

# FITNESS MYTHS

## **Fitness Myth No. 1: Doing crunches or working on an "ab machine" will get rid of belly fat**

Don't believe everything you hear on those late-night infomercials! While an ab-crunching device might "help strengthen the muscles around your midsection and improve your posture," being able to "see" your abdominal muscles has to do with your overall percentage of body fat. If you don't lose the belly fat, he says, you won't see the ab muscles.

But can doing ab crunches help you to lose that belly fat? Experts say no.

You can't pick and choose areas where you'd like to burn fat, so crunches aren't going to target weight loss in that area.

In order to burn fat, you should create a workout that includes both cardiovascular and strength-training elements. This will decrease your overall body fat content, including the area around your midsection.

## **Fitness Myth No. 2: An aerobic workout will boost your metabolism for hours after you stop working out.**

This statement is actually true -- but the calorie burn is probably not nearly as much as you think!

While your metabolism will continue to burn at a slightly higher rate after you finish an aerobic workout, the amount is not statistically significant. In fact, it allows you to burn only about 20 extra calories for the day. While there's a little bit more of a metabolic boost after strength training, he says, it's still marginal. It doesn't really count towards your caloric burn

## **Fitness Myth No. 3: As long as you feel OK when you're working out, you're probably not overdoing it.**

One of the biggest mistakes people tend to make when starting or returning to an exercise program is doing too much too soon. The reason we do that is because we feel OK while we are working out.

You don't really feel the *overdoing it* part until a day or two later.

No matter how good you feel when you return to an activity after an absence, you should never try to duplicate how much or how hard you worked in the past. Even if you don't feel it at the moment, you'll feel it in time -- and it could take you back out of the game again

## **Fitness Myth No. 4: Machines are a safer way to exercise because you're doing it right every time.**

Although it may seem as if an exercise machine automatically puts your body in the right position and helps you do all the movements correctly, that's only true if the machine is properly adjusted for your weight and height, experts say.

Unless you have a coach or a trainer or someone figure out what is the right setting for you, you can make just as many mistakes in form and function, and have just as high a risk of injury, on a machine as if you work out with free weights or do any other type of non-machine workout

## **Fitness Myth No. 5: Running is counterproductive to strength training**

Sounds like you need to find a new trainer! "Running is definitely not counterproductive to building muscle, unless you're looking to dramatically increase muscle mass," says Gregory Florez, CEO of FitAdvisor.com. "In fact, as a weight-bearing exercise, running helps develop more lean muscle mass in the lower body -- which also keeps your bones healthy." That doesn't mean it's a substitute for strength training, though. "Include lower-body strength moves like squats and lunges and upper-body moves like push-ups and pull-ups to reduce injury risk, increase stamina, and boost metabolism," adds Florez.