

**REAL SIMPLE**

| SPECIAL ISSUE |

# Quality Matters

A guide to  
money  
well spent

*Wish  
List*

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## Getting in Gear

Remember when you were a kid shopping for a bike, and the toughest decision was picking out the color of the handlebar streamers? Now fitness equipment is so complex that just trying to choose the right product is enough to make you break a sweat. How do you know when a low price means good value? And when should you spring for the pricier model? *Real Simple* looked at 12 categories of gear, then selected two best buys in each: The item on the left is a great value for beginners; the one on the right is a sophisticated option that devotees will find worth the splurge.



### Bikes

#### **SPECIALIZED SIRRUS BIKE, \$520**

This hybrid bike (left) is engineered to suit a woman's lower center of gravity, providing good balance control around corners. A cushy saddle and upright handlebars mean comfortable riding.

**TO BUY:** [www.specialized.com](http://www.specialized.com) for store locations.

#### **CANNONDALE R500 FÉMININE TRIPLE ROADBIKE, \$1,000**

Perfect for a serious cyclist or someone training for a long-distance bike tour, the Cannondale is lightweight and has narrow handlebars, short-reach brake levers, and gear shifters suitable for female hands.

**TO BUY:** [www.cannondale.com](http://www.cannondale.com) for store locations.



### Helmets

#### **GIRO SKYLA, \$35**

This helmet (left) has in-mold construction (the foam liner and the shell are molded together, not taped) to make it both safe and durable. It features 20 air vents, and best of all, the back is styled to leave room for your ponytail.

**TO BUY:** [www.giro.com](http://www.giro.com) for store locations.

#### **LOUIS GARNEAU REV, \$50**

In addition to three major safety certifications, this helmet has 26 vents and the Sports Spiderlock 1, a dial at the back that facilitates quick, one-handed tightening.

**TO BUY:** [www.louisgarneau.com](http://www.louisgarneau.com) for store locations.



### In-line Skates

#### **K2 EXO 6.0, \$200**

K2, the brand best-known for skis, has now perfected in-line skates (left). The ankle is narrow, the heel pocket tapered, the arch length short, and the instep high to provide maximum comfort and stability.

**TO BUY:** [www.k2skates.com](http://www.k2skates.com) for store locations.

#### **ROLLERBLADE AERO 90 TFS, \$249**

The latest model from the originators of the in-line craze comes with larger-than-ever 90-millimeter wheels for speed, and a one-step closure system that makes getting the skates on and off a breeze—no laces required.

**TO BUY:** [www.rollerblade.com](http://www.rollerblade.com) for store locations.



### Treadmills

#### **VISION FITNESS T9200, \$1,299**

The T9200 (left) is tough enough for daily use, with a sturdy frame, a 2.5-horsepower motor, and a 54-by-20-inch running area. Its quick speed and elevation keys mean you won't have to wait for the machine to catch up after you hit the arrow buttons.

**TO BUY:** [www.visionfitness.com](http://www.visionfitness.com).

#### **PRECOR 933, \$3,500**

This treadmill comes with a 2.75-horsepower motor, and it has three more degrees of elevation and three more inches of length to run on than the Vision Fitness T9200. There are 13 preset training programs, including intervals and hill courses.

**TO BUY:** [www.precor.com](http://www.precor.com) for store locations.