**Treadmills vs Running Outdoors – What’s the Difference?**

I’m not going to tell you that running on a treadmill is a waste of time, that it’s useless, or that it’s something you should never do. Running on a treadmill definitely has its advantages. Apart from anything else, it allows you to train indoors, which means you can avoid going out in the rain and means you can avoid having to talk yourself into training on wet days. Better yet, this means that you can put on the TV or listen to music without sweaty headphones. And that makes running a lot less boring!

But there are definitely downsides. Big downsides in fact. Read on to find out what those are and why you should reconsider making this your primary way of exercising…

**Biomechanics**

The first thing to recognize is that running on a treadmill is not biomechanically identical to running outdoors. That is to say, that the way you exercise is different and this results in different results for your muscles.

More specifically, the difference comes from the fact that the floor is moving underneath you. When you run on a treadmill, you are stay completely in spot and the objective is really just to be off the ground long enough to avoid moving backward. This is different to running outdoors, where you are actively *pulling* yourself forward and reaching out for that next step. The real thing works more muscles in the legs, burning more calories and also improving your technique.

**Getting Outdoors**

Then there’s the downside of being indoors. One of the best things about running outside is actually just… *being* outside. That’s because running outdoors means you’re getting fresh air (which is incredibly good for your lungs and your circulation) and it means that you’re getting sunlight. Sunlight means vitamin D, which means stronger bones and more testosterone!

**But Then Again…**

But don’t write treadmills off completely. While they may not be as good as running outdoors in many ways, they are not *only* useful for their convenience. One thing treadmills have going in their favor is that they force you to keep running at a set speed and let you set this very precisely. You can’t slow down or inadvertently take it easy as you’re running because the treadmill sets the pace. This makes them ideal for running to a very specific goal and also very good for interval training and the like.