



Sunshine Gym
Outdoor Fitness Equipment

Buyer's Guide

for Local Communities

Fitness for everybody



New and growing communities are placing health at the centre of their development plans to deliver better opportunities for people.

An outdoor gym serving a town or village is a brilliant community asset. Outdoor gyms bring together different members of the community to socialise and exercise for all round wellbeing. For the purpose of this guide, we will consider the most important requirement for a community gym will be its accessibility and availability to everybody.

At Sunshine Gym, this is our speciality – from beginners to experienced gym users, we design inclusive outdoor gyms that are varied, inviting and convenient to use. We work with providers to achieve value for money so users can maximise the possibilities their community outdoor gym offers.

In community settings, our focus is to deliver a mix of equipment for a range of comprehensive workouts.

Community outdoor gyms from Sunshine Gym include, but aren't solely targeted at, the fitness elite; they are not designed to be hang-out zones for teenagers; and we don't include gimmicks like phone chargers.

A Sunshine Gym is just simply an outdoor gym with equipment that can be used by adults of all ages, shapes, sizes, or fitness condition. A Sunshine Gym offers fitness for everybody.

Let's talk about location



Transforming community recreation areas can support physical and mental wellbeing among communities.

The position of an outdoor gym within a park or community space is one of the two biggest decisions to make (the other being equipment choice). Gyms that have reduced impact are either in the wrong place, or have the wrong equipment, or have both the wrong equipment in the wrong place.

The first consideration is accessibility. We are targeting outdoor fitness for everybody, so to ensure we're including those with reduced mobility, the gym would be best placed as close to the access points or car parks as safely possible and just off a pathway. Outdoor gyms offer many benefits to users with reduced mobility and users from this demographic quite often become some of the most regular visitors to the gym.

Another benefit of having the gym close to the access points is to capture new users. Many members of your community will visit the gym to use it as a traditional gym, but quite often most users start out as 'passing traffic'.

Certain pieces of outdoor gym equipment can be considered, to a degree, as playground equipment for adults. What we mean by this is that they are quite fun to use, so people get intrigued to the point they 'try' the equipment, and once they try one piece, they're on to the next and so on. Many of these passers-by then become regular users of your facility taking in all of the benefits of exercising outside.

There is a safety consideration here as well in relation to proximity to children's playgrounds. Outdoor gym equipment is designed for users over 1.4m in height (unless you purchase some of our dedicated children's range for 1.4m and under). Users under 1.4m in height, typically young children, should not be using adults' gym equipment. To minimise the risks, a gym designed for users over 1.4m in height should be located away from a children's playground by a minimum 25m or separated by a suitable fence or boundary. This then differentiates an adults' gym from a children's playground.

Sunshine Gym offers a dedicated range of outdoor gym equipment for children or users 1.4m or below in height. These pieces focus on cardiovascular exercise only and are widely used and very much enjoyed by primary school children throughout the country. In some community locations we have designed and installed both children's outdoor gyms and adults' outdoor gyms so families can stay fit and healthy together by visiting the dedicated fitness zones for their age group.

The final consideration when considering the location of an outdoor gym is supervision. Not supervision in the traditional sense of managing risk in a school playground for example, but the visibility of the gym facility, from a wide array of directions, is important to discourage anti-social behaviour. Our equipment is designed to be heavily vandal resistant; vandals would have to go to extreme lengths to seriously damage any Sunshine Gym kit. However, anti-social behaviour does present other problems such as litter, graffiti, etc. Placing the gym in a well supervised area mitigates this risk.

Consider the space available



Sunshine Gym can help those involved in the creation and running of our neighbourhoods to embrace new thinking to build better places to live, work and visit.

With a location chosen, another consideration is the space available. The overall footprint of outdoor gyms does vary depending on the amount of equipment. However we must consider the requirements of the safety standard we work to: BS EN 16630.

In a nutshell, we must ensure that every piece of equipment is a minimum of 1.5m away from an obstruction. This could be another piece of equipment, a tree, fence, wall, kerb, any fixed object within 1.5m of the extremes of the piece of equipment (extremes are the furthest points in which a piece of equipment can occupy—for example, the Double Health Walker is measured from the point at which the moving legs hit the safety stop).

However, many customers increase the space to 2-2.5m depending on the width of their grass cutting machinery, to simplify the ground maintenance of the grass and to keep the area in top condition.

More information is available on the requirements of the BS EN 16630 standard in our guide [here](#)



It's all about the layout



At Sunshine Gym we work to exceptionally high safety and quality standards in everything we do from the supply of equipment, to the layout of an outdoor gym.

The layout of the equipment will vary depending on the chosen equipment, but you can apply two trains of thought – safety and functionality.

