

Fact or Fiction?  
Training Myths Debunked  
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### **1- Strength Training Makes Women Bulk Up**

It is a common misconception that using dumbbells or training heavy will make females develop huge bulky muscles. If you ask one of those “muscle men” how long it took them to build ten pounds of muscle, chances are their response will indicate that it took as much as a year (Boyle). A person whose goals are hypertrophy-based, is training for the sole purpose of building muscle. Everything in their life, from diet, to the way in which they work out, will center around this idea. Now, when it comes to women, there is a distinct difference. To start off, women do not have the same amount of testosterone (a muscle building hormone) as do men. Their body composition is much different, and thus the way in which it reacts to weight training will not have the same effect. Strength training is a valuable tool for women to use in their lives, whether it be to help lose weight (the more muscle one has, the more fat is burned on a daily basis), to become stronger or more agile in a particular sport, or for general fitness, the results of strength training in its many facades are extremely beneficial.

### **2- Spot Reduction Myth**

As due to a plethora of “quick fixes” outlined by varying weight loss products, many people are under the impression that the way to reduce fat and build muscle in a “problem area”, is by simply performing exercises that “work” that particular muscle. Crunches will of course give you a six-pack, just as adductor and abductor machines will chisel those thighs . . .think again. In order to achieve true weight loss, and to lose weight in specific areas, it is necessary to combine a cardio routine with a weight training regiment that works the entire body. As per genetic factors, individuals will store fat in different ways, and losing this weight happens throughout the whole body. Exercise in combination with proper nutrition will guide a person towards their fitness goals. Eating correctly and consuming daily multivitamins will aid in the balance of proper nutrition, and allow stores of energy to be used properly while performing a fitness routine (Poliquin).

### **3- Exercising on Resistance Machines is the Best Way to Exercise!**

Upon walking into most fitness facilities, one is bombarded by a plethora of equipment: machines that curl and press, extend and bend, and everything in between. Many first-time gym goers can become intimidated by the massive machinery, unsure of how to properly operate it. Well, there is some good news for them! These machines are not inherently necessary for a resistance training program. While they are advocated for certain modalities of training, and used for activation of specific muscles, they are not completely necessary. It is actually possible to give oneself a “hardcore” workout based solely on body weight. Using free weights is also an excellent way to challenge the body. By choosing a modality such as body weight, free weights, or a cable machine, it is easier to weight lift with a multi-joint, functional approach. Functional training mimics activities done in daily life, and allows for the recruitment of core musculature, increasing one’s strength, mobility, and stabilization (Laskowski).

#### **4- The Sorer the Better!**

It is not always best to gauge the benefit of one's workout by the amount of pain it puts you in the next day. Granted, it is important to overload the muscles in order for them to make gains and improvements, however, it is not necessary to exhaust oneself to complete fatigue during each workout. It is common to hear talk about lactic acid buildup as being the cause of muscle soreness, but in essence, micro-tears in the muscle's contractile proteins are what cause this sensation (Karp). In response to these micro-tears, muscles gain mass, and thus "results" are seen. However, merely doing an exercise of which the body is maladjusted can cause soreness. Delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS) will generally reach its peak about 48 hours after physical activity, and it is key to listen to one's body. It is also important to be sure one is exercising properly, and recruiting the correct muscles in their intended ways, in order to avoid soreness in relation to improper form.

#### **5- The "Fat Burning Zone"**

Step onto a piece of cardio equipment, and one is flanked by the multitude of options present to complete a workout. A most popular choice, is the legendary "fat burning zone". At around 65% of one's maximum heart rate, most fitness enthusiasts are married to the principle of exercising for 30 minutes at a moderate intensity. While this is a decent choice for a person who is new to exercise and is attempting to establish a baseline, for those more adept to physical activity, it is important to use other options. Interval training is an excellent way to shed pounds, and improve cardiac function. Elevating and decreasing the heart rate multiple times during an exercise session will increase the amount of energy expended and put more stress on the heart (which is itself a muscle). When given the opportunity to engage in a moderate activity for an extended period of time versus a higher intensity activity for a shorter amount of time, it is oftentimes better to choose the latter. By placing more stress on the system, the stroke volume of the heart increases, as does cardiac output, and thus parallel to the amount of force the body's muscles have to produce to maintain this higher intensity. The benefit of elevating heart rate in this manner is an increased EPOC (excess post-exercise oxygen consumption), which is the "elevation of the body's metabolism following exercise" (NASM). This increases the amount of time the body is in our new "fat burning zone", even after exercise has been completed!

#### References:

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