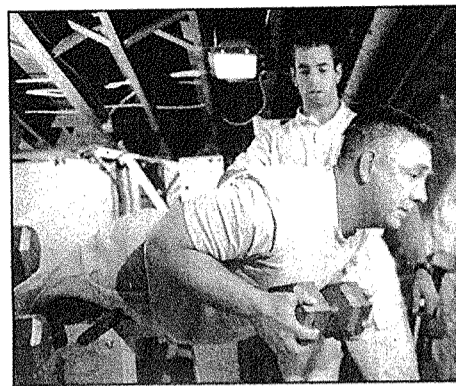


## Exercise in utility



Jamie Schwaberow / Dispatch

Maj. Shelby Jones gets advice from trainer Nate Traucht as he works out in his basement exercise room.

### Homeowners visualize room for improvement

By Kathy Lynn Gray  
Dispatch Home Reporter

**R**adiologist Dr. Terri Jones and her husband, Shelby Jones, lead a harried life. Two children and two demanding careers leave little room for personal interests, and almost zero time for keeping fit.

"When you have a family, you just don't have time," Shelby said.

A major in the Ohio Air National Guard, Shelby must stay in top physical shape. He started lifting weights at the couple's Clintonville home a few years ago but decided he wanted more.

That's when he hired fitness consultant Jerry Greenspan, president of Columbus Fitness Consultants, to set up an exercise room in his basement.

The basement is one of the most popular spots for a home fitness space, Greenspan said. He estimates that 70 percent of the 50 exercise rooms he has set up have been in basements, while another 20 percent have been in an unused bedroom or den. The rest are in everything from a garage to a family room.

The popularity of in-home fitness rooms is growing because many people don't have time to go to a gym.

"Convenience is everything," Greenspan said. "If you have a home gym, you can cook your dinner while you're working out."

In a 1996 survey by the National Association of Home Builders, 6 percent of the 3,800 people surveyed said an exercise room was essential in a house and 31 percent called it desirable. Nearly half — 47 percent — were indifferent and 16 percent didn't want one.

In comparison, of those surveyed, 63 percent said a laundry room was essential, 55 percent said a dining room was essential and 21 percent said a home office was essential.

The more people planned to pay for a house, the greater their desire for an exercise room, the survey showed.

The Joneses' exercise room has a lifting rack, several sets of dumbbells, a stationary bike, a thigh machine and a multiposition bench. The main piece of equipment is a multistation gym, which Shelby, 43, and Terri, 50, use together for both lower- and upper-body workouts.

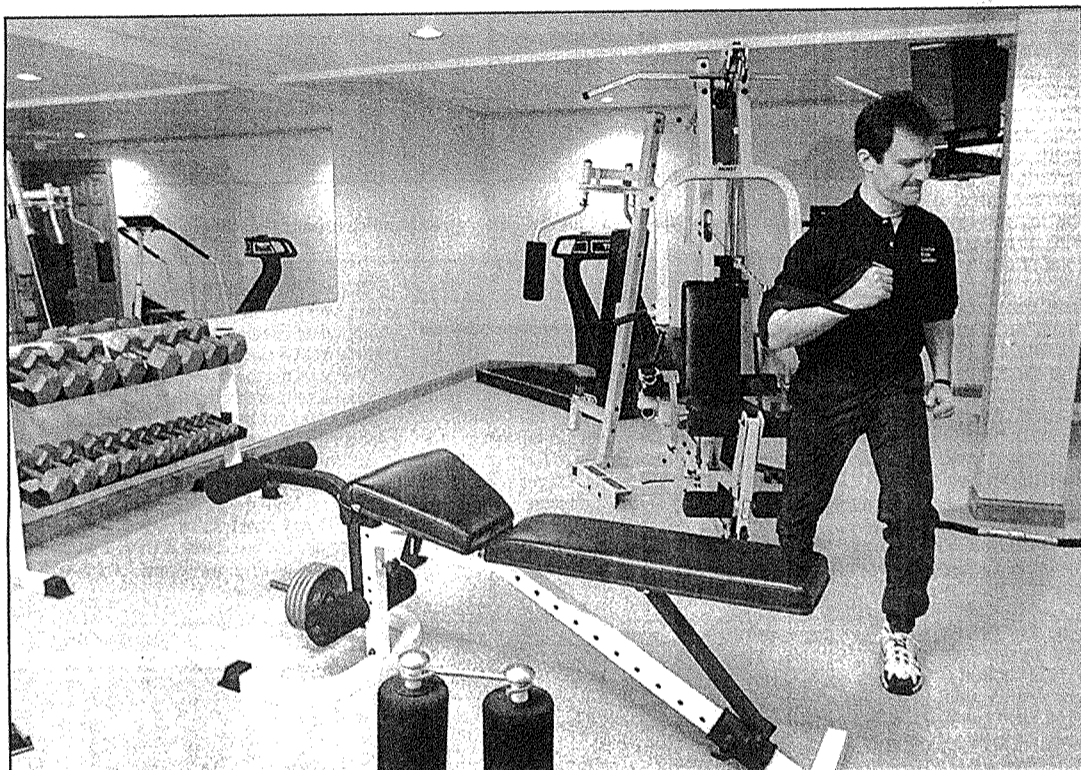
Twice a week, a trainer puts the couple through their paces in the 10-by-18-foot area; they try to exercise two more times on their own.

Because their fitness area is in the basement, they weren't worried about equipment being too heavy for the floor.

Floor strength is the first concern of remodelers such as Jeff Brown, who has added six exercise rooms to homes in eight years.

In a weight-room addition he's working on, Brown used additional steel beneath the framing, placed the floorboards closer together and doubled the subfloor to accommodate weights.

