



Lab A3-8 *Home Exercise Equipment Checklist*

When shopping for home exercise equipment, you need to consider a variety of factors before making a final choice. The following checklist can help you critically evaluate different types and brands of equipment. Check the statements that are true.

- ___ I have tried out this equipment at a local gym or other location.
- ___ I enjoy using it.
- ___ I use it frequently.
- ___ It stands up to the intensity of my workouts.
- ___ It is easy for me to adjust and use.
- ___ It has no obvious design flaws (loose knobs or hanging straps, for example).
- ___ It is sturdy and does not tilt or wobble while in use.
- ___ It runs smoothly and quietly.
- ___ It fits my body type and skill level; I don't have to lift or stretch beyond my capacity in order to use it.
- ___ The upholstery and painted surfaces appear durable.
- ___ It does not have extra features that I don't need.
- ___ It fits into the space I have available.
- ___ I have considered consumer reviews of different brands in my choice of this type and brand of equipment.
- ___ It is within my price range.
- ___ I have done comparative price shopping and know that I am getting the best price I can on this particular piece of equipment.
- ___ It has a money-back guarantee or a free trial period.
- ___ It has a good written warranty.
- ___ The dealer or manufacturer provides home delivery and setup.
- ___ Service will be easy to obtain.

Other considerations (describe):

Refer to the additional guidelines on the following page.

(over)

LAB A3-8 (continued)

Treadmill

Why buy? You can walk, jog, or run on a treadmill. Walking stresses the joints least, but jogging and running will burn more calories per minute.

Choosing it. The treadmill surface can be hard. If you plan to run or jog, choosing a surface with more give is worth it. Look for an inclined, motorized track; walking briskly uphill can provide the same intensity as jogging. If you plan to run, look for at least 2 continuous-duty horsepower. If you plan only to walk, you can get by with a narrower and shorter treadmill belt, but it should still be at least 4 feet long; longer is better. Make sure the handrails will support your weight if you lose your balance. If you are short on space, choose a model with a folding deck.

Using it. Holding the handrails reduces the workout intensity, so keep your hands off the rails whenever possible once you have mastered the technique. When you are walking or running on a slant, maintain good posture with only a slight bend at the waist to protect your back.

Cross-Country Ski Machine

Why buy? The cross-country skiing action engages upper- and lower-body muscles more vigorously than any other exercise machine. This generally means that you will burn more calories per minute, especially if the front of the machine is raised to mimic uphill skiing. Also, impact forces to the body are low.

Choosing it. Buy a skier that allows separate adjustments for upper- and lower-body resistance.

Using it. Learning to coordinate the movements may take some time, but with practice you should be able to master the technique.

Stair-climber

Why buy? You can get an intense workout without exposing your lower body to severe impact forces.

Choosing it. Some models have linked pedals in which pressing down on one forces the other one up. Unlinked models provide a more natural rhythm.

Using it. Stepping height can range from about 2 to 18 inches. For the best workout, keep the pedals in midrange and don't let them touch the floor. Other tips:

- Stand upright to protect your back, and keep your knees over your feet.
- Keep your feet flat on the pedals to reduce stress on your Achilles tendon at the back of your ankle and heel.
- Hold the handrails lightly for balance; resting your weight on them reduces the intensity of your workout.

Stationary Cycle

Why buy? Exercise cycles provide fairly intense workouts with little stress to the knees and are relatively inexpensive.

Choosing it. Electronic brakes adjust pedal resistance automatically to keep the workload constant as pedaling speed changes. With mechanical brakes, the work rate increases as pedaling speed increases. Thus, you can make the workout harder by either adjusting a resistance knob or pedaling faster. Be sure that the adjustment knob is easily accessible.

Avoid cycles that add resistance with rubber pincers that grip the wheel because the result is often a jerky ride. Look for cycles that use either a friction belt or wind resistance.

Some models offer arm cranking, which combines arm and leg exercise. This burns more calories and causes less fatigue per calorie burned.

Using it. For highest efficiency:

- Position handlebars in a position that is comfortable for you.
- Set the seat height so that your knee is bent only slightly with the pedal at its lowest point.
- Use pedal clips, which allow your legs to pull as well as push the pedals.