

# universityQ&A

By Matt Brzycki

## What are the most popular pieces of cardio equipment?



Currently, the most popular pieces of cardio equipment are elliptical trainers and treadmills. Interestingly, these two types of aerobic activities are virtually at opposite ends of the impact/force spectrum: ellipticals involve low-impact forces, and treadmills involve high-impact forces.

Despite industry trends, some people still prefer to use equipment that's relatively unpopular. So while ellipticals and treadmills are in vogue, it's always a good idea to satisfy a wide variety of tastes with a wide variety of choices.

“A wrestling mat is more durable and attractive than other types of mats.”

## Is it important to keep maintenance logs for equipment?

A maintenance log can be quite handy. The log, which can be a simple three-ring binder, should contain a sheet of paper for each piece of equipment. This page should note the equipment name, manufacturer, date of purchase and serial number, plus a list of specific things to check and a place to document when a particular repair and/or scheduled maintenance are performed. With this information, you can determine how often certain repairs are performed, and better maintain your cache of replacement parts. More importantly, detailed records can protect you in the event that someone is injured on a piece of equipment and claims that the injury was due to improper maintenance. Each piece of equipment should be inspected periodically for wear and tear (including belts, cables, chains, bolts, screws, pads, grips and moving parts). This preventive maintenance should be performed according to the manufacturer's guidelines, and can be done in-house by an employee who has been properly trained, or outsourced to a service company.

If a piece of equipment is in need of a repair that renders it unusable, it should be tagged with a sign (such as, “Please do not use”) and serviced as quickly as possible. **FM**

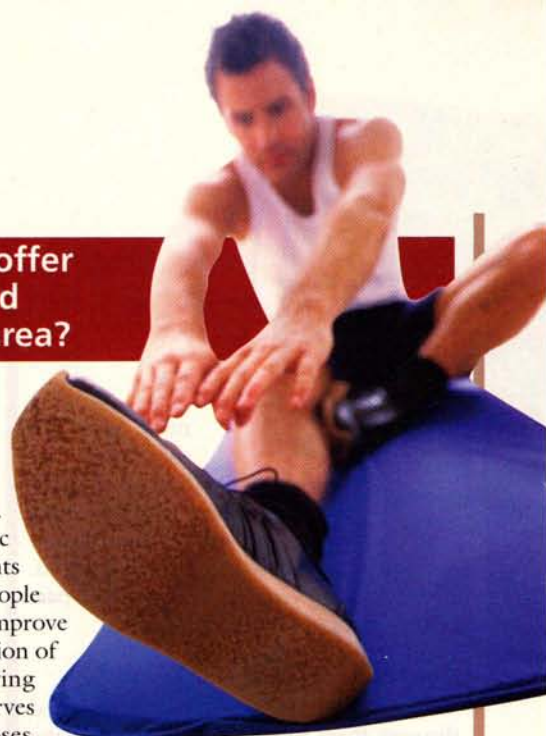


## Should we offer a designated stretching area?

You'd be surprised by how many individuals use stretching areas. Performing specific flexibility movements is the best way for people to maintain — or improve — the range of motion of their joints. Having greater flexibility serves at least two purposes.

First, it may make individuals less susceptible to injury. Second, it enables individuals to exert their strength over a greater range of motion. In addition, stretching may relieve and/or reduce the muscular soreness that can result from performing unfamiliar activities or intense training (although this has yet to be corroborated by research).

Your stretching area should include some type of mat. Some facilities incorporate a wrestling mat, which is more durable and attractive than other types of mats. The area can also include specialized stretching equipment and/or machines. You'll notice that many individuals also use the stretching area to perform abdominal work.



## How can I extend the life of upholstery on machines and benches?

One suggestion to extend the life of upholstery is to put wear, or “slip,” covers on the parts of the pads that tend to tear or deteriorate. Bench/back pads, for example, usually degrade first where people place their heads. If the pad has a wear cover, you simply need to replace it instead of the entire pad. At a cost of perhaps \$15 for a wear cover vs. \$50 for a new pad, this can add up to significant savings. If you do have to purchase new pads, get them with wear covers. If your pads don't have wear covers, you can buy them separately. Or, you can invest in a staple gun and a roll of vinyl to make your own wear covers.



Matt Brzycki is coordinator of recreational fitness and wellness programs at Princeton University, Princeton, N.J. He has more than 20 years of experience at the collegiate level, and has authored, co-authored or edited eight books.

Do you have questions that you need answered? Email them to [edit@fitnessmgmt.com](mailto:edit@fitnessmgmt.com).