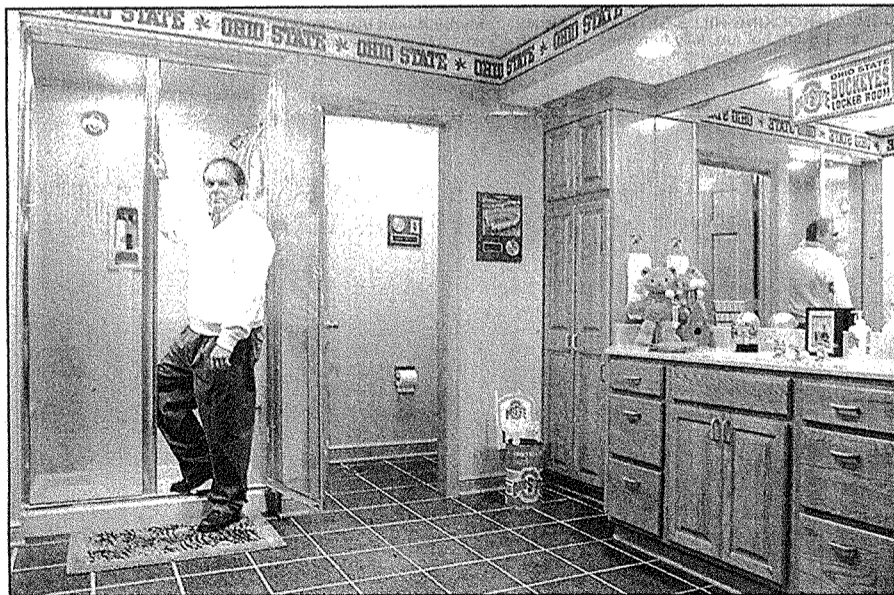
To keep the area from "smelling like a sweatshop," he's installing large swinging doors in the back wall and windows on other walls.



Fitness consultant Jerry Greenspan demonstrates a multistation home gym in the basement of Betsy Bayne's home. A mirror at left allows exercisers to make sure their form is correct.

Doral Chenoweth III / Dispatch

■ To learn more about exercise rooms, visit the Columbus Dispatch Charities Home & Garden Show. The Remodelers Council of the Building Industry Association of Central Ohio will staff a booth.



Remodeler Ron Landis stands in the steam shower of the bathroom that's part of an exercise area in a Westerville home.

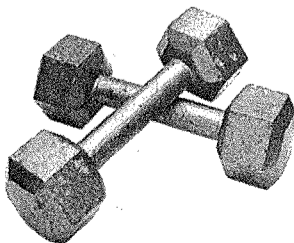
Doral Chenoweth III / Dispatch

### Exercising a choice

A survey titled "What Today's Home Buyers Want," found that people wanting an exercise room make up:

- 39% of respondents younger than 35
- 25% of respondents 55 or older
- 31% of those buying a house that costs less than \$100,000
- 78% of those buying a house that costs \$500,000 or more
- 29% of those with household income less than \$35,000
- 48% of those with household income of \$100,000 or more

Source: National Association of Home Builders



## EXERCISE *from* 1J

---

Ceiling fans also help with air circulation.

The exercise area, like many Brown has completed, has a new bathroom so exercisers have "a place to shower so they're not traipsing through the house," he said. A separate space with a hot tub is a place to relax after a workout.

Remodeler Ron Landis worries about head height when he designs an exercise area.

"Most of those machines you step up onto, and the average basement isn't high enough," he said. Ceilings must be a minimum of 8 feet high for many typical exercise machines, he said.

Like Brown, Landis tries to design lots of natural or electric lighting into a room and often adds a television on the wall to watch while exercising.

In one Westerville home, he added an exercise area in about a fourth of the 2,200-square-foot walk-out basement he remodeled.

Next to the area is a bathroom with the spacious look of a locker room and a steam shower to soothe exercise-sore bodies.

Full-height mirrors on the walls also are standard in home exercise areas, to make sure the proper form is followed when using the machines, Greenspan said.

Costs for an exercise area can run \$500 and up, Greenspan said, depending on your budget, needs and dedication to exercise.

Landis estimated it could cost \$6,500 to \$8,000 to turn an existing space in a home into an exercise room, and \$15,000 to \$20,000 more if the space is added to a home. Adding a

bathroom would cost \$8,000 to \$10,000 on top of that, he said.

Greenspan first asks clients how much they want to spend, then about exercise goals, available space, who will use the equipment and what equipment a client already has before recommending what to buy and where to put it.

Greenspan charges \$90 an hour to advise clients about exercise rooms; he waives that fee if they buy a certain amount of fitness equipment from his Exercise Equipment Experts company.

"I see people's exercise setups all the time and think, 'What a lot of money they've wasted because they didn't really know what they were buying,'" he said. "People are just starting to realize they need to talk to someone who's an expert before buying."

Often in-home exercise areas grow as homeowners buy more equipment. Betsy Bayne moved hers from a basement bedroom in her southern Delaware County house to a family room, then had a 15-by-28-foot portion of the basement remodeled specifically as an exercise room.

"I like it because we can exercise on our own terms and look however we want," she said. "We have a mounted TV, a VCR and a ceiling fan, and all those things add to the exercising experience."

Their new room has a step machine, a treadmill, a single-station weight machine, a multiposition bench, a 45-degree back-extension machine and a thigh machine, arranged in a circle. Bayne tries to exercise three to four times a week for 45 minutes to an hour; her husband, Bill, exercises six times a week for a total of about six hours.

The benefits are many, Betsy said.

"It helps me maintain my energy level so I can keep up with my kids. And I'm able to fit into my clothes."