

# Consumer Decision Making Study Guide 2026

**Skin Care: Sunscreen** *\*Updated*

**Fitness Equipment**

**Water Bottles**

**Dental Products**

**Brewing Coffee – Seniors Only** *\*New*

**Event Venues – Seniors Only** *\*New*



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# Skin Care: Sunscreen



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## SUNSCREEN OVERVIEW

Sunscreen is one of the most important tools we have to protect our skin from the sun, yet nearly one third of Americans never use it. Too much sun exposure can cause sunburn, premature aging, wrinkles, and in many cases, skin cancer.

When used as directed, sunscreen can:

- Decrease your risk of skin cancers and skin precancers. Studies show that regular daily use of SPF 30 sunscreen, when used as directed, can reduce your risk of developing squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) by about 40 percent, and lower your melanoma risk by 50 percent.
- Help prevent premature skin aging caused by the sun, including wrinkles, sagging and age spots.

Unfortunately, many people think that a tan is a healthy look. But what these people do not know is that a tan is actually like a giant scab that your skin creates to try to protect itself from more sun damage.

It is impossible to completely avoid the sun, of course, but you can take precautions to ensure that you are protecting yourself from its harmful rays.

Know the 6 W's of Sunscreen:

**WHO:** Everyone under the sun except babies under six months old

**WHICH:** Broad spectrum SPF 15 or higher; Dermatologists recommend SPF 30

**WHEN:** Every day, 30 minutes prior to going outdoors. Reapply sunscreen at least every two hours, and more often if you're sweating or swimming.

**WHERE:** All exposed skin

**WHAT:** Apply one ounce (about two tablespoons) to your entire body for each application

**WHY:** Reduces your risk of skin damage and skin cancer

## SUNSCREEN OVERVIEW (CONT.)

In addition, consumers should engage in sun protective behaviors, such as wearing protective clothing; wearing sunglasses and a hat that provides adequate shade; avoiding the sun during the hours of 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM and finding shade whenever possible during these periods of peak sunlight.

Consumers should also use adequate protection and appropriate precautions with sunlamps and tanning beds/booths. Both are sources of UV radiation that have been linked to skin cancer, skin burns, premature skin aging, and both short-term and long-term eye damage.

Sunscreen should not be used on babies under six months of age. Staying out of the sun, using shaded structures and sun-protective clothing are the best ways to safeguard infants.

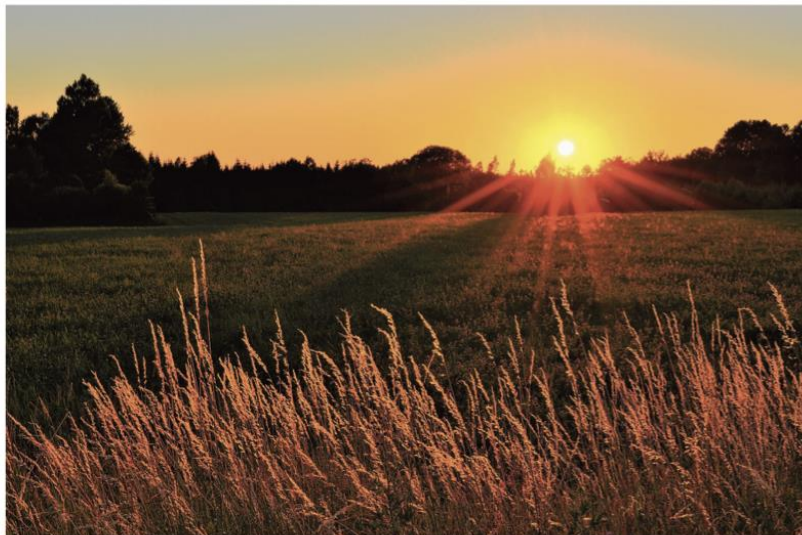
Parents of infants and toddlers 6 months and older may apply a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher to all skin not covered by clothing, according to the instructions on the product label. When outdoors, sunscreen should be reapplied approximately every two hours, or as often as the label says. Sunscreens that use the ingredients zinc oxide or titanium dioxide, or special sunscreens made for infants or toddlers, may cause less irritation to their sensitive skin.



## CHOOSING THE RIGHT SUNSCREEN: WHAT MAKES THE SUN HARMFUL?

The sun itself is not what harms our skin. It is the ultraviolet (UV) radiation that the sun gives off that actually causes the damage. There are three types of UV rays. They are UVA, UVB, and UVC.

- **UVA** rays penetrate deepest into your skin, reaching the new skin that lies far beneath the surface and are linked to long-term skin damage such as wrinkles. UVA damages your skin, resulting in a tan. It is the primary radiation used in tanning beds. It causes almost all forms of skin aging, including wrinkles. UVA damages the collagen and elastin in the skin and generates free radicals.
- **UVB** rays are responsible for most of the damage that your skin incurs from the sun, causing sunburn and most skin cancers. UVB damages the DNA in skin cells and causes DNA mutations that can eventually lead to melanoma and other types of skin cancer. UVB radiation from the sun can also cause cataracts. Cataracts happen when proteins in your eye lens get damaged. The proteins start to collect pigments that cloud your vision.
- **UVC** rays do not reach the earth's surface because they are blocked by the ozone layer; humans are only exposed to UVC radiation from artificial sources such as a lamp or lasers.



## HOW SUNSCREEN WORKS

Sunscreen includes active ingredients that help prevent the sun's UV radiation from reaching your skin. Here's how the two types of sunscreen work for you:

- 1) Physical (mineral) sunscreen ingredients (including the minerals titanium dioxide and zinc oxide) reflect and scatter the rays (like a shield) before they penetrate your skin.
- 2) Chemical sunscreen ingredients (like avobenzone and octisalate) absorb UV rays (like a sponge) before they can damage your skin.



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved 20 human-made chemicals or natural sun blocking agents for use in sunscreens. The most common chemicals that protect you from UVB rays include: cinnamates, patamates, or benzophenones like oxybenzone and Dioxybenzone. The chemicals that protect you from UVA rays are titanium dioxide and zinc oxide. A good sunscreen will contain agents that block both types of radiation.

## SUN PROTECTION FACTOR (SPF)

The sun protection factor (SPF) value indicates the level of sunburn protection provided by the sunscreen product. All sunscreens must be tested to measure the amount of UV radiation exposure it takes to cause sunburn when using the sunscreen compared to how much UV exposure it takes to cause a sunburn when not using the sunscreen. The product is then labeled with the appropriate SPF value.

Sunscreens are made in a wide range of SPFs. Higher SPF values (up to 50) provide greater sunburn protection. Because SPF values are determined from a test that measures protection against sunburn, SPF values primarily indicate a sunscreen's UVB protection. According to the FDA and the EPA, to get the most protection out of sunscreen you should choose a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15.

Some people incorrectly believe that SPF relates to the time of solar exposure. For example, some people believe that, if they normally get sunburned in one hour, then an SPF 15 sunscreen allows them to stay in the sun for 15 hours (e.g., 15 times longer) without getting sunburned. This is not true because SPF is not directly related to the time of solar exposure but to amount of solar exposure. The amount of solar exposure we experience depends on many factors.

For example, the sun is stronger in the middle of the day compared to early morning and early evening hours. That means your risk of sunburn is higher at midday. Solar intensity is also impacted by your geographic location, with greater solar intensity occurring at lower latitudes. Because of this, someone who is closer to the equator may experience greater solar exposure than someone who is farther from the equator but spends the same amount of time in the sun.

## SUN PROTECTION FACTOR (SPF) (CONT.)

It is also important to remember that high-number SPF's last the same amount of time as low-number SPF's. A high-number SPF does not allow you to spend additional time outdoors without reapplication. As many individuals only apply about 20–50% of the amount of sunscreen needed to achieve the amount of SPF on the label, application of high-SPF sunscreens helps to compensate for this under-application. Sunscreen should be reapplied approximately every two hours when outdoors, even on cloudy days, and after swimming or sweating.

## BROAD SPECTRUM

Broad spectrum sunscreens help protect against both forms of UV radiation - UVA and UVB. However, not all sunscreens are broad spectrum, so it is important to look for this description on the label. A sunscreen product's SPF value is primarily an indicator of the level of protection that product provides against UVB radiation, but broad-spectrum sunscreens also protect against UVA radiation. Broad spectrum Sunscreen provides protection against both by providing a chemical barrier that absorbs or reflects UV radiation before it can damage the skin.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the FDA recommend at least an SPF of 15. Dermatologists recommend an SPF of 30.

Sunscreens that are not broad spectrum or that lack an SPF of at least 15 must carry the following warning on their Drug Facts label:

*Skin Cancer/Skin Aging Alert: Spending time in the sun increases your risk of skin cancer and early skin aging. This product has been shown only to help prevent sunburn, not skin cancer or early skin aging.*



## STORING YOUR SUNSCREEN

To keep your sunscreen in good condition and maintain its effectiveness, the FDA recommends you not expose sunscreen containers to direct sun. Protect the sunscreen by wrapping the containers in towels or keeping them in the shade while outside in the heat for long periods of time.

This is why sunscreen labels must say: “Protect the product in this container from excessive heat and direct sun.”

Keep unused sunscreen in a safe place that is away from sun and heat.

