING SPACE	HOW MANY	SQUARE FEET
Treadmills	About 80 sq ft each, with clearance		
Ellipticals	30–50 sq ft each		
Bikes, rowers, ski ergs	30–50 sq ft each (bikes and ergs at the low end)		
Climbers and others	30–50 sq ft each		
Total	Compare with the space you have		

3 Pick Your Mix

Tick the one closest to your gym.

- [ ] **Big-box or general gym:** 55–65% treadmills, 20–30% ellipticals, 10–15% bikes, a few rowers, climbers, or ergs.
- [ ] **24/7 access gym:** mostly treadmills and ellipticals. Skip anything with a learning curve, like Jacob's Ladder or the VersaClimber.
- [ ] **HIIT gym or CrossFit box:** four to six rowers, two air bikes, two ski ergs. Treadmills optional.
- [ ] **Martial arts or boxing gym:** one or two rowers and an air bike for warm-ups and conditioning.
- [ ] **Yoga, Pilates, or functional studio:** one rower or recumbent bike for members with special needs.

4 Ask Every Vendor the Same Questions

Write the answers in. Equipment dealer GymPros says a true commercial treadmill is built for 8–12 hours of use a day.

ASK EVERY VENDOR	VENDOR A	VENDOR B	VENDOR C
Is it commercial-rated? How many hours of use a day is it built for?			
What's the warranty on the frame, motor, and parts?			
Which member apps does the console support?			
How long will you keep updating the console software?			
What maintenance does the manual call for, and how often?			
Do you sell refurbished units, and what warranty do they carry?			
Who services it, and how fast after a breakdown?			
Are delivery and installation included?			
Price per machine, delivered	$_____	$_____	$_____

5 Plan the Floor Before Delivery

- [ ] **Treadmill clearance:** at least 2 meters (about 6.5 feet) behind each treadmill and half a meter on each side (ASTM F2115).
- [ ] **Bikes can sit closer together** because the rider stays put.
- [ ] **Spin bikes go in the class room,** separate from the main cardio floor.

6 Payback Math

Payback months = machine cost ÷ (monthly revenue from members you kept + monthly downtime savings).

MACHINE	COST	REVENUE KEPT / MONTH	DOWNTIME SAVED / MONTH	PAYBACK (MONTHS)
Example: treadmill	$5,000	$160 (two $80 members)	$0	About 31

NOTE

Price ranges in the guide are dealer prices checked in October 2026, and they drift. Get written quotes before you commit.

Find your real busiest hour

Gymdesk logs every check-in with a time, so you can export the log and count who came in between 5 and 6 p.m.

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