

Overweight-only gym fosters supportive atmosphere

January 7 2013, by John L. Mone

(AP)—Downsize Fitness is an exclusive health club, evocative of the nation's trendiest gyms. But there's a strict requirement to join: You must be 50 pounds or more overweight.

The chain wants its members to feel comfortable while exercising, so there are no mirrors inside and the windows are fogged. Even the equipment is designed for heavier people.

Chicago entrepreneur Francis Wisniewski says he started the gym because "I've been overweight my whole life, and I was embarrassed to go to the gym myself."

The first locations opened in Chicago and Las Vegas in 2011, and expanded to Dallas in 2012.

Gym member Janie Busch said she likes the supportive atmosphere.

Krisanne Hale, a [personal trainer](#) in Dallas, is still trying to lose weight. She says that helps members relate.

More information: Watch the video here: bit.ly/WnxFOz

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