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Wellness Clubs Are a One-Stop Shop for Health and Fitness

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By **Mikaila Kukurudza** | Photos Courtesy of **Sweat and Tonic**

For years, boutique fitness studios have been the new black. From Barry's Bootcamp and Lagree Studios to SoulCycle and F45, these smaller, niche—and often luxury—fitness brands have been popping up everywhere, and inspiring cult-like followings of loyal exercisers.

Well, there's a new kid on the block delivering all of your health and fitness needs, literally under one roof. Like a shopping mall for your body and mind, wellness studios (or wellness clubs) are one-stop shops for everything from yoga to meditation, indoor cycling to coffee bars, and even restaurants. Sounds too good to be true, but it begs the question: In an already saturated market, one that has been trending hard this last year towards at-home fitness, is there really a demand for the convenience of health hubs?



David Ingram, founder of new 16,800 square foot wellness club, **Sweat and Tonic** in downtown Toronto, says heck yes there is. "I think there is a massive gap in the market that no one is filling," he says. "I was going to three different studios to enjoy the activities I liked. [I thought] 'Why can't we just have a place that has all my favorite classes in one location?'"

Even more than efficiency, Ingram saw an opportunity to create a laid-back community atmosphere. "You'd often see faces at the same classes doing the same thing but everyone just rushed in and rushed out," says Ingram, which is where the more social services of some wellness clubs come in, like coffee bars, restaurants, lounges, workshops, and more.

With my interest piqued, I decided to check out Ingram's three-story oasis, Sweat and Tonic, to soak up the experience and see for myself. From the moment I entered, and the receptionist reminded me of my class and treatment schedule, I knew I was in for a self-care experience unlike any other.



After a stop at the coffee bar followed by a 45-minute sauna, I headed to the third-floor Chi Junky yoga studio for a one-hour hot flow. Once showered and changed, I took a lunch break and caught up with emails in the modern upstairs lounge, dubbed Tonic House. I finished my day with a 30-minute meditation session in the technology-enhanced Somadome.

Had I had the luxury of more time, I could have hit up a spin class, booked a facial or massage, attended a wellness seminar, or met with a friend for a cocktail at the full service bar.



But what really surprised me was the lack of high-pressure commitment. There's no membership fee and class packs are valid for 6 months after your first visit. Or you can opt for a \$27 drop-in pass for any class or sauna.



I was sold (I'm already planning my next girls' day, birthday, and basically any other occasion with friends at **Sweat and Tonic**). But you don't have to take my word for it. If you want to check out a wellness studio for yourself, you might want to start at one of these locations:

1. **The Well, New York, NY**

A meditation dome, steam room, sauna, reflexology lounge, mindful movement studio, spa, private gym, and an organic restaurant complete with a liquor license—The Well is a full ecosystem for wellness that demands you to ask yourself why you'd ever go anywhere else.

Price: \$375 monthly membership (plus a \$500 initiation fee) *Although if you're under 32 you can swipe up a monthly membership for just \$210*

Website: the-well.com