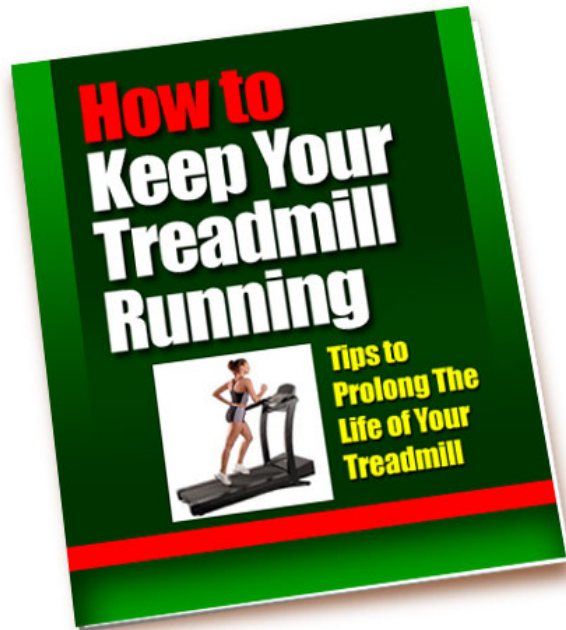


How to Keep your Treadmill Running



Buying a treadmill is hard enough. Choosing the best out of many treadmills in the market is nigh impossible. But once you've got the treadmill you've always wanted, are your worries truly over? Well, they certainly are, but only if you maintain your treadmill properly.

Your treadmill is probably the most expensive fitness investment you've ever made. It's only natural therefore if you want to prolong its life. One of the ways to doing that is to keep a regular maintenance schedule.

A quality treadmill, however, should not require frequent maintenance schedule. Upkeep for your treadmill includes period dusting, and, if need be, occasional belt lubrication. The following are some tips to help you maintain your treadmill and prolong the life of your fitness investment.

Keep it Clean and Dust-free

The number one cause of premature belt failure is dirt. That has always been the case ever since the first treadmill was sold in the fitness equipment market. And the number one way of avoiding dust from totally ruining your precious treadmill is to adopt a cleaning routine of sorts.

Dusting between the belt and deck at least once a week will ensure longevity of the machine. The deck should be kept dry and debris-free at all times. In addition, make sure the area where you place your treadmill is relatively dust-free, to minimize the dust from getting between the belt and/or the deck.

Apply the following cleaning procedure once a week or as needed:

- Wipe down display with a mild solution of Non-Phosphate cleaner on damp soft cotton. Cloth should be damp not wet.
- Wipe down handrails and traction strips with soft cotton cloth and mild soap and water. Cloth should be damp not wet.
- Vacuum or wipe down the deck area between tread belt and frame.

For once a month cleaning:

- Unplug treadmill. Let it sit for 10 minutes. Take off motor cover and vacuum inside the motor area, being very careful not to directly touch the static-sensitive electronics.
- Slide clean towel under tread belt and wipe deck and under the belt. Rotate belt 180 degrees and repeat.
- Apply lubrication (only when recommended) under tread belt.

- Check drive belt tension and adjust as necessary.
- Check tread belt tension and tracking and adjust as necessary.

Adjust the Tread Belt Properly

The best treadmills are those that provide you with easy access to belt tracking. But even the best treadmills with the most easily accessible belt tracking are also susceptible to stretch slightly under initial use. That is why it is important that you adjust the tread belt every so often to keep down stretching.

Most manufacturers include the Allen wrench in the package when you buy a treadmill from them. Use that to tighten both belt adjustment screws clockwise. If your manufacturer did not supply you with an Allen wrench, use another of the right size.

A $\frac{1}{4}$ turn clockwise should tighten tread belt if it has loosened from breaking in. The screws for belt adjustment are usually located at the rear end of the treadmill. Some belts do require looser running than others so don't be surprised if your tread belt is a little loose even when you haven't used it yet. Check the user's guide before making adjustments just to make sure.

Moreover, be sure to keep the belt running at a low speed of around 3 mph when adjusting the belt tracking. This is the ideal speed when making any adjustments with the screws.

Ensure Proper Alignment of Belt

The tracking adjustments may also be used to properly align the belt of your treadmill. So, when adjusting your belt tracking, be sure not to turn either side more than $\frac{1}{4}$ turn at a time only. Belt tracking adjustments are almost always minor anyway, so don't overdo your adjustments.