## CHECK EXPIRATION DATES

FDA regulations require all nonprescription drugs to have an expiration date unless the manufacturer’s stability testing has shown that the product will remain stable for at least three years. That means a sunscreen product that doesn’t have an expiration date should be considered expired three years after purchase.

To make sure that your sunscreen is providing the sun protection promised in its labeling, the FDA recommends that you:

- 1) Do not use sunscreen products that have passed their expiration date (if there is one listed).
- 2) Do not use sunscreen products that have no expiration date and were not purchased within the last three years.
- 3) Discard expired sunscreens because they may not be safe and effective anymore. If you do not know how old your sunscreen is, discard it.

## WHAT TYPE SHOULD YOU USE?

The best type of sunscreen is the one you will use again and again. Just make sure it offers broad-spectrum (UVA and UVB) protection, has an SPF of 30 or higher, and is water resistant.

The kind of sunscreen you use is a matter of personal choice and may vary depending on the area of the body to be protected. Available sunscreen options include lotions, creams, gels, oils, butters, pastes / ointments, wax sticks, and sprays.

Creams are best for dry skin and applying on the face.

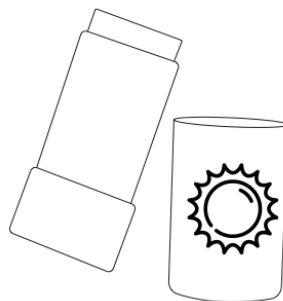
Gels are good for oily complexions and hairy areas.

Sticks are good to use around the eyes.

Sprays are sometimes preferred by parents since they are easy to apply to a child's skin. However, the challenge in using sprays is that it is difficult to know if you have used enough sunscreen to protect all sun-exposed areas of the body.

To evenly cover the skin and use spray sunscreen safely, follow these tips:

- 1) Spray until your (or your child's) skin glistens, then rub the sunscreen into the skin to get even coverage.
- 2) Do not apply spray sunscreen near heat or close to an open flame.
- 3) Avoid inhaling spray sunscreen by never spraying it around or near the face or mouth and not spraying it into the wind.





## WHAT TYPE SHOULD YOU USE?

Tinted sunscreens add protection against visible light, in addition to the sun's UVA and UVB rays. Research has shown visible light can worsen dark spots caused by the sun. Tinted sunscreen that matches with your skin tone can also help you avoid the white residue or "cast" that some sunscreens leave on your skin.

Dermatologists don't recommend sunscreen with insect repellent. Purchase and apply each product separately, as sunscreens need to be applied generously and often; however, insect repellent should be used sparingly and much less frequently. Some moisturizers and cosmetics have SPF. While these products are convenient, remember that sunscreen needs to be reapplied approximately every two hours when you're outdoors.

In addition, keep in mind that while some sunscreens are water resistant, no sunscreen is "waterproof" or "sweatproof." Sunscreen manufacturers are not allowed to use these terms, as they would be misleading. When using a water-resistant sunscreen, you should reapply it after swimming or sweating.

The directions for using sunscreen products can vary according to their forms. Always read the label before using a sunscreen product.

Other factors to consider:

- Your skin cancer risk factors: Your skin type and family history will determine the level of protection needed for you.
- Photosensitivity: No matter your skin type, certain medications and disorders make your skin highly sensitive to the sun, raising your protection requirements.
- Skin conditions: You can choose from sunscreens for dry skin, oily skin, acne-prone skin and sensitive skin.



## CHOOSING THE RIGHT SUNSCREEN--COST

Sunscreens can vary in price from a few cents per ounce for generic brands to a few dollars per ounce for designer brands. Studies show that the price of sunscreen is not related to its effectiveness. However, for some high-risk individuals who are especially sensitive to the sun's rays, cost may make a difference.

Often, the sunscreen's cost suggests a special way that the product was made. For example, a sunscreen made especially for young children may cost more than regular sunscreen, but the difference in price is worth it when you figure that the baby's sunscreen was created with a special formula that won't burn if it gets in the baby's eyes.

For most people though, any sunscreen that contains an FDA-approved sun blocking agent will provide adequate protection. Your best bet is to try out several different products and find the one that works best for you.

## CHOOSING AND USING THE RIGHT SUNSCREEN

**Putting it on-** Sunscreen works best when it is applied about 30 minutes before you head out into the sun. The best way to apply sunscreen is to smooth it in lightly with your fingertips and then allow it to dry before you put on clothes so that it does not have a chance to rub off. Many sunscreens will stain clothing, so it is a good idea to let the sunscreen dry completely before dressing.

**Water resistance-** There are two water-resistance categories for sunscreen: "water-resistant" and "very water-resistant." Water-resistant sunscreens are those that retain their labeled SPF after being worn in the water for 40 minutes. Very water-resistant sunscreens retain their labeled SPF after 80 minutes in the water. It is important to note that no sunscreen is truly "waterproof," and claims to that effect are false.



## CHOOSING AND USING THE RIGHT SUNSCREEN (CONT.)

**Keeping it on-** For the best protection, you should reapply sunscreen whenever you come out of the water or every 30 minutes if you are sweating heavily. If you are involved in normal activities, reapplying sunscreen every one to two hours should be sufficient.

**Cover all areas-** When you are applying sunscreen, it is important to cover those hard-to-reach areas. Be sure to apply sunscreen to your eyelids, lips, ears, neck, feet, and hands. However, you should be careful when you are applying sunscreen around your eyes to make sure that you don't get any in your eyes.

Choosing a sunscreen that is thicker (like a cream) is a better bet on your face because it is easier to control. It should take about 1-ounce of sunscreen to cover your entire body. This means that a 6-ounce bottle of sunscreen should last for only six applications. Because it can be hard to remember where you have already applied sunscreen, the sunscreens that have added color but dry clear are helpful, especially with children. Sunscreens with added color can also be more fun for kids to wear, so they might not mind getting slathered in it as much. However, before you purchase a sunscreen with added color, make sure it has all of the other requirements of a good sunscreen.

**Skin reactions-** The first sunscreens relied on a chemical called para-aminobenzoic acid or PABA. This product caused skin irritation for many people, so sunscreens have changed to milder chemicals. A PABA-free sunscreen is an especially good choice for those with sensitive skin. Additionally, fragrances added to sunscreens can cause allergic reactions in some people who use them. There are fragrance-free alternatives that protect just as well.

## CHOOSING AND USING THE RIGHT SUNSCREEN (CONT.)

**Safety concerns-** There have been past incidents in which people applying and wearing sunscreen spray near open flames caught fire and, as a result, suffered significant burns that required medical treatment. Although the specific products reported to have been used in these incidents were voluntarily recalled from the market and are no longer on store shelves, there are many other sunscreen spray products which still do contain flammable ingredients, like alcohol.

Flammable products are required to have a label warning indicating that they are flammable and should not be used near an open flame.

To stay safe while using sunscreen sprays, do the following:

- When you choose a sunscreen, think about where you'll be using it. If you'll be anywhere near a flame source, avoid any product with a flammability warning, and choose another non-flammable sunscreen product instead. This recommendation is particularly important when it comes to choosing a product for children, since they are frequently active and may be near flame sources.
- While applying and wearing sunscreen products labeled as flammable, avoid open flames.

Using these sunscreen tips, along with other protective measures, makes a difference in how well you can protect yourself and your family from sunburn, skin cancer, early skin aging and other risks of overexposure to the sun.

**Sources:** EPA, FDA, American Academy of Dermatology Association, Kenvue

# Fitness Equipment





## FITNESS EQUIPMENT

Your personal health can be positively impacted by including physical activity in your regular routine. It can improve your physical health and other facets of living a healthy life. “Regular physical activity can improve your brain health, help manage weight, reduce the risk of disease, strengthen bones and muscles, and improve your ability to do everyday activities,” according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

According to the National Institute of Health, four basic types of exercise can improve health and physical activity. Each of them has different benefits, and the use of multiple types can magnify the benefits regardless of age. Types include:

- **Endurance** — This activity increases breathing and heart rate. It is often referred to as “aerobic” or “cardiovascular (cardio).” “Walking, cycling, swimming, climbing, dancing, and running are all endurance-building activities. A range of fitness equipment products can be used for endurance.
- **Strength** — Muscle strength can help you become a better athlete, increase work productivity, and make strenuous daily activities easier. It can also help you with your balance. Equipment and products to help build strong muscles may include “strength training” and “resistance training” equipment. The CDC recommends two days of strength training per week.
- **Balance** — **Balance** is an important part of physical fitness and focuses on maintaining proper posture over the body’s base of support. Improved balance can prevent falls among the elderly, increase an athlete’s ability to generate power in a vertical jump, and increase the force or resistance placed upon the body to increase strength. A range of products on the market can help improve balance for all ages and purposes.
- **Flexibility** — Exercises that stretch muscles can greatly impact your body’s ability to stay flexible. Muscle flexibility allows for greater freedom of movement for other exercises as well as for everyday activities. It may also help you avoid discomfort when combined with small spaces for extended periods of time like a meeting, classroom, plane flight, or even a car/bus ride<sup>3</sup>. Equipment/products used to improve flexibility can be quite simple and inexpensive compared to other types of fitness equipment. However, the impact on your physical fitness can be quite dramatic over time.

