

PLATE LOADED EQUIPMENT

Plate loaded machines offer benefits to exercisers who enjoy high-intensity strength workouts. By Barb Gormley

When a customer recently asked Chris Cluett, of Spartan Fitness Equipment in Dartmouth, NS, to show him equipment that would let him leg press 700 pounds, Cluett automatically escorted him to the store's plate loaded equipment area. "You can only handle that amount of weight with a plate loaded machine," says Cluett, the company's director of operations.

Close to 35% of Spartan's resistance training equipment sales are plate loaded machines, and it carries a wide variety from four manufacturers. The company's six locations in Eastern Canada sell specifically to the retail and commercial markets.

"You can do the same exercises with plate loaded equipment that you do with selectorized weight-stack style equipment," explains Cluett, "but you're not restricted by the amount of weight you can use." With plate loaded equipment, the user manually loads plates – as heavy as 45 pounds each – onto the machine. Certain machines can hold up to 1,000 pounds.

At St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, NS, it's the big, brawny types who gravitate to its High Performance Room that features solely dumbbells and

plate loaded equipment, says Jeff Vossen, manager of recreational services. It's also popular with the university's sports teams and body builders.

As his facility's administrator and keeper of the budget, Vossen sites another important plus to plate loaded equipment: it's cheaper than other types of resistance training machines. "We already have 10,000 pounds of weights in our facility, so when we buy a new piece we're just buying the machine." The simplicity of the equipment – fewer welds and parts – and lower shipping costs, due to its lighter weight, also help keep the price down.

Vossen notes that his users appreciate the close resemblance of the plate loaded workout to barbell and dumbbell training. They also like that some plate loaded machines don't require a training partner or spotter. Perhaps most importantly, plate loaded workouts offer a decreased risk of injury due to the supportive structure and controlled movement ranges that the machines provide.

Even though plate loaded machines are very safe when used properly, fitness professionals need to teach members how to use them properly, as they would any other piece of equipment. Vossen offers these four safety tips:

- 1.** When you're loading plates, bend your knees and keep your back straight. Hold the plate close to your body, and avoid twisting actions.
- 2.** When you're transporting plates, hold the hollow side away from you. This lets you grip the plate more easily. Some plates have integrated handgrips that make holding and transporting them easier.
- 3.** Always use safety collars so the plates stay in place; if the plates move during exercise, they could change the balance of the bar.
- 4.** When you're finished with the machine, return the weights to the rack. Don't drop them on the floor where they could potentially land on your toes or someone else's. If you don't tidy up after yourself, others may not be able to lift them and put them away for you.

If you're interested in adding plate loaded equipment to your gym floor, here's some of the latest equipment available today.

Barb Gormley is the managing editor of *Fitness Business Canada*, a freelance fitness writer and a certified personal trainer. Contact her at www.barbgormley.com.



Paramount Plate Loaded Free Weight Series

The Paramount Plate Loaded Free Weight Series includes 20 models with optimum biomechanics and compact, space-efficient designs. Five upper-body models feature patented Paramount Advanced Rotary Technology utilizing unilateral movements and adjustable rotating handles that allow users to achieve full articulation of the shoulder joint while following a natural range of motion. The Total Body leg, chest and shoulder models provide multiple exercise movements. Paramount plate loaded machines are designed using parametric modelling and include low-maintenance components and high-quality construction. For more information, call 323-721-2121 or visit www.paramountfitness.com.

Cybox ChestPress

CYBEX plate loaded machines deliver the results your most advanced users are looking for without intimidating newer exercisers. The plate loaded series offers a broad adjustability range to ensure proper user fit and hip-level plate tubes for easy loading. This innovative strength training line incorporates direct drive and four far linkages as well as the company's patented Dual Axis Technology. For more information, call 888-462-9239 or visit www.cybexintl.com.



