

LADIES' HOME

Never Underestimate The Power Of A Woman.

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FITNESS MYTHS

Continued

MYTH: You have to follow a strict regimen in order to get fit.

Actually, what repetition gets you is a big dose of boredom. There are real advantages in injury-prevention with cross-training (doing a variety of activities). John Platero, fitness coordinator for L.A. Fitness, in Los Angeles, explains another benefit: "There's something called Specific Adaptation to Imposed Demands, which means that over time, your body gets comfortable with the movements and they get easier—and less effective. If you mix up your

workouts, your body is constantly being challenged, and must expend more energy in order to keep up," he says.

Delon Nelson suggests creating a "rolling exercise schedule." Make a long list of fitness activities you enjoy—walking, a workout video, lifting weights, using a stair climber, hiking. Every time you work out, pick something different from the list. When you've done them all once, start again.

MYTH: Your workout didn't work unless you're sore the next day.

There are many ways to evaluate your workout, but soreness is not one of them. Cohen points out that a good workout should challenge your body while minimizing injury. So how hard should you push? For aerobic activities, you should be able to have a conversation while working out. To be more precise, subtract your age from 220 to get your maximum heart rate per minute. Then shoot for about 60 to 80 percent of that number for your target heart rate or training zone.

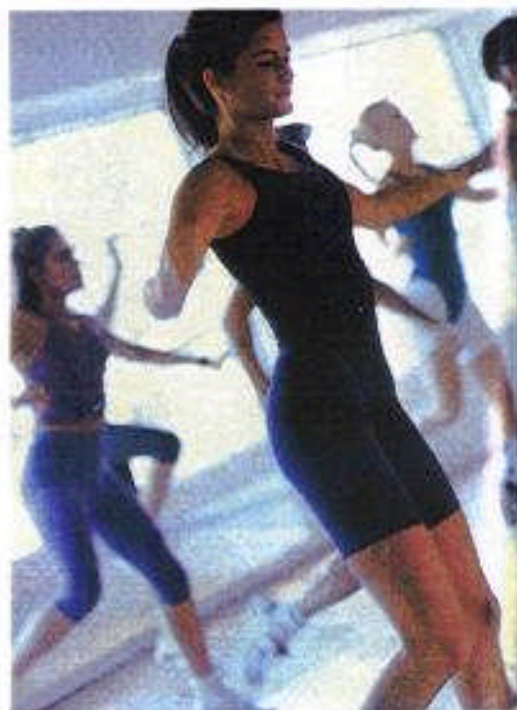
"With weight training it's more difficult," says Cohen. "The best way is to get good supervision from a certified trainer." Most trainers recommend completing up to three sets of twelve to fifteen repetitions for each lift. Choose a weight you can lift at least twelve times that's challenging but not so hard that you can't keep control at all times.

Myth: Step classes are bad for your knees.

Stepping was created by Gin Miller, a veteran fitness expert, after a torn ligament in her knee left her unable to partake of her regular exercise routine. "People make mistakes," explains Miller. "They're stepping too often—more than three to five times a week. They're stepping too fast—you should have enough time to make a solid foot plant and remain balanced. And they're stepping too high—set the platform so your knee bends to about 60 degrees, halfway between straight and fully flexed. You should never feel your knees stressing, and if you do, lower the height, the pace or the frequency."

MYTH: Stair climbers give you a big butt.

"So many people believe this myth! Believe me, if you could build up your lower body from a stair machine, you'd see bodybuilders on



them!" says Delon Nelson of Crunch. While you may add muscle mass, you will burn fat—the net result should be a smaller butt. The problem, insists Nelson, is that "so many people use the stair climbers incorrectly—they lean over, resting on the rails and pushing their hips back—to compensate for not being able to keep up with the program." With your body resting on your arms, you're not working as hard and not burning as many calories. Nelson's advice: Use a lower setting on the machine but increase your duration (say, from fifteen minutes to twenty-five).

MYTH: Working out takes time away from the family.

"A person who is clear about her needs and interests and knows how to get them met makes a much better partner and parent," says Sue Rooks, M.S.W., M.Ed., a licensed clinical social worker in (continued)

