



Buying Exercise Equipment

Exercise equipment is great to use when the weather is too cold or too hot. Before buying the equipment ask yourself the following questions:

- What is my current fitness level now?
- What is my goal?
- Is the item safe for me to use?
- How much do I want to spend?
- Does the item have a warranty?
- How does this item compare to other equipment?

Talk to your diabetes team to help answer these questions.

Below is a list of various types of exercise equipment and information about what you should consider before buying.

Treadmills

Price:

Treadmills vary in price. The difference in price is based on durability the extra features included (e.g., computer programming, hear rate monitors, etc.). The durability and construction of the treadmill is most important.



Motor:

It is important that the treadmill you purchase has a motor. Do not buy a manual treadmill. Manual treadmills make you drive the belt forward. The motor on the treadmill should be at least a 1.5 horse power motor. Turn on the motor of the treadmill and listen to much noise and vibration it makes. This will be important for you when you are listening to music or the TV while exercising!

Belt Widths and Lengths:

The width of the belt is important for safety and comfort. Usually the width ranges from 17" to 22" and the lengths from 45" to 60".

Emergency Shut Off:

The treadmill you choose should have an emergency shut off. This allows the treadmill to shut off if you fall.

Computer Feedback and Control Panel:

The control panel of the treadmill should display speed, distance and time. Pre-programmed workouts may be an option that most treadmills have. They are not necessary.

Heart Rate Monitors:

Some treadmills have contact heart rate monitors. You hold on to a hand-rail and the treadmill reads your heart rate and displays it on the control panel. It is not as accurate as taking it on your own or through the use of a transmitter type heart rate monitor.

Stationary Bikes

Price:

Prices ranges for stationary bikes depend on how many features are included.



Bike Styles:

Choose a bike style best for you. This will depend on your comfort and any joint/muscle problems you have.

Upright Style: set up and look is very similar to traditional outdoor bikes.

Recumbent Style: these bikes have a wider chair/seat with a back support and the pedals are out in front of you unlike the upright bike where the pedals are below you. This style of bike is becoming more popular as the comfort of the seat is greater.

Control Panel Features:

You should be able to determine 1) the speed at which you are pedaling (revolutions per minute (RPM), kilometers per hour (KMPH) or miles per hour (MPH)), 2) the distance covered, 3) the time of cycling, and 4) what level/tension you are working at.

Other important features:

- Foot straps
- Adjustable seat height so when seated, there is a 15 degree bend in your knee on extension
- Seat tilt

Elliptical Machines

This machine is a great alternative for those wishing to have a non-impact aerobic work-out. It mimics walking or running and offers the option of incorporating the use of arm work as well.

Style:

It is important to try out the machine before buying. The size of machines and comfort can be different from each other. Some elliptical machines offer forward movement as well as backward movement.



Control Panel Features:

You should be able to determine 1) the speed at which you are moving (revolutions per minute (RPM), kilometers per hour (KMPH) or miles per hour (MPH)), 2) the distance covered, 3) time of exercise, and 4) the level of intensity at which you are working.

Resistance Training Equipment

There is a variety of equipment for resistance training. The following options can be purchased:

- **Dumbbell weights** or “free weights” are common pieces of equipment to use for resistance training. They can be purchased in different materials, including rubber, cast iron or plastic. They can also be purchased as a fixed or adjustable weight.



- **Resistance training machines** are the pieces of equipment usually found in a gym. They incorporate a weight stack and pulley system that gives you resistance against a fixed movement. These machines can be purchased for home use as well.



- **Exercise bands** can be used for resistance training and may be a good choice if you do not have a lot of room to store equipment. If you need to, you can travel easily with this equipment. Each band colour equals a certain amount of resistance. The lighter the colour, the less resistance on the band. The darker the colour, the more resistance there is on the band.



Heart Rate Monitors

Monitoring your heart rate during exercise is important to make sure you are working at a safe intensity. Manually checking your heart rate is usually done by feeling your pulse on your wrist or neck and counting the beats you feel over 10 seconds. Sometimes this can be challenging. A heart rate monitor may be used instead. A belt with a transmitter is worn around your chest and sends the information to a watch that you wear on your wrist. You simply glance at your watch during your workout to know your heart rate. These monitors are very accurate. If you have an arrhythmia (irregular heart rhythms), it may not be accurate. Speak to your diabetes team before purchasing one.