

# THE BEST OF FITNESS 2006



We tested 1,000-plus products to come up with these 33 picks for the year's best in clothes, gear, gadgets, shoes, and more.

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*Photography by David Martinez*



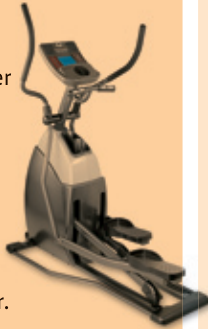
Wardrobe styling: Leka Dobbs/www.leteadobbs.com, Prop styling: Viktoria Ruchkin/Workgroup, Hair/Makeup: Clifford Hashimoto/www.artists-services.com, Clothing: top by Isis, pants by Dominator, shoes by Avia (see page 202 for more details)

# EQUIPMENT

## Elliptical machine

**Under \$1,500**

**Horizon Fitness EX-44 Smooth-stride** (\$999). This machine (also known as the CSE4.5) has pedals set just 2 inches apart for a natural motion that doesn't stress your hips and lower back (other ellipticals average 5 to 6 inches). Other pluses: heart-rate monitoring, 10 different workouts, a fan to keep you cool, and speakers for your CD or MP3 player.



**Over \$1,500**

**Octane Fitness Q45e** (\$3,599). Not only does this elliptical allow you to stride naturally, but the strategically placed handlebars help you get the most out of your upper body, and programs with names like GluteKicker keep things interesting. Plus, a special feature analyzes your pace and adjusts stride length to match.



## Treadmill

**Under \$1,500**

**Horizon Fitness PST 6** (\$1,499). Quiet and sturdy, this treadmill offers speeds up to 12 mph and inclines up to 12 percent (just in case you have an Olympian in the house). Contact heart-rate monitors are located conveniently on the handlebars. "It's also a cinch to fold and store after your workout," notes judge Lynn Allen.



**Over \$1,500**

**PaceMaster Platinum Pro** (\$2,299). With 17 different programs and a range of speed and interval options, boredom doesn't stand a chance when you're pacing on this machine. Add an extra-long belt, heart-rate monitoring, and a memory that can store up to seven workouts, and you've got a machine worth its price.



## Stationary bike

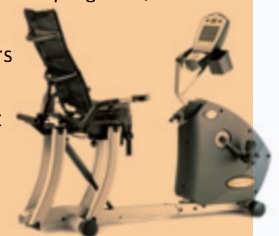
**Under \$1,500**

**SportsArt Fitness C51r Recumbent** (\$1,199). Judge Allen loves this bike's step-through design, as well as the thickly padded, easily adjustable seat with side bolsters to keep your butt comfortable and supported (how many bikes do that?). Other pluses: an easy-to-read display and 6 programs with 20 different levels of resistance.



**Over \$1,500**

**SportsArt Fitness C53r Recumbent** (\$2,099). This bike offers all the perks of the C51r and more. The supportive mesh seatback (bye-bye, sweaty back) and cushy seat make it ultra-comfy. Plus, it features 10 different programs, heart-rate monitoring via the handlebars or a chest strap, and a system that lets you preprogram your own workouts.



## Weight system

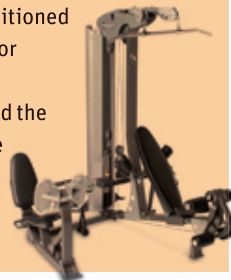
**Under \$1,000**

**Life Fitness ParaBody GS1** (\$999). This sturdy machine will fit in the corner of virtually any room, and is surprisingly easy to use, requiring only minor adjustments between exercises. Plus, each movement mimics your body's range of motion, protecting both your muscles and joints from strain.



**Over \$1,000**

**Hoist Fitness V2 Multi Gym** (\$2,199). This compact system offers a 155-pound weight stack with a full-length shield to protect fingers from pinching. The back pad can be positioned five different ways for comfort (the seat's adjustable, too). And the pulleys allow a wide variety of upper- and lower-body exercises.



**Most INNOVATIVE**

**SportsArt Fitness X-Trainer** (\$5,299).

This cross between a recumbent bike and an elliptical trainer impressed judge Allen with ingenious features like lower- and upper-body resistance options that can be independently adjusted. Handlebars provide resistance in both directions and rotate to target different muscles.



