

A person is running on a treadmill, captured from the waist down. The image has a strong red color overlay. A large, white, semi-transparent number '10' is positioned on the left side of the frame. To the right of the '10', the text 'mistakes you are making on cardio workouts: the treadmill' is written in white. At the bottom left, the word 'healthoutfit' is written in white.

# 10

mistakes you are  
making on cardio  
workouts:  
**the treadmill**

healthoutfit

# the treadmill

**Hitting the treadmill at the gym or at home is a great way to keep fit and active, even when the weather outside is less than delightful. Using one seems simple enough, but did you know that basic treadmill mistakes could be sabotaging your running results and making you vulnerable to injury? Here are the 10 most common treadmill blunders and how to correct them:**

01

**You wear the wrong trainers.**

Look for trainers with extra padding in the soles to protect your heels and foot bones from the high impact of each foot strike. Keep in mind, however, to use them only for the sport they are designed for, i.e. walking or running. Make sure that your pennies are well spent by visiting a store that can offer you a professional fitting service so you know the trainers you buy are specific for your foot shape and exercise goals.

02

**You look at your feet.**

Looking at your feet while walking on the treadmill can cause you to lose your balance. It can also strain the back of your neck and misalign the rest of your body, causing your hips to poke out behind you - which stresses your spine, hips, and knees. Gaze straight ahead and keep your shoulders level and chest open. Your hips, knees, and lower-back will follow, making a relatively straight line from the head to your feet.

03

**You stick with one routine.**

It may be comfortable doing the same workout day after day, but over time you'll burn fewer calories as your body adapts and muscles become more efficient. Every four weeks change at least one aspect of your workout. Try the elliptical or the stair climber, or take your walk outside. Routine changes also help prevent muscle and joint strains from the repetitive stress of pulling and pushing the muscles at the same angles over and over again.

04

**You slap your feet down.**

Landing flat-footed can cause muscle strain. You end up leaning backward as the belt goes forward, which strains back muscles from the force generated through your hips and back. This could also cause you to lose your balance. Be as vertical as you can and walk or run as you would normally. Land on your midfoot or the ball of your foot—not your heel.

05

**Your arms are all over the place.**

Don't waste your energy by swinging your arms when you run; keep your arms by your sides until you get to higher speeds. Once you reach a jog, keep arms bent parallel to each other and at 90-degrees, which helps with the rotation of your torso. Try to keep your arms loose, not tight or tense.

06

**Your stride is too long.**

Stretching out your legs in an effort to cover more ground sacrifices form and efficiency. Someone who over strides will appear to be leaping high with each stride. You burn up a lot of extra energy, so you can't work out as long and you also increase the risk of injury. You could also hit the front of the treadmill frame, which can cause you to fall. The most efficient way to run is three steps per second and you should barely lift your foot off the ground.

# the treadmill

07

**You hold the bars.**

Walking on an incline burns more calories than walking on level ground – unless you sabotage results by hanging on! This is because you burn fewer calories when you support part of your own body weight. Walk naturally on the incline as you would normally walk up a hill outdoors. You should be nearly vertical with a slight lean (five degrees), not way forward so you're grabbing onto the front of the treadmill. Your feet should come down underneath your center of gravity, not far out in front.

08

**You hunch forward.**

If you lean too much in any direction, your body will naturally work to keep its balance. Hunching forward can cause you to develop an anterior tilt or excessive forward lean, which can cause you to lose your balance and may contribute to lower back pain. Keep a solid upright posture, which includes engaging your core muscles. If you can't maintain good posture, slow down the treadmill speed.

09

**You overdo it.**

Excess muscle soreness, elevated resting heart rate, and little aches and pains that get worse with each workout are signs you're overtraining. If you notice any of these red flags, stop your current workout, re-evaluate your exercise program, and get some rest. High-intensity workouts should be done only two to three times a week. For general fitness, moderate workouts of between three and five times a week should work for most people.

10

**You are not using your legs enough.**

When you do the same workout over and over, your body adapts and your results reach a plateau. The three components of training include intensity, duration, and frequency. To be safe, increase only one of these variables on any given week. If you want to run longer this week, don't also try to run faster. Increase your intensity only after you've increased your duration and frequency – and by only 10% each time. You could also increase the intensity and calorie burn of your walking workout by adding ankle weights or wrist weights, or try a weighted vest, which evenly distributes the resistance.

