

WORKOUT GADGETS

Exercise module

Fitness Trackers

Nearly everyone eats less, works out more and spends less money when they are monitoring what they're doing. This is where the fitness trackers and wearable devices can be a big help. Consider getting a tracker that you can wear on your wrist or waist band. Not only do they track how many steps you walk in a day, but they can also track how much you sleep and whether it was restful. Some have integrated HR*, some are water resistant and some will even upload your results to your insurance company. Look around, ask around and find out which ones suit you best.

* HR = Heart Rate. For more information on monitoring your heart rate, consult with your provider or ask them for the Exercise Module entitled *Determining Your Heart Rate*.

Physioball

Who doesn't like to play around on a colorful, large rubber bouncy ball? They are useful for helping you with balance, coordination and can also promote proper form when doing core exercises, sitting at a desk or when used as a bench when doing dumbbell exercises. If you're under 5'6", get the 55 cm size. If you're over 6 feet, get the 75 cm size. If you're between, use the 65 cm size.

Headphones

These can help block out music you don't care for or let you listen to music you enjoy. Some people even use ones with a microphone to talk on the phone while working out. A couple words of caution. Don't pump up the volume. If your neighbor on the bike next to you can hear your music, it's too loud and likely causing damage to the delicate parts of your ear. Be mindful of what you're doing while working out. It's one thing to be parked on an indoor exercise bike while taking a phone call. It's entirely something else if you're trying to talk while lifting weights or listening to your headphones while running or biking in traffic. Leave them at home and instead tune into your surroundings. It could save your life.

Reflective Gear

If you're working out in the early morning, at dusk or at night, be seen. There are many hats, shirts, pants, vests and shoes that have reflective material sewn in. There are also lots of blinky, flashing and strobe lights that clip onto you to improve your visibility. Check out the Internet for reviews to see which ones get the job done best.

HR Monitors

Electronic gadgets keep getting smarter and smaller. Look for HR straps with integrated Bluetooth that will pair with your smartphone or tablet. Some even pair with the cardio equipment you're on. You can find apps for your smartphone that track, record and analyze your HR data. Some even look at your HR variability to let you track your levels of stress or if you're becoming over trained.

If it Sounds too Good to be True...

It probably is. Be aware of late night infomercials promising quick results with little effort. Always check out products, programs or claims with the Better Business Bureau, Consumer Reports, Yelp or just do a Google search to see what others are saying.