

Treadmill Calorie Count

Did My Treadmill Just Tell Me I Burned 800 Calories?

Don't worry it isn't true! If only every automated calorie counter knew EXACTLY how to accurately calculate for each and every potential user. Then we would have caloric integrity in the gym. Although manufactures have improved the accuracy of such estimates, there are just too many factors at work to expect one machine to be able to get this number right. In general, the newer and the more expensive the machine, the more accurate that energy expenditure estimate will be. Also, the more information the machine requires of the user, the more accurate the calorie count. Below see a list of the complicating factors that simply cannot be addressed by an inanimate object:

- ~ Muscle burns more calories per minute than fat does. This means that without an accurate body fat percentage a COMPLETELY accurate caloric expenditure number is not possible.
- ~ Men burn calories more quickly than do women. Meaning, if the machine does not account for your gender, all bets are off!
- ~ Older individuals have a slower basal metabolism than their younger counterparts. How much slower? Good question and one that the treadmill cannot answer.
- ~ Fitness levels vary greatly between members of the same height, weight, gender, and age. Therefore, it is IMPOSSIBLE to account for the athletic efficiency and/or biochemistry of one user over another.
- ~ Dehydration, chronic illness, and innumerable other factors can alter your ability to burn calories at any given time. Even the most gifted mathematician with detailed information about an individual cannot correctly predict with 100% accuracy the rate at which calories will be burned during a specific activity.

So, why are they there? MOTIVATION. Exercisers like numbers, goals and measures. Anyone with a goal needs to establish parameters by which to define success. Utilize the calorie counter to help you track your improvement. If you burned 250 calories in 30 minutes walking on zero incline at a rate of 3.8 miles per hour...see what adjusting the incline does. You can find that you can make minor adjustments that cause you to work significantly harder without inducing misery. These indicators also give you a ball park figure by which to estimate your calories in versus calories out so that you can reasonably establish an expected weight loss in a given period of time. Ultimately, what you eat is just as important as what you do when it comes to your health.

Even with the inaccuracy issues, calorie counters on fitness equipment have a valid use. Just know that you cannot have that pitcher of margaritas based solely on your 20 minute run in which you supposedly burned enough calories to "earn" it! Moderation and estimation are key elements in your diet. Unfortunately, estimation is also the best you can hope for when it comes to calorie counters on treadmills and other cardio machines at the gym!

Article Written by SCWfitness.com