

LIMITED EDITION

Ageless

BODY FIT TIPS

356
AGELESS
FIT TIPS

STAYING
MOTIVATED
EVERYDAY

1 If you want to burn fat and build muscle, then start drinking green tea. Studies show that those who regularly drink green tea burn significantly more fat and build more muscle than those who do not. In one study for example, green tea drinkers gained 3kg more muscle and lost 6.5kg more body fat, than those not drinking green tea. Their training routines were the same and other variables were controlled, illustrating just how big a difference green tea made to their results. If you are a regular tea or coffee drinker, switch a couple of your regular brews for green tea. If for whatever reason you don't like the taste, then you can also buy green tea in supplement form. Drink a strong mug of it before you hit the gym, to harness some of the stimulatory effects of the caffeine and get psyched up for your session.

2 To enhance recovery and to begin the repair process, drink a whey protein shake after your workout. Training of any kind, but particularly resistance training causes damage to your muscle fibers. It is this that causes muscle soreness and prevents you from hitting the gym everyday. The quicker that you can begin the recovery process, the better. Whey protein is a very fast digesting protein that helps the muscles to repair and grow back bigger and stronger. Drink a 40-50g shake as soon as you have finished your session to maximize your recovery and prevent excessive muscle soreness.



3 Do not waste your money on '**fat burners**'. So many people who are looking to lose weight buy these supplements in the hope that they will see their fat melting off them. The reality however is that fat burners will make almost no difference to you, unless you are already very lean and are just looking to get a bit leaner. In addition, a lot of these supplements have unsavory side effects that could affect both your training and your general health. Just some of these include headaches, dizziness and excessive sweating. So instead of wasting your money and jeopardizing your health, focus on training hard and eating well. This is a much healthier approach and will be much more sustainable in the long run.

4 Take a multivitamin everyday to stay on top form. It may not be the most glamorous supplement out there, but a multivitamin is essential if you are training hard. They are also cheap and can be picked up from any supermarket or health food store. They are so important, because no matter how good your diet is, it is inevitable that there will be certain nutrients that perhaps are not accounted for. In addition, exercise puts strain on the body and increases our need for certain nutrients. Taking a multivitamin everyday ensures that all bases are covered and helps to keep you in good health. Take it at the same time everyday and do not take it on an empty stomach.

5 Whether you are looking to burn fat or build muscle, start taking a fish oil supplement. Fish oil has been shown to improve fat loss, aid muscle building, and reduce inflammation. It is widely available and is cheap compared with the majority of supplements on the market. If you are training regularly and eating well, take between 3-5g a day to support your goals. Take it with a meal at any time of the day that suits you. One word of warning though – avoid cheap fish oils. These are very low quality and provide no tangible benefits. In fact they may even be harmful because of their high metal content.



6 Boost your testosterone levels by taking zinc and magnesium. Although there are many '**testosterone boosters**' on the market, there is little evidence to support their claims. So if you want to boost your testosterone levels, supplement with zinc and magnesium tablets. Take 15g of zinc, and 250mg of magnesium each night before you go to bed. Take them either on an empty stomach or with a quality source of protein, like cottage cheese or protein powder. This will help to boost your testosterone levels, which are key in helping you to build muscle and burn fat. There is also evidence to suggest that they will help to improve the quality of your sleep, which is vital for your recovery.

7 If you are looking to get the most out of your training sessions, then make sure that you drink enough water. Just a 2% decrease in hydration has been shown to have a negative impact on performance, which will decrease your strength and affect the quality of your workouts. Always carry a water bottle with you, and take one into the gym during your sessions. Continually sip on it to prevent dehydration and ensure proper performance. A good way of monitoring how much fluid you expend during a workout is to weigh yourself before and afterwards. The difference between the two figures is the amount of fluid that you need to replace.

8 If you have ever been told that creatine is a dodgy supplement that you should avoid, then you have been told wrong. Creatine is a great supplement that helps to improve strength, increases explosive power and allows you to work harder for longer. It has been tested perhaps more than any other supplement and has been shown to be completely safe and present no side effects if taken properly. If you are looking to increase muscle mass and strength, take 5g a day in your post workout shake on training days, and 5g at any time of day on non-training days. You can also 'load' creatine, by taking up to 20g a day for 5 days. This saturates your muscles with the substance and provides you with the many benefits of creatine from the get go. For some, this may cause bloating and discomfort. If it does, then just reduce your dose to 5g a day and your muscles will be saturated within a couple of weeks.

9 It has long been said that you can't out train a bad diet. Now whilst that is still true, it is also worth remembering that you can't out supplement a bad diet. Do not ever neglect whole foods in favour of supplements. A well-balanced and nutritious meal is far superior to a protein shake and a multivitamin. Supplements do have their place, but your focus should always be on eating well and consuming a variety of fresh produce and whole foods.

10 If fat loss is your goal, then add high intensity interval training (HIIT) into your training plan. HIIT, which involves short periods of near full exertion with longer periods of low intensity work has been shown to be far superior compared with long but slow cardio sessions. People doing HIIT burn more fat, improve their aerobic capacity and lose less muscle than those who spend hours on the treadmill. It also makes a great option for those of you who dislike traditional cardio.

11 If you are tight on time but still want to get a session in, then try Tabata. This very different training method involved a 20 second burst of all out intensity, followed by a 10 second rest period. This is repeated 8 times for a total of 4 minutes. It might not sound like much, but do it right and it will be the longest 4 minutes of your life. Choose moves that recruit a lot of muscle fibers. If you are in the gym you can do Tabata on traditional cardio equipment like the treadmill, bike or rowing machine. If you can't get to the gym, then go for moves like burpees or squat jumps.

12 If you are trying to burn fat, don't waste your time with sweat suits. Although many people believe that wearing thick clothes and hats when they go running will help them to burn more calories, they are sadly mistaken. All that sweat suits do is cause you to overheat and sweat. You will lose water weight, which you will then put back on as soon as you have a drink of water. In addition, excessive water loss has been shown to be detrimental to health and perhaps even dangerous. So next time that you head out for a run, stick with shorts and a T-shirt.

