

Unless you have loads of self-discipline or a ridiculously good-looking personal trainer, it can be tough to get excited about working out. There is hope, however, as there are lots of gadgets on the market that can make the grind a little less tedious. We've asked Kathleen Alleaume, accredited exercise physiologist and founder of The Right Balance (therightbalance.com.au), to investigate the latest fitness devices to give your workout that extra oomph.



hypoxi

Think of this as a magic wand to get toned thighs. Hypoxi - with the help of a body-toning machine - is an effective, targeted fat-loss and cellulite-reduction treatment.

In order to shape your figure, smooth your skin and eliminate stubborn fat deposits, Hypoxi works by concentrating on your problem areas during a gentle cardio workout. All you have to do is 30 minutes of stationary cycling, three times a week, in an airtight chamber that's designed to increase blood flow and circulation to your lower body.

"Users can achieve up to three times greater circumference loss in targeted areas compared to conventional training," says Ariana Hendry, managing director of Hypoxi Australia (hypoxi.com.au). It's recommended you eat a small carbohydrate meal one to four hours before your session, and have protein-rich foods after your Hypoxi workout. **Cost:** \$690 for 12 sessions. Pricy, but worth the smooth pins and perky butt.



vibration plate

These days, it seems you can shake your

way to a better body by moving your workout onto a vibration plate.

Vibration training involves performing traditional weight-training exercises on a vibrating platform, which is designed to trigger rapid muscle contractions between 30 and 50 times a second.

The upshot is that, when you're on it, you work harder all over. "The benefits of vibration are huge. It's proven to reduce cellulite by breaking down fat cells, improve circulation and encourage the production of collagen, which keeps the skin looking younger," says Sonia Darbey, founder of Pilates Physique (pilatesphysique.com.au), which runs vibration training classes.

Dr Rhonda Orr, from Sydney University's Discipline of Exercise and Sports Science, says that on top of giving you a more intense workout, whole-body vibration training also increases power output, strength and flexibility.

Adds Darbey, "I had one female client who couldn't do one regular push-up after weight training for a few months. After I put her on the platform, she could do 10 push-ups after just one week."

Cost: From \$35 for a 30-minute session.



numetrex sports bra

The ultimate multitasker, this clever undergarment has built-in heart-rate sensors, which pick up the heart's pulse and send it to a compatible watch or cardio machine.

Fitness trainer Heidi Lindahl says, "Tracking your heart rate when engaging in any form of exercise or training is the best way to ensure you're working out effectively and safely." Even better, the monitor acts as a fitness mentor. Once your target heart rate for a productive training session has been established, you're monitored like a hawk. If you're a bit slack, and don't remain within the optimal training zone, the monitor is there to give you a stern wake-up call.

Cost: From \$99 (watch sold separately). For more info, visit numetrex.com



pedometer

For as little as \$30, pedometers are a must-have for anyone

who's serious about their fitness. The fact is, walking is a great way to stay in

shape, and this device is the perfect, indispensable performance partner that puts an end to guessing games.

Pedometers not only work by counting steps, they provide the motivation to increase your daily physical activity level. For many, a pedometer helps break through psychological barriers by giving you encouragement, accountability and a sense of control.

Lindahl says we should be taking a minimum of 10,000 steps a day. She recommends her clients use a pedometer in between workout sessions, and to think of ways to incorporate more steps into their day. "If you keep that number in mind, you become quite creative, like getting into the habit of going to the bathroom on another floor via the stairs, or walking over to workmates rather than emailing them," says Lindahl.

Cost: About \$30. There's no excuse not to have this dirt-cheap gadget.



nike+ ipod sport kit

Now you can transform your iPod into your very

own workout coach. To use this kit, place the Nike+ sensor into your shoes and the wireless receiver on your iPod Nano.

Your iPod's display will give you info about your workout, such as the time lapsed, distance completed and kilojoules burned, which is stored on your Nano and is easily downloaded through iTunes to nikeplus.com. "Not only will it track your performance, you'll also get instant feedback while you exercise," says John Allen, head personal trainer and director of Exercise Sydney (exercisesydney.com.au). "You simply program your workout, set performance goals, and then transfer your data to evaluate your session."

Research shows that synchronising the speed of music with exercise makes you train harder and can also help you stick to your fitness routine.

Cost: Nike+ iPod Sport Kit, \$48 (Nike shoes and iPod sold separately). □

For more ways to get the body you want, jog over to cleo.com.au