

Tips on Selecting Exercise Equipment for Home Use

General guidelines to help you

- Think about what exercise you enjoy most. For example, would you rather walk or bike?
- Keep in mind that “you get what you pay for.” The less expensive models may not have what you want. On the other hand, the “top of the line” models may have frills you don’t need.
- Put equipment in a cheerful place, maybe near the TV or music – not in a dark basement where it may only collect dust.
- Think about how much room you have for it. For example, if a treadmill won’t fit in the space you have, would a portable stationary bike suit your needs?
- A good warranty is worth the money. Check with the dealer – what is covered under warranty? Ask about guarantees to replace any faulty parts. Ask if any parts are expected to wear out under normal use.
- Check Consumer Reports or talk to others who own exercise equipment.
- Ask about assembly. Do you have to pay extra for assembly and delivery? If you have to put it together yourself, find a dealer who will check it over once it’s assembled.
- Look for a dealer who has stock replacement parts available. Will the service person come to your home? Or do you have to bring in the equipment for service?
- Make sure the equipment is stable. If you buy a treadmill, look for one with an automatic emergency shut-off.
- **Try before you buy.** If you buy the same piece of equipment you work on already, great. But, if you don’t, try out the equipment for more than one minute. This way, you get a good idea of how comfortable it is and whether you’ll enjoy doing it over the long-term.

Types of equipment

Here are just a few things to look for as you shop for equipment. Watch the ads for sales, and ask questions. **Remember that we are here to help.** We’ll be glad to help you decide what would work best for you.

- **Treadmill**
 - Electric is easier than manual
 - At least 1.5 horsepower (2.0 to 2.5 is best)
 - At least one safety rail
- **Stationary bike**
 - Comfortable, adjustable seat
 - Adjustable handlebars, pedal straps
 - Resistance easily adjustable, controls easy to reach
- **Elliptical machine**
 - Comfortable pedals and handles
 - Stride length and path that feels natural and comfortable to you
- **Weight training equipment**
 - Can range from small hand-held weights to a multi-station exercise machine
 - Almost all types help improve muscle strength and endurance
 - Biggest concerns should be safety and cost
- **Exercise video**
 - Think about exercise goals
 - Check length and intensity of workout
 - Try out video from rental store first
- **Pulse monitor**
 - Chest belt type is more accurate than finger or ear clips
 - Try before you buy