13 Contrary to popular belief, you do not burn more fat if you exercise on an empty stomach. Although it was long believed that exercising on an empty stomach caused the body to tap into fat, rather than carbohydrate stores, this has now been disproven. You will burn the same number of calories during exercise whether you have eaten before or not. In addition, you are likely to train at a higher intensity if you have eaten. This will allow you to push yourself harder and burn more calories than if you were exercising on an empty stomach. If for whatever reason you do not have time to eat before you exercise, then at least try to have a protein shake. This will give you some energy and will help to prevent muscle breakdown.

14 If you are injured but don't want to take time away from the gym, try swimming. It is a very low impact form of exercise and will help to rehabilitate your injuries. It is also a great form of cardio and recruits a large number of muscle fibres, which helps to build that athletic look that is so popular. Still not convinced? Just look at some top level Olympic swimmers. They rarely lift weights and spend all of their time swimming, yet they are very athletic and muscular looking. To escape the boredom of doing length after length in the pool, try incorporating HIIT into your sessions.



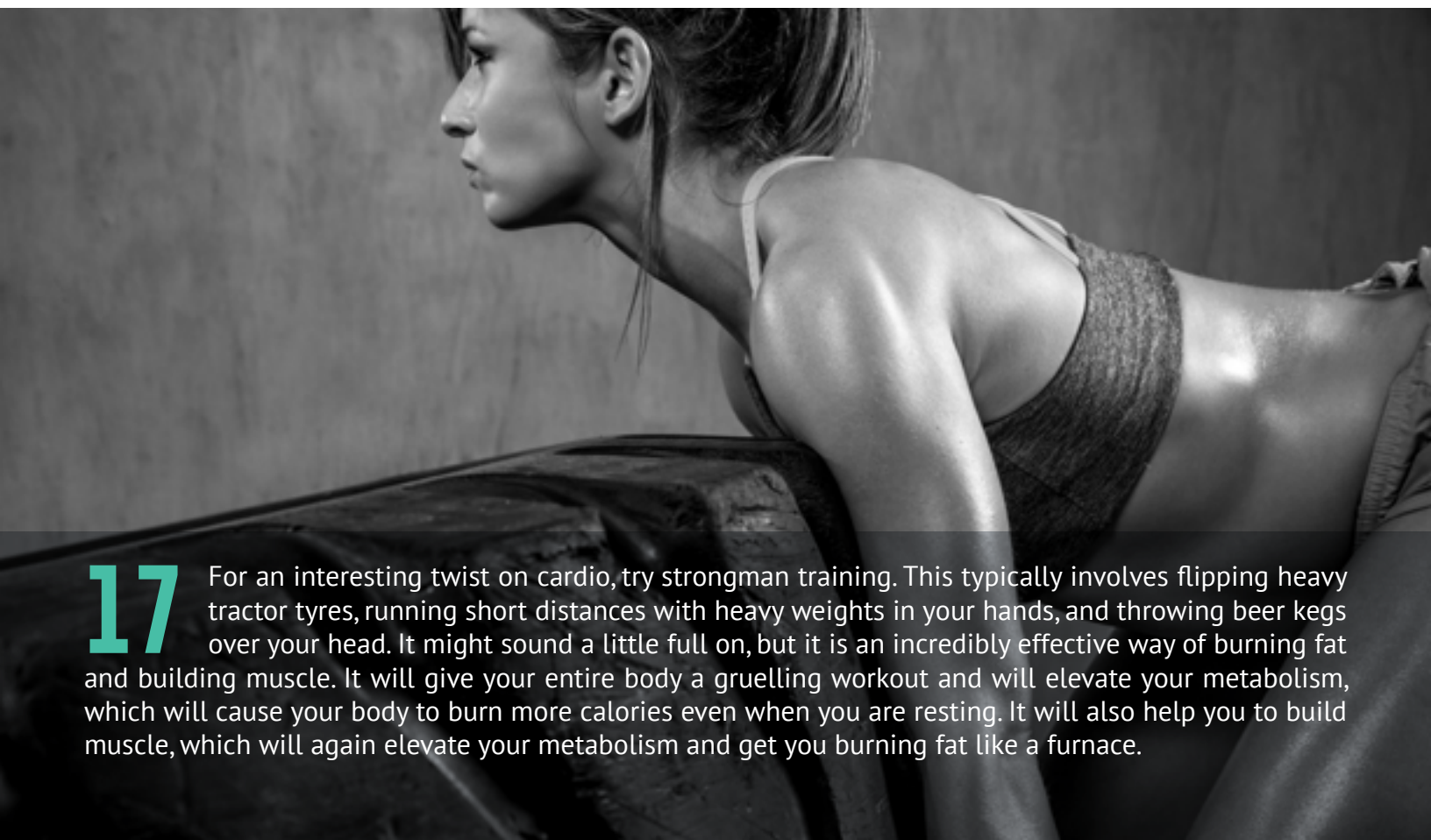


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If you want to burn fat but can't tear yourself away from the gym, give metabolic circuits a go. These punishing but enjoyable workouts involve setting up a whole list of moves that target the whole body. Start with around 8 different moves that target the whole body and perform 8-12 reps on each move. Perform all of the moves in a row without any rest. At the end of the circuit, rest for around 3 minutes before you go again. These circuits do require quite a lot of equipment so won't work so well during gym rush hour, but they will get your heart going like nothing you have ever done before.

16

If fat loss is your goal, keep your cardio sessions short and intense. Long sessions on the treadmill are great if you are training for a marathon, but they are inefficient at burning fat. They also cause great hunger, which can lead to overeating, which then counteracts any calories burnt during the session. It is much more efficient to exercise at a high intensity for a short period of time. It might be more mentally and physically taxing to do this, but it will help you to get the body that you want in half the time!



