

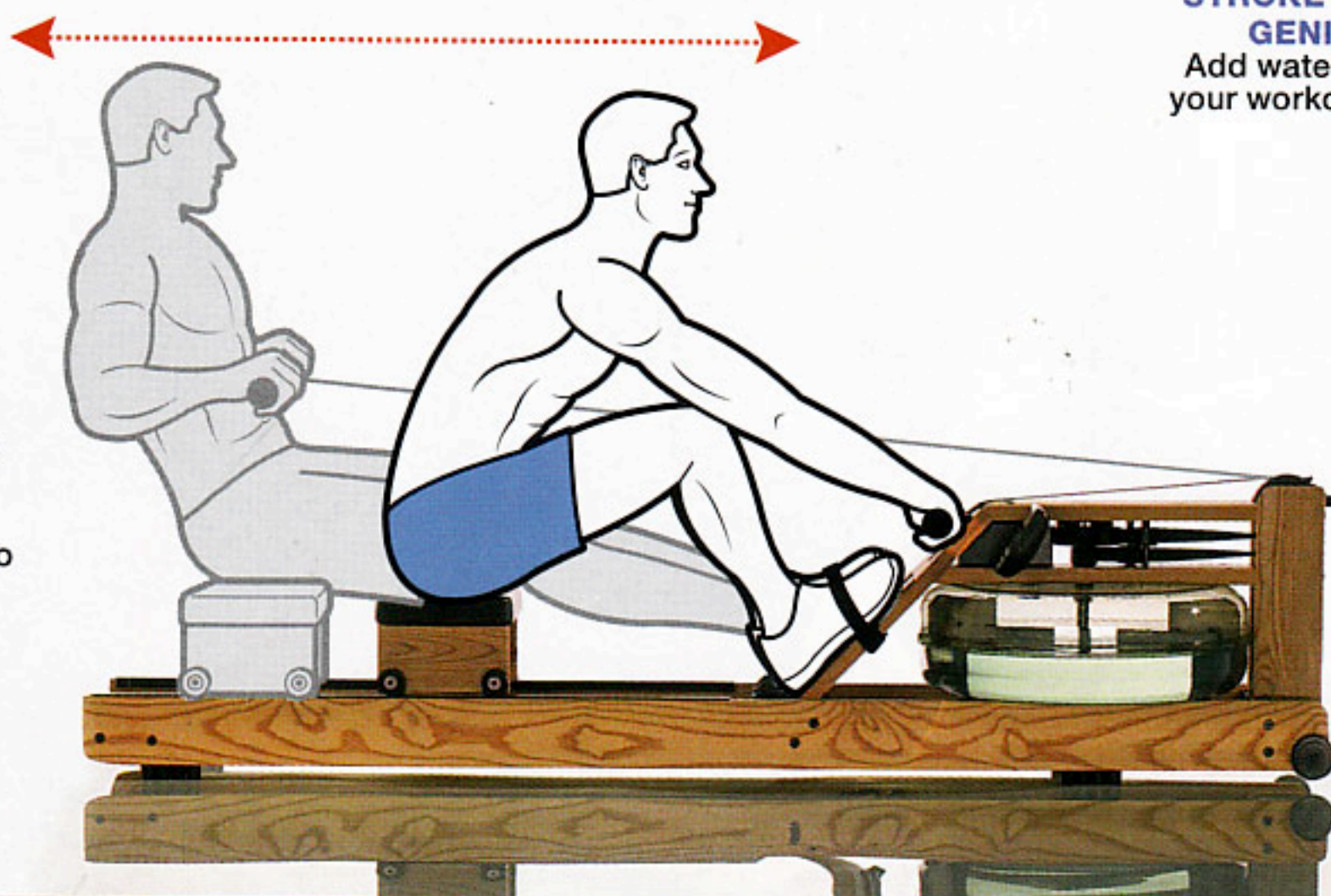
# Power Tools

Build muscle, lose fat, and stay fit from the comfort of home

There's a saying among fitness professionals: "The best gym is the one you pass on the way home." Convenience, after all, has a way of eliminating excuses, and the only thing better than belonging to a local gym in that regard is having essential fitness gear at arm's reach. "Unfortunately, most guys go about it backward," says trainer Alwyn Cosgrove, author of *The New Rules of Lifting*. "They start with a treadmill,

which inevitably becomes a top-of-the-line clothes rack." You won't spin your wheels on the equipment below. Nor will you outgrow it in a few months. We scoured the journals, interviewed the world's top fitness coaches, and tested each product ourselves. The result is a short list of the most effective exercise tools available today—everything you need to build muscle and torch fat without a flashy gym card. **TREVOR THIEME**