When taking into account the safety aspect, consideration should be given to how far the moving parts extend compared to the most likely direction of traffic from oncoming gym users.

In our experience, outdoor gyms are best installed in a single row, just off a path, all facing towards the path. The most likely direction of traffic is then from the front, and users will return to the path to travel to the next piece.

However, should you prefer or require the equipment to be in a cluster, then the machines with the greatest moving parts should be on the back row, so that users are travelling past static equipment or machines with less movement to get to the machines with the greatest movement.

After the safety aspect is considered (and prioritised), then functionality can be considered. Outdoor gym equipment can be categorised into three key areas: cardiovascular, strength building and stretching (warm up/cool down) equipment. Depending on the way in which you expect the gym to be used, this can add some intelligence to the layout. Two of our favourite concepts are:

1

Workout Zones

This concept works well with large gyms typically for seven or more pieces of equipment. The idea is to group all three different types of equipment into mini zones, much like the layout of internal gyms. Users can then plan their workout week around different parts of the gym, such as cardio day, legs day and so on. Having some line markings on the surface really works well here if circumstances allow.

2

Bootcamp

Many 'bootcamp' gyms work on circuit training, where users move around a circuit in a dedicated order, an example being upper body strength – lower body strength - cardio – stretch – repeat. The gym equipment can be set up in a similar layout where users start on any piece and move along the circuit. This is great for friendship groups or small fitness clubs as additional off-equipment exercises can be included for larger groups.

Getting the numbers right

Every community, park and open space is unique in its own right, and the best person to identify the perfect number of users is you.

As a minimum guideline, we'd recommend enough equipment for four users, to accommodate a typical family or friendship group, due to the social aspect of an outdoor gym. However, it may be worth considering the variety of exercise that you wish to include balanced with your budget. Every piece of gym equipment provides different results to the next, and variety equals greater results. A great couple of examples are as below:

Tunstall Park, Stoke on Trent



Located around 30m away from the children's playground, just off the path of a main walkway is our outdoor gym for up to 14 users (seven pieces of equipment). The gym in peak times can be used by a couple of friendship groups as well as an individual or two, without users feeling like they're on top of each other. This is a very typical yet effective gym for a small local park.

Roman Park, Herefordshire



As a showcase park for the surrounding area, Roman Park is a focal point of outdoor activity for the community. Visitor numbers can be vast so we installed a gym capable of managing a large number of users from all demographics of the community. Suitable for 32 users (20 pieces of equipment), there is a wide variety of equipment, including a smaller set for younger users under 1.4m in height. This is a great example for a large rural park.

Make it welcoming



The right surfacing can boost user confidence.

Sunshine Gym equipment, with only a handful of exceptions such as fitness rigs, does not need a safety surface to comply with the requirements of BS EN 16630. However, the right surfacing can deliver a range of benefits.

1

Grass surfacing

This is the most common surface in which we install our equipment, especially in local parks. Although we can install directly into grass, we recommend that we protect the grass with the use of rubber grass mats. These are a relatively low-cost solution, usually installed around each piece of equipment, something we refer to as spot grass matting. This allows you to protect the surface where users stand to either access or use the equipment.

2

Hard surfacing

Whether installing into existing tarmacadam or providing a new hard surface, this is considered to be one of the best, long-lasting surface options. It provides an area of hard standing for users and is usually the easiest to maintain in comparison to other surfaces. Should you have an area of existing tarmac, the cost is no different to install than into grass. To finish, we'll lay a smooth patch of concrete, dyed to match the surrounding surface so that it blends in. A new tarmac surface requires a little more work, with a higher cost upfront, but this will make the gym more accessible and offer greater results over the life-span of the outdoor gym.

3

Wetpour or rubber bound mulch

Another option is to have an impact absorbing surface such as wetpour or rubber bound mulch. These types of surfaces are generally used for playground equipment with a critical fall height, and although we don't need to have this type of surface to comply with BS EN 16630, it does offer some advantages. As a solid surface is unlikely to wear as quickly, it is easier to maintain and ensures users don't get any mud on their shoes or clothing in comparison with grass or a natural surface.

For more information on surfacing, check out our buyer's guide on surfacing [here](#)

Choose your outdoor gym equipment

The best equipment to keep communities fit and healthy is equipment that people find easy to use and operate.

This is the second biggest consideration (after location) before finalising your plans for an outdoor gym. You must ensure the right equipment and enough equipment is selected for your community. It is important here to keep in mind the ultimate goal of providing fitness opportunities for everybody: some promotional outdoor gym images capture elite gym users performing a range of impressive workouts. At Sunshine Gym we believe community facilities should be inclusive, offering opportunities for people of all ages and abilities without intimidation.