A wide range of products is available in this product category, and there is an even wider range of uses for them. In addition, one should consider their physical fitness goals. Fitness equipment can provide benefits, although different, depending on the user’s age and current physical ability. However, most of the equipment referenced in this guide can be used across ages and abilities, depending on the type of equipment and the person’s ability to use the equipment towards their fitness goals effectively. This product category includes the following types of fitness equipment but may include others not listed or referenced here.

- Dumbbell Set
- Treadmill
- Stationary Bicycle
- Barbell Set



### **DUMBBELL SETS** (X Endurance Strength Balance Flexibility)

Dumbbells are small bars that fit in your hand and have equal weights on either side. They weigh as little as 2 pounds and go up to over 100 pounds. Depending on their range of uses and anticipated benefits, dumbbells can range from simple small sets to very large extensive sets. Some are more appropriate for single-person use in your home, while others may be more appropriate for multiple people to use at the same time as studio sets in a gym setting.

- **Materials** – Dumbbells can be made from various materials, including rubber, neoprene, urethane, steel, and cast iron. In addition, some may include a combination of both, such as rubber-coated cast iron products. Each has advantages and disadvantages based on the type of use, space, and storage. The types of materials used can also be reflected in the cost. For example, the rubber-coated hexagonal weights may be more expensive than the non-coated equivalent due to the extra materials used. In addition, rubber may be less likely to scuff or scar a delicate floor.



- **Types** – Dumbbells come in three general types: fixed, adjustable, or plate loadable. Fixed dumbbells have a single grip, which is permanently fixed between the billets and cannot be altered. Adjustable dumbbells consist of a series of weight plates mounted in a base with a mechanical handle or dial that can be adjusted for a specific plate, which adjusts the amount of weight. The plate loadable is also a varied type of dumbbell that includes a handle that can be loaded with varied weight plates and secured with a barbell collar. Depending on their intended purpose and use, one type may be more advantageous than another. For example, smaller sets of 2, 3 & 5-pound weights may not be expandable within the set, unlike the larger studio sets that may range from 5 to 50 pounds each.



- **Shapes**—Dumbbells can be round/circular, hexagonal, square, or globe. Depending on how and where they will be used, the shape can impact which is preferential. For example, hexagon-shaped dumbbells are less likely to roll away if set down on the floor, on a flat surface, or when stored. Circular dumbbells distribute their weight more uniformly than other shapes, and their ability to roll can be both an advantage and disadvantage.



- **Handles**—The handle is a very important feature of any dumbbell. Variations in grip thickness, shape, texture, and finish can make a big difference when selecting the best one for you. Some have revolving grips, which allow the grip to spin separately from the dumbbell to avoid torque in the wrists when changing hand positions.



### **TREADMILLS** ( ✓ Endurance ✓ Strength ✓ Balance ✓ Flexibility)

The treadmill is a stationary exercise machine that features a walking or running belt designed primarily for cardio exercise. However, they can be used for all types of exercise depending on the type and features of the individual model. Treadmills can offer a variety of speed and incline settings that are ideal for varied cardio fitness levels. Some models even offer Bluetooth connectivity for audio/visual and programming. Some have LCD touchscreens for interactive controls, including streaming training programs. Treadmills can provide some unique advantages for their users to include:

- Offering cushioned running/walking surfaces for shock absorption reduces high impact for runners, which can lead to back, knee, and ankle problems over time.
- Low-impact cardio helps build a stronger heart and bones, reduce blood pressure, and even help with weight loss.
- Building leg muscles and improving core strength.
- Improves mental health through endorphins released through aerobic exercise.

Treadmills can be grouped into 4 different types. Each may share similar features and benefits as well as have some features unique to each type. Since treadmills can be a very versatile piece of fitness equipment, evaluating the scope of its use is important when selecting the best one for your own use.

- **Manual** – These products are generally lighter and the least expensive treadmill types. They generally offer fewer features than the others as an electric motor does not power them. The primary features include handrails and the treadmill belt. They are powered exclusively by the person walking or running. As a result, when you stop walking/running, the treadmill stops as well. This is a much safer option at home if there are small children around. They are usually foldable, making them much easier to store. They are generally smaller and lighter than their motored counterparts.
- **Motorized** – These products require a main power source for the electric motor and other powered features like LCD displays, speakers, and streaming capabilities. Motorized treadmills are generally heavier than manual ones but may be equipped with rollers to make moving them easier. The motorized belt and deck may have adjustable speeds and inclines for extended capabilities. Commercial versions may include vitals sensors to monitor heart rate. Their more rugged construction may be more appropriate for extended or heavy use and will likely be more expensive than the home-type models. However, they also work well at home despite the cost.
- **Hybrid**—These products are generally more expensive and durable than other models. Their hybrid designs can include “tread climbers” that combine traditional designs with elliptical machines.





- **Medical**—These are very specialized machines but also have their place depending on their intended use. Sometimes referred to as “zero gravity” or “anti-gravity” treadmills, they allow the user to walk or run at a lower percentage of their own body weight. This is especially valuable for preventative rehabilitation or therapy. They function primarily like a standard treadmill except as noted above.



Treadmill safety is very important, especially for any version that will be at home and may be accessible to small children. Great care should be taken when selecting a treadmill. Ensure that it has important safety features, such as emergency stop systems like a panic button, a tether with a shut-off clip, or both.

### **STATIONARY BICYCLES** ( ✓ *Endurance* ✓ *Strength* ✓ *Balance* ✓ *Flexibility*)

Stationary bicycles or “exercise bikes,” like treadmills, are a type of stationary fitness equipment that provides some of the same fitness benefits as cycling with some important benefits over being out on an open road. Aside from the cardiovascular benefits of this type of activity, stationary bicycles also help with weight loss, burn fat, strengthen leg and lower body muscles, and provide a low-impact workout. This equipment allows for interval training and is much safer than road cycling for obvious reasons.

The most common and basic design of a stationary bicycle includes a metal frame, single wheel, seat, and some type of handlebar. From this point, the variations begin and have a great impact on its use and versatility. Other features can include vitals monitoring sensors, LCD screens, audio input ports, Bluetooth, and streaming program capabilities.

There are five general types of stationary bicycles: indoor cycling bikes, recumbent bikes, upright bikes, air bikes, and folding bikes. Each has its own unique characteristics and fitness benefits. Depending on your fitness goals, you should select the type and model that best fits your needs.

- **Indoor Bike** – This is likely the most common type of stationary bicycle. It includes the basic design with the handlebars positioned forward of the cycle (above the front wheel) to allow the rider to lean forward, like being out on the open road. What makes this type unique is the exposed flywheel that uses friction or magnetic resistance to create different levels of intensity. The control is either a manual control (knob) or electronic control (digital). These models are great for high-intensity workouts and have a smaller footprint than some of the other types. You can even stand up on the pedals and ride in that position. One fault is that they generally provide no upper-body workout.
- **Recumbent Bike** – This type is unique in that it places the rider lower to the ground and repositions the pedals in front of the rider as opposed to directly below. As a result, this type is considered the lowest-impact type of bike. Unlike the Indoor Bike’s narrow seat, this one provides a wider seat and a backrest, putting the rider into an almost reclined position. People who might experience pain on a bike might be more comfortable with this type of bike. It may also be beneficial to someone recovering from injury, someone with balance problems, older people, or even someone with a disability. This bike gives up intensity for comfort and stability. There is no upper body or hand movement with these models, making it less versatile.





- **Upright Bike** – This model is like the Indoor Bike but with one major difference. The handles are closer to the rider to keep the rider from leaning forward at any point during the ride. For some, this position might be a bit uncomfortable for long rides. This also creates a more compact footprint than other types. In addition, the seat tends to be smaller than on the recumbent bike. This model provides a more robust and intense workout than the recumbent bike, but there are fewer choices for this type of bike on the market.



- **Air Bike** – While the Indoor Bike uses a flywheel, an air bike uses a fan to generate resistance while pedaling. The faster you pedal, the faster the fan turns and the more resistance you create. These models tend to be noisier than others, so if noise is an issue, this may not be the best choice. The pedals are located directly below the rider, like the Indoor Bike, and the seat size varies depending on the model chosen. One of the unique features of most Air Bikes is the moveable handles that add to an upper body workout. It works like an elliptical where your upper body movement can assist you with your lower body workout.



- **Folding Bike** – These models are designed with space as a priority. These are not your sturdiest designs but are functional and great for small spaces. They are designed to be folded up and stored away easily. These models have the handlebars in front of you and the pedals below. Your ability to get an intense workout from these models is very unlikely, but they do provide a decent cardio workout. Many do have low maximum weight capacities and generally do not come with any “extras.” This makes them very affordable.



### **BARBELL SETS** (✓ Endurance ✓ Strength ✓ Balance ✓ Flexibility)

- A barbell set is a piece of fitness equipment generally purchased as a set, although individual pieces can be purchased and is primarily used for weight training to build strength. While it can be used to address other fitness benefits relative to alternatives, this option is generally more expensive. A set includes a barbell and a long bar (4' to 8') designed to accept weight plates on either end to increase or decrease the total weight. Collars are used to prevent the plates from moving outward unevenly. It is one of the simplest pieces of fitness equipment in most gyms. However, it is much more complicated to learn how to use it correctly and effectively. In exchange, a barbell set for weight training requires using multiple muscle groups at once. This can make complete workouts more efficient. Sometimes, you can work your entire body with a single move, which is great for budding athletes. The two basic components of barbell sets include the weight and the barbells (with collars).



