

The art of sweating: An average guy tries the gym

What do you call it when somebody tries out a gym for the first time and finds that it was one of the most harrowing AND inspirational experiences of their life? I have no idea, but if you do find out, please tell me – I think I missed the memo.

To preface the course of events that led to me staring deeply into my soul (as well as my gorgeous brown

eyes) at the mirror-wall of a Planet Fitness in Virginia, I feel the need to point out that the gym is a good place.

Exercise is extremely important to people's well-being and oftentimes, people find a calling at the gym. I would highly recommend trying it out at least twice: once to regret your decision and the second time to realize it may be just what you need.

I tried it once. Hypocrisy aside, if you need something to get your mind off of a sticky situation or you're just looking for a nice energy release, I honestly do recommend you try going to a gym. But I digress.

Let's set the stage.

Not too long ago, a break in school came up and I found that I wanted to do something special. A friend of mine from

Colorado was in Virginia and he invited me to come stay with him for a few days, so I thought, "Why not?" and drove myself to Norfolk.

Brief sidebar: That friend – Nick? He is absolutely ripped. Well, compared to me at least, but upon consideration that isn't much of a feat. Point is, if "no pain, no gain" happens to be true, I feel like I should send him a large number of "get well soon" cards.

Once in Norfolk, I relaxed. It's the closest I've come to a vacation in a good while and I was excited to have two days without any sort of physical labor.

"Hey Sam! Get changed. We're going to the gym," Nick bellowed from the doorway.

I've never been to a gym. I walk my dog a lot and that keeps my calves and thighs rather toned, which is something I'm quite proud of, but the gym has never sounded appealing to me. As a result, my arms look like twigs off a branch.

We get to the gym, which happens to be a glistening Planet Fitness, and Nick says we need a "light warm-up" in the form of 10 minutes on the bikes.

Piece of advice: 10 min-

utes is extremely long when you start right out of the gate going full-speed. How did I know it was full-speed for me? The almost definitely faulty heart-rate monitors built into the handlebars read my heart rate at 190 BPM.

While typically I'd say I was dripping with sweat, it seemed in the moment like more of a steady pour.

The 10 minutes complete, we now proceed to the weight-lifting portion of the evening's activities.

To my dismay, I'm not aware of the weights I managed to lift, nor do I recall the number of reps I did, but for the sake of good storytelling I believe it would be most appropriate to imagine I lifted two tons and looked like a sculpted god while doing it.

Roughly an hour goes by and we decide to clean our workout stations and head out. I was tired, aching and feeling rather dashing after my experience, so after I managed to pull myself from the floor with arms that felt like the aforementioned two tons I impressively benched, I headed back to Nick's car feeling proud of what I did that day.

Don't get me wrong: I am never doing that again. Never. I would need a large amount of money to do that again. But I was proud.

We head back, eat some curry, and I fall asleep for the night with dreams of greatness and/or muscle fatigue fresh on my mind.



Photo illustration by Emmy Benton/Nighthawk News
Columnist Samuel Smith shows off his massive gains from attending the gym. While the gym can create healthy results, it's not for everyone.

The next morning, as well as the subsequent eight mornings, I wake up with arms that were sore beyond belief, but with a miniscule, almost indistinguishable protrusion that I like to consider my biceps, reminding me of the hard work I put into sweating profusely in a public place.

The gym is a place of hopes and dreams, where you can better yourself or best an elliptical if you so try. I just so happened to find out that my hopes and dreams are hiding out somewhere else, ideally sweating a lot less.

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