**WaterRower Natural** \$1,095, [waterrower.com](http://waterrower.com)  
In the hierarchy of cardio, rowers reign supreme. "No other machine provides a better total-body workout," says Patrick Pearson, a rowing coach for the Great Britain Olympic team. Unlike its competitors, the WaterRower uses a water-filled flywheel to adjust the resistance automatically and deliver a realistic rowing feel. "The movement is also smoother, reducing the risk of injury," says Pearson.



**STROKE OF GENIUS**  
Add water to your workout.



**Perfect Pullup**  
\$99, [perfectpullup.com](http://perfectpullup.com)  
"Conventional fixed-grip pull-up bars don't allow you to move your lats through a full range of motion," says Cosgrove. In short, they limit your back's growth potential. The Perfect Pullup solves that problem with rotating handles, which also engage a greater number of muscles and reduce joint strain. Plus, "the handles are detachable, so if you do head over to your local gym, you can take them with you to reap the same rewards," says Cosgrove.



**Newton Gravity**  
\$175, [newtonrunning.com](http://newtonrunning.com)  
Remove your shoes and take a quick sprint down the nearest hall. You ran on your forefeet, right? That's how we're designed to run, and why most shoes fall short: They encourage heel striking. Newton shoes contain rubber lugs in their upper soles to promote natural (barefoot-like) form, forcing you to strike the ground with the balls of your feet first. And the less you run on your heels, the more efficient (and faster) you'll become, according to a recent Japanese study.



**Garmin Forerunner 405**  
\$297, [garmin.com](http://garmin.com)  
Next to running shoes, a heart-rate monitor is the best piece of cardio equipment you can own. Good ones will track both heart rate and calories, but the GPS-enabled 405 also monitors speed, distance, and running route, giving you essential info about whether you should speed up, slow down, or call it a day. "It takes the guesswork out of cardio," says Cosgrove. The 405 is also equipped with a "virtual partner" to push you along when a buddy can't.



**PowerBlock Sport 9.0**  
\$598, [powerblock.com](http://powerblock.com)  
"When it comes to home gyms, scalability is critical," says Cosgrove. "You need equipment that will challenge you as you grow stronger." That's the problem with most selectorized dumbbells, which typically max out at 50 pounds, and why elite training facilities such as Athletes' Performance in Tempe, Arizona, use PowerBlocks. The Sport 9.0 Stage II replaces an entire dumbbell rack, allowing you to select from 2.5 pounds to 90 pounds in each hand.

## ASK THE FITNESS COACH

Get the most out of your workout

### My biceps don't grow no matter what I do. What's up?

A trainer friend once told me that big biceps are like lipstick: They look great, but they serve no real purpose. And you know what? He's right. Huge biceps don't make life easier or enhance athletic performance, and they're often best worked through seemingly unrelated exercises (particularly those for your back). But I digress. Are you lifting enough weight? Muscles grow faster when you fatigue them. Are you allowing enough recovery? Three days is optimal. Are you

### TOP GUNS

Win the arms race.



varying your routine? Alternating between open-chain moves (such as concentration curls) and closed-chain exercises (like chin-ups) will keep your biceps from adapting to one movement, accelerating their growth.

### Is it ever smart to work out when you're sick?

There are hard rules and soft rules when it comes to exercising when you're not feeling well. The hard rule is never exercise with a fever of more than 101 degrees; doing so can increase your risk of overheating and lead to cramping, fainting, and even heatstroke. The soft rule is that exercising with a mild cold is not only safe, but also potentially beneficial. Indeed, exercising at a submaximal level (i.e., a conversational pace) can help clear out your system and speed up your recovery.

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