- **Weights** – The plates of any barbell set are the most important consideration. Most sets are available with cast-iron or bumper plate styles. Your choice will influence how you set up your gym, how many can be stacked onto a barbell, and other factors. Cast-iron plates are the most traditional options for a set. They can be thinner than coated plated, allowing more stacking on any given barbell. However, cast iron can rust if exposed to moisture or damp basements/garages. They are also a bit noisier as they clank together during your workouts. Bumper plates are generally made from a rubber base and, as a result, can be thicker than cast-iron plates, reducing the number that can be stacked on a barbell. These also tend to be a bit pricier than the cast-iron plates. As far as sets, they can range from as little as 65 pounds and as high as 600 pounds. Unless you expect to be lifting that much, a mid-range set at 300-350 pounds is a good place to start.



- **Barbells** – Most sets include a Standard or an Olympic barbell that is about 7' to 8' in length and weighs approximately 45 pounds. They have a “sleeve” on either end that holds the plates of weight secured by a collar. Each different type of barbell has different qualities and a special design that serves its specific purpose. In addition to varying shape and size, they may also feature different amounts of knurling (grippy lining on the metal), amount of whip (the way the weight changes as the bar moves), and sleeves.

- Standard Bar: 35-55 lbs, versatile lifts, static sleeves
- Olympic Bar: 33-44 lbs, versatile lifts, spinning sleeves
- Trap (Hex) Bar: 30-70 lbs, great for deadlifts, not very versatile
- Swiss Bar: 35 lbs, good for those with limited shoulder mobility, holds less weight
- Safety Squat Bar: 50 lbs, good for beginners, not very common
- Curl Bar: 25-35 lbs, good for arm lifts, varied hand positions, limited to arm lifts
- Cambered Bar: 85 lbs, good for lower body lifts, hard to find
- Log Bar: 135 lbs, specialized lifting, good for very heavy weight, hard to find
- Deadlift Bar: 45 lbs, flexes for deadlifts, deeper knurling, relatively expensive
- Powerlift Bar: 45 lbs, stronger steel, great for heavy weights, not for beginners



- **Collars** – There is a range of different collars that fit on barbell sleeves to secure the weight plates. They include spring collars, spinlock (threaded) collars, lockjaw collars, and muscle clamp collars to name a few. When it comes to securing the weight plates, make sure your collar is designed for the sleeves on your bar to prevent the weight plates from moving.



As anyone could imagine, barbell sets take up much more space than other forms of fitness equipment. In addition, their size and total weight make storing them after each use impractical. Depending on the size of the set, it might include racks for the bar(s) and weight plates. That is a big consideration when choosing to add this to your home gym. Plenty of space is a must.



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# Water Bottles



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# Water Bottles

Water bottles are made from a variety of materials and can vary greatly in shape and size. There is sure to be a water bottle to fit the needs of every consumer.

## Materials

### Plastic

- Versatility: Plastic water bottles come in limitless shapes, colors, and textures.
- Weight: Plastic is a lightweight material compared to other options.
- Affordable: Plastic water bottles are generally inexpensive.
- Health and Safety Concerns: Plastic water bottles that are a hard plastic labeled with the number 7 have BPA (Bisphenol A). BPA is a widely used chemical that is found in polycarbonate plastics, epoxy resin, food storage containers, and eye wear. It has been linked to all kinds of health issues like obesity and infertility. This is worsened when the bottle with BPA sits in the sun or has a hot beverage inside.
- Bad for the Environment: While plastic water bottles are designed for more than single-use plastic bottles, they tend to wear out quickly compared to other materials. They will then go into the landfills.
- Durability: Plastic water bottles make denting and breaking nearly impossible.
- Taste: With time, plastic water bottles will take on the taste of liquids stored in the bottle.
- Smell: Plastic bottles often have scents that attach to their chemical bonds, causing the bottle to smell over time.
- Insulation: Plastic bottles do not hold cold very well and will lose their temperature quickly.
- Washing: Generally, hard plastic water bottles are dishwasher safe.



### Recycled Plastic

- Potentially have more health dangers than regular plastic water bottles, due to PET plastic (Polyethylene Terephthalate).
- Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) is a strong synthetic fiber made from ethylene glycol and terephthalic acid. It is commonly used in carbonated drink beverage bottles. It is the most common type of plastic that is recycled.

- **Eco-Friendly:** The ability to melt the plastic back to original form and reuse allows plastic to stay out of landfills.
- **Recycled plastic material** has the same characteristics as regular plastic water bottles.

## **Glass**

- **Washing:** Glass bottles are generally safe to put in the dishwasher.
- **Color:** Glass can come in clear and a variety of colors to be able to track the amount of water you take in.
- **Taste:** Glass water bottles have no impact on the taste of water or drink.
- **Smell:** Glass water bottles have no smell associated with them.
- **Insulation:** They do not provide any insulation, so your beverage will not remain cold or hot.
- **Durability:** Glass can shatter easily when you drop it.
- **Weight:** Glass water bottles are among the heaviest. They are great for those who do not travel with their bottle during the day.



## **Single-Walled Stainless Steel**

- **Weight:** Second to plastic, this is the lightest bottle option. Great for backpacking.
- **Durability:** Will not break when you drop them. Often will dent upon dropping, but will still hold liquids.
- **Health risks:** No known health risks.
- **Affordable:** Considering their lifespan, stainless steel is a great option.
- **Taste:** Single-walled stainless steel water bottles have no impact on the taste of water or drink.
- **Smell:** There is no smell associated with single-walled stainless steel.
- **Transfers Heat:** Because it is single-walled, hot beverages will be conducted easily and may injure your hand.
- **Insulation:** Cold drinks will lose their temperature quickly because they are single-walled and will take on the outside temperature.
- **Washing:** Single-walled stainless steel is dishwasher safe.



## Insulated Stainless Steel

- **Insulation:** Because of the insulation, typically a double-wall, they maintain the temperature of the contents, both hot and cold.
- **Durability:** The double-wall gives an added layer of protection against dents, and the risk of breaking is virtually non-existent.
- **Portable:** Because the insulation prevents heat transfer, condensation will not form on the bottle. This ensures your hands will not get burned or chilled when you hold your bottle. They are not as heavy, so they can be carried easily.
- **Taste:** Insulated stainless steel water bottles have no impact on the taste of water or drink.
- **Smell:** There is no smell associated with insulated stainless steel.
- **Health Risks:** Because it is stainless steel, they pose no known health risks.
- **Color:** They come in a variety of colors and finishes (matte, opaque, or shiny).
- **Affordability:** Can be affordable, especially considering their lifespan and durability.
- **Weight:** They are heavier than plastic, but lighter than glass.
- **Washing:** If they are vacuum insulated, you can only hand wash them.



## Aluminum

- **Weight:** Aluminum is very light weight, so it is a great alternative to plastic.
- **Affordable:** Aluminum is a cheap material to produce.
- **Health Risks:** Aluminum bottles require a lining because the aluminum can emit toxic chemicals. The linings are often made of plastics or resins, which can contain BPA.
- **Taste:** Traces of the flavors of your drinks can cling to the lining of the bottle affecting the taste.
- **Smell:** The water bottles may take on the smell of liquids over time.
- **Insulation:** Not well insulated. Cold water will lose temperature quickly.
- **Durability:** Aluminum dents easier than stainless steel. However, it will not break if you drop it.
- **Washing:** Not dishwasher safe and will need to be hand washed.



## Silicone

- **Weight:** Silicone is a light material, so it is easy to carry around.
- **Durability:** Silicone is a resistant material. It won't break upon dropping. It can be punctured with sharp materials.
- **Washing:** They are dishwasher safe and can withstand high temperatures. This makes them easy to clean.

- **Health Risks:** Silicone water bottles are made without harmful chemicals that are used in plastic water bottles. It is a non-porous material that prevents bacteria and mold growth.
- **Environmentally Friendly:** They are reusable and long-lasting.
- **Insulation:** Does not keep cold well. Silicone keeps heat longer.
- **Taste:** Silicone can have a slight plastic taste when first purchased, but a proper wash before using can eliminate it. Flavored drinks may also cling to the material and affect taste if not washed properly.
- **Smell:** Silicone can have a slight plastic smell when first purchased. A proper wash before use can eliminate it.
- **Discoloration:** They may show discoloration or staining over time.
- **Collapsible and easy to store.**



## Sizes

### **Small**

- **Size Range: 5-16 ounces**
- 6-8 ounces: Best for long-distance runners so they can easily lift a water bottle from their waist and take a drink.
- 16 ounces: Great for home, travel, work, and short hikes. Can easily clip onto a backpack or slide into a cup holder without adding much weight.

### **Medium**

- **Size Range: 17-24 ounces**
- 20 ounces: Easy to clean and light weight. Commonly used for home, travel, work, picnics, and average length hikes.

### **Large**

- **Size Range: 25+ ounces**
- 32 ounces: Meets half daily water consumption needs. Common for fitness and athletic training, day trips, and longer hikes.
- 40 ounces: Commonly used for fitness and athletic training, day trips, longer hikes, family activities, and camping.

