



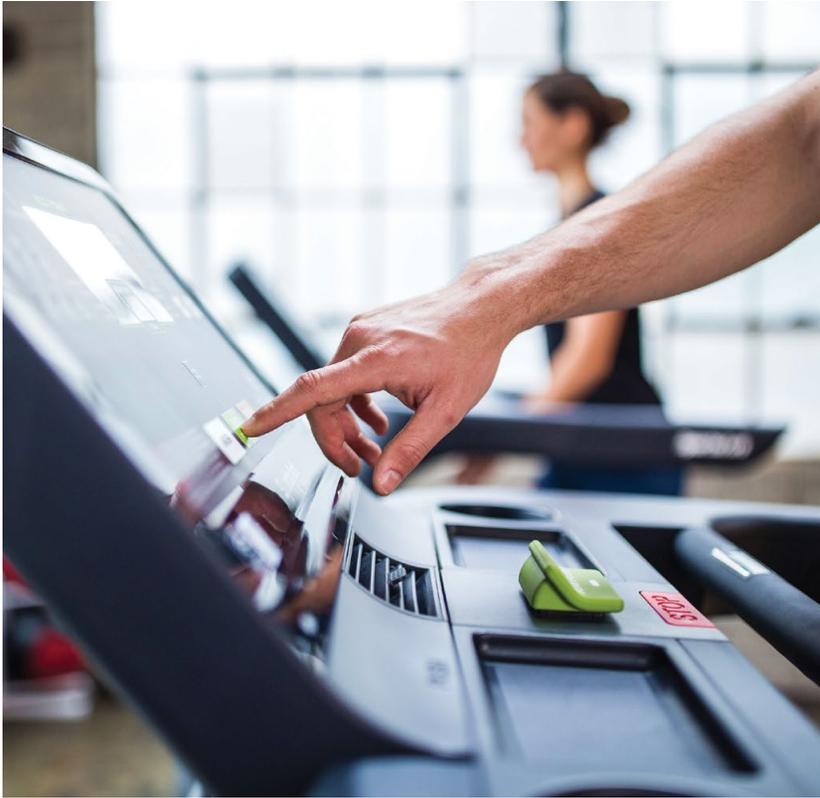


GREEN IS THE NEW BLACK:

**How Campus Recreation Centers
Encourage Eco-Friendlier Living**

by Ivo Grossi

In the era of sustainability and green movements, colleges are starting to “go green” as a way to not only help our planet, but to encourage students and staff to live an eco-friendlier life. The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) estimates that buildings in the U.S. consume 14 percent of the potable water (water safe for consumption) and 41 percent of the energy consumption.



To reduce greenhouse gas emissions, companies with large spaces, such as college campuses, need to start offering programs and initiatives to do their part in reducing these numbers. Many universities are starting this trend at the source—the campus recreation centers.

Traditionally, gyms are a huge source of energy between the fluorescent lights, air conditioning and various TV's. There are two phases of implementing more eco-friendly practices into this environment: long term and short-term quick fixes.

Long Term

If the budget is available, the biggest investments Universities can make is to reduce the amount of energy being used. To do this, larger installations in places such as recreation and wellness centers are key, such as investing in environmentally responsible fitness equipment.

There are new, innovative lines of this equipment that can convert human generated energy into utility-grade electricity that powers the facility. By installing energy producing equipment, facilities and their members can have an impact on the environment every time they hit start on the machines.

Depending on the amount of equipment and hours used, for example, a gym with 20 energy producing treadmills, 20 ellipticals, ten upright and ten recumbent cycles, used 12

