

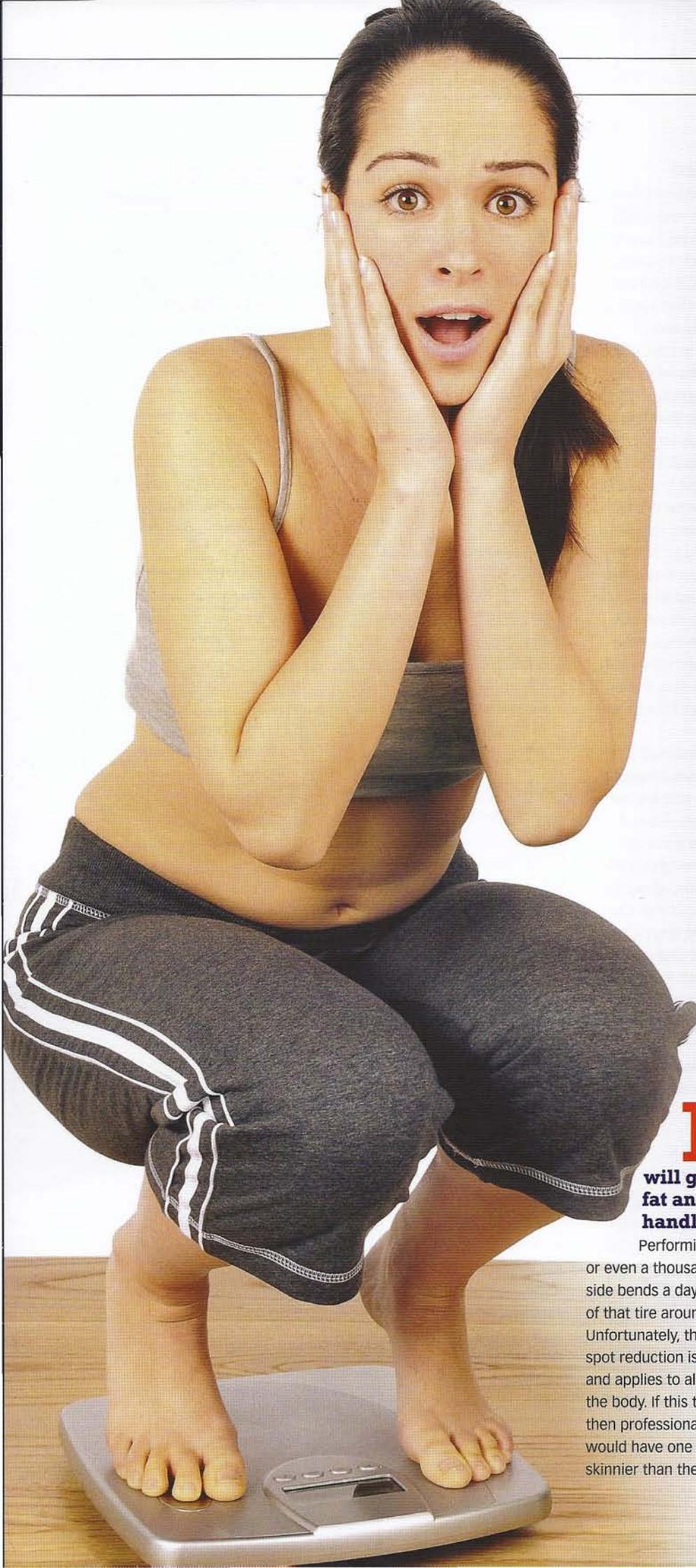
Top 6 Fitness Myths Busted!

Given the large amount of health and fitness information coming from so many different sources, it's no wonder people are confused. Nowadays, the key to a healthier lifestyle is to make educated decisions, and to know how to sort through the misleading information. If you've spent countless hours working out, and are yet to see results, then you've most likely fallen prey to the most common fitness and exercise myths. This month **Bernadette Abraham** rubbishes some of those myths. Read on to find out where you may be going wrong

1 **Crunches and side bends will get rid belly fat and love handles.**

Performing ten, twenty, or even a thousand crunches or side bends a day will not get rid of that tire around your waist. Unfortunately, the concept of spot reduction is simply a myth, and applies to all trouble spots of the body. If this theory were true, then professional tennis players would have one arm significantly skinnier than the other. When the

body expends enough calories, fat will be reduced from the entire body, including the target area. This is probably why most people believe that spot reduction is possible. It also seems that the first areas of the body to gain weight are generally the last places to lose it. Most of us have six-pack abs waiting to be unveiled; however it is hidden underneath a layer of fat. So the key to a flat, sexy stomach is to lose overall body fat by incorporating proper nutrition, resistance training, and moderate aerobic exercise.



