

Is vibration training a waste of time?

Are vibration platforms a valuable training aid or just another gimmick for the lazy masses? *MF* asked two leading fitness experts for their views, so that you can decide



Simon Richman,
fitness manager at British
Military Fitness, says

YES

Vibration machines such as Power Plates are a gimmick for people who want to get fit by doing the least amount of actual exercise possible. They might be effective for the rehabilitation of specific muscle injuries, and they may slightly improve muscle tone, but they won't do anything for your cardiovascular fitness. At British Military Fitness, our outdoor classes combine running and circuit activities to improve strength, tone and cardiovascular fitness.

Power Plates are expensive, too. A personal model costs £2,000. How many people can afford that? A pair of good running shoes is a far better investment. Running is the ultimate cardiovascular exercise, but cycling, rowing and swimming are also good.

Exercise is most effective when you are motivated and having fun doing a varied cardio session. This combined with a sensible diet will deliver far superior results than a few sessions on a vibrating plate. It's a cliché, but there really are no shortcuts when it comes to getting fit.

Visit britmilitfit.com for details.



Lars Harms,
education and training
manager at Power Plate
UK, says

NO

During exercise on the gym floor, your muscles will contract maybe once or twice a second. A high-speed Power Plate stimulates the muscles to contract between 30 and 50 times per minute.

Performing press-ups, squats, tricep dips or lunges on the plate will recruit around 97 per cent of muscle fibres, a feat that cannot be replicated on stable ground. As a bonus, it also automatically activates your core and regenerates damaged muscle tissue, which speeds up the body's natural ability to repair itself and build muscle.

This machine isn't a miracle cure, but it can enhance your workout and save you time. A ten-second warm-up of press-ups on the plate makes your muscles more responsive ahead of hitting the bench press, meaning you can lift more

weight. It also helps build a stronger core compared to sit-ups alone. For post-workout stretches it massages tired muscles, shifting excess lactic acid.

Using the Power Plate three times a week in conjunction with free weights and cardio can deliver improvements in strength, power and flexibility.

Visit powerplate.com for details.

Photography: Hugh Threlfall

TRAINER TALK

What's the single best exercise to get great abs?



Reverse crunch

Shaun Stafford,
personal trainer

The reverse crunch forces your abs and obliques to work really hard. Start on a flat bench and aim for 8-12 reps. Once you can do three sets of 12 with perfect form, increase the angle to increase the difficulty.

Visit shaunstaffordtraining.com.



Weighted crunch

Rob Burr, Phoenix
Fitness Group

The abs respond better to being overloaded than they do to performing hundreds of sit-ups. Lie on a gym ball while holding a heavy weight plate on your chest and crunch for three sets of 8-12 reps.

Visit phoenixfitnessgroup.com.



Woodchop

Neil Odell,
Premier Training
International

The woodchop stimulates the entire abdominal region in a more functional way than crunches. Alternate between high and low, horizontal and reverse woodchops in sets of 6-12 reps.

Visit premierglobal.co.uk.



Gym ball jackknife

Chris Mundle,
DestinationW1

Start in the plank position with your back flat and a gym ball under your feet. Roll the ball towards you, tightening your abs into a crunch, and hold for five seconds. Do 15 reps. This is great because it works your shoulders and arms too.

Visit destinationw1.com.