17

For an interesting twist on cardio, try strongman training. This typically involves flipping heavy tractor tyres, running short distances with heavy weights in your hands, and throwing beer kegs over your head. It might sound a little full on, but it is an incredibly effective way of burning fat and building muscle. It will give your entire body a gruelling workout and will elevate your metabolism, which will cause your body to burn more calories even when you are resting. It will also help you to build muscle, which will again elevate your metabolism and get you burning fat like a furnace.



18 When trying to get in shape, don't obsess over the numbers that you see on the weighing scales. Weight is important, but it is not as important as how you look. Often when people obsess over how much weight they lose, they tend to push themselves to extremes so they can see those numbers dropping. This is neither healthy nor sustainable and can cause health problems if done in the long term. A better way to assess your progress is by taking pictures and body measurements of yourself. Using a tape measure, record the measurements for your legs, waist, arms and chest. Do this at the same time every week and you will be able to build up a much better picture about the way that you look and the progress that you have made so far.

19 If you want to improve the quality of your sleep, remove all electrical items from your bedroom. Get rid of your mobile phone, laptop, and don't ever have a TV in your bedroom. These electrical appliances reduce the quality of your sleep, which is vital to your recovery and progression. They are also more likely to distract you or keep you awake, as you watch just one more episode, play one more game, or read one more email. Try to focus instead on something that will help you to relax and unwind. Read a book, or listen to some music. It may sound strange, but you will be amazed at the impact that it will have on your quality of sleep and in turn, your general well being.



20 Remove all possible distractions when you go to the gym. Do not take a phone into the gym with you, and if you have to, to listen to music, then make sure that you put it on '**Airplane Mode**'. In addition, leave all books and newspapers at home. If you are serious about your results, then you need to treat your workouts seriously. Removing these distractions will help to keep you focused on your session. This will allow you to push yourself harder and reap better results.

21

If you struggle to stay motivated, then try training with a friend. Choose someone who is around your fitness level (*or fitter than you*) and has the same goals as you. This will ensure that you are accountable to someone. You will be much less likely to quit on that last rep or miss a session if you have a pair of judgmental eyes staring back at you. It will also give you someone to talk to during those times when motivation is lacking. Turn each session into a bit of a competition and you will really push each other and get the very most out of yourself. Just make sure that you don't choose a partner whose idea of a good gym session is a light jog and a gossip on the treadmill!



22

Find out at what time of day you function best, and then go to the gym. If you are an early bird then chances are that you will have your most productive workouts in the morning. Conversely, if it takes a couple of strong coffees to even get you going, then you are likely to have your best workouts in the afternoon or evening. Experiment and find out what works best for you, and then stick with it. It might not always be possible due to work and other commitments, but for the most part try to schedule your workouts at times when you are raring to go, rather than ready to hit the sack!

23

Do not rely on your gym to provide the soundtrack to your workout. Their choice of music tends to be questionable at best, and truly atrocious at worst. This can have a real impact on the quality of your workout. It is hard to push yourself if you have an ill suited and distracting playlist blaring out over the speakers. To stop this from happening, take your own music to the gym. Prepare a long playlist so that you don't have to mess around with your ipod during your session, and get to work!



24

When trying to get in shape, don't obsess over the numbers that you see on the weighing scales. Weight is important, but it is not as important as how you look. Often when people obsess over how much weight they lose, they tend to push themselves to extremes so they can see those numbers dropping. This is neither healthy nor sustainable and can cause health problems if done in the long term. A better way to assess your progress is by taking pictures and body measurements of yourself. Using a tape measure, record the measurements for your legs, waist, arms and chest. Do this at the same time every week and you will be able to build up a much better picture about the way that you look and the progress that you have made so far.



25

Prepare properly for your gym session. Make sure that you have the right gear for the session that you are about to perform. This includes any water or fluids that you may need, along with equipment like ipods or heart rate monitors. It may sound obvious, but you would be surprised at the number of people who turn up to the gym in beach shorts, or even jeans! That is a sure fire way of killing the intensity of your session. Being physically prepared for your workout helps you to get mentally prepared. You will be psyched and ready to go, and in the right mindset to get through your workout.

26

To achieve a well balanced physique, make sure that you don't just focus on your '*mirror muscles*'. Having a big chest and a bulging pair of biceps is great, but it looks bizarre if you don't have a good back or a good set of legs to go with it. To stop this from happening, devote time in the gym to all of your major body parts. This will not only make you look much better, but it will allow you to function better. Developing one muscle group at the expense of others causes muscle imbalances, which can in turn lead to injury.





27 There is no magic training plan or programme that is certain to get you the body that you want. Some training programmes are better than others, and you need to look around and find a programme that you enjoy and that fits in with your lifestyle. Consistency and hard work is what delivers results, not any particular magical programme. The best programme for you is one that you enjoy and that you can fit into your lifestyle. If you don't enjoy your training and have to make a whole number of sacrifices to accommodate it, then chances are you will quickly lose motivation and give up.



28 Variety is key to progression. If you have been doing the same thing in the gym day in, day out then it is very unlikely that you will be seeing the results that you want. Your body very quickly adapts to a particular training routine or programme, and when this happens it stops changing. To stop this from happening, change your programme every 6 weeks. This is about how long it takes for your body to adapt to the stimulus that you are placing on it. That is not to say that you should completely reinvent your training programme every week, but changing it once a month or so will ensure that you continue to progress and get the results that you want.

29 If you are serious about getting in shape, then you need to accept that there will be times when you have to make sacrifices. Getting in shape should be an enjoyable process, but you do need to recognise that there will be times when you have to forego certain things that you enjoy. You certainly do not have to give up your social life, but you will have to limit your consumption of alcohol and you won't be able to go for 3 course meals multiple times a week. If you accept that you will have to make these changes at the very beginning of your journey, you will be much more likely to succeed. Getting in shape is a great and enjoyable process, but it does also require a lot of hard work

30

Consistency is what delivers results. If you follow your diet perfectly 5 days a week, but then go for an all out binge at the weekend, you will not see the results that you want. It is much better to follow your diet closely all week and allow yourself a few small treats here and there than it is to go on a huge blow out. This also allows you a little more flexibility and to enjoy social events or meals out with friends. Provided that the rest of your diet is in place and that you make smart choices, you can enjoy a little cheat without going on a massive binge.



