
Fitness Tips

by Cari Draft Elliott, BS, CPT - ACE-Certified Personal Trainer

What's better, free weights or machines?

Question: Okay, it's January and I'm headed back to the gym to drop those holiday pounds. What will give me the better workout, free weights or the weight machines?

Answer: First of all, if it's holiday pounds you need to drop, make sure you get in a good dose of cardiovascular exercise this month, because it's likely your body fat has increased from the indulgences... and it's the cardio exercise that combats the fat. At the same time you'll want to increase your lean muscle mass by doing strength training, which is where the weights come in. Free weights or machines?

Machines are going to let you accomplish the same exercises as free weights, but you won't have to think too much about proper form, coordination or balance, because the machine does all that for you. Machines are also great for circuit training, because you can go from machine to machine with little rest between, and adds some variation to your workout routine.

Personally, I like free weights more than most machines. Once you have a trainer show you how to use your core to stabilize yourself and learn proper form, you'll find that free weights offer more variation and allow for greater range of motion. I also like the multi-tasking factor of working more than one muscle group at a time.

Whether you decide to use machines or free weights, the bottom line is consistency, intensity and variation of your workouts. Don't be afraid to mix up it up and keep challenging your body!

Cari Draft Elliott is an ACE-Certified Personal Trainer who makes "house calls"! Please check out her website at www.oneononefitgirl.com and email your questions to cari@oneononefitgirl.com.
