

To use weight machines or not to use weight machines, that is the question...

Whether 'tis nobler to sit on a machine that dictates your path or risk the freedom of a total body workout with instability.

If you are just starting out or have been working out for a while choosing what type of equipment may be a little bit of a challenge. Knowing the pros and cons may help you figure out whether machines or free weights suit you the best.



Most weight machines offer your body some support. This is beneficial for the beginner, to rehabilitate an injury, or for lifting heavy weights without a spotter. Weight machines make it easier to use good form because they work on a fixed path. They can be less intimidating with the instructions posted. And changing weights is relatively easy. Unfortunately, machines can be too supportive, meaning fewer muscle groups are being used during the exercise. As a result, you are burning fewer calories and you would have to use multiple machines for a total body workout.

Because machines require the use of both arms and both legs to move the weight, they don't allow you to work on a weakness of one side. And because machines work on a fixed path, working the body in functional planes of motions is not possible.

Free weights are versatile. Many different muscle groups can get a work out with one set of dumbbells. With free weights, you are able to move through multiple planes, getting a whole body work out, imitating movements you do in life, and specifically training for sports. All the while working on the stabilizer muscles and burning more calories. You may need instruction when using free weights, as they require skill and coordination, to achieve the proper form. It's easier to compensate with other muscles and put your body in the wrong position, which could lead to injury. And knowing what exercises to do to may be confusing, as well.



Unlike Hamlet, who was deciding between the pain of life or the dread of something after death, you, on the other hand get to choose between equally beneficial options. Now the question is: when do you start?

Camelview Physical Therapy, Inc.



4250 E Camelback Rd, K205 Phoenix, AZ 85018 602-956-9434