

Exercise Myth's Debunked

Myths

1. Cardio- First off, your treadmill, cycle, elliptical, or whatever contraption you're using for your cardio isn't counting your calories. To figure this, you need body-fat percentages, gender, and weight. And that's just enough to get in the ballpark and still will likely not be accurate. Second, cardio isn't the most effective way to drop bodyfat. Sure you can burn calories, and thus fat, while on your rat wheel, but it's your muscles that burn that fat so be careful to maintain your fat-burning motor and don't overdue the cardio. The true purpose of cardio should be to improve the fitness of your heart and lungs (your cardiovascular system). If your main goal is fat loss, cardio plays a role, but not near as big of one as you'd think.
2. It's all about the scale- Your bodyweight is a great measure of your success but not the end all be all of your goals. You should look to have a healthy body composition, but that can't be measured by the scale(well, most scales). Because we all have different blends of genes, and thus different heights, weights, muscle mass, bust and hip size, etc, we'll all weigh differently. It's not uncommon, especially in the early to mid training portion of your journey to experience weight gain and still lose fat and inches. This is because your body is actually building some muscle. That is a good thing. Instead of watching the scale as your primary goal, watch the measuring tape and the mirror and the scale together and realize that there is a process and your body will fluctuate from day to day. Try to establish a consistent pattern that leads toward your goal and don't get caught up in the off days!
3. I don't want to bulk up - Weight training doesn't make women bulky. Men's chemistry allows them to build muscle more easily than women. Women have too much estrogen in their body to build muscle and become bulky. It would take extreme effort to build mass on women, and generally also requires the same from men for them to build muscle. Even professional bodybuilders are happy with a 5 pound muscle gain over a year's time and that is their primary objective. What weightlifting will do is lift your butt, accentuate a ladies curves in the right places, and get rid of those bat-wing arms we all fear!
4. I just want a six pack- Spot reduction of fat is impossible, except for liposuction. SO quit doing millions of crunches hoping to see those abs pop through your belly fat. You need to ditch the fat. That means working out the whole body and getting into shape is the price you'll have to pay for six-pack abs or sexy arms. Get to work!
5. I work out, therefore I'm fit - Fitness takes into consideration more than just how many reps on the bench press you can bust out. Your cardiovascular system, your flexibility, your diet and rest, and your mental, emotional, and spiritual states all play a role in your fitness. The gym can't make up for a poor diet (though it may afford you a few extra cheat meals) and no amount of diet and exercise can make up for bad relationships and poor life decisions. So take a look at your weaknesses, not your strengths, and start making improvements.
6. Stretching will prevent injuries - There is increasing evidence that there is no injury prevention benefit tied to stretching, or at least static stretching. Athletes, and those of us trying to uncover the athlete buried within us, would benefit from warming up and doing what is termed "dynamic" stretching; things like high knees and walking lunges and swinging our arms to warm up the shoulders are beneficial to decreasing rate of injury.

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Static stretching has its place, but not necessarily the place we were taught back in grade school.

7. Pain is bad – Pain is an interesting thing. It can be both a motivator and a deterrent. When it comes to exercise, some discomfort is a great thing. It is good to push through our barriers and work hard. We may even have to sweat! However, pushing to the point of pain every workout and all workout long isn't necessary, and really isn't even prudent. There is a new craze in the exercise world that involves doing very technical movements to the verge of failure, every workout. The idea is to push the boundaries, or "test" ability, every workout. Beyond being unnecessary, this is detrimental to progress and will also lead to an increased incident of injury. You should definitely test yourself regularly, but remember that the bulk of your training should be exactly that, training. There is a huge difference between training and testing.