## Shape

**Width:** Aside from the volume the bottle can hold (refer to size section), the exterior width of the bottle is important. Ensure it fits your space, your hand, backpack sleeve, waistband loop, or cup holder.

**Height:** Some bottles may be too tall to fit in coffee machines or water dispensers, so you will need to consider the uses before choosing a bottle.

**Interior Angles:** The shape of the bottle relates to the ease of cleaning. If a bottle has sharp corners, it can be more difficult to clean.

## Mouth

Mouth refers to the opening at the top of the bottle.

### **Wide-Mouth**

- Wide enough to fit ice cubes.
- Easy to clean.

### **Narrow-Mouth**

- Difficult to reach inside to clean.
- Reduced likelihood of water splashing.

## Handle Types

**No Handle:** No handle attached to the water bottle at all.

**Bottle Handle:** Handles are built into the water bottle and are rigid and cannot change.

**Cap Handle:** This handle is attached/built into the cap of the water bottle. These can be rigid or soft. You can switch out caps for another one with a different handle.

## Cap Types

There are a variety of types of caps available for water bottles. Each type has its own advantages and disadvantages, and you need to choose the one that best fits your needs and preferences.

### **Screw-On Cap**

- Cap screws on firmly in place, minimizing the amount of possible leakage.
- Must open the cap each time to take a drink.
- Water can easily spill or splash out if you are moving while opening the cap.

### **Push-Pull Cap**

- Push to close and pull to open the cap of the bottle.
- Opens to a spout within the bottle.
- Common in sports bottles.



## Flip-Top Cap

- Hinged lid that flips open with a push button or by pulling it up.
- Opens to reveal straw or spout.

## Straw Cap

- Cap has a straw built in that extends into the water bottle.
- Straw can flip up or can be permanently up.

## Cleaning

Water bottles should be washed daily and deep cleaned once a week. Water bottles should be cleaned regularly if you are sick, if the water bottle was left outside, or on the ground at the gym.



## Daily Cleaning Method

Materials Needed: warm water, dish soap, bottle brush

- Step 1: remove the water bottle cap
- Step 2: add a squirt of dish soap into the water bottle
- Step 3: fill the water bottle with warm water
- Step 4: add the cap back on and shake the water bottle
- Step 5: remove the cap again and scrub the bottle with the brush
- Step 6: scrub the cap with warm water and dish soap using the brush
- Step 7: rinse the cap and water bottle with warm water and set out to dry

## Deep Cleaning Method

Materials Needed: vinegar, cool water, paper towel/dishcloth

- Step 1: remove the water bottle cap
- Step 2: fill the bottle halfway with vinegar
- Step 3: fill the rest of the bottle with cool water and allow it to sit overnight
- Step 4: empty and rinse the bottle with warm water
- Step 5: dry the bottle with a paper towel or dishcloth

For an extra clean, if the water bottle is dishwasher safe, place the water bottle in the dishwasher for a cleaning cycle

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Written March 2024 by Kari Helgoe, NDSU Family & Community Wellness Extension Agent, and Jadah Poepping, Center for 4-H Youth Development Student Worker

# Dental Products



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## DENTAL PRODUCTS

With so many dental care products on the market, deciding which to use can be a real challenge. Exploring general product categories for oral health will provide insight across the range of dental care products. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), “oral health affects our ability to eat, speak, smile, and show emotions. Oral health also affects self-esteem, school performance, and attendance at work or school. Oral diseases—which range from cavities and gum disease to oral cancer—cause pain and disability for millions of Americans.”<sup>1</sup>

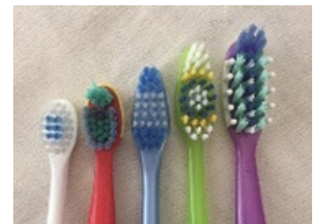
Home oral care recommendations from the American Dental Association (ADA) are based on data from clinic studies and systemic reviews. Oral care can help lessen the need for extensive dental intervention in the future.<sup>2</sup> The ADA recommends that you brush daily with fluoride toothpaste. They also recommend that you clean between your teeth regularly. Of course, eating a healthy diet and seeing your dentist regularly is a key to dental care. To explore dental care products more effectively, the following categories of products will be reviewed:

- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Dental Floss

## TOOTHBRUSHES

The ADA recommends brushing your teeth at least twice a day. However, how do you select the appropriate toothbrush? There are so many different brands and styles of toothbrushes. To complicate things even more, there are even manual and powered toothbrushes. The toothbrush is one of many tools to clean teeth, gums, and even your tongue. When choosing a toothbrush, consider the following:

- **Head Size**—A smaller head size makes the toothbrush easier to maneuver into tight areas that are trickier to access. A compact head is smaller and more maneuverable than a full-size head. Brush heads can also be straight or angled. Angled brush heads help reach the insides of your teeth, which are more susceptible to tartar buildup. Dentists suggest that a round-headed toothbrush provides a more versatile design.
- **Bristle Design** – Equally important, heads with varying-sized bristles are more popular among manufacturers, which help to get into deeper gaps between teeth and hard-to-reach areas. The shape of the bristle patterns can also vary. Diagonal patterns are good for cleaning the sides of the teeth and along the gum line. A cup-shaped design will be better for cleaning around teeth. A block design has all bristles the same size and type, while polishing bristles are made of rubber-like material arranged in circles to help clean surface stains without damaging the enamel. Other variations include wavy, crisscross, and tapered. These designs are more about comfort and preference.





- **Bristle Firmness** – Many consumers feel that the firmer the bristles, the better, but that is not accurate. While no oral hygiene can be harmful, so can the wrong oral hygiene. Firm bristles can damage teeth and gums. Soft bristles will do an effective job as the firmer variety without irritating your gums, which may contribute to a receding gum line. Toothbrushes are marketed as Extra Soft, Soft, Medium, and Hard. Generally, go soft unless there is some valid reason to go with a firmer or softer bristle. Packaging may also express bristle firmness in millimeters. A “soft” bristle brush may show 0.15 mm, while a “hard” bristle brush may show 0.23 mm, reflecting the thickness of the bristles.
- **Handle Design**—While less important than head size and bristles, a comfortable and secure handle should be your priority. There are lots of varieties, so picking one that fits well is important. Handles can be straight, contra-angle, non-slip grip, and flexible. The handle should allow you to comfortably reach every tooth surface, including the very back of your mouth.



Each of the design features referenced above is important for any toothbrush, regardless of the type in question. The traditional “manual” toothbrush is the foundation for more contemporary versions, including the increasingly popular powered/electric toothbrush. Here are some key features about both types of brushes and considerations when purchasing one or the other.

- **Manual**—These are the most inexpensive types of toothbrushes and are as effective in keeping teeth healthy as any other. While the toothbrush heads are of the utmost importance, manual toothbrush handle designs are extensive. However, the same selection principles referenced above apply. Furthermore, there is greater variability in head design among manual toothbrushes than its electronic counterparts. Manual brushing is estimated to result in about 300 brush strokes per minute.
- **Electric** – An electric toothbrush performs rotations or oscillations of its bristles, making it a bit easier to remove tartar in hard-to-reach places where manual motion may prove to be more difficult. These brushes have removable heads and tend to be considerably more expensive to replace than the manual ones. Most are either battery-operated or rechargeable. Some have timers to signal the user when to shift to other areas or stop altogether. Compared to manual brushes, these might be better at reducing the incidence of gingivitis and plaque, given that they increase the amount of brush strokes per minute. The ADA recommends electric toothbrushes for people with arthritis or other issues that prevent manual brushing from being effective. These brushes can also be divided into three sub-types:



- **Standard power** is a generic term to differentiate any powered toothbrush from the other two types of speed or movement. A standard electric toothbrush produces about 2,500 to 7,000 brush strokes per minute.
- **Sonic power** – this type moves the head fast enough to produce a hum in the audible frequency. Some models can produce up to 30,000 brush strokes per minute compared to a standard electric toothbrush. The benefit of this model is that it has a large sweeping motion to remove food particles and bacteria from the teeth and gum lines.
- **Ultrasonic power**—This brush is faster than a sonic-powered brush, reaching up to 2.4 million strokes per minute. The benefit of such a high speed is that it breaks up the bacteria chains found in the mouth, whereas cleaning occurs simply by placing the brush on the tooth without any manual motion. Some models have adjustable frequencies to allow for more sweeping motion.



### **TOOTHPASTE**

The ADA recommends that people use only toothpaste that contains fluoride. Toothpaste containing fluoride has been shown to prevent cavities. Also, any toothpaste packaging should be reviewed to make certain that the ADA's Seal of Acceptance is present. This means that the product has met ADA criteria for safety and effectiveness. Products that do not have the seal do not mean they are not safe or effective; they have not been studied or endorsed by the ADA. Toothpaste is also developed and marketed with specific problems in mind. For example, if tartar buildup is a problem, there are formulations that are designed to help with that. Toothpaste can contain ingredients that prevent enamel erosion or cosmetically affect the mouth, such as whitening or improving bad breath. They can come in the form of gels, pastes, or even powders.

