

Low-Impact Cardio That Protects Your Joints



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Why I recommend elliptical, recumbent bike, or stationary bike instead of the treadmill

Dear Friends,

Over my 16 years treating patients, one of the most common questions I'm asked is, *"Why do you usually recommend elliptical, recumbent bike, or stationary bike instead of the treadmill?"*

The simple answer is, the elliptical, recumbent bike, or stationary bike provide the **same cardiovascular and movement benefits as walking or running**, while **significantly reducing unnecessary stress on the joints**. As we stay active over time, our joints deserve smarter loading, not more pounding. My goal is always to help you move in ways that support strength and endurance **without accelerating wear or discomfort**. That balance is key to staying active for years to come.

Warmly,
Aime Maranan

Why Low-Impact Cardio Often Works Better Over Time

Many active adults notice that activities they once tolerated easily, like walking or jogging, now lead to knee, hip, or back soreness later in the day. This reflects how our joints and connective tissues change with time and use.

Machines like ellipticals, recumbent bikes, and stationary bikes are designed to:

- Keep the joints moving through smooth, controlled ranges
- Reduce vertical impact through the knees, hips, and spine
- Allow sustained cardiovascular exercise without repetitive pounding

In short, they simulate walking, running, or stair climbing, while minimizing joint compression and shock.

What Many People Don't Realize

Cardiovascular benefit does not depend on impact.

Your heart, lungs, and muscles respond to:

- Effort
- Rhythm
- Duration
- Consistency

Not how hard your feet strike the ground. Low-impact cardio often allows people to exercise longer and more comfortably, which leads to better endurance, balance, and overall conditioning.

Early Signs You May Benefit from Low-Impact Options

You may want to consider modifying your warm-up or cardio routine if you notice:

- Joint stiffness after treadmill use
- Knee or hip soreness later in the day
- Back discomfort after walking workouts
- Fatigue that limits how long you can exercise

These are **signals**, not failures. Listening early often prevents bigger setbacks later.

Common Belief — Corrected

Common belief:

“If it doesn’t hurt, it’s not effective exercise.”

Clinical reality:

The most effective exercise is the one your body can tolerate consistently, without pain or recovery setbacks.

COMFORTABLE MOVEMENT BUILDS MOMENTUM. PAIN INTERRUPTS IT.

Safety & Independence Tip of the Month

Warm-ups matter more than most people think.

Starting your workout with 5–10 minutes of low-impact movement helps lubricate the joints, improve circulation, and reduce injury risk — especially before strength or balance exercises.

Staying Active Around the North Shore

With winter still in full swing, many of our patients are using indoor cardio options to stay consistent until spring. Maintaining movement now makes the transition back to outdoor walking and activities much smoother when the weather changes.

A Gentle Reminder

If you or a family member have questions about joint-friendly exercise, balance, or staying active comfortably, our therapists are always happy to offer guidance. Early adjustments often make a meaningful difference.

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Feel free to share this with a spouse, friends, or family members who may find it helpful.