

- Exercise

Running in the open versus on the treadmill: What's a better workout?

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There is no denying that running has many health benefits. Running regularly helps to build strong bones, as it is a body weight exercise. Moreover, it also strengthens muscles, improves cardiovascular fitness, and helps to maintain a healthy weight.



While some runners cannot bear the monotony of the treadmill, others are not able to pick up pace without manual controls in front of them. Therefore, it comes down to individual preference, supplemented by an informed decision, once the advantages and disadvantages of both types of running are factored in.

The difference between running outdoors and on a treadmill

When you run outside, you expend more energy than you would on a treadmill, as your muscles get more activated outside due to lack of linear running patterns. Moreover, when running on a stiff surface like concrete, there is a heightened generation of ground reaction forces, which reinforces your bones more than a treadmill. Whereas the very design of treadmills ensures absorption of ground reaction forces, saving your joints from the impact associated with running. Besides the Covid-19 related restrictions to stay indoors, there are also weather and temperature related constraints that tilt the preference towards treadmills.

For instance, running in hot weather attracts the risk of dehydration or heat exhaustion. Additionally, treadmills help with controlling and tracking the pace and keeping it consistent.

That said, running outdoors means more calories burnt

Running outdoors helps burn more calories due to wind resistance outside. Bone strength and mineral density also improves, as it's a weight bearing and high-impact exercise. Apart from physical benefits, outdoors provide a good amount of vitamin D and lets you inhale the fresh air, leading to a boost in energy and lower levels of stress and anger as compared to running on a treadmill.