

Treadmills-“Shop Smart”

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Whether you're a runner or a walker you know that when the weather is inclement these activities are done indoors, and there is no wonder that treadmills are the aerobic-exercise machines of choice. If you are thinking of buying a treadmill, here are a few helpful hints in choosing the right treadmill. Before you buy any treadmill, take it for a test run and check for attributes below:

- ✓ A thick deck: a deck that's at least 3/4 inch thick will stand up the best to the impact of running.
- ✓ Wide foot rails: make sure you can stand on them comfortably while you start up the treadmill and that they're not tilted or wobbly.
- ✓ Well designed handrails: they should be close enough to reach, but they should not get in the way of your swinging arms.
- ✓ Motor housing: should be out of kicking range as you walk or run on the treadmill.
- ✓ Easy to use controls: should be labeled so you can figure them out. Can you reach them easily? Speed and incline should be easy to set.
- ✓ Stability: be sure treadmill doesn't wobble or creep across floor.
- ✓ Date display: the easiest to use displays show important data (speed and incline) as soon as you adjust controls, rather than showing one piece of information at a time.
- ✓ Useful programs: if you plan to use preset programs, see if you can easily set the desired program. Check how the display monitors your progress through the program.
- ✓ Pulse monitor: it can help keep your workout at an appropriate level. Those with sensors that wrap around your chest are the most accurate.
- ✓ Large belt: look for a belt that's at least 17 inches wide and 51 inches long.
Warranty: it should cover labor, frame, deck, motor, and other parts for 2 years or more.

Now that you have some ideas on how to choose a treadmill, you will be able to continue your activity indoors throughout the year and out of the inclement weather. You should always consult your physician before beginning an aggressive exercise program.