2 Muscle turns into fat after you stop training for some time.

Muscle is a metabolically active tissue, and fat is an organic tissue; two completely different types of tissues with their own roles and functions. One cannot turn into the other, even if exercise is discontinued. The fact that most people begin to resemble the Pillsbury Doughboy soon after program discontinuation is due to muscle loss and eating habits. When training is decreased or stopped altogether, the number of calories you ingest must also be reduced. Otherwise, the extra calories that were being utilized during your workouts will get stored as fat. In the absence of a strength stimulus, the muscles atrophy, which means they become smaller and weaker. In other words, use it or lose it. This in turn decreases the metabolic rate and promotes further fat storage. Fortunately, one or two brief workouts per week are sufficient to maintain strength levels and muscle mass for extended periods of time.

3 Low-intensity exercise burns more fat than high-intensity exercise.

This theory is based on the fact that when you exercise at a low-intensity, 60% of the calories you burn come from fat, whereas only 35% of calories from fat are burned during high-intensity exercise. Although it may seem that low-intensity exercise has the ability to burn more fat, the math proves otherwise.

For example, if you perform a low-intensity aerobic workout for thirty minutes at about 50% of your exercise capacity, you will spend approximately 200 calories (120 of those calories come from fat). If you perform the same workout at about 75% of your exercise capacity, you will burn approximately 400 calories (140 of those calories

come from fat). Even though the lower-intensity exercise burns a greater percentage of fat, the final computations show that higher-intensity exercises burn more calories and more calories from fat in the same amount of time.

The point here is that both low- and high-intensity exercises have their own benefits, and they both promote fat loss. However, if you are more comfortable performing lower-intensity exercises, simply increase the duration of the activity. Remember, the concept of a "fat-burning zone" is simply a myth.

4 Training in the afternoon is the best way to get fit.

Many studies have been conducted, and there is no evidence to support this theory. The assumption comes from the fact that more fatal heart attacks occur between 6am and noon. This is due to the fact that the blood platelets are more prone to forming blood clots in the morning; not because individuals exercise in the morning. In fact, regular exercise has been proven to reduce the risk of heart

attacks at any time of the day. The relationship between getting the best results and the best time of day to exercise simply does not exist. If you exercise at a certain intensity level, you'll burn the same amount of calories regardless of when you exercise. The key to getting results is to be consistent, so whatever time suits your schedule is the best time to exercise.

5 Pregnant women should not perform aerobic exercise.

Pregnancy should not deter a woman from exercising. In the past, women were discouraged from performing physical activity in fear of harming the baby. Today, numerous studies have proven that regular exercise during pregnancy offers many benefits, such as fewer pre-natal discomforts, increased energy, improved posture, reduced mood swings, less problematic deliveries, and an ability to maintain or even increase their cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength, and flexibility. The American College of Obstetricians

and Gynecologists concluded that exercise during pregnancy is safe for most women, and is based on the recommendation that participants be carefully monitored by their physician.

6 Protein shakes help build muscle.

Increasing muscle mass requires two elements; challenging your muscles beyond their normal levels of resistance and eating more calories than you burn. With all the marketing hype about high protein diets and supplements, it's easy to believe that protein is the solution to building muscle however ingesting protein without performing strength exercises will not add an ounce to your muscle mass.

Protein does in fact help build and repair muscle tissue but it cannot be stored by the body for future use. Therefore, a large consumption of protein beyond the body's requirements will only convert the excess into body fat. Also, you run the risk of placing strain on your kidneys and becoming dehydrated. As a general rule of thumb, the average individual who exercises regularly needs between 1 and 1.2 grams of protein per pound of lean bodyweight for necessary muscle growth. This can easily be achieved with proper food. Your lean bodyweight can be determined with the help of a qualified trainer by assessing your body composition with the use of a fat-caliper or a bioelectrical impedance device. The sure way to increase muscle mass is to incorporate a healthy eating plan, moderate amounts of cardio exercise, and a progressive resistance training program. *



For more information, be sure to attend Bernadette's final "STOP the Confusion" health and fitness lecture on June 6th, 2010. Call 050-283-2020 or visit www.BernadetteMe.com for more details.