

THE HIGH END

Now in Your Building: On-Demand Exercise Classes

The latest in rental and condo amenities include streaming fitness devices and meditation rooms.

By **Jane Margolies**

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Leslie Bottrell selects a workout on the Mirror control pad in the yoga studio of 222W80, her rental building on the Upper West Side. Stefano Ukmar for The New York Times



An instructor on the Mirror device puts her through her paces. Stefano Ukmar for The New York Times

As a working mother of two, Dr. Leslie Bottrell has little time for exercising, let alone getting herself to a fitness studio in her Upper West Side neighborhood for a group class. And because her schedule varies week to week, she can't settle into classes with fixed time slots anyway.

So when Mirror — the streaming fitness device with a Hollywood following — was installed in the yoga studio of Dr. Bottrell's apartment building, 222W80, it quickly became her go-to exercise solution.

“It gives me the benefit of a class,” she said of Mirror, which looks like a standard looking glass until activated, when it reveals an instructor who takes you through a fitness regimen of your choice. “But I don't have to go out and find it and fit it in with my schedule.”



Dr. Bottrell varies her fitness routine with punching exercises on equipment that also has a digital instructor. Stefano Ukmar for The New York Times

Mirror and other fitness equipment with on-demand instruction may primarily be used in private homes, but the devices have been migrating to the gyms of luxury residential buildings. There they have been a boon for buildings that don't have the space to hold classes led by real-life fitness instructors or a large enough residential population to fill them.

Such devices are also a way of showing tech-savvy residents, and prospective residents, that a building is on the cutting edge. "It's the new craze," said Carole Bloom, founder of the Bloomstone Group, a real estate advisory firm.

Exercise/yoga studios in luxury-building gyms are often equipped with video screens where on-demand classes can be called up. With Mirror, users can be face-to-face with an instructor, while also seeing their own bodies reflected back. They can choose from a variety of live or taped classes, including boxing, dance cardio, high intensity interval training and yoga.

Many buildings have also replaced some or all of their standard stationary bicycles with much pricier Peloton bikes, which have screens that display instructors who provide spin class-style workouts.

At 49 Chambers, a 1912 bank building in Lower Manhattan that's been converted to a luxury condominium, the bikes even clinched a sale. A prospective buyer who was considering a two-bedroom unit early in the sales process asked whether the gym would have Pelotons, recalled Ariel Chetrit of the Chetrit Group, the building's developer.

Although the bikes hadn't been planned for the building's gym, the query prompted the developer to add two. The two-bedroom unit sold.

"We assumed if one buyer wanted them, others would as well," Mr. Chetrit said. (He was smart to have nabbed the bikes when he did — a Peloton spokeswoman said that the company has ceased selling to multifamily buildings and will focus its sales on its core buyers: individuals.)

Mirror, meanwhile, has in some cases replaced classes with real-life instruction. At Dr. Bottrell's building, 222W80, a 72-unit rental building owned by Friedland Properties and managed by Rose Associates, yoga classes that were attracting only a few practitioners were terminated. But there are now more than 60 registered users on the building's Mirror, according to Santos Rivera, the building's resident manager. "At some point we may need to have a sign-up sheet," he said.

Meditation is another activity where on-demand options are attracting interest.



A lounge next to the meditation room at the Pierrepont, a rental building in Brooklyn Heights.
Stefano Ukmar for The New York Times



A resident listens to the Headspace app in the meditation room at the Pierrepont, in Brooklyn Heights.
Stefano Ukmar for The New York Times

Pierrepont, a new 90-unit rental building in Brooklyn Heights developed by Jonathan Rose Companies, has a sound-insulated meditation room with dimmed lighting and floor cushions. Ms. Bloom, who is overseeing the marketing and leasing of the building, said headphones and iPads are also available for guided meditation sessions with the Calm and Headspace apps.

And Michael Fazio, chief creative officer of LIVunLtd, a company that provides fitness services to residential buildings, predicts that more gadgets for mental health may be on the horizon. He cited an upcoming product called Vital Neuro, which offers headphones that can read brain activity and program a personalized regimen of music and sound to encourage relaxation and focus — a Fitbit for your brain.

“Brain fitness and maximum mental performance are big buzzy topics for C-suite executives,” Mr. Fazio said. “Exactly the type people who are renting and buying in the luxury sector.”

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