

# Burn Fat Faster

## Next time you race off to the gym, use these secrets for maximum effect

By: David Schipper

### More for Your Money

We asked the experts what they see people doing wrong on the leading machines and found out how we can squeeze more out of our time on them. Follow their suggestions and you'll burn more fat than the sweat-spraying cardio crazies with the blurry legs and burning lungs . . . and still have time for a smoothie afterward. (Editor's Note: Before you buy the smoothie, you should checkout the cuddly fat at [My Pet Fat.](#))



### Rowing Machine

#### YOUR FORM

**The mistake:** Your hands bump your knees, and "everything gets jumbled," says Mike Irwin, University of Pennsylvania lightweight varsity crew coach.

**The fix:** Think of the stroke as a dance, counting 1-2-3 and 3-2-1. On 1, push with your legs; on 2, "swing up" your body by leaning back; on 3, draw your arms to the bottom of your rib cage, spinning the flywheel. Then reverse it: 3, extend your arms; 2, swing your body forward from the hips; 1, bring your legs up after the handle passes your knees. "It should be a fluid motion when you tie it all together," says Irwin.

#### YOUR WORKOUT

**The mistake:** A long, steady slog. "You probably won't be able to maintain your power and form for the entire workout," Irwin says.

**The fix:** With medium resistance, do four to six 10-minute sets of rowing with 2 to 3 minutes of rest in between. "Your heart rate won't come all the way down, but you'll be able to regroup and start fresh," says Irwin.

### Treadmill

#### YOUR FORM

**The mistake:** Too much up and down and not enough levelheadedness, says Zack Barksdale, an exercise physiologist at the Cooper Aerobics Center in Dallas. You'll tire out your joints--and yourself--too soon.

**The fix:** Improve flexibility to smooth out your stride. Try leg swings--hold the handlebar, stand on one leg, and swing the other back and forth, keeping your upper body still. "It will loosen and warm you up, making your legs more pliable," says Barksdale.

#### YOUR WORKOUT

**The mistake:** Too many long, steady, flat runs.

**The fix:** Run shorter and harder, mixing speeds and inclines. You'll fatigue your muscles and your energy source more quickly, leading to more efficient fat burning throughout the day. Start with a 2 percent incline, and over several sessions work up to 10 percent. (Just walk at this point.) The more intense the workout, the shorter it can be.

### Stationary Bike

#### YOUR FORM

**The mistake:** The seat is too low or too high. "It fatigues the legs a lot more if the seat is too low," says Brian Holdsworth, director of fitness at the Healthplex Sports Club in Indianapolis. A very low seat also adds stress on the knees. Set it too high and your hips rock from side to side, which is uncomfortable and inefficient, and makes you look funny.

**The fix:** Adjust the seat, people! Sit on the seat and place your heel in the middle of the pedal, where the ball of your foot would normally go. You want your leg fully extended, straight down, at the lowest point of the pedal rotation. "When you move your foot to the correct position on the pedal, you'll have the right amount of bend," Holdsworth says.

#### YOUR WORKOUT

**The mistake:** Cruising instead of charging.

**The fix:** Vary the intensity, with 2 to 3 minutes of high-cadence pedaling and a 3-minute recovery, then repeat for 15 minutes. Stand occasionally. "Standing requires more muscle not only to push the pedals, but also to support and balance your body," says Joe Friel, author of *The Cyclist's Training Bible*.

### Elliptical Trainer

#### YOUR FORM

**The mistake:** Too little resistance. "Some people go so fast that it's almost momentum working for them as opposed to their having to propel the step," says Holdsworth.

**The fix:** Set the resistance correctly. Gliding isn't good. "When you make a revolution, you want to feel you're pushing the ramp down," says Holdsworth. "Have weight there rather than flipping around freely." As your balance improves, keep your hands at your sides; you'll recruit core muscles to keep yourself stable.

#### YOUR WORKOUT

**The mistake:** Falling into boring ruts.

**The fix:** Do intervals. "You'll be able to reach a higher intensity for a sustained period of time," says Holdsworth. Try 90-second blasts every few minutes, with recoveries twice as long. "As your fitness level increases, reduce the recovery time," says Holdsworth.

### **Stairclimber**

#### **YOUR FORM**

**The mistake:** "People hold themselves up with their arms," says Holdsworth. Never put your arms straight down on the railing and lock your elbows. That's like using crutches.

**The fix:** Rest your hands on the bars only for balance. "The ideal movement is with your body upright, with just a slight lean forward," says Holdsworth, "as if you were leaning to walk up a flight of stairs but not bending over."

#### **YOUR WORKOUT**

**The mistake:** Too little resistance.

**The fix:** Go slower, with challenging resistance. "It'll make you work harder, your heart rate will be higher and faster, and you'll be able to maintain your time in the training zone longer," says Holdsworth. Result: You'll burn more fat.