

THE EVEN HOTELS FUNCTIONAL TRAINING POLE WELL AWAY FROM HOME

At Matrix, we love a unique challenge. So when Even Hotels, an IHG brand, approached us about developing a piece of equipment for an in-room training zone for every room they offer, we were excited to create a complete solution specific to their needs.

Working together, we developed something as unique as the challenge we faced — the Functional Training Pole, an all-in-one training device exclusive to Even Hotels.

THE RISE OF FUNCTIONAL FITNESS

It all began in 2013 when the Matrix development team recognized the growing popularity of functional fitness training. Though functional fitness was only in its infancy at the time, our club partners were already beginning to incorporate it into their group classes. According to their feedback, club members were excited to try it and come back for more. Functional training was also becoming popular for enhancing sport-specific movements and for helping seniors strengthen the muscles they needed for the activities

of daily living. While we started to tinker with designs for our early functional training equipment, a member of our sales team made a valuable connection with IHG. At the time, they were working on a new concept called Even Hotels. This new brand would specialize in offering guests a holistic wellness experience, and Matrix seemed like a natural fit for equipping their in-room training zones.

A FUNCTIONAL CONVERSATION

Our team and the people from Even Hotels soon got together at our North American headquarters in Wisconsin. While the Even Hotels team was impressed with the functional training equipment they learned about and tried, they had grander ideas than a functional training step or multipurpose stool. They needed a complete, versatile functional training system that could double as an aesthetically pleasing focal point for the room. The two teams started to collaborate, and a beautiful partnership came to life. With good ideas coming from every angle, Matrix and Even Hotels agreed on a piece of equipment that could offer multi-directional resistance and stretching exercises for guests of all sizes and ability levels.

STUDYING STRUCTURES & STYLE

However, we weren't ready to start building prototypes just yet. Before our functional training solution could become a reality, we had to explore and better understand the physical and aesthetic characteristics of actual hotel rooms. Since our new functional trainer would be in every room Even Hotels offered, it had to be space-efficient before all else. We also had to take into account different measurements between

rooms in different buildings and even on different floors of the same building. Luckily, we could draw on the insight and expertise of the Even Hotels team. They helped our designers and engineers understand every aspect of their business. And finally, we had to design a functional trainer that could be manufactured with efficient repeatability.



EVEN HOTELS – STRUCTURE & STYLE

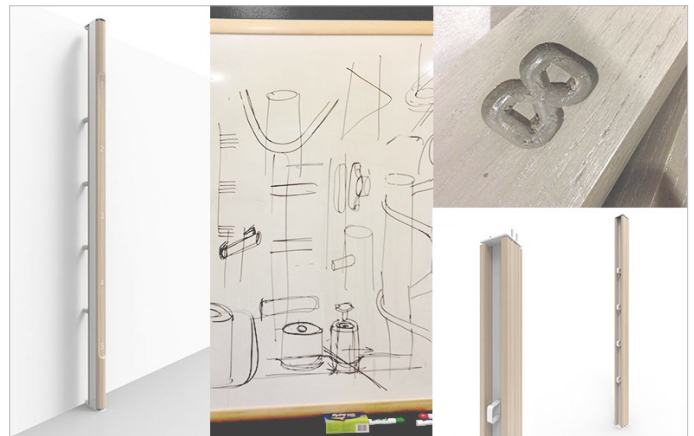
MATCHING FORM & FUNCTION

With the challenges and obstacles clearly defined, our team explored numerous solutions from existing equipment to new prototypes. Next, our model shop began to machine a telescoping steel pole that could be adjusted to fit rooms of different sizes. It was decided at this point that the Functional Training Pole would need to be anchored to the floor and ceiling. Unlike walls, these surfaces were load-bearing structural concrete, and that meant the Functional Training Pole would remain securely anchored during even the most intense workouts. To define the appropriate training zones, we brought in functional training experts. We also consulted with Even Hotels and considered a wide variety of wood accents to find the perfect coloration and woodgrain pattern.

COLLABORATIVE MANUFACTURING IN ACTION

After extensive digital and physical testing of the Functional Training Pole's load-bearing capabilities at our North American headquarters, we began to send our prototypes to the Even Hotels team in Atlanta, Georgia. After some visits to the

concept rooms they had built at their headquarters, we were ready to move into production. Even Hotels had a strong preference for the Functional Training Pole to be American-made for sustainability reasons and to reduce the environmental impact of shipping equipment from overseas. One by one, we tracked down sources for the telescoping metal tubing, the installation hardware and the wood accents from different small fabricators in Wisconsin, home to our North American headquarters. Once again, the collaboration of many different people triumphed, and all the right ingredients came together in the final design of the Functional Training Pole. The Even Hotels team was thrilled with the final product, and there was a long-term added benefit for Matrix as well; many of the learnings discovered during the development process were applied to our popular Connexus Functional Training System, which can be found in health clubs around the world.

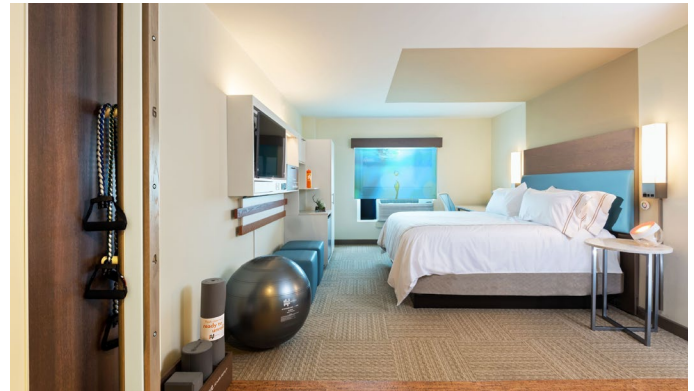


EVEN HOTELS – FUNCTIONAL TRAINING POLE CONCEPTS

AN ENDURING LEGACY OF COLLABORATION

As of today, the Functional Training Pole has been the centerpiece of the Even Hotels in-room training zone for over six years. The team at Even Hotels provides resistance bands, TRX suspension straps, yoga mats, foam rollers and other accessories that give guests everything they need for a superior functional training workout. Even Hotels also provides on-demand instructional videos via their in-room TVs, so even guests who have never tried functional training can simply cue up a video and experience a workout guided by an expert trainer.

Even Hotels customer feedback suggests that many of their guests use the Functional Training Pole for stretching and resistance exercises. This is more relevant now during the COVID-19 era than ever, since many travelers are reluctant to enter general-use fitness facilities and many such facilities are temporarily closed or limited. In the end, the Functional Training Pole stands tall as an example of what can be accomplished when motivated, talented professionals come together to create a fitness and wellness solutions that's accessible to all.



EVEN HOTELS – GUESTROOM