- Types - They can come in the form of gels, pastes, or even powders.
  - Gel—made from silica, tooth gel is less abrasive and creates less foam and splatter. Compared to a paste, tooth gel has a less minty aftertaste.
  - Paste has a foamier texture when brushing, thicker, stronger flavors, and tends to be more abrasive than gels.
  - Powders contain dry ingredients like salt, baking soda, activated charcoal powder, and flavorings. They require adding water and are good for removing stains and plaque. However, they do not fight cavities as effectively and may be too abrasive. There is no ADA seal.

**Ingredients** – They contain both active and inactive ingredients. However, to be endorsed by the ADA, toothpaste must be fluorinated. Those are primarily for fighting cavities. Desensitizing agents are used for people who experience sensitivity due to toughness, temperature, and air current. Some formulations are designed to remove surface stains, often called “whitening toothpastes.” Formulations are also available to fight gum disease by destroying bacteria responsible for plaque and tartar buildup. Finally, some formulations are fluoride-free. Those products will not have the ADA seal. Due to small children’s propensity to swallow small amounts of toothpaste, the ADA recommends that children 6 and under use very small amounts of toothpaste to avoid fluorosis.

The ADA Seal of Acceptance is an important part of selecting any type of toothpaste. However, there may be some circumstances where the seal is not present. Always consult your dentist before using any products that do not have the ADA seal.



### **DENTAL FLOSS**

Flossing is a very important part of every oral hygiene regimen. Flossing once a day before bedtime decreases the likelihood of cavities and gum disease caused by food particles not removed from brushing alone. The benefits of flossing include removing bad breath-causing bacteria and plaque from below the gumline. It can reduce the likelihood of soreness, puffiness, and redness of the gums, and it helps prevent gingivitis. The most common types of dental floss are waxed and un-waxed thread, both made from nylon. There is no distinct advantage of either when it comes to improving your oral hygiene regimen except as noted below.





- **Waxed**—This type of floss contains a thin layer of wax on its surface, making it a little thicker but easier to glide between the teeth. Waxed floss is more likely to be flavored than unwaxed floss and is generally stronger. People with tightly spaced teeth may find it difficult to use waxed floss.
- **Un-waxed floss** is generally thinner than waxed and a bit more comfortable to move in and out of your teeth. It usually does not come in flavors, which, for some people, may be an advantage. Compared to the waxed variety, it is more likely to break during flossing but easier to get between tight-fitting teeth.

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# **Beverage Appliances: Brewing Coffee – Seniors Only**



# Brewing Coffee

Coffee is always changing and evolving – whether by roast profile, seasonality, or geography, there’s always something new, different, and exciting to taste. For many people, they cannot start their day until they have had their first cup of coffee. Making coffee at home has benefits – like using beans you like, adding flavoring if desired, and lets you use your favorite mug. It also saves you money!

When choosing a coffee maker for home, there are a variety of things to consider.

- **Convenience:** When choosing a coffee maker, it is important to consider how you want your coffee experience in the mornings. Some may want a more of a hands-off experience that can be made in minutes by pushing a button. And others may want to have a more hands-on experience that can turn the brewing experience into a morning ritual and allow for more control over the end result.
- **Type of Coffee:** It’s important to decide on the type of coffee that you are wanting to make with the coffee maker. If you prefer an iced coffee over hot coffee, then you want to look for a coffee maker that can make a cold cup of coffee. Some coffee makers have multiple functions – like brew over ice or are a hybrid machine that includes multiple kinds of coffee.
- **Brew size:** Determining how much coffee you are wanting to make in the coffee maker will also help you decide the kind to purchase. If you don’t drink a lot of coffee, then a single cup coffee maker may be what you are looking to get. Counter space may also be part of your consideration.
- **Extra Features:** Some coffee machines have added features, including programming time to brew, keep warm or auto shut off. Higher end machines might include features like milk frothing and bean grinding.
  - **Programmable settings:** Do you want to just set your coffee up to brew and leave it? As we previously mentioned, some coffee makers will let you determine the settings in advance based on what you like and automate it for future use. From the amount of coffee brewed to the time in which it gets brewed, programmable settings can come in handy for a wide variety of situations.
  - **Built-in grinder:** Do you prefer your coffee grounds fresh? Depending on who you ask, freshly ground beans produce a better tasting cup of coffee. Having a grinder ensures that you are always using the freshest ground beans. Of course, you can always buy a coffee grinder separately, but having one that is built into your coffee maker adds convenience and helps you save counter space.
  - **Automatic shutoff:** We have all experienced that early morning rush and forgot something important while running out of the house. With the auto-shutoff feature, you can ensure that your coffee pot gets turned off and is not running all day long. This allows you to focus on what is truly important for your day, all while you have a cup of coffee in hand.
  - **Multiple warmers:** For offices or commercial settings where making multiple pots at a time is often convenient, a coffee maker that has multiple warmers to keep each pot hot is worth considering.
  - **Water filter:** Some high-end coffee makers will come with a water filter to help ensure that the flavor comes out just right. This is one of the more popular features that people consider when it comes to buying a coffee maker.

- **Size and height considerations:** Factor in counter space when choosing your model. If you plan to put your coffee maker on your kitchen countertop, be sure to measure the height available in your space. Many of the coffee makers require additional space above them to allow room for pouring water into the reservoir. Another factor is how much space are you willing to dedicate to a coffee machine.
- **Temperature feature:** The ideal brewing temperature for a pot of coffee is 196°F to 205°F, therefore if you're really into (good-tasting) coffee, you will want to make sure that you buy a machine that can brew at high heat. Hint: Most top-of-the-line machines will list their brewing temps on the box or online.
- **Price consideration:** When it comes to price, there is a notable range of several hundred dollars between the most and least expensive models.

## Types of Coffee Makers

**Drip coffee makers** can come in a variety of shapes and sizes, but when you hear someone talk about making a pot of coffee (e.g., several cups at once), they are usually going to be using a coffee brewer. Their simplicity makes them easy to use, durable and capable of quenching a caffeine thirst for a large family of coffee drinkers, or the college student studying for exams.

### Parts of the Drip Coffee Maker

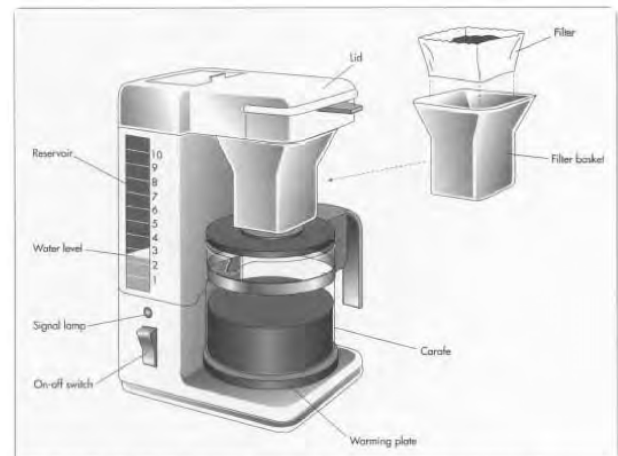
There is a **reservoir** that holds the water when you pour it into the pot at the start of the coffee-making cycle. Then the water flows through the one-way valve, into the aluminum tube in the heating element, and then partially up through the tube.

In the **shower head**, water arrives here from the hot-water tube and is sprayed over the coffee grounds. In some coffee makers, the water comes out of the hose onto a perforated plastic disc, called the drip area, and simply falls through the holes into the coffee grounds. The hot water flows through the ground coffee beans, picking up their oil essence on the way down into the coffee pot. This coffee oil, released during the roasting process, is called **cafeol**.

The **filter basket** holds the filter and the desired amount of coffee grounds. At the bottom of the filter basket there is a hole, which allows the water to drain through into the **carafe**.

The **carafe**, which is usually glass or insulated, holds the coffee on the warmer to keep the coffee at a desired temperature.

On the base of the coffee maker is the **heating element**. This component is comprised of an aluminum extrusion with two parts: a resistive heating element and a tube for water to flow through. When you turn on the switch, the resistive heating element starts heating the aluminum tube and eventually the water in the tube boils.



In an automatic drip coffee maker, a measured amount of cold water is poured into a reservoir. Inside the reservoir, a heating element heats the water to boiling. The steam rises through a tube and condenses. The condensed water is distributed over the ground coffee in the filter through a device like a shower head. The water flows through the filter, infusing with the coffee, and falls into a

<http://www.madehow.com/Volume-3/Automatic-Drip-Coffee-Maker.html>

The resistive heating element and the aluminum tube heat the water. The heating element has two jobs: When you first put the water in the coffee maker, the heating element heats it. Once the coffee is made, the heating element keeps the coffee warm.

Benefits:

- Extremely easy to use
- Affordable to buy and use on a daily basis
- Very convenient, as it makes a whole pot of coffee at once
- Lots of options for different models, shapes, sizes and brands
- Offers easy flexibility in brewing the best-tasting coffee for your taste buds

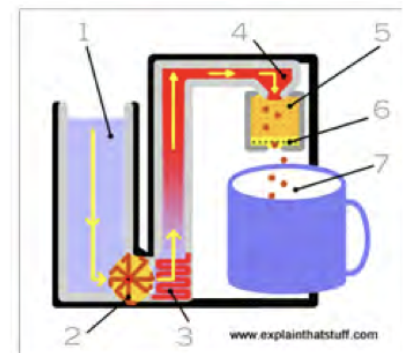
To Keep in Mind:

- Only makes basic coffee. Nothing fancy, and likely will not be satisfactory for those that prefer espresso drinks.
- Makes a lot at once. While a benefit, there may be instances where you end up wasting a lot of coffee.