31

Getting in shape is a marathon, not a sprint. When people are just starting out, they often throw absolutely everything that they have at their training programme. They hit the gym 6 times a week and follow their diet to the letter. Just 2 weeks later and they are completely burnt out. They then lose motivation and often give up. This is not the way to do it. If you are just starting out, focus on making small but sustainable changes. These will add up in the long term and make a big difference to the way that you look and feel.



32

More is not always better. When people are trying to get in shape they often think that they need to spend more time in the gym, do more sessions, and further restrict their diet. This is not true. If you are after results, you need to train smart as well as hard. When it comes to getting in shape, quality always beats quantity. You will need to train a certain amount to get the results that you want, but you do not need to spend hours in the gym. Just focus on getting the most out of each session and pushing yourself hard, and you will find that you can have a really great session in less than half an hour.

33

Do not let other people have a negative impact on your weight loss journey. When you start your training programme and begin to see results, there will be people who will try to tempt you. Most likely they will say things like ***'Go on, it's only a small slice of cake',*** or ***'Surely one drink won't hurt you!'*** Now whilst they are not acting out of malice, their behaviour, if persistent,² is likely to have a detrimental effect on your training. You have to stay strong and resist this kind of temptation. It will be difficult, but when you are in the shape of your life and the envy of all of your friends, you will be glad that you said no to that piece of cake!

34

If you are going to succeed in your weight loss journey, you will need to be flexible at times. There will be times when you have to travel or when you are stuck at work late. This is not an excuse for the diet to go out of the window. You need to be flexible and to be able to make smart and healthy choices when you are out and about. No matter how well you prepare, there are always going to be those times when things get in the way. It is how well you adjust and cope in these situations that will define your results.



35

It has long been said that ***'failing to prepare is preparing to fail.'*** Now whilst it may sound a little bit cheesy, when it comes to getting in shape, it still holds very true. Eating out of Tupperware might not be everyone's idea of fun, but when you are on a strict diet, you need to be in control of what you are eating. If you are serious about getting in shape, you need to prepare your food each night for the next day and be in control of every aspect of your diet. Then when lunchtime rolls around, you will not be tempted to hit the local hot dog stand because you will already have your well balanced and delicious meal packed in your bag!

36

Do not let the atmosphere in your gym put you off training. Often when people are just starting out, they feel self-conscious and that everyone in the gym is looking at them or mocking them. As difficult as it may be, you cannot let this stop you from doing what you want to do. It is most likely that people are not looking at you, but even if they are, who cares? You are there trying to make a positive change in your life, and you should be proud of that. Don't let ignorant people stop you from achieving your goals, use them to fuel you when things get difficult. You need to remember that we all start somewhere. Hold your head up high and ignore anyone who does not support the positive changes that you are making in your life.

37

Just because a particular diet or training routine worked for your friend, it does not mean that it will work for you. It is very tempting to follow the advice of a friend or family member who has lost weight, but it is important to note that we are all different. Because of this, different training methods and diets will have different effects on different people. So rather than trying to copy what someone else has done, focus on what works best for you, what you enjoy and what makes you feel good. There are so many different factors that influence a person's success, so don't get sucked into the trap of thinking that it was ***'x, y or z'*** that got your friend into good shape.

38

If you cannot sustain your diet or training routine, then you will not be able to sustain your results. So many people follow a diet hoping that they will be able to get great results fast. But if they cannot follow that diet for longer than a week or two, then they will have almost nothing to show for it. It is for this reason that fad diets are always so unsuccessful. They may work great for a short period of time, but because they place such severe restriction on what you can eat, they are impossible to sustain in the long term. So rather than focus on quick fixes, look at the long term, and make choices that you can sustain over a prolonged period of time. It is this that will deliver the results that you want.



39

If you are just starting out on your weight loss journey, try and recruit a friend or family member to join you. Provided that they have similar goals and a similar work ethic, they can really help to motivate you and keep you on track. You can also introduce an element of friendly competition that will allow you to push each other and really get the most out of every workout. In addition, you will have someone to help and support you at those times when motivation is lacking. This will be invaluable in helping you to stay focused and committed in the long term.



40

You don't have to go to the gym to lose weight. Just try and include more activity into your daily life. Walk or cycle instead of driving, take the stairs rather than the lift, and try to get out of the house when you can. It might not sound like much, but all of these activities will add up and could make a big difference in the long run. At the weekends try to get outside and do physical activities like hiking, walking, or sports. You don't have to run on a treadmill to lose weight. Incorporating it into your lifestyle can work just as well as is often very enjoyable.

41

When the going gets tough, remember that you, and only you are in control of your results. No one can force you to eat something, or to miss a gym session. Yes of course life will sometimes get in the way, but you are in charge of your own journey. The sooner that you realize that, the sooner you can put in place the strategies to make what you want happen. Then when you achieve all of the goals that you set for yourself, you will know exactly what it took to get you there.

42

Recovery is an often overlooked, but very important element of any weight loss programme. If you are killing it in the gym but are not in control of your recovery, then you will not be seeing the results that you want. In addition, you are more likely to get ill, pick up injuries, and lose motivation. To prevent this from happening, you need to ensure that you take a number of rest days from the gym each week, get enough sleep, and eat well. If you pay proper attention to those three elements, then you will recover well from your training and your results will reflect the time that you put into the gym.

43

Sleep is vital to your results. It is during sleep that your muscles repair and recover. If you consistently get too little sleep, you will not recover from your training which will have a knock on effect on your results. You will also feel more lethargic and are likely to have poor quality session. Getting 8 hours of quality sleep each night is not possible for everyone, but aim for at least 6-7. You will be more productive, will have better sessions, and will get in shape quicker if you do.



