

Stair Climbing In Proper Way for Strength & Weight loss



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Proper stair climbing is best way of integrating exercise into your daily life routine as most of us are doing it or can do it daily.

Most of Indian women have knee problems and they are basically because of our habits of squatting on the floor which damages our knees. Second important cause is improper stair climbing .

So here we would tell you advantages and techniques of proper stair climbing.

Stairmaster machines are among the most popular pieces of exercise equipment in gyms all over the world but these machines can be substituted by stair climbing in a proper way in our own homes or where ever we find them and some of the reasons are:

- It is totally free and all of us can get access to stairs.
- It is against gravity and the heavier we are, the harder we're forced to work and the more calories we burn.
- It is a relatively intense exercise that quickly increases our heart rate and in doing so can greatly improve our cardiovascular fitness.
- It helps strengthen and shape our most common problem areas like calves, thighs, buttocks and tummy. Climbing stairs for weight loss and fitness is an excellent exercise
- It is a very efficient way of burning maximum calories and is good for those of us with limited time to exercise.
- It can easily be mixed with other exercises, like walking, skipping and weight training, to maximize results and stair climbing workouts are easy to progressively increase.
- It can be done by almost anyone, regardless of fitness level.

- Because it is weight bearing, it helps build bone strength.
- It is low impact and safe for the knees (**provided correct technique is used and a preexisting condition doesn't exist**).

Getting started climbing stairs

We come across stairs at many places. So use stairs instead of using escalators or lifts.

Getting the most out of stair climbing

- With any form of exercise it is important to start off slowly and then increase our workouts, and stair climbing is in the same way.
- To help our body acclimatize to this form of exercise, we should start by limiting ourselves to walking up two flights of stairs followed by five minutes of walking on the spot. At the end of the 5 minute walk on the spot, when our heart rate has come down a bit, we can try walking up another two flights followed by another five minute walk on the spot. This may be enough of a workout for us in the first week or two.

When we start to get even fitter and stronger, then we can go further by :

- Lengthening the time of our workouts (doing more sets).
- Climbing two steps at a time instead of one.
- Adding to our body weight with a weighted belt, weighted vest or carrying dumbbells.
- Reduce our rest intervals.

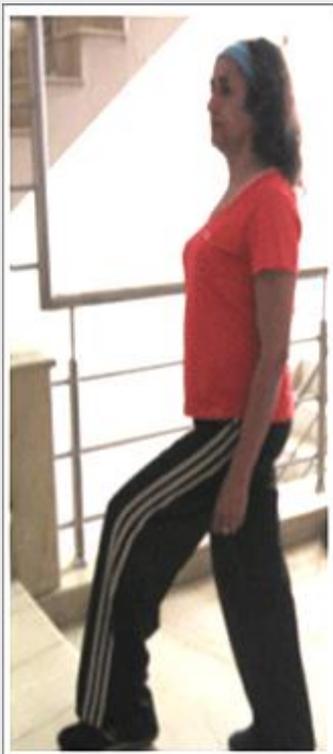
Aerobic versus anaerobic stair climbing workouts

Depending upon how we use them, stairs can predominantly improve our aerobic fitness or our muscle strength, it is better to keep breathing properly and not to go beyond your aerobic stamina For strength improvement it is best to walk up two steps at a time and limit the number of sets of stair climbs we do per workout to between 1 and 5 sets. And instead of running up 20 flights of stairs, it may only be necessary to walk up a total of 15 to 30 steps per leg. We can change styles for ourvarious thigh muscles.

Most important thing to learn is that when we put on foot forward we should lift the back foot and we should not bend our knees so that our knees don't go beyond our toes. This way we don't transfer our body weight to our knees and we don't damage our knees.

(fig -1 to fig-4)

FIG -1 Wrong step as knee is going beyond toes (RED ARROW)



Here are some tips for working the inner thigh, hips and buttocks using stairs:

- **To work the inner thigh:** stand sideways at the bottom of the stairs, place your hand on

the rail (if available) for balance. Lift your right foot and place it on the first step. Transfer your weight onto your right leg as you lift your left leg and cross it over your right and up to the next step. Continue up the stairs in this fashion until you've reached the desired number of repetitions.

- To work the buttocks: start at the bottom of a flight of stairs, step up with your left leg and kick your right leg back (contract your right buttock when you do this), and then repeat with the right leg and left kick. Continue this until you've reached the desired number of reps.
- To work the hip abductor :(the muscle on the outside of your hip that moves your leg out to the side); stand on a stair step sideways with one foot on the step. Without bending the supporting leg, lower the unsupported leg a couple of inches by tilting your pelvis, and bring it back up. Repeat 10 times and switch to the other leg.

To get the most benefit out of any aerobic exercise, we should do it at least 3 times a week, for at least 20 minutes per session, at an intensity that elevates our heart rate to between 60% and 90% of our maximum heart rate .MHR(maximum heart rate is $220 - \text{age in years}$ and for example for fifty years old this $220 - 50 = 170$ and 60% is 112 and 90% is 153 so our heart rate should be between 112 and 153 depending on whether we are doing moderate or vigorous intensity exercise.

For a combined aerobic and anaerobic workout, alternate five minutes of stair climbing with sets of exercises like push-ups, sit-ups, dumbbell curls and presses.

A combined workout example might include a five minute warm-up, thirty to forty minutes of intervals (consisting of 2-3 minutes of stair climbing followed by 1 minute of muscle toning exercises), a five to ten minutes cool-down and stretches.

To help avoid boredom we can:

- Cross-train using other activities such as bicycle riding, walking, jogging, etc.
- Use music to motivate us - wearing a portable radio, CD player or an iPod allows us to listen to all our favorite songs while climbing.
- Keep an exercise diary and track our progress - nothing motivates like success!

Safety tips for stair climbing

Generally speaking, stair climbing is relatively safe for most of us, but as with anything it is not

totally without dangers.

- Always warm up and stretch before climbing stairs, paying particular attention to the major leg muscles (calves, hamstrings, thighs and buttocks).
- Start out slow and easy, and don't increase our intensity by more than 10% each week.
- Be very careful coming down stairs. Don't come down too quickly and NEVER run down stairs, it's far too dangerous for no or little gain.
- Put our safety first and go at a speed that ensures we don't lose our balance or strain too hard.
- Wear a heart rate monitor so that we can see how hard our heart is working and to ensure we stay within the desired target heart rate, or according to talk test or Borg's test of self perceived exertion.
- Take lots of water in-between.
- Stop if you feel faint, dizzy or in pain.
- Take sufficient rest breaks during your workouts.
- Always consult your doctor before beginning any new exercise routine.
- Do not climb stairs if you have orthopedic or medical complications (such as high blood pressure, etc)
- Maintaining the correct posture while climbing stairs is very important to get the most out of our workout and minimize the chance of injury
- Cool-down period that allows our heart rate to gradually return to about 100 beats per minute is important.
- Dress comfortably and suitably. Newer synthetic workout fabrics tend to pull moisture away from the body and help keep us cool and dry.
- Always wear appropriate footwear in the form of comfortable, well-cushioned cross-training athletic shoes.

- Always use stairs that have good light and ventilation.

Conclusion

Climbing stairs is a great way to lose weight, improve our fitness and tone and strengthen our legs, tummy and buttocks.

This article was to explain how such routine activities like climbing stairs, is such an excellent exercise for those of us with weight loss goals, and also to give some very useful tips for you to get started for stair climbing and doing so safely and effectively.