# How to find our winners

## Footwear

**Running:** Avia A2230 Avi-Lite (\$90). 888-855-2842 or www.avia.com

**Walking:** Ryka N-Gage Walk (\$75). 888-834-7952 or www.ryka.com

**Crosstraining:** New Balance 715 (\$70). 800-253-7463 or www.newbalance.com

**Trail running/Walking:** Asics Gel-Trail Attack II (\$80). 800-678-9435 or www.asicsamerica.com

**Most innovative:** Teva X-1 (\$90). 800-367-8382 or www.teva.com

## Fuel

**Bar:** Snickers Marathon Energy Bar in Double Chocolate Nut (\$1.49). www.snickers.com

**Gel/Shots:** Clif Shot Bloks—Lemon-Lime (\$1.99). 800-421-1223 or www.clifbar.com

**Beverage:** Gatorade Endurance Orange (\$1.69). 800-884-2867 or www.gatorade.com

## Gear

**Pedometer:** Omron Healthcare Digital Premium Pedometer HJ-112 (\$40). 877-216-1333 or www.omronhealthcare.com

**Heart-rate monitor:** Suunto t6 (\$499). 800-891-8490 or www.suuntowatches.com

**Bag:** Overland Equipment Pro-Sport (\$65). 800-487-8851 or www.overlandequipment.com

**Hydration system:** Adidas by Stella McCartney Rehydration Bag (\$160). 800-448-1790 or www.shopadidas.com

## Apparel

**Jacket:** Illuminite Aspira Soft Shell Jacket (\$109.99) 800-497-6171 or illuminite.com

**Tops:** Lululemon Womens Singlet Tech (\$32). 888-984-5858 or www.lululemon.com

**Socks:** Asics Hera Low Cut (\$10). 800-678-9435 for stores or asicsamerica.com

**Bra/Bra top:** Isis Scoop Back Cami (\$40). 866-875-8689 or www.isisforwomen.com

**Shorts:** Brooks Epiphany Stretch Short (\$36). 800-227-6657 or www.brooksrunning.com

**Pants:** Dominator Spirit Pant (\$70). 888-348-2518 or www.dominatorclothing.com

**Most innovative:** Sugoi Wired Long Sleeve Training Top (\$70). 800-432-1335 or www.sugoi.com

## Video/DVD

**Cardio:** Dance Off the Inches—Calorie Blasting Party! With Juliane Arney (\$14.98). 800-546-1949 or www.anchorbayentertainment.com

**Pilates:** Rael Pilates, System 7/17 or 27 (\$24.95). www.razorfitness.com

**Most innovative:** Kari Anderson Reach (\$19.95). 800-433-6769 or www.collagevideo.com

**Yoga:** Yoga Shakti by Shiva Rea (\$29.95). 800-333-9185 or www.soundstrue.com

**Strength:** 10 Minute Solution Kickbox Bootcamp with Keli Roberts (\$14.98). 800-546-1949 or www.anchorbayentertainment.com

## Equipment

### Elliptical machines

**Under \$1,500:** Horizon Fitness EX-44 Smooth-stride, or CSE4.5 (\$999). 800-244-4192 or www.horizonfitness.com

**Over \$1,500:** Octane Fitness Q45e (\$3,599). 888-628-2634 or www.octanefitness.com

### Treadmills

**Under \$1,500:** Horizon Fitness PST 6 (\$1,499). 800-244-4192 or www.horizonfitness.com

**Over \$1,500:** PaceMaster Platinum Pro (\$2,299). 973-276-9700 or www.pacemaster.com

### Stationary bikes

**Under \$1,500:** SportsArt Fitness C51r Recumbent (\$1,199). 800-709-1400 or www.sportsartfitness.com

**Over \$1,500:** SportsArt Fitness C53r Recumbent (\$2,099). 800-709-1400 or www.sportsartfitness.com

### Weight systems

**Under \$1,000:** Life Fitness Parabody GS1 (\$999). 888-348-4543 or www.lifefitness.com

**Over \$1,000:** Hoist Fitness V2 Multi Gym (\$1,999). 800-548-5438 or www.hoistfitness.com

### Most innovative

**SportsArt Fitness X-Trainer** (\$5,299) 800-709-1400 or www.sportsartfitness.com

# Our judges



**Lynn Allen**, president of Heartland Fitness in Ames, Iowa, an adviser to the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association, and designer of the Clinton White House's workout room.



**Richard Cotton**, chief exercise physiologist at MyExercisePlan.com and spokesperson for the American Council on Exercise; trainer Tony Ordas assisted with the judging.



**Mark and Lisa Fenton**. A biomechanics expert, Mark is host of the PBS series *America's Walking*. Lisa is a former designer and engineer for Reebok and Nike.



**Petra Kolber**, longtime *Health* Contributing Editor, Reebok Master Trainer, and star of numerous fitness videos, including her latest, *Step Select* and *PK Grooves*.



**Robyn Stuhr**, PhD, 20-year fitness-industry veteran and program director for the Center for Sports Medicine, St. Francis Memorial Hospital, Corte Madera Town Center in Corte Madera, California.