44

If you are serious about getting in shape, then you need to limit your alcohol consumption. Alcohol depresses the hormonal system, which has a negative impact on your recovery. It also dehydrates you, which is bad news for your aching muscles. If you really cannot kick alcohol altogether then try and drink it on those days of the week that you do not exercise. On these days your body will not have quite the same demands and you will be able to get away with a glass of wine or bottle of beer. On training days it should definitely be avoided - stick with water and hot drinks like tea and coffee.



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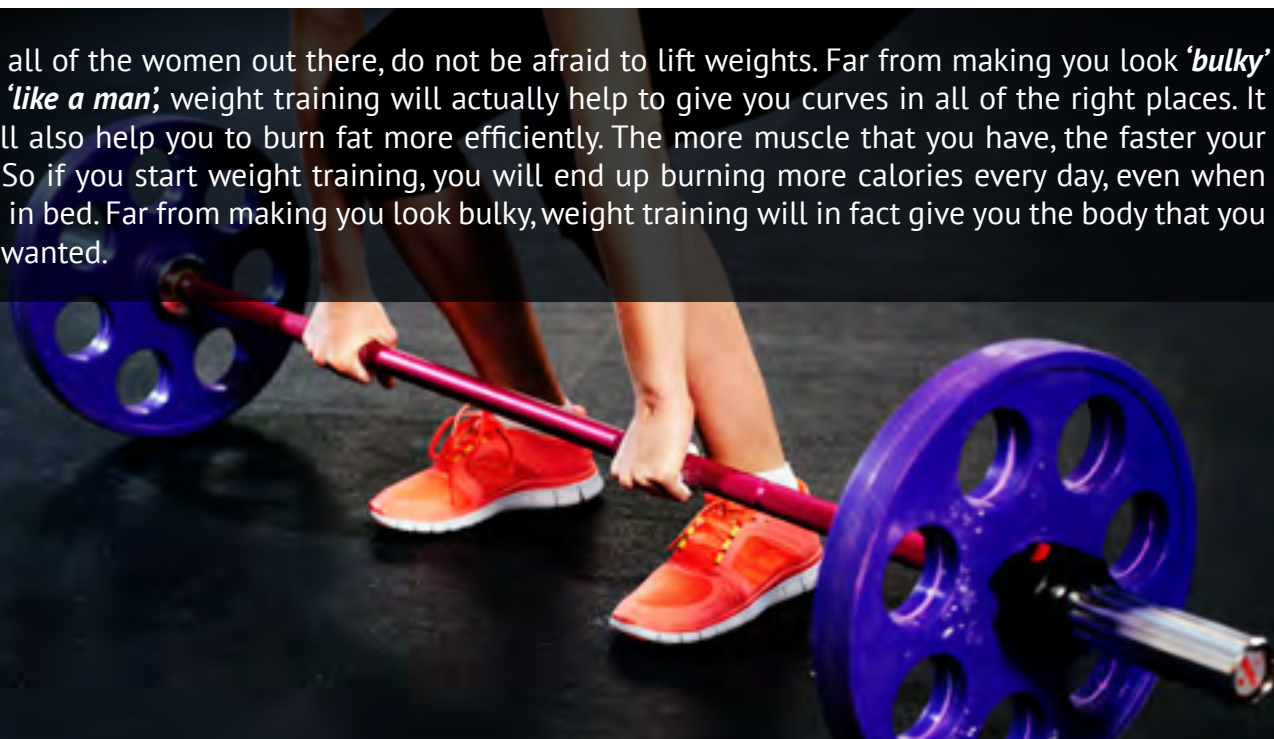
Do not be tempted to starve yourself thin. You may think that eating fewer calories will help you to lose fat more quickly, but unfortunately it is not quite that simple. If you drop your calories too low, your metabolism will slow down and your body will do everything that it can to hold on to its fat stores. You will also feel lethargic, which will have a very negative impact on the quality of your training sessions. When trying to lose weight, reduce calories slowly and do not starve yourself; skipping meals and eating tiny portions will do very little to improve the way that you look.

46

Any diet that recommends eating just one food should be avoided like the plague. The '**Cabbage Soup**' diet and every other diet like it are dangerous. They lead to serious nutritional deficiencies and do nothing to support your general health or training. Further, they are not sustainable. They are almost impossible to follow for any more than a couple of days. By this time you are likely to feel run down and completely devoid of energy. If you have lost any weight, then chances are you will put it all back on as soon as you start eating properly again.