**Single-serve pod coffee** machines have gained popularity due to their efficiency and ease in using. They rely on grounds held inside “pods” or “capsules,” which are usually produced by the same company that makes the machine. These force water through a small packet, either a hard-shelled capsule (also called pods) or a soft packet resembling a tea bag. Some brewers accept an adapter that takes your favorite loose grounds. Pod machines are more expensive to operate than other types because you need to buy special coffee refills. With plastic pods, there is also a lot of unrecyclable waste.

Parts of the **single-serve pod coffee** machine:

1. The **water reservoir** is what holds the water when you pour it into the pot at the start of the coffee-making cycle.
2. The **pump** at the bottom of the machine sucks the water and pumps it through the machine.
3. The water heats up to the perfect temperature as it flows up past the **heating element**.
4. The water is pumped through a narrow **needle sprayer** to increase its pressure.
5. The hot, high-pressure water pumps through the ground coffee in the **pod**, releasing the flavor.
6. A piece of **filter paper** at the bottom of the pod stops the coffee grounds from falling through into the coffee.
7. Coffee drips through into your **personal coffee cup**.



Benefits:

- Extremely easy to use and clean
- This type of coffee maker is usually very affordable
- Coffee pods come in many flavors
- Less waste of coffee if you only want to drink one cup at a time
- Great for offices, as co-workers can brew coffee precisely to their taste Will also brew tea or other hot beverages (cider pods, hot chocolate pods, etc.)

### To Keep in Mind:

- Buying individual pods will get expensive over time
- Not great for the environment, because constant use and disposal of K-cups will produce a lot of plastic trash over time

**French Press** coffee makers have a smaller footprint as they don't take up as much space and can be stored in a cabinet when they aren't being used. French presses brew coffee by pouring hot water over coffee grounds, then plunging the grounds to filter them out. They don't use a paper filter so more of the oils inside the coffee bean are in the brew. The oils are what gives the coffee its taste. With a French Press you are in control of the water temperature and brewing time. This gives the user more freedom to experiment to find the kind of coffee they prefer. These type of coffee makers are simple to use and don't require a lot of skill to get a great result.



<https://thedarkestroast.com/how-to-use-a-french-press/>

### Benefits:

- Don't require electricity to brew a cup of coffee.
- Coffee can be made anywhere with hot water
- Brewing method yields a rich and delicious tasting coffee
- Compact and portable which makes it easy to travel with, if desired
- Easy to use

### To Keep in Mind:

- Can be more time consuming than other methods
- In most French Press models, the coffee grounds are in the bottom when you will have to empty out and clean. Compared with other kinds of coffee makers that have a filter to make removing the grounds easier.
- Sometimes coffee grounds will end up in the bottom of the cup.

**Espresso Machines** open the various options of craft coffee at home. You get to explore coffees from any roaster you want and decide on your favorites. Espresso machines can range from inexpensive models to high-end models, so it is a matter of what you are looking to purchase. There are machines that are dedicated to making espresso, but there are also hybrid machines that can brew both regular coffee as well as espresso. While the hybrid models aren't usually the best espresso machines, the advantage is that you don't need two separate machines for your coffee needs.

With an espresso machine, you can enjoy a straightforward shot of espresso or create your favorite drinks, like cappuccinos, lattes, and macchiatos. These machines typically control the pressure of the brew but allow you to control the amount of water you brew with, among a few other factors depending on the model.

When purchasing an espresso machine, you want to consider budget, types of espresso drinks, frequency and quantity of drinks, kitchen space and grinder selection.

**Budget:** Home espresso machines are an investment that can save you money in the long run. If you enjoy these types of specialty coffee drinks, a home espresso machine can give you that specialty drink at a lower cost.

**Types of espresso drinks:** The type of espresso machine you may purchase will depend on the types of drinks you enjoy. If you prefer large milk drinks, then you may want to purchase an espresso machine that has a dual boiler or heat exchanger machine whereas if you just prefer straight espresso then a single boiler machine would work.

- In a *single boiler machine*, the boiler has one heating element with two thermostats. One thermostat is set for a temperature range that is ideal for brewing coffee. The other is set at a temperature meant to boil water and produce steam.
  - Benefits
    - Relatively low cost
  - To keep in mind:
    - You cannot pull shots and steam milk at the same time.
    - You'll always have to wait for the water to come to the correct temperature when changing from espresso to steaming and vice versa
- *Heat Exchanger Machine*. Instead of using a boiler to heat water for both brewing and steaming, the water in the boiler is only used to make steam. An additional water line is run from the pump and connects to a copper tube, or heat exchanger. This passes through the body of the boiler. The steaming water in the steam boiler heats the water in the heat exchanger without bringing it to a boil. In an heat exchanger machine, the brew water will never come in direct contact with the boiler water
  - Benefits:
    - The brew water is separate from the steam boiler
    - The machine is able to steam milk and pull shots simultaneously
  - To keep in mind:
    - The temperature of the brew water is hard to control
    - The brew water in the exchange coil can overheat if left too long
    - Requires a cooling flush. It is important to bleed or purge a small amount of water immediately before brewing an espresso, a practice called temperature surfing.
- *Thermoblock Machine*. A thermoblock is a thick piece of metal with a small coil machined into it. The whole block is heated by a built-in heating element. Small bursts of water are sent from the pump through the coil. These bursts are rapidly heated to past boiling, turning them into steam. There is a separate brew boiler, but since the steam and brew water are heated separately, the machine is able to do both at the same time.
  - Benefits:
    - Less expensive
    - Can brew and steam simultaneously
    - More temperature control of brew water
  - To keep in mind:
    - Not recommended for producing lots of drinks or large milk drinks
- The *Dual Boiler machine* has a pump that sends the water to two separate boilers. One heats water to boiling and the other heats water to brew temperature. Most dual boiler machines feature a digital temperature controller, so temperatures for both boilers can be carefully controlled.
  - Benefits:
    - Can brew and steam simultaneously
    - Precise temperature control
    - Most consistent brew and steam temperatures

- To keep in mind:
  - More expensive than other options

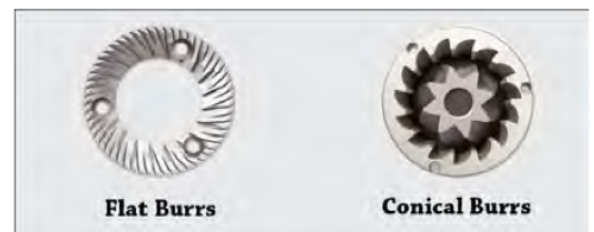
**Frequency:** How often will you use the espresso machine? Will it be a single morning cup of coffee or will you want multiple cups throughout the day? If you are single cup drinker, purchasing a single boiler would meet your needs whereas if you drink multiple cups in a day, you may want to get a larger dual boiler machine.

**Space:** Figuring out how much space the machine will take on your counter is essential to figuring out what kinds of machine to purchase. Making sure that the cabinet clearance for an espresso machine is important as some have a top filling reservoir.

**Grinder Selection:** The most important part of getting an espresso machine is choosing the right grinder. The espresso grinder is what determines how we unlock the flavor hidden within the beans. The criteria for selecting a grinder is simple – uniform particle size without excess heat or static.

There are three elements of a grinder that will determine the best outcome for a grinder: burr size, burr shape and motor power.

- **Burr Size** is what is used to explain the difference between grinders. The larger the burr size, the more cutting area available. A greater diameter burr means that for any quantity of beans, there will be fewer rotations of the burr set to grind them thoroughly, which leads to a faster dose of ground coffee. The more rapid the dose, the less chance for static electricity to build between the grinds, which leads to clumping, uneven distribution and channeling.
- **Burr Shape** often goes hand in hands with burr size, as conical burr grinders have far more cutting surface than a flat burr for the same given diameter. Burr shape is a personal preference. Conical burr grinders can create more “fines” than flat burr grinders. “Fines” are smaller coffee particles that dissolve more quickly in the cup, bringing out the lighter, more floral flavors. The flat burr grinders tend to have a more uniform particle size which allows the coffee particles to extract at a more consistent rate. This absorption allows for a more balanced, traditional type of espresso.
- **Motor Size** will determine the power of the grinder. The bigger the motor means it will have more power and make better espresso.



<https://clivecoffee.com/blogs/learn/what-makes-a-grinder-great>

**Cold Brew Coffee**, or cold brew, is coffee made by steeping ground coffee in water for several hours (usually 12 to 18 hours) then straining out the grounds and chilling it before serving it as-is, over ice, or diluted with water. Like other coffee, additional add-ins like milk, cream flavoring, and sugar are used.

There are two brewing methods for cold brew coffee.

- The first style is called immersion brewing. Immersion is the process of placing coffee grounds in water and letting them steep for a period of time. Coffee solubles are slowly extracted by the water over 12 to 24 hours and then the grounds are filtered out to create the coffee.

