

Ross flushes out best hotels with top fitness facilities

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By Sheena Jackson

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Ross Brown from Abbotsford sees himself as a fairly athletic person who likes to work out on a regular basis.

But with a busy work schedule involving travel at least twice a month, the 30-year-old has found that staying fit on the road can be a challenge.

Brown, president of the Chamber of Commerce and partner of an aviation consulting firm, has stayed in at least 80 hotels over the past 10 years.

"If you are an athletic-minded individual, there is no easy way to determine the quality of the gym until you arrive at the hotel," he said.

"I've been to lots of really nice hotels, great properties, but the gym looks like the equipment was thrown from someone's rec. room from the 1970s." Brown's frustrations came to a head two years ago when he was staying at a hotel in Lethbridge, Alberta. The treadmills were so poor, "It was difficult to do a proper workout."

Brown and two colleagues - Matthias Morel and Mark Klassen - recently launched an online tool designed to help people who like to keep fit when they travel. Anyone who has ever stayed in a hotel, anywhere in the world, can log on to the site - www.hotelgymreview.com - and write a review. In particular, the hotel gym and its equipment.

"To make the site useful, our goal over the next three months is to collect accurate and unbiased content that will flush out the best hotels, based on the quality of their respective fitness facilities," said Brown.

Reviews appear on the user friendly website within one business day of being written. All reviews are anonymous.

"We really want people to get on there and write reviews and help make it a valuable tool for fitness-minded travellers," Brown said.

It is expected to take between three and six months to build up the review database. At that point, Brown and his colleagues plan to re-launch the product with a new logo.