TEN TIPS TO BETTER GYM VALUE

1: Ask if it's cheaper to join annually. You may get a discount if you can afford to do this.

2: Can you freeze payments for a month or two, say in the summer without penalty?

3: Are there lower prices for using the gym off peak, say between 10am and 4pm? You may qualify if you can stick to this. Many gyms offer discounts to students and OAPs also, so do ask.

4: Can you have a free trial? Many offer a one or two day pass so you can try it out, especially if you haven't previously joined a gym.

5: If you pay monthly, can you stop the direct debit at any time? Some places lock you into a yearly contract which makes it very expensive if you find it's not for you.

6: Consider a 'pay as you go' option rather than signing up for classes you'll never take. Many councils run community gyms on this basis and they're just as good. Check out your local council's website for listings and prices.

7: You tend to pay more for a gym with a pool, so if swimming isn't your thing, don't pay the extra; find a place that just has what you need.

8: Many new gym bunnies baulk at the idea of classes, but it's a great way of keeping motivated, with good instructors and music to keep you going. Nobody is looking at you - they're all far more interested in themselves!

9: If you prefer running, try using an app like Endomondo or Wayfinder to track your progress.

10: Most of all, have fun! Exercise shouldn't be a bore - find something you like to do and do more of it.