Roller knocking occurs with improper belt tracking. This should be avoided at all times. If you hear a knocking noise when running your treadmill, that most often means that you have a defective roller. However, there are instances where the noise results from the belt placing too much force on the roller from side to side. You will recognize the difference between the cases in that the knocking noise in the latter will be at a much slower rhythm than roller rotation.

One way to reduce the load on belt is proper tracking. Not only that, it will also help guide the belt and ensure that the front and rear rollers are parallel. Just follow the manufacturer's directions on belt tracking to keep from misaligning or over-stretching the belt. A word of caution: be careful not to over-tighten belt when adjusting alignment.

Use Treadmill on Level Floor

Wondering why your treadmill is making all those squeaking sounds? Well, before you decide to pick up the phone and call your manufacturer, check if your treadmill is running on a non-level floor. Often, the number one reason why treadmills make squeaking noise and its belt mistracking is that people place their treadmills on ground that isn't consistently leveled, without even realizing why.

Most treadmills have level adjustment in rear supports. If your treadmill cannot be leveled with the floor, then level the floor with your treadmill instead.

Power Cord, Belt, and Deck

It's standard procedure among all electronic equipment – you should keep the power cord free and away from places where people are likely going to step on it. The same rule applies with treadmills, especially if you are using the electronic type as opposed to its manual counterpart. Also, make sure that the power cord is clear of the incline mechanism.

When it comes to maintenance of your treadmill's belt, it is accepted that you lubricate the belt every so often. When you do that, try to avoid using silicone or oils, unless the manufacturer itself recommends it. The ideal combination for a long-lasting treadmill is often a clean, dry and dust-free bed and belt.

Only use silicone spray when the manufacturer recommends it. And even then, be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions closely, especially when it comes to application schedule and type of lubricant. Some treadmill decks may require initial waxing to help reduce friction with the belt. Unless recommended by the manufacturer, however, do not wax a deck. Lubrication to pretreated wax decks may gump the wax.

Ensure Low Friction between Deck and Belt

To begin with, you want low-friction contact between the deck and belt. Damage to the motor electronics is more likely if the friction between the deck and belt is high. In addition, high friction belts will not coast when power is shut off. Neither will they be easy to dead-walk on when the power is off. Basically, high friction belts can cause the motor to stall – a situation which you do not want to happen as this is one sure-fire way of damaging your treadmill's motor.

To avoid high friction contact between the deck and the belt, be sure to follow your treadmill manufacturer's guidelines for proper deck and belt maintenance.

Lubrication when unnecessary can lead to excessive amp draw and subsequent damage to motor electronics.

Blown Fuses

You don't usually discover blown fuses, unless you are doing or having someone do some technical diagnostics on your treadmill. And even then, it is generally not recommended for users to replace blown fuses in the motor or motor controller.

When replacing blown fuses, you have to use the recommended fuse. This is true even if you're referring to an electronic piece that isn't a treadmill. When it comes to treadmill fuses, however, you have to understand that they are not interchangeable with automotive fuses. And so, if you discover a blown fuse in your treadmill, do not even attempt to make replacements on your own. Instead, contact a dealer for proper replacement.

Ground to an AC Wall Outlet

Why an AC wall outlet, you ask? Well, with many users owning treadmills that come equipped with computer consoles (such as those with programming) these days, console crashes are also becoming common. A computer crash may be anything that occurs out of the ordinary, such as a display blanking out, locking up, or not recording information. It could even be that the treadmill simply wouldn't shut down altogether. One way to determine that a crash is not due to a defect is to turn the treadmill power off and then on again.

The process of cycling power on and off will reset the computers most of the time. If the crash is caused by a computer defect, this will likely result in loss of control to the incline and speed or the treadmill may not even start at all. One way to safeguard your treadmill from console crashes is to plug the equipment into a grounded AC outlet.

If, however, the crash occurs frequently or is repeated, then consider the option of having it replaced. Most manufacturers that offer warranties in their products include console crashes in their warranty.

Read the Owner's Manual

All of the above are meant to be steps you take once everything else in the owner's manual fails to yield the result you want. But as what the old adage says: "An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure." No amount of repair and maintenance tips can compare to what you can prevent by just reading through your treadmill owner's manual.

The manual contains all the tips and advice for your treadmill's proper maintenance – something you can really use if you want to save from costly repairs. All maintenance procedures should be listed in the owner's manual, along with troubleshooting guidelines, parts listings, and instructions on repairs. Damage to your treadmill from improper use or unauthorized tampering can result in the manufacturer voiding the warranty. That is why, if you are in doubt about proper handling of your treadmill, contact either your dealer or the manufacturer for recommended care.