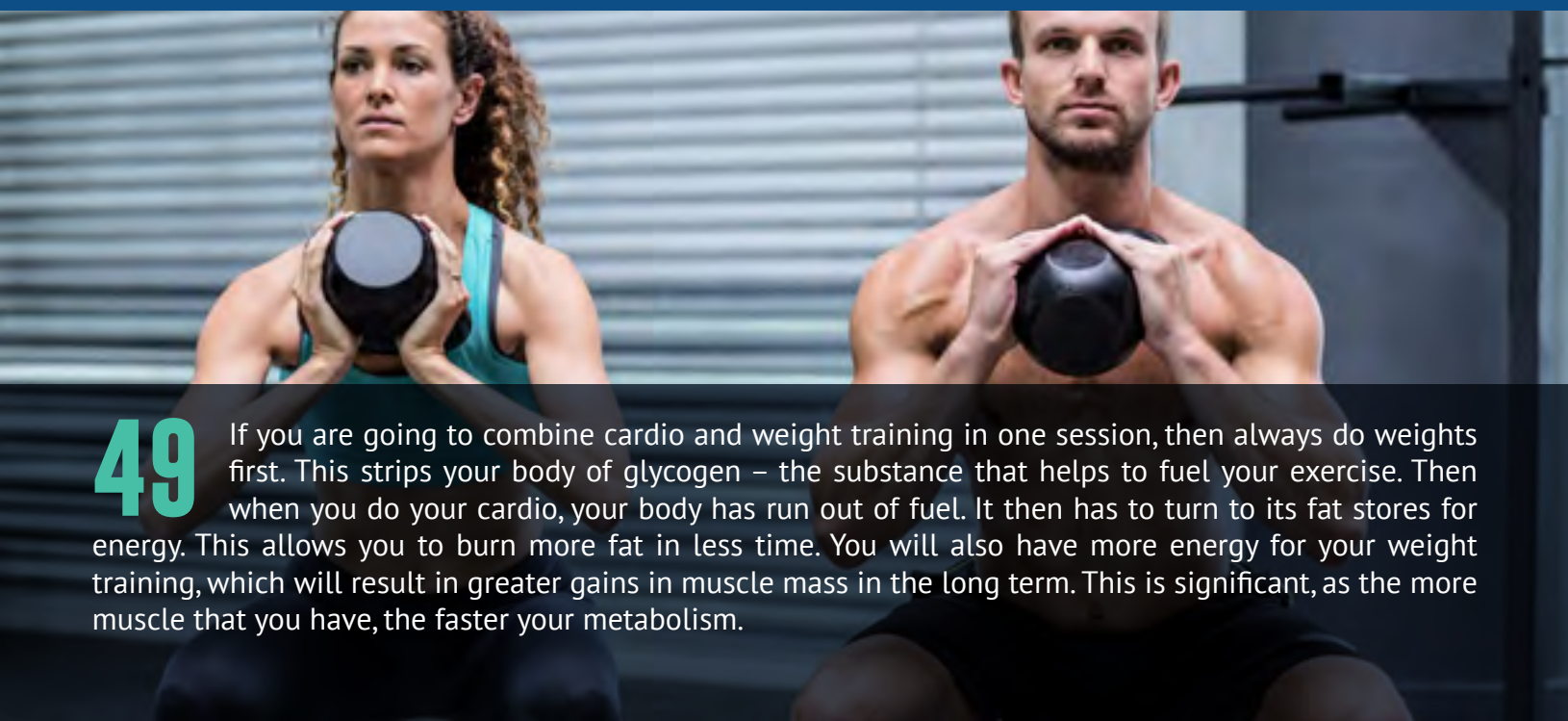
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To all of the women out there, do not be afraid to lift weights. Far from making you look '**bulky**' or '**like a man**', weight training will actually help to give you curves in all of the right places. It will also help you to burn fat more efficiently. The more muscle that you have, the faster your metabolism. So if you start weight training, you will end up burning more calories every day, even when you are lying in bed. Far from making you look bulky, weight training will in fact give you the body that you have always wanted.



48

You cannot '**tone**' a muscle. A muscle can only be made bigger and stronger, or smaller and weaker. So when you are in the gym, do not waste your time doing thousands of sit-ups in the hope that you will be '**toning**' your stomach. That toned look is a result of low body fat levels. So if you want to get '**toned**', stop wasting time trying to tone yourself, and instead focus on exercises and training that will decrease your body fat levels. Combine this with some training that targets the areas that you are hoping to 'tone' and you will be well on your way to achieving the look that you are after.



49

If you are going to combine cardio and weight training in one session, then always do weights first. This strips your body of glycogen – the substance that helps to fuel your exercise. Then when you do your cardio, your body has run out of fuel. It then has to turn to its fat stores for energy. This allows you to burn more fat in less time. You will also have more energy for your weight training, which will result in greater gains in muscle mass in the long term. This is significant, as the more muscle that you have, the faster your metabolism.

50

If you want to build muscle, eat whole fat Greek yogurt. It might be a little bit difficult to track down, but it will make a real difference to your training. Whole fat yogurt is high in the substance conjugated linoleic acid, or CLA for short. This boosts the immune system, and has also been shown to fight cancer. In addition, it has been shown that those who eat more CLA rich foods, gain more muscle. On top of all this, Greek yogurt is high in protein and calcium. This will support healthy bones and muscle repair, both of which are crucial when you are training hard. Eat it everyday if you are looking to build muscle. Start your day with a big bowl of yogurt, some fruit and a handful of mixed nuts.

