



To Your HEALTH

WELCOA'S ONLINE GENERAL WELLNESS BULLETIN

AS SEEN ON TV! The Best Piece Of Exercise Equipment

Few, if any, infomercial exercise machines live up to all their hype. The more expensive ones—Bowflex, CrossBow, Total Gym, and TreadClimber—come closest. The cheaper ones generally are not very effective. And even those cost a lot for what they do.

This year Consumer Reports rated exercise equipment as seen on TV infomercials. The verdict is in, just in time for the holidays.

Best machines to improve aerobic conditioning: Treadmills or Elliptical machine.

Best buy—Treadclimber.

Best machines to strengthen muscles all over: Multi-station weight stack units.

Best buy—Bowflex.

Best machines to strengthen abdominal muscles: None worth the money.

Best buy—lying on the floor and doing crunches!

Best machines to strengthen bun and thighs: None worth the money.

Best buy—Doing squats and lunges.

The best machines are also the most pricey—but remember, you get what you pay for.

Source: Consumer Reports, January, 2004.

Helpful Hints For The HOME GYM

By Mike Perko, PhD

If you're considering buying fitness equipment for home workouts, remember this piece of advice: "If it looks too good to be true, don't reach for that credit card!" The Federal Trade Commission advises all workout "wannabes" to exercise good judgment when evaluating advertising claims for fitness products. Before you buy, the FTC wants you to:

Look for equipment that offers a total workout. The best route to overall fitness is one that incorporates a variety of physical activities as part of a daily routine.

Remember that no exercise device can burn fat off a particular part of your body. To turn a "beer belly" into a "six-pack stomach," you must combine sensible eating with exercise that works the whole body. Why? Everything you eat has calories and everything you do uses calories. More calories out...fewer calories in = weight loss.

Be skeptical of outrageous claims. Ads that promise "easy" or "effortless" results are false. And many ads that make big claims about the number of calories you'll burn also may be deceptive.

Think twice about dramatic testimonials or before-and-after pictures from satisfied customers. These may not be typical. Celebrity endorsements don't necessarily mean the equipment is right for you, either.

Get the total cost of the product before you buy. Total cost includes sales tax, shipping and handling, delivery, and set-up fees. Get the details on warranties, guarantees, and return policies. Check out the company's customer service and support, too, in case you need replacement parts.

Source: Federal Trade Commission





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Coming To Terms With... Exercise

When you begin exercising you'll hear all kinds of talk about intensity level—light intensity, moderate intensity, and vigorous exercise. What does it all mean? Below you'll find examples of activities and how they rank.

Light-Intensity Activities

- Walking slowly
- Golf in a powered cart
- Gardening or pruning
- Dusting or vacuuming

Moderate-Intensity Activities

- Walking briskly
- Golf—pulling or carrying clubs
- Mowing the lawn with a power motor
- Bicycling on level terrain, or with a few hills

Vigorous-Intensity Activities

- Racewalking, jogging, or running
- Mowing the lawn with a hand mower
- Moving or pushing furniture
- Bicycling more than 10 mph, or on steep uphill terrain

Here's the key. You don't have to be a marathon runner to get health benefits from physical activity—in fact, you should begin exercising slowly and build your endurance.

The Surgeon General recommends that you engage in moderate level physical activity for 30 minutes on most days of the week, but some benefit can be derived from doing low intensity activities, too—you'll just have to do them for longer periods of time.

If you're doing low intensity activities, you'll need to do them for about an hour to get health benefits. Moderate level activities, about a half hour, and if you're engaged in vigorous activity, you'll only need to keep it up for about 20 minutes. Also, it's recommended that you check with your healthcare provider before beginning or increasing physical activity.

Working Out Is Right For You

Exercising is one of the most important steps you can take to leading a long and healthy life. Regular physical activity has been shown to reduce your risk for heart disease, help you control your weight, lower your cholesterol levels, improve your blood pressure, reduce stress and increase energy. But you have to exercise the right way to obtain these benefits.

The Surgeon General recommends that adults engage in "moderateintensity" physical activity for at least 30 minutes on five or more days of the week. For many people, the thought of exercising conjures up all sorts of negative ideas and images. But exercising doesn't have to be such a painful experience. Even small improvements in your physical activity will make a difference. Everyone can benefit from physical activity, regardless of age or fitness level. If you're getting ready to begin an exercise regimen, keep the following tips in mind to help you maximize your workout.

- **Talk to your healthcare provider.** If it's been a long time since you last got any physical activity, be sure to talk with your doctor about the best way to begin your exercise program.
- **Choose activities that are right for you.** Choosing an activity you like will help you stick with it.
- **Be comfortable.** Make sure your clothing and shoes encourage exercise, not hinder it.
- **Find a friend.** Having someone to exercise with is more fun than going it alone. It also increases the chances that you'll exercise more.
- **Don't overdo it.** If it's been a while, start with lighter intensity activities and build from there.



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