

"Exercise Machines Suck"

By Jason Zaretsky

Discover The 5 Reasons Why Exercise Machines Are A Waste Of Time

In today's day and age we live in a technology dependant society. Almost everything we do revolves around some kind of mechanical or electrical device. This includes what just about everyone looks for in a gym. If you're like most, when you walk into a fitness center, you usually look for the amount of equipment or how many resistance training machines there are on the exercise floor. "Is there a machine for my chest, back legs, arms etc..." This has been the biggest indicator when clarifying a gym's effectiveness. Well, being that our population's obesity epidemic is spreading world wide, and fitness levels have dramatically declined in the past twenty five years or so, I think it's time to re-evaluate and determine what went wrong.

It has been during the past twenty five to thirty years when our obesity problem really started to take off. And due to the fact that our society has always been in search for the 'quick fix', exercise really started to take off as well. Since exercise was "in", and we desire the "magic solution, resistance training machine companies are heavily marketing their equipment. I hate to break it to you, but when it comes to getting healthy and more physically fit, nothing will yield better results than hard work, dedication, and motivation; not gimmicks or machines. Machines actually are an inferior method of exercise.

It's time to go back to our roots and look like we did hundreds of years ago. When you think about it, humans have always done some form of activity, and we have always been obsessed with strength and physique. So my question to you is did we have machines hundreds of years ago? My next question is as a whole, who looked better as a population, us now or mankind hundreds of years ago?

Now I'm not saying exercise machines are useless, everything has its place, but I can come up with a couple of dozen reasons why exercise machines are not optimally efficient. Instead of boring you anymore than I already have I'll provide you with my top five.

Here we go:

1.) Exercise machines are NOT an optimal form of exercise for most. Exercise machines are great for isolating specific muscles (i.e. – the standard leg extension machine for the quads), but because exercise machines are anchored to the ground, your stabilizer muscles (muscle that surround your joints and protect them from injury), do NOT get developed. Exercise machines do not allow you to stabilize the weight you are lifting in three dimensions and since daily activities such as work and athletics do require you to use these important muscles (the stabilizers), exercise machines are an inferior method of

exercise

2.) Exercise machines are NOT ideal to improve posture. Over the years in the fitness industry, I have seen an incredible amount of people that have poor posture. This includes forward head, rounded shoulders, flat lower backs, and other misalignment in spinal curvature. This is due to the lack of strength in postural muscles, making it hard to fight gravity, and since gravity is almost impossible to escape, those who can't fight gravity efficiently will almost always have poor posture. By performing exercise on machines your body does not have to fight gravity, and on most traditional gym equipment your body doesn't have to stabilize itself. However, by performing exercise in a prone, upright, or supine position, you can engage and load postural muscles to help with fight gravity, resulting in better posture.

3.) Exercise machines are just flat out BORING! I can remember a couple of years ago when I worked at a large health club filled with fancy ground based machines, I would sit and watch people go through their work outs. One day I saw a gentleman working on the chest press machine. It was hilarious. He actually appeared to be falling asleep. I mean yawn after yawn during repetitions. I think if the guy was on a lying leg press he may have actually dozed off.

Now let's analyze that situation. If he were on a flat bench performing dumbbell chest presses, do you think he would have been in that state of mind? Only if he wanted a nose job by dropping the dumbbells on his face. I have in the past and still do observe exercisers on the free weight floor. What I see is always a look of determination, motivation, and enthusiasm. My point here is that by participating in a free weight, non-machine based program, it not only forces you to concentrate and work harder, but it's more fun, and the feeling of accomplishment is far superior than just going through the motions on exercise machines.

4.) Exercise machines CANNOT improve balance or stability. As I stated earlier, ground based exercise machines DO NOT require the use of your stabilizer muscles. These muscles not only protect your joints, but they also are responsible for your ability to stabilize and balance. Instead, try to incorporate some non-traditional methods of exercise like the use of a stability ball, or balancing on one leg, or doing some low level plyometrics. These types of exercises are extremely beneficial to increasing balance, stability, and agility. No machine can give you any of these qualities by itself.

5.) You can mimic any exercise machine exercise without the machine and get the same benefits plus a lot more. Every exercise machine that is on the market today has been developed based on movements that the human body does naturally. With that being said, you can perform any exercise machine exercise without the use of an actual exercise machine. The chest press machine is essentially a bench press, the leg press machine is a squatting motion, the rowing machine (you know the one for your back muscles) can be done with free weights, and the list goes on and on. But the catch is that when you do these movements with body weight or free weights you get all the same benefits plus the development of balance, stability, and definitely more calories burned. Let's not forget

that when you perform body weight or free weight based movements, you will always engage you core muscles.

I don't know about you, but if I have my choice I'm sure you can guess what it is. That's right good old fashioned body weight, free weight, or other non – machine based movements. Now, it's important to realize that I'm not saying that exercise machines are useless, but would you rather work out for hours at a time with boring exercise equipment, or would you like to get more bang for your buck by getting more out of one exercise like a squat, some form of a press, a rowing motion, a lunging motion, or even a twisting, or bending motion? Instead of using one to two dozen boring exercise machines all you have to do is have fun while incorporating the six movements I just mentioned and you'll be well on your way to achieving your fitness goals more efficiently and faster than ever before.

About the Author

Jason Zaretsky is Owner and Program Director of Optimal Performance Training Center. He specializes in athletic performance enhancement, physique alteration (weight/fat loss), and corrective exercise. Jason is committed to optimizing your results as he has helped a countless number of individuals and athletes reach their fitness and training goals by improving functional movement and through scientific results oriented programming.

Jason is certified through the NSCA as a certified strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS), The CHEK Institute as a Corrective High Performance Exercise Kinesiology Exercise Coach, and through the NASM as a Certified Personal Trainer (CPT), as well as a Performance Enhancement Fitness Specialist (PES).