

EFFECTIVE ELLIPTICAL WORKOUT

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Whether you're just beginning a workout program, or are already relatively fit, the elliptical trainer can help improve both your cardio fitness and muscle tone. Because it is non-impact, it is a good choice for runners who want a low-impact alternative for cross-training or recovering from an injury, and the resistance element makes it useful for athletes in other sports who want a total body workout. As with any machine, get advice from a gym staff member if you have any questions.

BASE BUILDING

If you are new to exercise, or need to rebuild your fitness after an injury or illness, a simple 30-minute elliptical training session can get you on track, according to "The Men's Health Hard Body Plan." You should start at a resistance level and pace you feel comfortable with and warm up for three to five minutes, then gradually increase the resistance and/or pace till you are working at about two-thirds of your capacity. Do this for around 20 minutes and follow with a cool-down.

FAT-BURNING

Elliptical trainer manufacturer Precor recommends the following workout to boost your body's fat-burning capacity in just 20 minutes. Begin with a three-minute warm-up, then increase your strides to around 130 per minute, aiming to work at 65-75 percent of your maximum target heart rate -- which you calculate by subtracting your age from 220. Maintain this pace, doing five minutes on a low incline to work your quads and calves, five minutes on a medium-high incline to tone your buttocks, and five minutes on medium to work your hamstrings and quads. Finish with a three-minute cool-down.

CARDIO

Take your fitness to the next level with a 40-minute cardio workout, developed by Precor. In this workout you do a three-minute warm up, then alternate five minutes at 65-75 percent of your maximum target heart rate with five minutes at 75-85 percent to push your heart and lungs into high gear. Repeat each interval four times, then conclude with a cool-down.

ENDURANCE

This 60-minute workout takes you through a series of changes in speed and resistance, to give you a complete cardio and muscle-toning workout. Begin with a five-minute warm-up, then increase your speed for a five-minute interval. Next increase the resistance till you are almost breathless, and maintain for five minutes, followed by a three-minute recovery interval. Continue alternating five minutes of high intensity with three minutes of recovery up to the 40-minute point. Then add two five-minute segments of reverse peddling to challenge your muscles, separated by a recovery period. End with a gradual, seven-minute cool down.

REFERENCES

- "The Men's Health Hard Body Plan"; Larry Keller; 2000
- Precor: "Beginner Level Fat Burning and Aerobic Base 1 Building - Elliptical Trainer"; 2010
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- "Morning Cardio Workouts"; June Kahn; 2006

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