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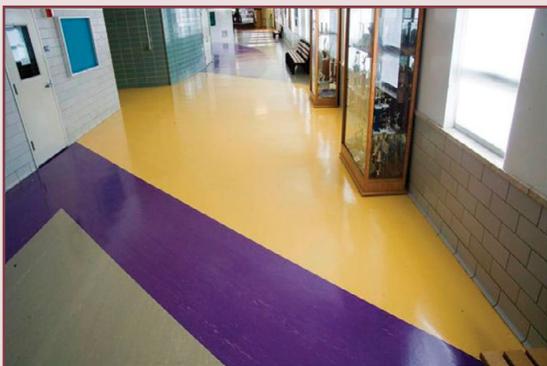
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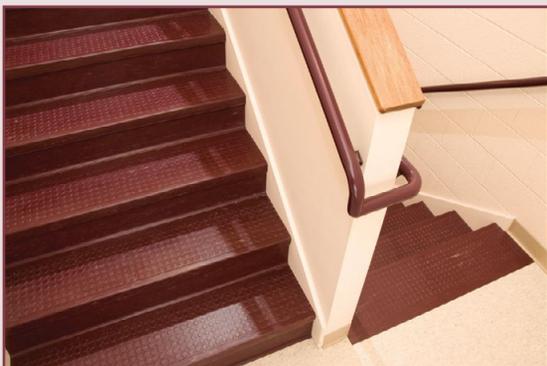
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Green is the New Black continued

Making gradual changes is an affordable way of reaching your end goal of going green. Not only do these green and sustainability efforts help the planet, but they can also set you apart from competitors and attract more students that share the same green values.

hours a day, seven days a week, on average can reduce 0.81 metric tons of CO₂ each year. We are starting to see gyms all around the world, such as Sacramento Eco Fitness in California and Terra Hale in England, install this type of equipment.

Benefiting the Planet While Reducing Energy Bills

As a result of these additions, gyms can produce a significant amount of energy which not only benefits the planet, but ultimately reduces the cost of the monthly energy bill as well. Another large installation that can have a dramatic impact are solar panels.

Using solar panels is another great way of collecting natural energy, this time through sunlight, that generates electricity. Solar panels can be installed over the entire roof, or just portions that see heavy amounts of sunlight. Lastly, a big change that can be made is installing low-flow faucets, showers and toilets. Between all of the toilets, showers, sinks and water filling stations on campus, installing low-flow products helps to cut down the amount of water that is being used.

Quick Fixes

If you are looking to make improvements right away, there are many changes you can start implementing to speed up your transition to becoming a green facility. These changes are an affordable way to get into the green game. Here are a handful of product changes and initiatives to get you started:

First, you can add biodegradable products to your gym. Contrary to what one might think, biodegradable soap, toilet paper and paper towels exist.

Secondly, make the move to all natural cleaning supplies. By avoiding harsh chemicals inside aerosol cans that can harm the air, switch to eco-friendly cleaning supplies made of all-natural ingredients that don't negatively impact the environment.

Next, you can promote a plastic-free life by selling glass water bottles at the gym to avoid members constantly bringing in disposable, plastic water bottles.

Additionally, you can initiate a recycling program. Get a recycling bin and offer incentive points for members. This can be as simple as offering a free fitness class for each amount of recycled material brought in.

You can also acquire energy-efficient light bulbs. Most energy-efficient bulbs use roughly 20 to 25 percent of the energy that traditional bulbs do, and can last up to 25 times longer. Other options include installing dimmers so you aren't using as much energy.

Finally, be sure to pre-set your thermostat. Set your thermostats so that the air or heat does not kick on during closed hours. This is another move that helps to reduce energy while simultaneously saving you money. Using a smart thermostat can help you regulate this best.



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End Goal

While you might not be able to notice any instant changes, especially with the quick fixes, these gestures go a long way once practiced over time. Going green is a process that the college, recreation center, and students can all take pride in. It is easiest to start the transition with some of the quick fixes, and slowly making your way to larger installations.

Making gradual changes is an affordable way of reaching your end goal of going green. Not only do these green and sustainability efforts help the planet, but they can also set you apart from competitors and attract more students that share the same green values. High school aged students are in a generation that was raised to make a cautious effort to lead an eco-friendly lifestyle. In the end, seeing a college that takes sustainability seriously is very appealing to them.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Ivo Grossi brings over 20 years of international executive experience in the fitness, health and wellness industry to his role as CEO of the Americas with SportsArt, producers of the ECO-POWR™ line of cardio gym equipment. He is a global speaker and writes about mindfulness, leadership and conscious business on his blog at <http://ivogrossi.com>.

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