Max Rack®

The Max Rack® by Star Trac bridges offers the safety of a Smith machine with the freedom of Olympic bar weight training. The unique 3D design allows the Olympic bar to travel up and down as well as forward and back while maintaining the lateral stability of a traditional Smith machine. The unique forward and back feature allows the user to move in two planes creating the opportunity for dynamic exercises like lunges or movements that require an arch through range of motion. For more information, call 1-800-228-6635 or visit www.startrac.com.



▶ **Hammer Strength Heavy Duty Half Rack**

Using our years of experience and commitment to quality, we've created the new, rugged Hammer Strength Heavy Duty Half Rack. Open-front configuration enables unrestricted movements, and the welded bottom band pegs allow for variable resistance training. The ergonomically angled chin-up handles provide natural exercise motion. If space efficiency, workout effectiveness, advanced training variety and the ultimate in durability are important to you, then the Heavy Duty Half Rack is ideal for your facility. For more information, call 800-634-8673 or visit hammerstrength.com.



▶ **Strive Arm Curl**

STRIVE's® Arm Curl features the patented Smart Strength® technology. It has the unique ability to target load the resistance at five different points in the range of motion. This enables users to recruit more muscle fibres during every workout thus producing a stronger, bigger and more efficient muscle then ever before. Built to last, this is the only machine of its kind and it has been instrumental in creating the arms of Schwarzenegger, Ferrigno, Goldberg, Hulk Hogan, and more. For more information, call 800-368-6448 or visit www.strivefit.com.

▶ **Iron Grip Urethane Olympic Plates**

Iron Grip Urethane Olympic Plates feature a patented opposing grip configuration for enhanced safety and ease of use. The unique 12-sided design is another safety feature that helps prevent the plates from rolling dangerously if members lean them against equipment or walls while loading bars or machines. The durable urethane coating prevents scratching and scuffing of equipment, walls and floors. Iron Grip Olympic plates are made exclusively in the USA and are backed by a five-year guarantee. They are available in 2.5 lb., 5 lb., 10 lb., 25 lb., 35 lb. and 45 lb. sizes, with kilogram equivalent weight markings on all sizes. For more information, call visit www.irongrip.com.





▲ Matrix Fitness Systems' Plate Loaded Series

Matrix Fitness Systems' Plate Loaded Series has the same aesthetic distinction and durable construction as the Matrix G3 Strength product line. Each piece offers maximum durability, stability, comfort and ease of use. All six units boast a number of appealing features, including a non-intimidating design, bolt-together frame for easy installation, Ergo Form™ cushions for added comfort, polarized titanium powder coating with a second clear coat finish and integrated weight storage horns to help keep facility floors clean. For more information, call 866-693-4863 or visit www.matrixfitness.com.



Technogym PURESTRENGTH ▲

Technogym's new PURESTRENGTH plate loaded equipment combines all the standard features of traditional plate loaded equipment with new innovations for a superior strength training experience. Structural integrity and durability paired with excellent biomechanics maximize muscle activation while respecting the safest trajectory for the joint. Innovative ergonomic features include Pure Grip technology, a comfortable and natural grip design to fit all users. The Body Print System also ensures the seat moulds to the user's body shape for maximum support. Other distinctive features include Visual Flags and spring-loaded seat adjustments that help users find the right exercise position.

escape ordinary
with our new **LIFETIME MOTOR WARRANTY**

SportsArt's new **ECO-POWR™** motor is not only the industry's first green power source – it turns out it's making our competitors green with envy, too. You see, with an unprecedented 5 Texas Instrument processors, **ECO-POWR™** is not only the most efficient motor in the industry, it's also the most durable. This allows SportsArt Fitness to offer an unheard of **LIFETIME MOTOR WARRANTY!** Every day more and more fitness directors are discovering that SportsArt Fitness is the equipment line that will help them and their facility **ESCAPE ORDINARY.** Isn't it time for YOU to find out what all the fuss is about?

SportsArt FITNESS
escape ordinary™

www.sportsartfitness.com

800.709.1400