



# Steel Fitness Premier

*Fitness club eliminates towel loss and saves \$30,000 a year*



Steel Fitness Premier is a 4,000 member upscale fitness club located in Allentown, Pennsylvania. The 55,000 square foot facility includes lap, activity, and therapy pools, a sauna and hot tub, an indoor track, multiple studios, and a wide variety of exercise equipment.

## The Towel Situation

Before Towel Tracker, Steel Fitness Premier members obtained clean towels in the locker rooms. Steel Fitness Premier's Aquatic and Environmental Manager Michael Seip explained, "We set out piles of towels, people took what they wanted and returned them at dispensers that we had around the facility." However, the towels didn't always make it back to the return bins. Instead, some went home with members, never to be seen again. Replacing them cost Steel Fitness approximately \$1,000 each month, which equated to \$12,000 a year. To stop this problem, Seip began looking for an innovative towel solution.

## The Solution

"We were trying to solve the problem of spending \$1,000 a month on towels that were disappearing," explained Seip. "Towel Tracker was the only system that made sense to us in our setting." In September 2012, Steel Fitness installed a Towel Tracker in the lobby. Once it was installed, Seip immediately noticed several positive changes:

- **Reduced towel loss**

"Towel Tracker has cut our loss of towels to virtually zero," stated Seip. Before Towel Tracker, Steel Fitness ordered replacement towels every month. But with Towel Tracker, Seip now only orders towels three times a year, to replace towels that wear out. As a result, Seip stated that Steel Fitness now spends about 50% less on towels than before, which equates to about \$6,000 in savings every year.

The newfound towel retention is due to Towel Tracker's ability to monitor towel usage and inventory. When a towel goes missing, Seip accesses the system's software and looks up who checked it out. If Seip sees a pattern of towels not being returned, he sends an e-mail to the member, reminding them to return the towel. If the towels are not returned, that member is charged with replacement costs. As a result, members take greater responsibility for their towels and proactively return them.

- **Cleaner Facility**

Prior to Towel Tracker, "People were in a habit of... feeling like it was the housekeeping staff's job to pick up the towels if they didn't feel like putting them back, and that has really subsided," Seip said. With the new system, members return their used towels to Towel Tracker's return cabinet. The end result is a sparkling clean facility.

## Additional Benefits

Seip stated that installing the Towel Tracker “was a several fold win for us”. Additional savings appeared in unexpected places:

- **Reduced labor hours**

With the Towel Tracker located in the lobby, it was no longer necessary to have both a male and female locker room attendant on site to care for towels in the locker rooms. Seip explained, “During non-peak times, a lot of times we’ll only have a male or a female housekeeping staff here... it’s definitely cut back on the schedule.” Seip stated that staff labor was ultimately reduced by about 15 hours a week.

- **Redirected labor hours**

“Towel Tracker is located just a few feet from the laundry room, so the housekeeping staff is not running around the facility trying to chase down towels anymore,” stated Seip. “It’s really allowed them time to do some other things... they were able to pick up some of the more routine cleaning projects that we have, and some of the special projects we only do occasionally.” As a result, Seip was able to cut Steel Fitness’ contract with a third party company that came in after hours to clean the facility. Between ending the cleaning contract and reducing staff hours, Steel Fitness saved an additional \$2,000 each month, which comes to \$24,000 a year.

- **Reduced towel use**

Before Towel Tracker, members took stacks of towels that often went partially unused. Seip explained, “When they’re in stacks, it’s very easy to just waste them.” Since the installation of Towel Tracker, Seip stated, “We’ve found that members take fewer towels.”

- **Reduced laundry costs**

With the reduced towel use, Steel Fitness also experienced a drop in laundry costs, and Seip stated that this has also reduced the wear and tear on their in-house laundry machines because “they’re not getting used as hard”. Additionally, washing fewer towels led to an eco-friendly decrease in water, electric, and chemical detergents used during the laundering process.



*“Towel Tracker has cut our loss of towels to virtually zero... we’ve been nothing but pleased with the results from using a Towel Tracker. I strongly recommend using the Towel Tracker system.”*

*Michael Seip  
Aquatic and Environmental Manager*

## Member Reaction

When Towel Tracker was installed, Seip experienced some resistance but was pleasantly surprised by how quickly members adapted. “As we publicized the fact that again, there really was \$1,000 of towels a month going out the door and it absolutely caused your dues to go up, they started to understand,” explained Seip. “It didn’t take as long to transition to a positive as I expected, I thought it was going to be a lot rougher of a road.” Seip added that Towel Tracker is viewed very favorably by new members: “It’s actually a selling point, they really think it’s cool.”

## Summary

With Towel Tracker, Steel Fitness members are responsible for the towels they use, and proactively make an effort to return them. As a result, Steel Fitness is cleaner and more cost effective, spending \$6,000 less per year on replacement towels and \$24,000 less per year on housekeeping costs, for a total annual cost savings of \$30,000. “We’ve been nothing but pleased with the performance, the service, and the results from using a Towel Tracker,” Seip concluded. “I strongly recommend using the Towel Tracker system.”

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