

Top Ten Fitness Myths:

By Jane Clapp

It seems my job is never done in terms of debunking fitness myths. Even though I repeat myself over and over and spread the word about the truth about fitness, I still come across the following fitness myths all the time.

Once and for all, I would like to set the record straight for all of you who still believe in the following myths. Here goes:

1) To flatten out your lower abdominals you have to do exercises that target that area.

You cannot get rid of abdominal fat by doing core training. Fat loss is all about clean eating and boosting your metabolism by building muscle all over your body. And there is not such thing as lower abdominals. The pot you might have down there won't go ahead with reverse sit ups ladies.

2) To get fit you have to see progress and results, you need to make it to the gym at least 4-5 times per week for about an hour a visit.

No! You can change your body with 2-3 good total body conditioning workouts a week that include a bit of cardio, challenging strength work but mainly by cleaning up your nutrition. And if you're already under slept and over stressed 5-1 hour workouts at the gym is only going to make you hang onto belly fat.

3) If you want long lean muscles you should do high repetition weight training.

If you want to lean down and create muscle definition you've got to generally keep your rep range to 12 and under per set and make sure you absolutely fatigue your muscles by the second set. Doing loads of reps and feeling the burn is about lactic acid build up Jane Fonda style. Not about creating more lean body mass.

4) If women aren't careful, they will bulk up from too much strength training.

Oh ya! Take a look at me. I can do full chin ups by myself! Women don't have the levels of testosterone that allow us to build bulky muscles. And besides the only way we add poundage to our female frames is by eating more than our bodies need to maintain current our body weight. And, don't forget bulking up takes a huge amount of much effort in the gym and with nutrition to. So don't flatter yourselves that you're going to get huge by strength training. Instead take a look at your food intake to uncover the truth about your 'bulk'.

5) The best way to burn fat is to work in your target heart rate zone.

If I could wring the necks of those cardio equipment manufacturers who spread this myth I would be a happy woman. Doing long sustained cardio is not the best way to lose fat. If anything, it puts needless stress on our adrenal glands causing

us to hang onto fat in our middles. Next time your at the gym, look at the people who live on the cardio equipment. Need I say more?

6) If you're not sore after a strength workout, you haven't made any progress.

Not necessarily true. Delayed onset muscles soreness you may experience most strength training is a funny thing. Sometimes you might be more prone to being sore than other days. It depends on a number of different factors. The best way to test whether or not you made progress from a strength session is whether or not you worked yourself to fatigue by your second set. I don't mean, "Gee, I feel a bit of a burn". I mean not being to do one more repetition with proper form.

7) Swimming is a great weight loss activity.

I might help you increase lung capacity but, swimming for hours a day, does not help you lose much weight. Because the buoyancy of the water is supporting your body, you're not working as hard as it would if, say, you were moving on your own steam. Plus the temperature of the water you swim in encourages your body to hang onto fat to provide insulation.

8) As you get older, you will lose muscle and gain fat, no matter what you do.

No! Getting fatter as you get older is due to lack of activity, over eating. We lose 5-7 pounds of lean body mass for every 10 years of our adulthood because we don't use our bodies the way they were designed to be used. That is, we sit like amoeba's all day at desks. Of course we're going to get fat as we age unless we do something about it.

9) If you're experiencing low back pain you should lay off exercises until the pain goes away.

Most of the time, back pain is caused by strength imbalances, poor flexibility in certain muscles and lack of strength. Not strength training is a good way to ensure your back only gets worse over time. Hire a trainer to help you out.

10) If you can't find a big chunk of time to exercise all at once, there's not point in exercising at all.

Little chunks of incremental exercise can be just as beneficial as a big chunk of exercise. The all or nothing attitude towards exercise is a great way to cop-out. Some is always better than none.