

Best Elliptical Workouts

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Why You Need To Use The Elliptical Next Time You Work Out



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If you've ever stepped foot in a gym, you know what an elliptical machine is. Generally, they're posted up in the cardio section, next to or near the treadmills and stationary bikes. But have you ever stepped foot on one? And do you even know what they're good for? If you've been avoiding the elliptical because you don't know much about it, it's time you learned what this machine can do for your body.

An elliptical machine is a piece of equipment that allows the person using it to get a low-impact cardio workout. Each machine has resistance adjustments, too, so you can decide how much force you're working against and either increase or lower the resistance based on your fitness

level. And because the elliptical is low-impact, it's perfect for anyone with joint issues or an injury, explains Adam Rosante, celebrity trainer in New York City, and author of *Super Smoothie Revolution*. But there are two types of ellipticals.

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"The elliptical trainer is pretty standard in most gyms," explains Rosante. "It has stationary handlebars and foot pedals that glide in a motion that's sort of a cross between a stride and a pedal." The goal of this machine is to get the heart rate up while working lower body muscles like the quads, hamstrings, glutes, and calves as well.

"Then there's the elliptical cross-trainer, which has a set of moving handlebars that you push and pull while working the pedals simultaneously," says Rosante. "This incorporates the upper body in a push-pull movement pattern for a more dynamic, total body workout."

If you haven't used an elliptical before, it may take a couple minutes to get situated to the back and forth stride motion, while keeping your feet planted. But once you get it down, you're golden.

Benefits of the Elliptical

As with any piece of cardio equipment, the goal is to spike the heart rate. Why? Because when your heart rate rises, you can burn calories and fat. The elliptical machine is no different. "It raises your heart rate though a longer, steady state workout or a series of fast-paced intervals, which will help you burn fat," explains Rosante.

The elliptical also provides a full body workout, not only raising the heart rate, but also working the lower body as you stride, and if you're on an elliptical cross-trainer, your upper body is activated as well with every push and pull motion of the handle bars.

"The elliptical gets a lot of flack, but I always say one of the best things you can do for your body is something you're not already doing," says Rosante. "So if you never use the elliptical, give it a shot. Variety is the spice of fitness."

Elliptical Workouts

Interested in giving the elliptical a try? Chances are you're not exactly sure what to do once you hop on so we asked Rosante for two workouts—one that's high intensity interval training and one that's a hear-rate based workout—as a jumping off point.

Workout #1: 13-minute HIIT

Minutes: 0-3

Pace: Moderate jog

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Minutes: 3-4

Pace: As fast as possible

—

Minutes: 4-4:30

Pace: Moderate jog

—

Minutes 4:30-5:30

Pace: As fast as possible

—

Minutes 5:30-6:00

Pace: Moderate jog

—

Minutes 6:00-7:00

Pace: As fast as possible

—

Minutes: 7:00-7:30

Pace: Moderate jog

—

Minutes 7:30-8:30

Pace: As fast as possible

—

Minutes 8:30-9:00

Pace: Moderate jog

—

Minutes 9:00-10:00

Pace: As fast as possible

—

Minutes 10:00-13:00

Pace: Moderate jog, tapering off to a stop

Workout #2: Heart Rate Zone Workout

“This one requires some very simple math, but turns your workout into a fun game,” says Rosante.

1. Determine your heart rate max (this is the maximum number of times your heart should beat in a single minute)

—Subtract your age from 220

*Example for a 30 year old: $220 - 30 = 190$

2. Determine your working heart rate zone

For this workout, you'll be working at 75-85% of your heart rate max.

Multiply your heart rate max by 75% and then 85%.

*Example for that 30 year old.

$190 \times .75 = 142.5$ (75% of your max HR)

$190 \times .85 = 161.5$ (85% of your max HR)

Your zone: 142.5 - 161.5 beats per minute

Note: During this workout, you'll keep your heart rate between 142 and 161 beats per minute.

3. Start the workout

Wearing a heart rate monitor, like the TomTom Spark 3, step on the elliptical and get moving. Once your heart rate reaches 142, the workout begins.

Press start on a timer and keep your heart rate between 142 and 161 for 20-minutes. Don't let it get any higher or lower.

Finish up with a total body stretch.

We Recommend

TomTom Spark 3 Cardio + Music GPS Tracker + Heart Monitor

□ Let's just start with the fact that the TomTom Spark 3 tracks time, distance, speed, sleep and

calories burned including heart rate info that records 24/7 and a multisport mode suitable for running, swimming or a gym workout. Then there's the fact that you can play up to 500 songs from playlists you create and store from your watch to your headphones via Bluetooth and, if you want, receive audio feedback on your workout.

[\\$137.99 at Amazon.com](#)

Required Reading

[Here's What You Need To Know Before You Pony Up For A Treadmill](#)

[Have A Seat For This Heart-Pumping Rowing Workout](#)

[The Best Rowing Machines For Your Home](#)

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