

Treadmill Time

By: Ken Hunt, Owner of Steel Gym and AFI-certified fitness expert

If you are still carrying around a few left over pounds from the holidays, why not try to ramp up your treadmill time. Now I know it can be boring, so update your iPod, get your headphones and give these suggestions a try.

Tired of your legs doing all the work while your arms just hang there - or worse, grip the safety bars? Try raising and lowering five- to ten-pound hand weights as you walk along. Start slow so that you don't fall and then simply increase speed as you gain confidence. By the end of a vigorous walk, you will have given your upper and lower body a good treadmill workout.

Walking Backwards—It's best to do this at a slow pace, and without hanging onto the bars. Walking backwards uses the muscles in your legs in a whole new way and challenges you to pay attention to your balance as well, which is incredibly important in any sort of exercise routine.

Another suggestion is to try speed intervals. The best way to do this is to walk or run as fast as you can for one minute. Then slow your pace down for a two-minute breather. After the two minutes are up, do another minute at full speed, and so on. Repeat this cycle five to eight times.

Or, try incline intervals. Now be sure to warm up before you try this exercise. Walk as you normally would for five minutes. Then set the incline on your machine to four or five. Continue walking for another five minutes, then return the incline to zero. Repeat this cycle two times for maximum benefit.

I call this one, On Your Toes! Walk as you normally would for five minutes. Then slow down your speed and walk on your tiptoes for thirty seconds. Resume your normal walk for another five minutes, then slow down again and walk on your heels for thirty seconds. Repeat this cycle twice to exercise different muscles in your legs and feet.

If you think that you can only do limited things on a treadmill, think again. After all, with a little imagination and innovation, you can make your treadmill workout both challenging and interesting. You will stay on longer and those excess pounds will drop off in no time.

Steel Gym has been named "#1 Gym in New York" two years in a row by the American Fitness Institute for "cost, cleanliness, equipment and service," and has been called "the last real gym left in New York" by famed bodybuilder Victor Martinez. Ken Hunt has been featured in the New York Times, Men's Fitness, GENRE, HX, Stonewall News, EXIT South Africa and is a recurring fitness expert on Sirius/XM Radio and Feast of Fools. The gym is located at 146 W. 23rd St, New York, NY. For more information on Steel Gym, please call 212.352.9876 or visit www.steelgym.com.