

## The Crosstrainer/Elliptical Machine is Useless for Fat Loss

If you are using an elliptical-type machine for intervals, then I believe that you are not getting the results you deserve. In my opinion, the elliptical machines are one of the least effective methods for losing fat - just as bad as spinning classes (which I'll cover in a future newsletter). Now you might know someone that uses the elliptical all the time and is lean. But I will bet that they can thank their genetics, their strength training, and their nutrition for their results. I have yet to see someone transform their physique with the elliptical trainer. In fact, when someone comes to me with a failing program, I often see them using the elliptical for their interval training. And that's the first thing I change. The elliptical machine is sneaky, and it fools us three ways. First, you can get your heart rate up really high and easily. Second, you can get a big sweat on. And third, the machine tells you that you have burned an awful lot of calories (even though the calorie counter is likely inaccurate, as was shown on a CBS news report). So why doesn't the elliptical work? Because you just don't do as much mechanical work as you do when you run or cycle. Basically, it's just easier and less effective. Getting your heart rate up is not the key determinant of fat loss. Your body is a well-programmed machine. It's 'wired' to increase heart rate and breathing as soon as it senses motion (that's why you start to breathe heavily after taking a single flight of stairs - it's not just because you are unfit). The key factor in fat loss is the amount of work done. Until you learn to separate the influence of the two, you won't be using intervals in the best possible manner. As fat loss expert Alwyn Cosgrove explains, "The problem is not the elliptical itself -- it's just that it tends to allow/promote momentum (as most people have the resistance too low) from bodyweight alone. So unless you crank up the resistance and actually produce some force and/or MOVE your bodyweight - it's nothing but momentum. So if you're not actively using your muscles to produce some sort of force you aren't burning many calories." But even then, I still don't think using a high resistance level on the elliptical will get you the results you are looking for. Yet despite their ineffectiveness, elliptical machines and the like remain a popular training method. But that's only due to the human condition - like flowing water, we seek the path of least resistance. We'll do anything to get around obstacles rather than doing the real work required to overcome the obstacles. Given the choice, humans always go with the easiest option. Compare the elliptical to the Stairmaster. Stairmasters are more effective but less popular. Why? Because we've found something easier (the elliptical) that still gives us the comfort of a sweat and an elevated heart rate (even if we don't get the results). And now millions of gym goers pat themselves on the back after flailing around on the elliptical for 30 minutes and thinking they've been shedding fat. Training in your comfort zone is useless. Your metabolic rate will increase when your body is forced to change. The harder and smarter you train, the greater your increase in metabolic rate. That is why you have to do things the right way (the TT way!), to lose fat. As I've always said with Turbulence Training, the key to getting results is making your body change. That means using training techniques that demand your body to change. The elliptical will not cause your body to change. It is a waste of time. So what works better? If you have my TT Reports, you know I recommend the stationary bike. It's safe, effective, and convenient. You can work at a very high power output, and that is no illusion. You are doing the work (as long as you are not spinning at a very high RPM - that is another waste of time!). Of course, you can also use sprinting. But that has a few more risks to it, whether it is done on a treadmill (risk: falling) or outside (risk: muscle pulls - so prepare appropriately). Some other manly fat loss interval options are sled pulling, Farmer Walks (see photo), pushing heavy objects, wheelbarrow carries, and complexes. I'll talk more about the exciting fat-shedding potential of lifting complexes in my future reports.

## About the Author

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