



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INSURANCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New Years “Get In Shape Plans” Should Include Consumer Awareness *Health Clubs are Required to Register with the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs*

Nashville, TN—As we enter the New Year, many of you are making resolutions to lose weight and get in shape. While some of you are looking for the perfect diet, others are looking to find the best exercise program. Before you invest your hard-earned money on a health club membership, it is important to do your research. The Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs wants to remind consumers of some basic guidelines when reviewing health club options.

“Tennessee law requires all for profit health clubs to register with the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs,” said Mary Clement, Director for the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs. “Each club is required to display their certificate of registration. The consumer should look for the certificate when considering any club. To ensure that joining a health club is good and healthy choice, consumers should weigh their options carefully. Our job is to inform, educate and help the consumer.”

Health clubs are required to register annually with the Division of Consumer Affairs. Failure to do so can result in prosecution and civil penalties for the health club.

Consumer Affairs offers the following additional information to consider when joining a health club:

- Shop around. Visit at least two health clubs to learn about dues, hours of operation and condition of facility.
- Call the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs to ask if there have been complaints filed against the health club in which you are interested.
- Know your rights. Once signed, consumers have 30 days to cancel a health club contract, providing the notification is made by certified mail.
- Avoid long term contracts. Consumers could be responsible to pay the full term cost of the membership, even if they stop going to the club.
- Initial membership contracts longer than three years are prohibited and discount offers are limited by law.
- Avoid paying in advance for long term contracts. Paying monthly, while slightly higher, protects the consumer over the long term.
- Know membership details. Ask about cancellation rights and what penalties you could incur with a cancelled membership.
- Read the entire contract. Consumers often feel pressured into signing a contract they did not read.

For more information about health club registrations and other consumer related issues or to file a complaint, please visit <http://www.state.tn.us/consumer/> or contact the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs at 1-800-342-8385.

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