White Paper Says Gyms Aren't Built for Women; Carbon Performance Says Its Gyms Are Designed for Everyone

Carbon attracts women, without being a women-only gym, demonstrating that a serious training culture and a non-intimidating environment can coexist



NASHVILLE, TN, UNITED STATES, October 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A company that operates a women-only gym concept released a 2026 white paper stating that the traditional gym does not adequately serve women, reigniting the ongoing "gymtimidation" conversation about how the fitness industry should adapt gym environments to make women feel more comfortable.

The findings point to gym layout and design, overcrowding, staff presence, cleanliness, and overall atmosphere as factors that can affect women's comfort and confidence. The paper acknowledges that many women prefer and thrive in mixed-gender gyms, but strongly suggests that the industry consider women-only spaces as one potential solution.

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> *Founder and Owner of Carbon Performance*

Carbon Performance, a popular, multi-location fitness and wellness center, agrees that the traditional gym model can feel intimidating for some women, but says its "more than a gym" business model and diverse member base prove that a co-ed gym can be a welcoming space for women and beginners without compromising the serious training culture that draws more experienced gym-goers such as bodybuilders and elite athletes.

“Having a women-only gym gives women another option, but it doesn’t address the larger responsibility gyms have to create a better member experience,” said Victoria Laffey, Founder and Owner of Carbon Performance. “From the first Carbon we built and every location that has followed, it has been my goal as a female gym owner that we create a space and culture where people with different goals and experience levels, including women and beginners, feel welcome and supported.”

Carbon addresses each of the potential barriers mentioned in the white paper within its holistic gym model.

While elite strength training equipment and a performance culture remain the foundation, Carbon provides a high-end atmosphere with recovery lounges, infrared saunas, cold plunges, and mind-body group fitness formats that naturally create a less intimidating environment.

Staff presence is never an issue at Carbon. All employees, not only the personal trainers, are passionate and educated about health and fitness and are always available to help members navigate the gym floor, equipment, and the services available to them.

While there are always times a gym will be busier, Carbon addresses overcrowding by designing strategically laid-out spaces and capping memberships at levels appropriate for each facility.

“The equipment should challenge people. The gym experience shouldn’t. If someone feels lost, unsupported, or like the space wasn’t built with them in mind, that’s an operational problem,” said Brent Laffey, Founder and Owner of Carbon Performance. “A modern gym should serve an elite athlete and someone walking onto the training floor for the first time without either one feeling out of place.”

Carbon officials want to be clear that their position does not mean there isn’t a need or demand for women-only spaces within a larger mixed-gender gym. Its newest location in North Carolina is an example.

Women looking for serious strength training in Charlotte can join Carbon Performance and have access to more than 175 strength machines, more than 40 cardio machines, expert personal training, nutrition coaching, group fitness, and advanced recovery amenities, while also having the option to train in a dedicated all-women’s strength and cardio area if they prefer a separate space.

While a women-only space is necessary in Charlotte because market research revealed that many women prefer it, Carbon does not view having a women-only area as the primary solution for making women feel comfortable, nor as a feature every gym must have.

Instead, the company’s broader position is that women should be able to walk into any Carbon

location and find serious training options, knowledgeable support, and multiple ways to pursue their individual health goals without feeling uncomfortable.

“Every Carbon Performance has the same serious strength and performance foundation, but we don’t use a copy-and-paste model for every location,” said Jerrad Tausz, CEO of Carbon Performance. “The goal is to respond to the market without changing the training standards and inclusive culture that define Carbon.”

In Charlotte, that means a dedicated training space for women. In other markets, such as Atlanta, where people want gyms with cold plunges and saunas, it means a tight focus on recovery. At Carbon Franklin, members can choose from a variety of classes, including Element 6, C45 HIIT, Les Mills BODYPUMP, Cycling, and Mat Pilates, because group fitness is important to women when choosing a gym in that region. Similarly, HYROX training in Nashville is in high demand with women, so that format is available at both Carbon locations in Tennessee.

As the fitness industry continues debating whether gyms miss the mark for female fitness and whether the answer is more women-only spaces, Carbon believes the industry should focus on providing modern, mixed-gender spaces that are complete ecosystems with services and amenities that support longevity and appeal to all adults with different goals, backgrounds, and experience levels.

“When people pay for a high-end gym membership, they should feel like the gym was built for them. For women training for the first time or getting back to the gym after time away, that doesn’t have to mean a women-only gym,” said Victoria Laffey. “Carbon proves it is possible to have the equipment and culture serious athletes expect, while creating enough choice, support, and flexibility that people with different goals and experience levels continue choosing to walk through the same doors.”

Carbon Performance currently operates gyms in Franklin and Nashville, Tennessee; Atlanta, Georgia; and Charlotte, North Carolina, with Carbon Salt Lake City opening in late 2026. Each location includes everything a high-end gym membership should offer: equipment for serious strength and performance training, expert personal training and nutrition coaching, a variety of group fitness classes, advanced recovery and wellness amenities, on-site nutrition offerings, and additional spaces and services tailored to each market.

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About Carbon Performance

Carbon Performance delivers a performance-driven, science-informed approach to strength training, recovery, and nutrition. With locations in Franklin and Nashville, Tennessee, as well as additional markets in Georgia and North Carolina, and opening soon in Utah, the brand integrates elite equipment, structured coaching, advanced recovery infrastructure, and

community inside environments built for measurable, long-term results.

To learn more about Carbon Performance, visit: www.carbonperformance.com

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