- The second is a drip process that also takes several hours. The drip process separates the cold water from the coffee grounds completely. This technique requires a cold drip apparatus or drip tower that allows the iced water to slowly drip over freshly ground coffee. The ground coffee absorbs the water, which then drops into a separate container at the bottom of the tower. Cold drip coffee is usually served over ice as an espresso-sized shot.

Cold brew coffee is not done in the refrigerator. Cold temperatures actually slow down the extraction process. If done in the refrigerator, it will taste weak by comparison with one that is steeped for the same amount of time at room temperature.

Benefits:

- Easy to make
- Stays fresh for several days
- Less acidic and tastes less bitter than conventionally brewed coffee
- The strength can be adjusted between a concentrated or diluted brew
- The immersion method can be done with a jar you have at home or you can buy a special cold coffee brewer

To keep in mind:

- Long steeping time
- Need to plan ahead of time for your coffee

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# Event Venues – Seniors Only



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## Selecting an Event Venue

When planning an in-person event, one of the most important decisions you'll make is where to host it. There are many factors to consider when choosing a venue, from the size of the space and the event date to the cost.

This guide covers the essentials that should be considered when choosing the perfect venue to host your special occasion. Whether you are planning a party, prom, club or business conference, festival, or anything in between, use this helpful advice to find the perfect venue for your next event.

### Location

There are a few factors to consider when narrowing down your choices, but choosing the right location is key to a successful event.

Before you start reaching out to venues, take some time to figure out what's important to you and your guests. If proximity to major transportation hubs is a priority, then you'll want to look for venues in or near city centers. If easy parking is a must-have, then suburban areas might be a better fit for you.

When deciding which type of venue will work best for your event, there are a few questions you need to ask yourself, such as:

- What is the purpose of the event?
- What type of event is it?
- What type of atmosphere am I trying to create? Can I create the theme, ambiance or mood that I want in this venue?

- How many attendees am I expecting?
- Do I need a seated or a standing venue?
- What is the layout of the venue? Will it work for your event?
- What are the technology needs for the event?

## **Accessibility**

A great venue must be accessible to your attendees. If they're not easily able to find it and enter, you could end up with an empty room or space. First, make sure you make it clear on when and how to attend. Second, you may want to consider your transportation options if your guests are coming from far away. Good public transportation will make it easier for them to get there, which means they are more likely to attend. Next, have clear signage to and at your location. Consider if the location/setting is indoor/outdoor, formal/casual, closer or further to a specific location. Also consider if the location is easy to find and accessible for your guests. (For example, some outdoor locations may require a short walk).

## **Capacity**

When choosing an ideal place or spot for an event, you should consider how many attendees the venue can accommodate. There should be adequate space for open mingling. Technically, it should have enough space for attendees and all the equipment you will be using. Attendees include the guests, speakers, caterers, performers, support personnel, volunteers, and anyone who will have a part in your event.

If you have more attendees than the venue can accommodate, things could get chaotic. If the venue is too small, you will not be able to accommodate everyone who wants to participate. On the other hand, you can pay for extra space to fit more people but this will equal extra costs. The maximum occupancy is usually set based on fire and safety codes, so it is important not to exceed this amount.

A larger space is ideal, but if it is too big, it may seem impersonal. It is also more expensive. At the same time, a space that's too small can make attendees feel cramped or restricted and less comfortable or safe. An ideal venue should be large enough to accommodate everyone, but not so big that it fails to create the atmosphere you're hoping to achieve.

Also, consider any special equipment you might need in the space, such as a stage, speakers, or special lighting. The venue should accommodate anything you require to carry out your event successfully.

Be certain to make note of where guests will register or check-in and where the emergency exits are located.

## **Parking**

Choose a venue with ample parking and make sure the attendees can access the space easily and safely. There is nothing worse than when guests arrive at a venue only to find that there is no parking or the parking is full.

The last thing you want is attendees having to look for parking elsewhere, which can take time and increase the chances of them arriving late or forgoing the event entirely. Therefore, make sure there are more parking spaces than you expect you will need, as it is better to have too many than too few.

## **Budget**

It's no secret that planning an event can be expensive. Between catering, decorations, and renting a venue, costs can add up quickly. That's why it's important to choose a venue you can afford.

Here are some tips for finding an affordable venue for an event:

- Consider hosting your event within your organization. For example, are you part of a school district where a school would be a good option to host your event?
- Check out local community centers or church halls. Often, these facilities offer lower rental rates than a full-service venue.
- Consider sharing your venue with another group. If there are two events being held at the same time, your rental rates will go down. Plus, if you are hosting an event for a charitable cause, sharing the space with another group can help raise awareness.
- Ask about discounts. If you are renting the venue during off-hours, inquire about a possible discount.

# Function Spaces and Services Offered

It is important to find out what services a venue can offer. These can include catering, live entertainment, room set-up, high-speed internet, clean-up, and more. If you need a service that the venue does not provide, it is important to find out if the venue will charge for the service if you hire it separately. Also, check to see what function spaces are available, whether it be outdoor space, indoor space, or both, and if the venue provides tables, chairs, or any other items you might need for your event.

Questions you should ask include:

- Does this venue have good acoustics and sound?
- What type of insurance is necessary and who is expected to provide it?
- Do you offer any additional services that might interest me? (such as a conference center with added technology, etc.)
- If the venue is providing food and beverages, what is the minimum number of guests for which you will be charged?
- Can you give us sample menus and a quotation?
- Can we experience a food tasting?
- Can you accommodate vegetarians or other special dietary requirements?
- Do you offer menus according to themes?
- Does the venue have a wedding or alcohol license?
- If the venue is not providing food and beverages, is there a kitchen used by you and your team?
- Does the venue have any partnerships with food vendors?
- Are the restrooms easily accessible?
- Is security offered and/or necessary?
- Will a cleaning crew make sure the venue is clean before the event and clean up afterwards?
- Does the have adequate tables, chairs, linens, silverware, etc.?
- Are there sufficient audio and video capabilities?
- Is there a stage available?
- Are there restrictions in place regarding noise or photography?
- Is there a music curfew around the venue?
- Are there any extra fees such as corkage fee, overtime fee or cancellation fee?

- If the event is planned outdoors, what is the rain plan in case of inclement weather?

## **Event Date and Time**

Before you rush to book a venue, check availability.

You may find a perfect event space, but it may be reserved on the date you need it. It is best to check availability months before the actual date of the event, just in case the date is already booked.

Think about how flexible you could be on the dates of your event, or even time of year. You may open up some more options this way.

If you are keen about a particular place or space and it's available on the date of your event, make sure to book it as far in advance as possible. This way, you don't have to worry about the venue and you can focus your attention on other things.

## **Venue Experience**

It's important to look at references for prospective venues before making a final decision. You can get references from past clients or even ask your friends, family, and co-workers if they have ever attended any events there.

You could also check out their website, if they have one, to see pictures or attendee reviews and ratings of any recent events that have been hosted there. This can give you a good idea of what the venue has to offer and what you can expect from it.

If the place has a restaurant, for example, you'll know if their food is well received or if they are known for being overpriced. If the venue is outside, you'll know what amenities it has and if its facilities are well maintained.

By seeing what other events have been hosted there, you can see if the venue's description matches what they actually have to offer.

Furthermore, you might want to ask if they have hosted events similar to what you are planning on hosting. Event venues often hold different types of events and you want to make sure that it has experience with hosting your type of event.

## Tips for Booking an Event Venue

Are you still unsure how to choose the best venue for your event? You'll find a couple of useful tips below:

- Outdoors or indoors? If you are looking for a place that will hold at least 100 people, then it is best to stick with an indoor venue. It has better amenities and is more secure. However, outdoor venues are cheaper and offer better scenery for your photos.
- Book early. In-person events are usually planned way in advance, so be sure to book a spot at least six months ahead of your event. This will give you ample time to set up for it.
- Simply put, the earlier you book, the more you could save. The venue could provide some incentives. These could include: venue rebates; discounts on food & beverage and audio-visual; destination rebates, and additional concession packages to help your event budget's bottom line.
- Do your research on the venue's policies beforehand. While some venues are flexible with their rules, others are strict. Be sure to read over the contract and ask for a few changes if you are not comfortable accepting all their terms.
- Practice your negotiating skills. If you don't like the venue's terms, then negotiate. Add specifics to why you are not comfortable with their terms and ask them if they can change them for you. Remember that this is all about getting the best deal for yourself too.
- Book according to your needs. If you are hosting a small event of 20-30 people, then it's more efficient to book a small space than a large space. If you are hosting an event of more than 100 people, then it's best to book a large space.
- Alternative options. If you cannot find a suitable venue that agrees with your terms and conditions, then get creative. Loop in your networks to see what options you have available to you.

## **Event App or Website**

It is also helpful if you can provide attendees with an event app or website. Today, it is more common than ever for events to have a website or an event app. These are used more frequently for large events because they enhance event experiences. Using one or both can help your attendees save time when searching for event information, such as schedules and maps.

## **Wrapping Up**

Choosing the right venue for an event can be a lot of work, but it's well worth it to pick the right spot. Plan ahead and plan well, and do your research thoroughly. Don't hesitate to think outside the box when it comes to finding a place to hold your next event, big or small. Compare different venues to get the best possible deal, but make sure the place you choose is flexible and suitable for your event needs.

Sources: BDI Events; Whova; Event Solutions; J. Shay; Tagvenue; Sched; Superevent

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