



# Genesys Athletic Club

*Towel Tracker helps one of America's largest fitness clubs reduce towel loss by 94 percent and save \$44,000 a year*

Genesys Athletic Club is a premier fitness club located on the grounds of Genesys Regional Medical Center in Grand Blanc, Michigan. At 225,000 square feet, it is one of the largest fitness clubs in the country and offers medically-based fitness and wellness services tailored to meet the needs of its 6,600 members.



## The Towel Situation

To accommodate the towel needs of Genesys' 6,600 members, 15-20 towel stations were set up around the facility. Club members took as many towels from these stations as needed, with no tracking mechanism. Although return bins were located at each station, many towels were never returned. Instead, enormous quantities of towels disappeared on a regular basis. General Manager Jim Mongrain explained, "Some members take them home and they don't realize they're taking them—they might throw them into their gym bag or whatever." He added, "There was a significant amount of overall loss."

The cost to buy replacement towels was astronomical. "We were purchasing approximately 100 dozen towels a month, to the tune of \$60,000 a year," stated Mongrain. "So from an economic standpoint it became quite obvious that we needed to change direction and do it quick."

## The Solution

In August 2014, Genesys Athletic Club installed three Towel Trackers—one in the main lobby and the other two in the men's and women's locker rooms. The cost savings and associated benefits were immediate:

- **Reduced towel loss**

Towel loss plummeted by 94%, from an average of 40 towels disappearing per day to an average of 2.4 towels per day. As a result, the number of replacement towels purchased also dropped by 94%, from approximately 100 dozen towels ordered per month to only 6 dozen per month. In addition, the annual towel replacement budget dropped from \$60,000 to \$16,000—a 73% reduction that represents cost savings of \$44,000 per year.

- **Recouped costs from missing towels**

When towels disappear, Towel Tracker tracks them, and this means that the club knows exactly which members took the missing towels. Genesys sends those members gentle, non-accusatory reminder letters, requesting that the missing towels be returned during a one week grace period. According to Mongrain, about 30% of missing towels are returned as a result of these letters. Those who don't return towels within a week are charged a replacement fee, although Mongrain added that for the first towel taken, "We give them a grace towel, and that softens the blow a little bit... but we really want to make sure they understand they need to bring them back."

- **Reduced laundry costs**

When members know their towels are being tracked, they stop taking large stacks of them and instead take only the towels they really need. As a result, overall towel usage tends to drop dramatically. This was the case at the Genesys Athletic Club, where Mongrain said there has been a huge reduction in the number of towels being used. With fewer towels being used, fewer towels need to be laundered, and Mongrain stated that as a result, "Laundry costs have definitely gone down." This includes a significant reduction in the costs associated with water, electricity, laundry detergent, fabric softener, and bleach.

## Further Benefits

- **Redirected labor hours**

The towel system used before Towel Tracker was very labor intensive, with locker room attendants continuously walking around the club stocking clean towels and picking up dirty towels in numerous locations. After Towel Tracker was installed, Mongrain stated, "Members no longer leave their towels lying around, because they know they are being tracked." As a result, he added, "We can now redirect that labor to where it really needs to be, which is in the locker rooms, cleaning, and taking care of members and their needs."



*"I would implement the Towel Tracker one hundred times over if I had the opportunity."*

*Jim Mongrain, General Manager*

- **Cleaner facility**

Before Towel Tracker, club members frequently left used towels lying on exercise equipment and on the floor of the weight lifting area. "Towels were lying everywhere," stated Mongrain. "It gave the appearance that the club was not clean." The towel problem was particularly troublesome in the locker room and showers. "Some members decided they wanted to place 5-6 towels on the [shower] floor, because they didn't want to touch the floor," explained Mongrain. "Many of them just left them there, so the members who came behind them were not happy. Then we had to deal with the upset member as well as the wet towels." Things changed dramatically after Towel Tracker was installed. Today, club members pick up after themselves because their towels are being tracked, resulting in a much cleaner facility. Mongrain says various members have enthusiastically told him, "Now we have a cleaner looking club!"

- **Upgraded towel quality**

Due to the drastic reduction in towel loss, Mongrain has been able to put some of the cost savings back into the club, by providing members with a higher grade towel. The response has been very positive. Mongrain explained, "I've had a number of members approach me and say, 'You know, I used to use three or four towels. I'm only using one now because it's a better grade, thank you for doing that.'"

## Customer Reaction

After the three Towel Trackers were installed, many club members liked the new, high tech method of obtaining towels. However, Mongrain said that some members who were resistant to change in general gave him significant pushback during the first six months. But he noted that Towel Tracker's impact on the facility's overall cleanliness ultimately won over its former critics: "Members actually came up to me, some of which were the ones who complained, and said, 'Listen, I wasn't a fan of this, but I do see the benefit now and I'm enjoying the fact that this club is cleaner now.'"

Towel Tracker has been at Genesys for over a year, and Mongrain remarked, "The impact of the Towel Tracker system has been neutral—I know of not one single member who has left the club because of the system." He added, "As far as new memberships are concerned, one of the nice parts about this system that we have in place now is that this is all they know. This is what's introduced to them when they become a member, and it's not an issue for them."

## Summary

Towel Tracker has quickly reduced towel loss, towel replacement expenses, towel usage, and associated laundering expenses at the Genesys Athletic Club, while providing a clean and cost efficient way to quickly and conveniently dispense towels to fitness club members. Mongrain commented, "I definitely would recommend this machine. It does require a little bit of a backbone to put it into place, but I would never go back on the decision to have implemented this system." He added: "I would implement Towel Tracker one hundred times over if I had the opportunity to do this."

**For more information about Towel Tracker visit: [www.toweltracker.com](http://www.toweltracker.com)**