

TREADMILL REVIEW  
Machines That'll Move You

WINTER GEAR  
Running Snowshoes

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# Winter Gear

Treadmills and Snowshoes to keep you active in the cold

These treadmills are  
no run-of-the-mill  
machines

# Home Runs

By Gus Alexandropoulos



Although many runners continue training outside during the tough Canadian winters, some simply resign themselves to less-frequent workouts and the inevitable reduced fitness. This season, rather than losing those hard-earned summer miles or delaying that early spring race, consider training indoors on a treadmill. When combined with a positive attitude and a proper training program, modern treadmills are an effective tool for maintaining and even improving fitness during the winter months.

Here are a few buying and set-up tips for a more effective and enjoyable indoor running experience.

## Commercial or Residential Units

Most manufacturers build treadmills for health clubs as well as home use. Although they are more expensive, the commercial units deliver excellent durability under continuous use. Unfortunately, the price for these units is too high for most runners. Luckily, many high-quality residential units are good enough for serious home training.

## Motors

The treadmill motor drives the belt and the incline mechanism. Larger, durable motors cost more but are necessary for driving longer belts at higher speeds. A 2-horsepower motor is the minimum for serious training while the larger 2.5- and 3-horsepower motors ensure consistent long-term performance. Speak to a salesperson and confirm the motor power matches your training speed.



**TR32**  
**SportsArt \$3,800**

With a 3.2-horsepower motor, built-in cooling fan and information-rich console, the TR32 delivers solid performance for serious indoor training. The unique ACS cushioning system is manually adjustable, allowing runners of different weights and strides to customize their cushioning experience. The impact reduction is significant, without any of the “running in sand” feeling some complain about with some other systems. A solid and durable design.



**T9600 Deluxe**  
**Vision \$2,900**

Vision builds treadmills with the option of buying each model in three different feature configurations: Simple, Deluxe and Premier. The three models reflect the complexity of the console features, allowing runners the option of buying the same quality treadmill at a lower price if they forego computerized bells and whistles. The durable 3-horsepower motor pumps out plenty of speed, while the orthopedic belt and eight variable-durometer elastomers reduce impact.



**PS 300 Treadmill**  
**True \$3,200**

There is no doubt that True builds great treadmills. The PS 300, with its commercial-grade construction, reaffirms this fact. The materials are solid and well chosen, and the 60-inch track is long enough for the tallest runners. The PS 300 comes with a unique orthopedic belt and Soft System suspension for low-impact running. A well-laid-out console provides useful feedback, including a Cruise Control setting that maintains a desired heart rate by automatically adjusting the treadmill’s speed and elevation.

## Belt Cushioning

All treadmills have a cushioned running belt to reduce impact on muscles and joints. Some manufacturers use more cushioning, however, resulting in a bouncy ride for certain runners. Try out the treadmill at the showroom before buying.

## Features

Conveniences available on treadmills include heart rate monitors, radios, fans, pre-programmed workouts and even flat-screen TVs. If you don't need them, you can save money by buying a functionally similar model without the add-ons.

## Incline

Competitive runners will prefer treadmills with a greater amount of incline for more realistic hill workouts.

## Belt Size

Longer and wider belts provide a larger running surface ideal for faster training, or for runners who want to have more lateral space. The drawback of these larger belts is an increased “footprint” floor size, higher cost and the need for larger motors to drive the belt.

## Size

Most treadmills require a substantial amount of floor space – think medium-sized couch. Measure the area for the treadmill and compare it to the actual unit before buying.

## Controls

Make sure all the controls are easily accessible even during difficult interval training. Again, try the machine on the showroom before buying.