

MYTHS OF RESISTANCE TRAINING REVEALED

ONLY MEN SHOULD LIFT WEIGHTS!

False. Resistance training is for everyone and women can and should include resistance training in their exercise planning. Resistance training will result in stronger muscles, strong bones, increased metabolism, increased flexibility, stronger joints and connective tissue. Studies have shown that weight bearing and resistance training exercises not only prevent bone loss but also increase bone mass. This is of particular importance to women.

IF I LIFT WEIGHTS I WILL GET HUGE MUSCLES AND LOOK LIKE A MAN!

Absolutely false. Once and for all, let's clear up this misconception. It is physiologically impossible for women to build a muscular physique to the same degree as men. As women, we simply lack high levels of testosterone that are responsible for the muscular development seen on men. Aside of the chemical imbalance, it takes many years of hard work and dedication for women to achieve muscular development to a high degree.

I DON'T WANT TO BODYBUILD, I JUST WANT TO TONE!

Regardless of what your goal is you are bodybuilding. We are all building our bodies' everyday, with every activity. Whether we are running, playing tennis, swimming, cycling, or whatever our chosen activity, we are building our bodies to better sustain those activities we enjoy. This phrase is just a misuse of terminology. Whether you are bodybuilding for competition or bodybuilding for health it all involves a sound exercise program and healthy diet.

IS SPOT REDUCING POSSIBLE?

There is no such thing as spot reduction. This is another myth that has been around for years and years. You can hear it from anyone, male or female. Whether it involves losing weight off the thighs or "love handles" it is not possible to lose weight off a specific area or exercise weight off a specific area. If there is weight to lose, an exercise program combined with aerobic exercise will result in weight loss from all over the body. Generally, however those areas plagued by most women (hips and thighs) and men (love handles) are usually the last area to see a significant reduction. A good weight loss program requires hard work, discipline and patience.

TO LOSE WEIGHT I MUST LIFT WEIGHTS FOR A HIGH NUMBER OF REPETITIONS.

Again this is another example of a myth that has been making the rounds for years. I believe this stems from the fear that women have of becoming too muscular. So, in order to allay those fears they have been told to lift a very light weight for a large number of repetitions (reps in the 15-25 range). There is no truth to the myth that lifting light weights for high reps will lose body fat. Again, the only way to lose fat is a combination of good nutrition, aerobic exercise and a sound strength-building program. The problem with lifting very light weights is that eventually the body will become accustomed to the stress and will cease to adapt. Once this happens, no progress will be seen toward your fitness goals. The body becomes very adept at conserving energy and will eventually become very efficient at doing the same amount of work with less expenditure of calories. As stated in the article, "reps, sets and weights", a good strength-building program involves a carefully chosen scheme of reps and weights with ongoing modifications.

This is not to say that high reps do not have their place in a training regime. These are usually reserved for the endurance athlete such as race walkers, marathoners, cyclists, and cross-country skiers. These sports require a program of muscle endurance training, but this is usually done at certain times throughout a training year along with a muscle hypertrophy program. These are two entirely different programs done at different times within an athletes yearly training cycle.

IF I STOP EXERCISING ALL THAT MUSCLE WILL TURN TO FAT

This is false. Muscle is muscle and fat is fat. The two are different components of our physiological make up. They cannot become the other under any circumstances. We can become successful at decreasing our bodies' fat stores and increasing our lean muscle tissue but they do not turn into the other. If one stops exercising the muscle tissue you have built up will atrophy (shrink) back to its pre-exercise form. If you don't exercise your muscle will still atrophy over time. This is a natural form of aging, but it is within our control to decrease muscle wasting with age. The reason most people believe that muscle turns to fat once they stop exercising is that they will become fatter. This is not because the muscle has turned into fat, but because the muscle has shrunk from disuse and without activity to burn calories, most people will become fatter. If the calories are not used, your body will store them as fat!