

UNIT 8: LISTENING: HEALTH & FITNESS

800 fewer calories
harder to come by

battling with
health club

current trends
home-exercise

doubled
previous generation

Hello everyone and welcome to today's talk about the (1) _____ in health and fitness. Nowadays, it seems as though everyone in the wealthier parts of the world is (2) _____ their weight and as a consequence, more and more people are joining local gyms or buying (3) _____ machines.

In fact, according to the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association, membership in health clubs in America (4) _____ from a little over 17 million in 1987 to more than 36 million in 2005. While the figures for Europe are (5) _____, evidence for the past decade suggests that (6) _____ membership has doubled there as well.

What few people nowadays realize is that the average person in the developed world is now burning (7) _____ a day than a generation ago. This means that **even if people today ate no more than a (8) _____, they would still be getting fatter.** Unfortunately, instead of eating less than their parents did, as they should, many people consume a lot more.

as much to blame
daily calories

brought about
increased technology

burning off
taking their toll on

cardiovascular fitness
used a treadmill

So what exactly has (9) _____ this change in fitness levels? Well, people in developed countries are not only eating more but are also doing less exercise. (10) _____ has not helped. **The car and other such machines** designed to help reduce our work load are (11) _____ as deep-fried fast food. **On top of this, the changes in how and where we work have reduced the amount of (12) _____ people actually need.** Such factors are (13) _____ our health, with health costs soaring. And this is where exercise machines may not be the most efficient way of (14) _____ those excess calories and boosting (15) _____ but they are certainly the most common. According to the Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association International, some 45 million Americans (16) _____ in 2001. That's an amazing number of people and an awful lot of treadmills.

elliptical cross trainer

has tripled

support any weight

swinging motion

Having said that, **an exercise machine that did not even exist a decade ago — the (17) _____ — is fast replacing the traditional treadmill.** As its name implies, the machine delivers an elliptical or (18) _____, **with both the hands and feet tracing semi-circular patterns — the feet on two moving platforms rather than bicycle pedals, and the hands gripping handles that move but are not meant to (19) _____, which is important as there is no seat.** Since the machine was introduced there, the number of people using elliptical machines in America (20) _____ to more than 11 million a year.

comparable to
passing trend

lower impact
results in

no difference
roughly equal to

oxygen consumption
superior

We have been doing some tests to find out if these machines are actually any better than the previous machines or if they are just another (21) _____. Dr John Porcari, a professor of exercise and sport science, believes that elliptical machines are at least better than the previous exercisers, but no better than treadmills in terms of increasing cardiovascular fitness. In one set of tests, Dr Porcari measured the (22) _____, heart rate and calorific expenditure of 16 volunteers, and found that there was virtually (23) _____ between elliptical machines and treadmills. But elliptical machines have a (24) _____ on the knees than running, claim their manufacturers. True, says Dr Porcari, who measured the "ground reaction forces" of the test subjects on the various machines. **Running on a treadmill (25) _____ forces that are roughly two and a half times the subject's body weight. But using an elliptical machine gives forces that are (26) _____ the subject's weight. This is much kinder on the body and makes the impact (27) _____ that of walking.** In that respect, ellipticals are (28) _____.

air resistance

greater reduction

in particular

reaching speeds

shell out for

However, those who do not want to (29) _____ fancy exercise machines will be heartened by the results of a seminal study in 1969 by Lewis Pugh, a British physiologist, which has been confirmed many times since. Dr Pugh found that, **when (30) _____ above 14 kilometres per hour or so, running on firm ground uses up substantially more calories, and therefore leads to a (31) _____ in fat, than running on a treadmill or using an elliptical machine.** Dr Pugh attributed the difference to (32) _____. Manufacturers of exercise machines point out, correctly, that **running on firm ground creates a greater impact on the body's joints than using machines,** (33) _____ **the knees and ankles.** But what they don't say is that modern running shoes go a long way to reducing the impact of such forces. So, perhaps the best exercise of all is simply to leave the car at home, and run to the gym and then right past it. After that, just keep going and going.