Of all the outdoor gym equipment available from any supplier, it is the cardiovascular range that offers the most 'fun' equipment and there are a handful of machines that can be included to ignite interest in the first instance, with potential gym users going on to discover more benefits of regular outdoor gym use. We can look to our children's range for inspiration, as the favourite pieces in the children's range are equally as fun in the adult sizes.

The first choice of any community gym should be the Double Health Walker, a machine that mimics running or walking and is the firm favourite of most outdoor gyms that we have installed. This is the cherry on the cake, the piece that users easily understand, and draws passers-by into the gym.

The next choices can vary a little, but should include all or a selection of the following:



Double Slalom Skier



Sky Stepper



Rower



Arm & Pedal bike



Horse Rider

All five from the list above provide a great cardio workout, and all remain fun, easy to use and are suitable for the vast majority of your community.

Next, we can consider the strength building equipment. Two pieces that stand out as the most popular in any community gym are:



Combi Power Push & Pull Down Challenger



Double Squat Push

These two pieces alone provide an excellent full body strength workout, yet remain relatively easy and fun to use.

Beyond these two machines, the below strength building equipment is targeted a little more at advanced gym users, those with superior body strength looking for a greater workout, as well as those progressing from beginner to intermediate stage. Note that on a smaller gym of seven pieces or less, these are too niche to provide value to a community gym, but for larger outdoor gyms these can be a great addition:



Double Pull Up



Parallel Rails



Double Sit Up Bench

For most gyms of eight pieces, we would advise a 80/20 or 60/40 mix of cardio/strength equipment for best results. For larger gyms, say 12 pieces or more, a 50/50 approach would be advised.

For even bigger gyms, our warm up/cool down machines should be included. On smaller gyms, users may need to warm up and cool down off the equipment by running and stretching in an open space, but should budget allow then we offer some dedicated equipment for your community. The below equipment is purposely designed to help stretch those muscle pre and post workout:



Leg Stretch



Waist Twister



Tai Chi Discs

At the start of this buyer's guide, we outlined how a community gym must be for everybody, inclusive of all users. We offer a range of inclusive or wheelchair accessible equipment to also consider. The inclusive equipment in particular allows users with full, partial and limited mobility to exercise in their local park. The below are great examples to consider:



Double Arm Extension



Double Hand Bike



**Wheelchair Accessible Rowing
Wheels**

Another level

Hopefully, this guide has provided a great insight into how to choose the best products for your unique outdoor gym experience.

There is one other variable to think about: multi gyms. All the multi gyms and fitness rigs within our range comprise of all of some of our individual pieces of equipment but joined together.

The main concept of joining the pieces was to maximise the social benefits of outdoor exercise. Quite often from our experience, it's the social side of exercising that really brings the community together. Friendship groups, families, or even strangers with a shared passion for exercising can all motivate and encourage each other to achieve more.

Our multi gyms are the next level of outdoor fitness equipment. Should increasing social engagement be a key performance indicator, then consider swapping the individual pieces of equipment for those joined on multi gyms (cardio) or fitness rigs (strength building). Check out the below as our favourites:



Activ8 Multi Gym



Motiv8 Multi Gym



Hercules Fitness Rig



Atlantis Fitness Rig

Your next steps

This guide includes all our advice to plan the very best outdoor gym, that can be used by the whole community and will make a real difference to peoples lives.

We offer free of charge site visits, so please get in touch and arrange to meet one of our experts in person, to review your own park or open space, and help create a brilliant community asset.



Why choose Sunshine Gym?

Choose Quality

- ✓ Quality equipment brought to you by one of the UK's leading experts in outdoor gym equipment.
- ✓ Products come with a 25 year structural guarantee as standard, with a pre-galvanised and powder-coated finish to further enhance longevity and durability.
- ✓ An expert team of trained technical sales advisers, ready to provide information throughout the process.
- ✓ Professional installations provided by a dedicated team of experts, for a long lasting fitness suite.
- ✓ Quality aftercare including free online training videos for your outdoor gym equipment.

Choose Safety

- ✓ All relevant products tested to the BS EN 16630:2015.
- ✓ All relevant equipment is fitted with our unique safety stop system, to avoid dangerous crushing points.
- ✓ Equipment has no in-built resistance making it suitable for use without an induction.
- ✓ Children's equipment range excludes strength training.
- ✓ All multi-user equipment contains independent moving parts, ensuring each user controls their own workout.

Choose Choice

- ✓ Products which provide adults with the opportunity to work on both their strength and/or cardiovascular health.
- ✓ An expertly designed range catering for different age groups, including school aged children.
- ✓ Specially curated packages to suit various needs within different sectors.
- ✓ Ties with Broxap allow for easy supply of playground equipment, sports equipment and street furniture.

Discuss your requirements with one of our friendly experts

Call us on 01782 571719