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# FACT OR FICTION?



BY: SCOTT KEPPEL

**F**itness myths get started because we all respond to diet and exercise differently. Thus, the diet or workout plan that is working fabulously for your friend, relative, etc. may not produce results for you. This is why it is important to consult with a fitness professional before starting a program. One should also obtain clearance from their physician. I know you are really excited to begin your New Year's diet and workout program and you are doing all of your research now to prepare, so I thought I would dispel a few myths on diet and exercise to steer you onward toward your fitness goals.

## 1 TO PROTECT MY KNEES, I SHOULD RUN ON A TREADMILL?

Running is a great form of cardiovascular exercise and while running on a treadmill is easier on one's knees than pavement (the treadmill has some "give" to it where the ground doesn't), running is generally quite stressful on your knees due to the high impact force placed on your body – and specifically your knees. Light running can place over twice the usual amount of pressure on one's knees, hip joints, ankles, etc. This means a 130 pound woman may land on one foot with about 260 foot pounds of force. If you are having any pain or other issues you believe are due to your workouts, I suggest you have a certified personal trainer, running coach, or any other specialist check your running form to make sure it is proper before eliminating running completely. If an expert determines running is not the best form of cardio for you, some lower impact alternatives are: cross-trainers, stationary and road bikes, ellipticals, etc.

## 2 PERFORMING ABDOMINAL EXERCISES WILL GET RID OF MY BELLY?

While performing abdominal movements are important to strengthen the muscle, they WILL NOT get rid of the excess fat on your stomach. The only

way to see your abdominal muscles is to lower your body fat percentage. Since you burn fat from within and not outside-in (the areas you have the most fat will be the last place you see changes), incorporating cardiovascular training, resistance training, and a healthy diet are THE ONLY WAY to lower your body fat percentage, decrease the fat you carry and possibly reveal the "six pack" you've been hiding.

## 3 IF I DON'T SWEAT, I'M NOT WORKING HARD ENOUGH?

Sweating is a way for your body to cool itself. Some individuals are prone to sweat more than others, so this is not necessarily a measure of how hard you are pushing yourself. Factors such as the foods you eat may also play a role in water retention and sweating.

## 4 MACHINES ARE ALWAYS SAFER THAN FREE WEIGHTS?

While machines are a great tool and tend to be easier and safer to use than free weights, if you are not properly aligned you can get hurt just as easily. If you can't hire a personal trainer, take advantage of the trainers at your fitness facility and/or read the directions and diagram on the machines to learn what muscles you are working and how to adjust the settings for your height to avoid injury.

## 5 IF I AM NOT SORE THE FOLLOWING DAY, I SHOULD WORK HARDER?

DOMS (Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness) is not an accurate indicator of a workout. One should focus on acute muscle fatigue, that is either muscle failure or come close to failing at your desired rep range (i.e. if you are trying for 10 reps you should not be able to perform 15). The more rest you get, the more you stretch, along with consuming a proper diet will all contribute to recovering quicker and not being as sore. Don't use muscle soreness as an indicator of an effective workout and don't make it a goal to workout until you become sore.

## 6 IT'S OK TO TRAIN ABS EVERY DAY?

Your abdominal muscles are just that; muscles, and as such just like any other muscle, your abs require time to recover. If you're doing just a few reps here and there then it is ok to perform them daily. If, however, you are training them intensely - that is, performing multiple sets and reps for 10 minutes or longer - then you should allow at least a day to recover before working them again.

## 7 IF I WANT TO TONE UP, I SHOULD DO HIGH REPS AND LOW WEIGHT?

This is not necessarily true, as your diet and cardio programs will play large roles in the definition of your muscles. Lifting will shape what you have, but it is the diet and cardio that will burn the fat and allow for more definition to become visible. Again, remember we burn from within, so the places you store the most will be the last places to see. High reps will typically burn more calories than doing heavier weight and lower reps, but will not do much for building muscle. This is why it is important to manipulate your reps and sets and determine which body parts are stimulated with light weights and which body parts need to have heavier weight.

## 8 IN ORDER TO LOSE WEIGHT, I NEED TO DO HOURS OF CARDIO AND CUT CALORIES?

This is not necessarily true, as you may be burning the candle at both ends. If you restrict your calories to an amount that is below your BMR (Basal Metabolic Rate) your metabolism can slow down and force your body to want to store fat. If you're performing only cardio, you will not be building muscle which burns more calories than fat (1lb of muscle burns 20-100 kcal per day, and 1lb of fat burns only 8 calories per day). Most women should not eat less than 1200-1300 calories and most men should be around 1700-1800 calories a day. Contact me or another certified trainer and/or dietician to help you determine your daily caloric needs.

Hope you get a jumpstart on your 2010 New Year's Goals!

**Scott Keppel** has been changing bodies and lives for over 14 years. He believes anyone can achieve their fitness goals if they put their mind to it, prepare for it, and work for it! Now the proud owner of **Scott's Training Systems**, Scott and his team create individualized workouts and meal plans to take clients' bodies and lives to the next level! With locations in Tempe and Mesa, Scott has a client following like no other local fitness expert. Scott and his team are regulars on 3TV and have been featured on several other local news stations. He is a lifetime natural competitor who has trained dozens of clients for bodybuilding, figure, and fitness competitions - a number of whom placed in the top five and several have won overall titles! Scott and his team are the official trainers for the Weight Loss Institute of Arizona and the Child Obesity Center. STS is also the official trainer for the Miss Arizona USA and Miss Teen USA pageants. Scott is certified in pre/post natal training and has worked with many women through their pregnancy to term. Contact Scott today at **480.820.0835** or **www.scottstrainingsystems.com** for your free consultation/assessment!

