



SIT-UPS OR CRUNCHES WILL BURN FAT OFF YOUR ABS

"I see a lot people come in here and say they want to lose their stomach," Koerber says. "I say, 'Modify your diet and start working on a treadmill,' and they look at me like I'm crazy. You could have abs like Schwarzenegger, but if you have a layer of body fat over them, you will never see them." Don't get us wrong — abdominal exercises are great for strengthening your abs and core, but they're not going to take the fat off.



YOU AREN'T WORKING HARD ENOUGH IF YOU AREN'T DRIPPING IN SWEAT

How much you sweat depends on much more than just how hard you are working. Your body temperature, the clothes you are wearing, genetics and more determine how much you sweat. "Some people can get in a great workout without breaking much of a sweat," Hoover says. "And then there's the guy who sweats when he does a biceps curl."

BREAKING DOWN FITNESS MYTHS

By Amy Bertrand
POST-DISPATCH HEALTH AND FITNESS EDITOR

Most fitness professionals have seen or heard it all. Miracle diets, perfect workouts, promises of flat abs in two minutes a day. Chris Hoover, fitness supervisor at the Jewish Community Center, says he constantly sees people acting on that misinformation.

"I don't know what it is," he says. "They see a big muscle guy come in with his muscle magazine, and he sounds like he knows what he's talking about, so before you know it ... word of mouth, it's on someone's website, and suddenly everyone has this (wrong) information."

Jeremy Koerber, lead exercise specialist at BJC WellAware Center, agrees. "You've got this quasi-expert who has worked out for years, and maybe he did something and it worked, but maybe he just has the genetic potential. So these theories tend to get perpetuated, and they are nothing more than just gym talk."

For whatever reason, it seems there is a lot of misinformation out there about what it takes to get in a good workout. So with the help of Hoover and Koerber, we've devised a list of the top 10 fitness myths.

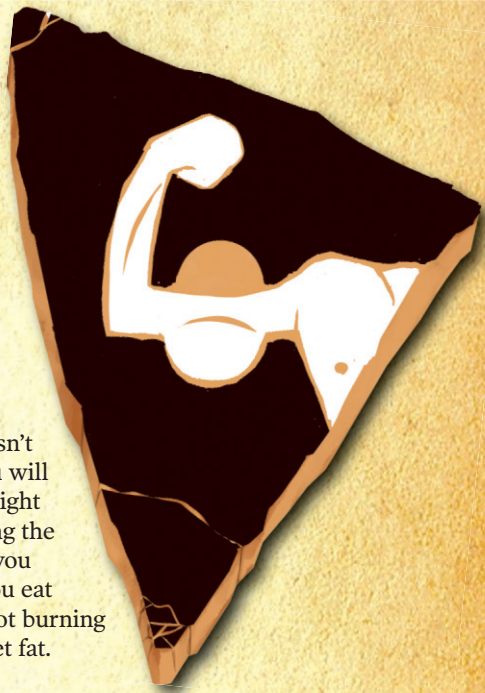


WORKOUTS SHOULD HURT

Though feeling sore a day or two after a new workout can be fairly normal, you should never hurt beyond that. "If the soreness worsens, or if you have it four, five or six days after the workout, something's wrong," Hoover says. "You may have some sort of inflammation."

IF YOU STOP EXERCISING, YOUR MUSCLES WILL TURN TO FAT

Muscle tissue and fat tissue are completely different, Hoover says. If you stop exercising, your muscle will become smaller and perhaps atrophy. But that doesn't necessarily mean you will get fat. You'll gain weight only if you keep eating the way you were when you were exercising. If you eat less to make up for not burning calories, you won't get fat.



AS YOU AGE, YOU WILL LOSE MUSCLE AND GAIN FAT

Though there is some truth to this, it's not an absolute. As you age, your metabolism decreases, but resistance training can increase and help you maintain lean muscle mass. "You can maintain your muscle — you just have to work a little harder," Hoover says.

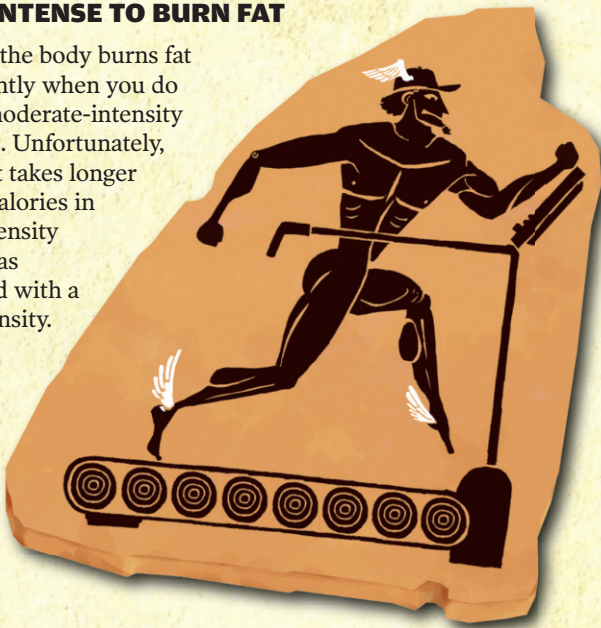


STRETCHING ISN'T IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT WON'T MAKE YOU THINNER

Most people skip flexibility training because they think it doesn't have a direct impact on their fitness. But if you think about the fact that without proper stretching you could become injured, thus missing many workouts, it's vital, Koerber says. It's also important to maintain your body's range of motion as you age.

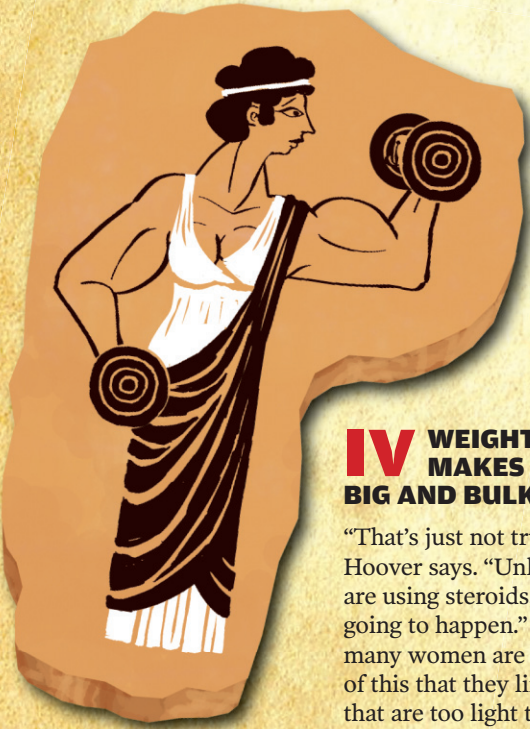
WORKOUTS MUST BE INTENSE TO BURN FAT

Actually, the body burns fat as efficiently when you do low- to moderate-intensity workouts. Unfortunately, though, it takes longer to burn calories in a low-intensity workout as compared with a high-intensity.



IF YOU DON'T HAVE TIME TO GET IN THE GOVERNMENT'S RECOMMENDED 30 TO 90 MINUTES A DAY, YOU SHOULDN'T BOTHER

The truth is, anything you can do will be beneficial. Studies have shown that even splitting up those 30 minutes into 10-minute segments is good for you.



WEIGHTLIFTING MAKES WOMEN BIG AND BULKY

"That's just not true," Hoover says. "Unless they are using steroids, it's not going to happen." He says many women are so afraid of this that they lift weights that are too light to properly tone and strengthen their bodies.



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