

“Machine Gal vs. Free Weight Guy”

Women tend to use more machine types of equipment and men generally use free weights. Find out the benefits for both to improve your workout regimen.

Benefits of Machines

- **They're Supportive:** Good for those who need help learning new exercise and rehabbing injuries.
- **They're easy to use:** A fixed path with instructions and pictures; makes it easier to use good form.
- **They save time:** Doesn't take much time to change the weights on the machines
- **They're less intimidating:** You have instructions; you know what muscles to work and how to do the exercise correctly.

Cons of Machines

- **They're too Supportive:** Use fewer muscle groups at the same time and it works the body in a less functional way.
- **They're limited:** The machine focuses on one muscle group at a time, less range of motion; which forces you to use multiple machines for full body.
- **They don't allow you to work on weakness:** Most machines, both arms or legs lift the weight at the same time; therefore, your stronger muscle will work harder and the weaker muscle will lack the tension it needs
- **They don't allow the body to learn naturally:** There isn't much room to work the body through different plans of motion.

Benefits of Free Weights

- **Versatility:** Unlimited variety of exercises for the whole body
- **Functionality:** move the body in a more natural way(real life movements)
- **Building whole body strength:** As you focus on working a specific muscle group, other muscles are and have to be engaged, especially the stabilizing muscles.
- **Less Equipment:** You don't need much space or equipment; therefore, you are able to do the exercises just about anywhere (home, hotel, etc.)

Cons of Free Weights

- **They're hard to learn:** Take a lot of skill and coordination; good form is harder to achieve.
- **Higher risk of injury:** Because there is no fixed path, it is easier to put the body in the wrong position, which leads to injury.
- **Confusion:** There are so many different exercises per muscle group that people get confused on the correct form and where to start.

- **Training without a spotter:** Especially when your first starting out, you need to have a spotter; someone who knows the proper form and technique, which isn't always available.

Deciding Free Weights or Machines

- **Beginner:** stick with machines until you feel more comfortable with the movements.
- **Working out at home:** stick with free weights. Machines are expensive, take up a lot of room and offer limited exercises. Free weights are cheaper, versatile and take up less room.
- **Rehabbing an injury:** stick with machines since they offer the most support, but always follow your doctor/physical therapist's advice.
- **Hate lifting weight:** you might find machines are easiest to use.
- **To get the most out of each workout in the fastest possible time:** stick with free weights. You can incorporate more muscle groups at the same time.

Machines allow you to train muscles; **Free weights** allow you to train movements.

I personally believe that free weights and cable machines are best to use because you get a bigger range of motion, you work more muscles at one time. Therefore, you burn more during your workout. However, there are some instances when machines are preferred.