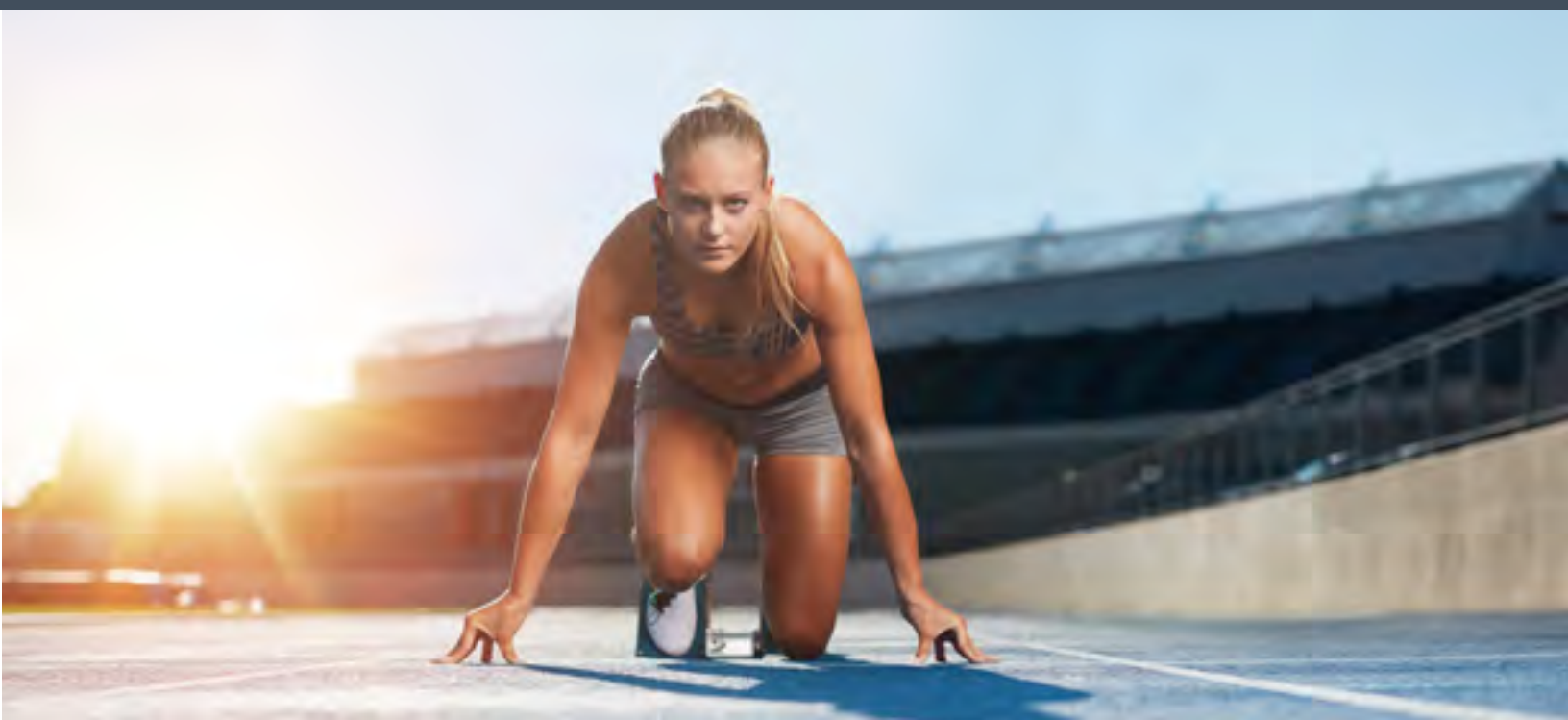


51

Avoid eating a fatty meal before you go to the gym. Fat has many benefits and good sources of fat should definitely be included in your diet, but you should avoid eating fat right before you go training. This is because fat takes a long time to digest properly. Therefore if you eat a high fat meal, it is likely that it will still be in your stomach when you go to the gym. Then when you start training, you will begin to suffer with a number of uncomfortable symptoms. You may have stomach cramps or feel nauseous. This will inevitably have a detrimental affect on your workout. To prevent this from happening, avoid fatty meals around your workout, and eat them later on in the evening, or earlier in the day.

52

Do sprint intervals if you want to burn fat fast. Sprint as fast as you can for 30 seconds. Stop and fully rest for around 3 minutes. Repeat the process 5-8 times. This kind of training is very time efficient. In addition, it will elevate your metabolism, and cause your body to burn calories hours after you have finished. Compared with traditional forms of cardio, it causes much less muscle wastage. This is important, as muscle mass is linked with metabolism. The more muscle that you have, the faster your metabolism, and the more calories you will burn – even when you are lying in bed!





53

Avoid fat in your post-workout meal. When you train, you cause damage to your muscle fibres. These need to be repaired through nutrition and rest. The sooner that you can begin the repair process, the better. After working out, you will have diminished your protein and carbohydrate stores. The priority then should be to replenish these stores as quickly as possible. To achieve this, your post-workout meal should consist almost entirely of carbohydrates and protein. If you add fat to this meal, you will slow down the absorption of the carbohydrates and protein, and therefore also slow down the recovery process. To prevent this from happening, go for low fat protein and carbohydrate sources in your post workout meal. Meats like chicken and turkey work really well, combined with a carbohydrate source like quinoa, rice or sweet potatoes.



54

Eat frozen vegetables for convenience and to reduce your shopping bill. Many people think that frozen vegetables are devoid of nutrients, but this is not true. Although they may not be as good for you as the fresh stuff, they still contain a whole range of vitamins and minerals. In addition, they can be stored for much longer without going off and are very easy and convenient to cook. Some of the best vegetables that you can buy frozen are peas, green beans and broccoli. This will ensure that you are eating all of your vegetables, without costing you a fortune. It will also be less wasteful, as you do not have to throw any vegetables that you don't eat away, you can just throw them back into the freezer.

55

For the best results when weight training, focus on doing big lifts that recruit large numbers of muscle fibres. Moves like squats, deadlifts and bench presses recruit very large numbers of muscle fibres, which will burn more calories during your session. The hormonal impact of this kind of training is also more significant, which means that you will burn calories for hours after you have finished. These big lifts will pack more muscle on to your frame, which will boost your metabolism and have you burning fat like a furnace.

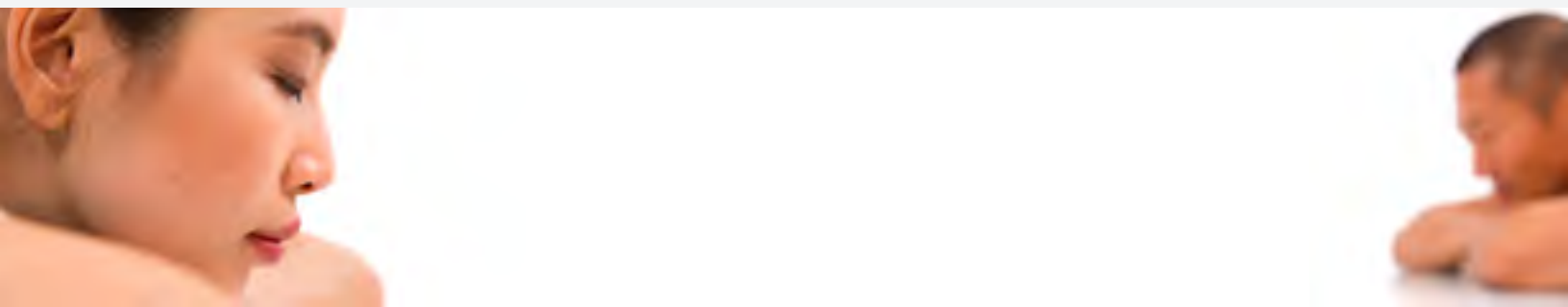


56 If you are tight on time in the gym, avoid single limb, isolation exercises. These weight lifting moves, like bicep curls, leg extensions and sit-ups have very little impact on your hormonal system. This means that you will not burn many calories performing them, and you will not experience the **'Afterburn Effect'** after your session. This is when your body continues to burn calories long after your session is over. Isolation moves are great to use if you have a lot of time, but for most of us, this isn't the case. Instead make sure that you focus on big moves that recruit multiple muscle groups.

