

LifeStyle Skills

► *Fitness Facts and Fallacies*

For New Direction and OutLook Weight Control Programs

After you complete this module, you will be able to...

- Separate fitness fact from fiction
- Use these fitness facts to fine-tune your personal workouts

**I
can't
exercise
because...**



... it makes me too tired.

Too much exercise can cause fatigue, but the right dose of aerobic exercise will make your heart stronger and more efficient. And stronger muscles give you endurance to get through the day. Exercise can also improve the quality of your sleep, so you feel more rested.

... I don't have the time.

Start out by "sneaking in" small amounts of time. When your body responds positively, you'll find it easier to manage exercising for a half hour or so.

... it costs too much money.

There's no need to join a fancy gym or invest in equipment. A pair of walking shoes and a water bottle will get you started.

... I hate to sweat.

Not all exercising breeds sweat. If you work at a moderate pace and dress in lightweight fabrics (cotton or the new "breathable" fitness fabrics) you can stave off some of the perspiration.

... it always causes me pain.

Most often pain occurs because you have taken on too much too soon. Cut back on the intensity or duration of your activity so that you can do it comfortably.

... it makes me too hungry.

You may experience hunger after exercising due to a dip in blood sugar levels, which can trigger hunger. To overcome this effect, allow for a small meal one hour before your workout. This, in addition to proper hydration throughout the day will alleviate those hunger pains.

... I'm too out of shape.

There's one great thing about being out of shape. You will have terrific results! The key is to start very slowly and increase your program gradually. Even if you start with a walk around the block - it's more than you did yesterday.

... I am too old.

Getting older is one of the best reasons to begin an exercise program. As you age, you lose up to one half pound of muscle every year of life after age 25. This changes your body composition (less muscle), which lowers your metabolic rate and leads to weight gain - assuming your caloric intake doesn't decrease as well. Strength training not only slows that process down; it can also rev it up, by building muscle.

	TRUE	FALSE
1. Now that I'm exercising, I can eat guilt-free.	☐	☐
2. Fat turns into muscle when you exercise - and when you stop exercising your muscles turn back into fat.	☐	☐
3. Sit-ups are a great way to lose a big belly.	☐	☐
4. Spot reducing can get rid of trouble spots.	☐	☐
5. For longer and more slender muscles, do more stretching exercises.	☐	☐
6. Women who strength train get big and muscular.	☐	☐
7. More reps/less weight is better than less reps/more weight.	☐	☐
8. Strength training builds muscle and bone but does nothing for the heart.	☐	☐
9. Walking with weights is a great way to strength train.	☐	☐

1. FALSE. An exercise program is not an invitation to overeat. A healthy weight is a balancing act between your food intake and activity level. If the number of calories you consume equals the number of calories you expend, your weight will stay the same. To lose weight, you need to either expend more or eat less, but the equation works best when you combine the two.
2. FALSE. Fat is fat and muscle is muscle - you can't transform one into the other no matter how hard you try! A strength-training program can increase your muscle tissue. The more muscle tissue you have the more calories you burn (even at rest) so if you are consuming the same amount of calories as you did before, then you'll lose weight. With proper guidance the weight you lose should be mainly from body fat, not muscle tissue!
3. FALSE. Sit-ups, crunches and the like will help strengthen the abdominal muscle, but the big belly you might be trying to get rid of is fat that lies on top of the muscles. To lose the fat, a combination of consuming less calories and expending more energy through exercise is the tried and true approach.
4. FALSE. There is no such thing as a "spot-reducing" exercise. You can burn fat off by exercising, but it comes off proportionately throughout your body. You may see more of a difference in some areas compared to others, but your body always maintains the same basic proportions. You can IMPROVE the look of those proportions and get that "loose clothing feel" via strength training. Even if you stay the same weight, you will look and feel better!
5. FALSE. While stretching may enhance the elasticity or "resting length" of your muscles, it does not change the shape or structure of your muscle. In conjunction with strength training, stretching will help you "balance your posture" and take stress off your joints.
6. FALSE. It takes testosterone (the muscle producing hormone) to gain bulky muscles, which most women do not naturally have enough of. Plus, it takes several hours a day - every day - to build that kind of muscle. A few sets a week (as we are encouraging you to do) will re-shape and firm up your body, and increase your metabolism, but won't leave you with a "six pack" or big biceps.
7. FALSE. Despite Madonna's claim that she does 1000 crunches everyday, doing a lot of reps is actually NOT a good thing. Why? First, it creates repetitive stress on your joints and second, you need quality - not quantity - to achieve the best results. Finding a match between number of reps and weight depends on the individual.
8. FALSE. Strength training improves circulation and pumps blood to the heart. When performed in a circuit style with less than 15 seconds of rest between sets, strength training will provide an aerobic benefit. This style of training works double duty, providing the benefits of aerobic conditioning and muscle toning in one workout. Strength training has also been shown to reduce LDL (bad) cholesterol levels.
9. FALSE. Carrying weights while walking will burn a few more calories, but research shows the risk outweighs the benefit. The added weight can throw off your natural walking movements, cause overuse injuries to shoulders, ligaments and tendons and can increase blood pressure from gripping the hand weights.

Answer Key: