

can't get fit and have fun doing it at Life Time, you're in trouble!" Our experts were struck by the outstanding variety of exercise equipment and classes, plus its top-drawer staff and training. **Nutritionist Christine Avanti** gives special credit to its LifeCafé menu, which boasts all-natural items with a Mediterranean flair, like the Chicken Basil Pesto Sandwich (along with the usual smoothies and wraps). "This club understands the importance of good nutrition," she says. Jen Boulden, our *green* expert, gives Life Time her highest score for eco-friendly touches like the widespread use of natural light and progressive energy- and water-saving practices. **WE LOVE:** Rock-climbing walls for a fun, adventurous, family workout.

### 3. URBAN ACTIVE

[www.urbanactive.com](http://www.urbanactive.com)

This innovative club understands the importance of environments that make you *want* to be there. Their newest building in Columbus, Ohio, for example, is 75 percent glass, and every club's indoor track boasts nearly complete panoramic views, surrounding members with sunlight. Most cardio machines have flat-screen personal TVs (and iPod hookups), and you'll find tons of cardio equipment in the in-club



**Work out with a view:** Enjoy the sights while breaking a sweat at Urban Active.

movie theaters. Lyons loves that many staff members are specially trained to work with people with injuries and disabilities, a segment of the population many gyms overlook. "I feel the passion behind this club," she says. **WE LOVE:** Thoughtful, thorough *green* practices that promote member health as well as the Earth's well-being. "They know their stuff," Boulden says.



**Go to new heights:** Hang around at one of Crunch's Anti-Gravity Yoga classes.

### 4. CRUNCH

[www.crunch.com](http://www.crunch.com)

"Great energy, refreshing color, hip vibe," Lyons says. This popular urban gym takes full advantage of its big-city settings, making working out as entertaining as it is healthy. Crunch's cutting-edge classes, from Anti-Gravity Yoga to Pole Dancing, win our judges' praise (and perfect scores). "Crunch is often the first to try new exercise approaches," Bryant notes. It also wins praise for its creative "field trips"—ski and surf trips, yoga in the park, even discounted cooking classes. **WE LOVE:** The commitment to Pilates, with Reformer equipment for members.

### 5. TOWN SPORTS INTERNATIONAL (New York Sports Clubs, Boston Sports Clubs, Washington Sports Clubs, Philadelphia Sports Clubs)

[www.mysportsclubs.com](http://www.mysportsclubs.com)

Kudos to this club for taking meticulous care of its machines and upgrading regularly. Bryant calls this approach "excellent" and lauds the unique organization of equipment that guides users through based on their level of experience. Lyons likes that TSI offers personal-training options to fit busy and on-a-budget folks. "In our overworked and underpaid economy," she says, "these are two important areas." The designated mind-body studios found in many of the clubs gained praise from McGee: "It means they are serious about mind-body-based workouts."

**WE LOVE:** Small Group Training, where a group of members with a common fitness goal (like skiing, Pilates, or boxing) can get customized training at an affordable price (as low as \$189 per person for eight one-hour sessions).

### 6. 24 HOUR FITNESS

[www.24hourfitness.com](http://www.24hourfitness.com)

Fun, upbeat, accessible, with "a proven track record," fitness expert Harley Pasternak notes. That's 24 Hour Fitness's prescription for a healthy, full-service club that appeals to members of all ages and budgets—all attributes



**Bring the kids:** Your children can do their own thing at 24 Hour Fitness.

that win widespread praise from panelists. Bonus points from Lyons for offering a range of classes for seniors. **WE LOVE:** "Signature Clubs" that reflect different celebrity athletes' particular passions. (The Lance Armstrong Clubs, for instance, feature special cycling rooms.)

### 7. GOLD'S GYM

[www.goldsgym.com](http://www.goldsgym.com)

Our panelists praised the variety of group-fitness classes, including cycling, cardio kickboxing, yoga, and Pilates, as well as dance-inspired cardio. "It's great to see that Gold's, which I used to

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## Meet our experts

**Christine Avanti**, a certified nutritionist with a Los Angeles-based consulting practice and author of the new book *Skinny Chicks Don't Eat Solids* (Rodale 2009).

**Jen Boulden**, co-founder of [www.idealbite.com](http://www.idealbite.com), a free daily-tip service for green products, lifestyle, and services.

**Cedric X. Bryant, PhD**, chief science officer for the American Council on Exercise (ACE) and author of a dozen fitness and sports-medicine books.

**Kim Lyons**, celebrity fitness trainer best known for her role as a trainer on *The Biggest Loser* and author of *Your Body, Your Life*.

**Kristin McGee**, certified ACE personal trainer and New York City-based Pilates and yoga expert and DVD star.

**Harley Pasternak**, celebrity trainer and author of *5-Factor Fitness* and *5-Factor Diet*.