

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a red sports bra, is looking upwards with a focused expression. She is in a gym setting, with blurred background elements like a basketball hoop and other people. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting her face and upper body.

THE
HPC
METHOD

A CONFIDENCE GUIDE FOR WOMEN

Not an alien in the gym.

How to walk in, know what you're doing, and train with confidence, even when no one is there to tell you how.

COACH SAH · THE HPC METHOD

If you feel like you don't belong there, *you're not the only one.*

Almost every woman I coach has told me some version of this.

Everyone else knows what they're doing. What if I use the machine wrong? What if people are watching me?

That feeling is normal. It isn't a sign you're not cut out for training. It's a sign you're somewhere new, without a plan you trust yet.

Here's the thing I want you to hear: confidence in the gym isn't a personality trait. It's a skill. It's built the same way strength is: small, repeated, a little more each week.

“Most people in the gym are thinking about their own set, their own playlist and their own reflection. Far fewer are looking at you than it feels like.”

What's in this guide

- How to walk in with a plan, so you never wander
- A simple first-sessions structure you can repeat
- Gym etiquette, so you know the unwritten rules
- How to check your own form, and what to look for
- What to say and do when it feels awkward

Coach Sah

STEP ONE

Walk in with a plan, *not a hope*.

The biggest cause of gym anxiety is not knowing what you're going to do next. A plan takes that away before you even park the car.

Know your session before you arrive

- Have your exercises, sets and reps written down or in your app
- Watch the demo video for anything you haven't done before
- Have one backup for each exercise, in case the equipment is taken

Choose your time

Mid-morning, early afternoon and later in the evening are usually quieter. Your first few sessions are easier when the floor isn't packed. As your confidence grows, the time matters less.

Pack your bag

Water bottle · small towel · headphones · your phone with your program · a hair tie · shoes you can feel the floor in for lower body days

Find your home base

Pick one corner, usually near the dumbbells or a bench, where you set your bottle and towel down. Coming back to the same spot each session makes a big space feel smaller.

STEP TWO

Your first sessions: *keep it familiar.*

Repeat the same session for two to three weeks. Familiarity is what builds confidence. By week three you'll know where everything is, how it feels, and you'll be ready to progress.

PART	WHAT TO DO
Warm up 5–10 min	Bike, rower or a brisk walk, then a few mobility moves for the joints you're about to use.
Main work 4–6 exercises	A mix of lower body, upper body push and upper body pull. Machines and dumbbells are a great place to start.
Sets and reps	2–3 sets of 8–12 reps, finishing each set with 2–3 reps still in the tank.
Rest	60–120 seconds between sets. Use it to breathe and note your weights.
Finish 5 min	Gentle stretching or a slow walk, and a quick note on how the session felt.

Write it down. Log the weight and reps for every set. Seeing the numbers move week to week is one of the fastest confidence builders there is. It's proof, on paper, that you're getting stronger.

This is a general starting structure. If you have an injury or a health condition, check in with your health professional first.

The unwritten rules, *written down.*

Half the anxiety is not knowing the rules. Here they are, so you can stop guessing.

- **Wipe it down.** Give the bench or machine a quick wipe when you're done.
- **Put it back.** Return dumbbells and plates where you found them.
- **Ask, don't hover.** "How many sets have you got left?" is completely normal to ask.
- **Working in is fine.** If someone is resting between sets, you can ask to use the machine in between theirs.
- **Give people space.** Don't walk directly in front of someone mid-lift or stand between them and the mirror.
- **Filming is normal.** Lots of people film their sets. Just keep other people out of your frame where you can.
- **Staff are there to help.** Asking how a machine adjusts is what they're there for.

"You're allowed to take up space. You pay for that gym membership too."

STEP FOUR

How to know you're *doing it right*.

You don't need someone beside you every session. You need a way to check, and someone to teach you what to look for. Filming your sets does both.

How to film yourself

- Prop your phone at about hip height, side on for most lifts
- Get your whole body and the weight in the frame
- Film one working set, not your warm-up

What to look for

CHECK	ASK YOURSELF
Set-up	Are my feet, grip and starting position the same every rep?
Brace	Do I take a breath and tighten through my middle before each rep?
Control	Am I lowering the weight slowly, or letting it drop?
Range	Am I moving through a full, comfortable range for me?
Feel	Do I feel it in the muscle I'm training? Effort is good. Sharp or pinching pain means stop and check.

This is exactly how I coach online. You send me videos of your sets, I send back feedback and simple cues, and over time you learn to cue yourself. You're not leaning on me forever. You're building your own eye.

STEP FIVE

When it feels awkward, *here's what to do.*

Someone's on the machine you need.

Ask how many sets they have left, or go to your backup exercise and come back. *Your plan already has a plan B.*

You don't know how to use something.

Check the diagram on the machine, rewatch the demo video, or ask staff. Or choose a move you do know. *Skipping one exercise doesn't ruin a session.*

You feel like someone is watching.

They're most likely waiting for equipment, resting, or zoned out. Pop your headphones in and come back to your next set. *Your session is your business.*

Your head starts racing.

Stop, breathe in through your nose, and let a long, slow breath out. Do it three times, then look at the next line of your plan. *One set at a time.*

You want to leave early.

Do one more exercise, then decide. Most of the time you'll finish. If you don't, you still showed up, and that counts.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS ALONE

Confident on your own, *with me*
in your corner.



When you coach with me online, you're never guessing. And the goal is for you to need me less over time, not more.

- A personalised program in the HPC app, with a demo video for every exercise
- You send me videos of your sets, and I send back feedback and cues
- If you really need me, we can jump on a video call while you're at the gym
- WhatsApp and voice messages for questions in between

Start with your assessment at thehpcmethod.com

Start Your Assessment