



---

Jan. 20, 2009

*“Working Out in 2009? What You Need to Know About Health Club and Gym Memberships”*

*By Nebraska Attorney General Jon Bruning*

The New Year is in full swing, and now is a perfect time to focus on our resolutions. If yours includes hitting the gym or even joining a health club, be sure the facility you choose suits your personal needs and fitness goals before signing on the dotted line. Decide what's important to you by considering location, staff, programs, equipment, maintenance and social interaction.

With countless health clubs and gyms in Nebraska, there are many choices and different types of contracts. Most people use gyms and clubs without a problem, but some consumers have complained about high pressure sales tactics, club closings, automatic renewals and cancellation and refund problems.

Take advantage of the tour most clubs offer. A tour allows you to see the facility and talk to the staff. Make sure you ask questions about issues that are important to you.

Here are some tips to remember before joining a health club or gym:

- Check with your doctor before beginning a fitness program.
- When you sign a contract, know what you're signing. Take time to research the facility until you feel comfortable you have all the information you need.
- Ask your friends, family and co-workers about the reputation of the health club. You can also research the business either by visiting the Better Business Bureau Web site, [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org) or by calling (402)391-7535.
- Visit the health club during the hours you would most likely use it to determine if it is overcrowded.
- Determine what services require paying additional fees such as tanning, child care or racquetball.
- Remember, financial positions can change quickly. Ask about shorter contracts and always know the cancellation policy. If the club closes while you are under contract, you may not be able to get a refund.

If you would like more information about gym or health club memberships, call the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division at (800) 727-6432.

Here's to a happy and healthy New Year.

