

President's Corner

As we begin see this fine weather throughout Ontario, people are outside more frequently and being more active. Like many folks, the winter months do not inspire me to be very active and in turn, I feel a little out of sorts. So last week, I began a new journey. I began to run again. I am starting slow, but I thought that I would share this news with all of you who are so dedicated in your health by participating in the YUSA lunch hour fitness initiative.

You have all inspired me so much! Your dedication to the program and your overall health is truly something to model. I will continue to update you on my progress and in turn, I hope you keep me accountable. I am very motivated, like so many working mothers, to piece out a little time for myself 3-4 times per week and just get healthy.

In addition, I have given myself a goal to work towards. On June 3, 2012, I am running a half marathon. This is very scary to me, but I am going to do it. I cannot promise any records will break (LOL!), but I am committed to completing it. I will keep you posted and well done to all of you who are taking care of yourselves by staying active!

In Solidarity,

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York University Staff Association Health and Wellness News and Views

There are several common misconceptions about exercise and weight loss. It's easy to fall into the trap. A workout buddy passes along an exercise tip, and then you pass it on to a few more friends... Your daughter's coach gives you advice, and soon enough you hear the same advice from several other parents. So you figure it must be true. But experts say that in the world of health and fitness myths and half myths are everywhere. Some myths are just harmless half truths, but others can actually be harmful. Here are 7 health and fitness myths BUSTED!

Women who lift weights will bulk up.

Women's testosterone levels are much lower than men's, so in most cases they are not capable of building large muscles. In fact since muscle takes up less room than fat, women tend to lose inches when they strength train. So in addition to the physical benefits such as increased metabolism, decreased risk of osteoporosis, and increased strength, strength training will help you slim down too!

No pain no gain

This is a trite saying developed by bodybuilders and performance athletes that reflects the need to push comfort levels during training in order to improve performance. In other words if you stop when you are still comfortable, you're not going to improve much. It is important to know what GOOD pain is and what BAD pain is. It is okay to push yourself to fatigue, work your heart, lungs, and muscles. Feel the burn, but be reasonable. Don't push yourself so hard that you have to miss sessions, and even worse, possibly risk an injury.

Muscle weighs more than fat

This is a great question and one that has been the centre of debate for years. First off, remember that

muscle does not tell you the composition of that weight, and it is composition that really matters. "Muscle does not weigh more than fat, anymore than lead weighs more than feathers". A pound is a pound. Where the discrepancy often comes in is that muscle is much more dense than fat. A pound of muscle occupies less space than a pound of fat. So to sum it all up, muscle does not weigh more than fat. But it is more dense and in this case size does matter! Also remember that muscle is a heck of a lot more metabolically active than fat, so the more you have the more calories you are going to burn off. So let's build muscle and shrink the fat!!

To supplement or not to supplement

Although many people do take various supplements, be it fat burners, protein, vitamins and minerals, in my opinion, it is not necessary to take supplements to have a great physique. If you eat well, you can look and feel great without incorporating supplements into your workout program. If you are involved in a competitive sport, some supplements like protein, glutamine and creatine may be useful, but for recreational exercise they will probably have little benefit. So, when it comes to health and longevity there are more conclusive studies about the benefits of regular exercise, and good food choices than there are about supplements.



Crunches will get rid of belly fat

Don't believe everything that you hear on those late night infomercials. While an ab-crunching machine might help strengthen the muscles around your

midsection and improve your posture, being able to see your abdominal muscles has to do with overall percentage of body fat. Exercise burns calories, but not always where you want calories to burn. Sit-ups and crunches still contribute meaningfully to your fitness program, but they cannot eliminate belly fat directly. In order to burn fat you need a workout program that includes both cardiovascular and strength training elements.



Stretch before you exercise

Traditional stretches, like when people bend over to touch their toes or stretch their legs on a fence, often cause the muscles to tighten rather than relax — exactly the opposite of what is needed for physical activity. Before exercising your muscles and joints should be warm. Light exercise does this more efficiently than deep stretching and is less likely to result in injury. Instead of stretching, many experts recommend warming up with a light jog or sport-specific exercise, like kicking for football or a few serves for tennis. That type of light movement increases the heart rate and blood flow to the muscles, warming up the body temperature. Stretching is vital to become more flexible, but it has to be done at the right time and for the right reasons.

Sweating means you are out of shape

Sweating is a natural response to exercise; it is one way that your body regulates temperature.

Different people sweat more than others under

similar levels of exercise. Sweating during exercise is just a good indicator that the body is efficiently cooling itself down. Most professional athletes sweat more than the average person, because their bodies are more efficient at using sweat to cool down. Whether you sweat a lot or not we can all become dehydrated from time to time. What you eat and the amount fluids you take in have a dramatic effect on your level of hydration. Your body is around 60-70 percent water and your blood is mostly water so you need to take in enough fluid every day.

These are only a few of the common myths that are spreading around the fitness scene. Far too many people fall for them and start doing things in their workout programs and diet plans that halt their progress. Rather than becoming a victim of these myths, use critical thinking every chance you get. Ask yourself where this information is coming from and what the credibility of its source is. If necessary, do your own research to find out just what truth the claim has. Might sound like a lot of work but **YOU'RE WORTH IT!**

“Strive for progress not perfection”.

Kerriane Brown

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