

A QUICK LESSON IN PURCHASING AN ELLIPTICAL

Ellipticals are the hottest piece of equipment on the market today. Sales continue to rise and ellipticals are catching up in sales to treadmills. Having been involved in elliptical sales from the start I've watched the products become much more dependable and user friendly in recent years. In the next several paragraphs I will present you with questions that I have been asking my customers when they are looking at purchasing a new piece of exercise equipment.

Most customers either experience an elliptical at a fitness center or a friend that already has one. Reasons for liking an elliptical are: good range of motion, doesn't stress the body like some other types of equipment and a good workout in a short amount of time. Although those are all good reasons the most important quality of an elliptical is the "good range of motion."

ALL BRANDS OF ELLIPTICALS REGARDLESS OF PRICE HAVE DIFFERENT RANGE OF MOTIONS.

Or in other words, finding the right elliptical can be very hard. Let's take a closer look at "range of motion." An elliptical has a designated path that it travels every revolution. This path is an ellipse (hence the name). However, depending on the manufacturer the path may be round, flat, upright or adjustable. Some have you running on your toes, on your arches and some have adjustable pedal angles. The travel of the moving uprights (what your hands grasp too) also can have a long or short travel and hand grips that curve in or curve out. Think about walking on a flat surface for a minute. You can take a short stride, long stride, you can swing your arms a little, a lot or not at all. You have total control over the way you walk. **With an elliptical, you have very little control over the path you will travel.** That is why before you look at Ipod compatibility, heart rate control, programs, or LCD TV screens you need to first find a brand or model of elliptical that matches the way your body likes to move.

So my first words of advice are **NEVER BUY AN ELLIPTICAL MAIL ORDER AND NEVER BUY AN ELLIPTICAL WITHOUT FIRST TRYING IT OUT.** I have probably frustrated a few customers when they call and tell me they want my cheapest, or most popular or my best elliptical

and I reply with a 2-3 minute explanation of why neither cheapest, best or most popular has anything to do with which elliptical is best for them. I won't sell a customer an elliptical unless they try out three or more models on the floor. If you're just buying an elliptical to hang your clothes on that you want to wear the next morning than that's different and you can buy any model you want but seriously though, you need to try out ellipticals before you purchase. They're not treadmills, they're not bicycles or recumbent bikes that always pedal circles. When you try them out you will feel the difference between the models and brands and it will help you decide which model is right for you.

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN HUSBAND AND WIFE WANT TO BUY AN ELLIPTICAL?

Normally I would run for cover but I think you can see where I'm going with the above question. If there is more than 5-6 inches in height difference between partners there is a good chance you won't both like the same elliptical. In general, shorter individuals usually like a more upright motion and taller people usually like a more flat, elongated travel motion. The best compromise is an elliptical that has an adjustable stride, or adjustable ramps and or adjustable foot pedals. This will allow all users to customize the path to their body type.

The next questions to consider are how often are you going to use it both in hours per week and months per year. What other forms of exercise do you participate in and what if any other pieces of fitness equipment do you already have and use. You need to pick an elliptical in the price range that matches your overall usage so that you get many years of service with very little maintenance or repair. Having sold fitness equipment for over 20 years let me tell you a little bit about the development of the treadmill over the last ten years and then how the elliptical has matured since its introduction.

Treadmills when they were first introduced worked great and then quickly developed electrical problems between the motor, motor control board and the upper console. Physically, the belt, deck and frame had no issues but it was always the electronics because when you walk or run on a treadmill you cause a constant vibration that would crack the computer boards that provide power and control to the treadmill. Over time the electronics have been designed to withstand this vibration and we rarely see problems with properly built treadmills today.

Ellipticals are the new equipment on the block and they are the complete opposite of the evolution of the treadmill. There is no vibration because your feet never leave the pedals and the electronics rarely fail on ellipticals. But what does fail on inferior made ellipticals or ellipticals that weren't designed to be used by entire families on an every day basis are the arms, pedals and connecting linkages that make up the range of motion. Simply put, ellipticals that don't match your range of motion or your weight or the total hours of usage can develop noise and or break down because they bear your entire weight for every revolution they make.

Ellipticals have made huge improvements over the past four years but you need to match the quality with the amount of use or you will be looking to purchase a new one in a short amount of time.

Finally you need to ask questions about warranty and service. Many inexpensive ellipticals have a 90 day warranty. Most all of our ellipticals have a lifetime on the electronic brake, 5 to 10 years on parts and a one year labor warranty. At our store we deliver, install and explain all the features of any exercise equipment you purchase from us. We show you the maintenance that you will need to perform and we come to your house if you have a problem, you don't have to bring it back in to us for repairs.

I hope you found this article useful and that some of your questions were answered. There are many brands and models to choose from so take your time to find the model that meets your needs best.

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