57 If you are short on time but still want to get a killer workout in, try circuit training. Pick a number of moves that target all of the major muscle groups and perform them back to back, resting only minimally between sets. This kind of training produces a big response in your levels of growth hormone. This means that you will continue to burn calories long after you have finished your session. Not only is this kind of training very time efficient, it is also enjoyable and produces some great results.



58 If fat loss is your aim, then limit your rest periods when you are training. Keeping your rest periods short – between 10 and 60 seconds – produces a much greater response in your levels of growth hormone. This is significant, because growth hormone plays a large role in fat burning. It elevates your metabolism for an extended period of time, which causes your body to burn more calories, even when you are resting. In addition, keeping your rest periods short works great for those times when you cannot spend that much time in the gym.





59 Don't be afraid to lift heavy weights when you are in the gym. Lifting heavy weights but for fewer reps has been shown to be highly effective both for fat loss and muscle gain. All too often people choose light weights and perform endless numbers of reps. This in fact does very little to shift your stubborn fat stores. Choose weights that you can lift for around 8-10 reps. By the final few reps you should be really struggling. This will help you to build muscle, burn body fat and get the body that you want.

60 When lifting weights, make sure that you move the weight through its full range of motion. All too often, people shortchange their results by cheating when they lift weights. Rather than perform the entire movement, they cut it short and perform only the middle section of the move. This is ineffective and will cause your results to plateau fairly quickly. To stop this from happening, make sure that you are always moving the weight through its entire range of motion. This will increase your strength and also the time that the muscle is under tension. This will lead to increased muscle mass in the long run.

61 Do not lift with your ego. Although it may be tempting to try and throw around the heaviest weights in the gym, it is not the most efficient way of training. When you choose weights that are too heavy for you, you end up sacrificing your form. This in turn leads to an insufficient stimulus of the muscle, which means that it has no reason to grow. To prevent this from happening, forget about how much weight you are lifting, and instead focus on how you lift it. Always move the weight in a controlled way and focus on the muscle that you are trying to stimulate. Without a doubt this will send your gains through the roof.



62 If you are new to weight training, always train large muscle groups first in your workout. These larger muscles – like the back and legs require much more energy than smaller muscle groups, like the biceps or abs. If you want to put on muscle then you need to train these big muscle groups when you are fresh and at your strongest. If you try to attempt them later on in your workout, you will not be able to lift as much weight, and your results will suffer. Start with the big moves, and then as your workout goes on, turn your attention to smaller body parts. This will ensure that your entire body gets worked in the most efficient way.



63

Include berries in your diet to boost your health and burn fat. Not only do berries taste delicious, but they have a whole number of health benefits. Primarily, they contain what is known as antioxidants. This means that they help to get rid of some of the waste products that build up in our body. When we exercise, we create more of these potentially harmful waste products. Ensuring that we eat enough fruits and berries will help to rid our bodies of these antioxidants. This will improve general health and more specifically, recovery time from the gym. The quicker that you can recover, the more often that you can train. This will speed up your results and help you to lose weight quicker. Some of the best choices of berry include raspberries, blackberries and blueberries. Other dark skinned fruit like cherries also work well.

64

You don't need to lift weights to get big muscles. Some of the best moves that you can do to increase your muscle mass are done just with bodyweight. Moves like pull-ups and dips are great for increasing muscle mass. They need minimal equipment, so make a great choice for those of you who may train at home. In addition, they allow you to work efficiently with your body, and give you 'functional' strength. There is no point being able to bench press 100kg if you can't even do a dip with your own bodyweight. Free weights are of course a great addition to any training programme, but bodyweight moves should also form a pivotal part of your routine.



65

Do not overly rely on machines when you are weight training. Although they are great, they do not stimulate the stabilising muscles surrounding the muscle that you are trying to work. This can lead to muscle imbalances and weaknesses, which in time will hamper your progress. If for example you only ever train on machines, you will find that you probably struggle to lift free weights. To prevent this imbalance and avoid injury, make sure that you incorporate free weights into your training routine. Train with free weights first to build up the stabilising and support muscles. Then as your session continues and you begin to tire, head over to the machines.

66

Just as there is no magical diet or supplement that will get you in shape, there is no one exercise that will work wonders for you. Often certain moves are advertised as *'the best'* or *'the ultimate'* move for bringing up a particular body part. Now whilst it is true that there are some moves that better stimulate a muscle, there are no single moves that will get you bulging biceps or a pumped up chest. Choose a variety of moves and change them each week to hit the muscle from different angles. This will ensure that the muscle is properly stimulated and over time will lead to significant increases in muscle mass.



67

Do not be enticed by new equipment or modern looking machines. Whilst they all have their place within a training programme, you should not overuse them at the expense of free weights. All too often these modern machines are a little gimmicky. They promise to deliver the best results in record time, but you need to remember that there is no such thing as a quick fix. They may stimulate your muscles in a new or different way, but make sure that you treat them as just one weapon in your arsenal of training moves. Often keeping it simple is what works best.

68

Putting on muscle takes time. It is not what you want to hear, but you need to know. If you are expecting to bulk up and get a set of ripped abs in a couple of months, then chances are you will be left disappointed. If you train hard and consistently, you can make massive changes to the way that you look. But if you hit the gym and then go to bed expecting to wake up looking like the Incredible Hulk, you are out of luck. Don't lose motivation, just be patient and consistent and overtime you will be able to see significant changes.



69

Losing fat takes time. Adverts and magazine articles may tell you that you can *'Get a 6 pack in 6 weeks'* or *'Lose 10 pounds in 10 days'*, but it is never as simple as that. If you try to rush and lose as much fat as you possibly can in as short a time as possible, you will burn out. You will most likely lose muscle rather than fat, and will cause significant damage to your metabolism. This makes it harder to lose weight when you try again. Focus instead on small changes that are sustainable. It might take you a little bit longer to lose the fat, but you will be able to keep it off for good.



70 Do not chase lots of different goals at once. It is great to be ambitious, but if you want to gain muscle, lose fat, improve fitness and gain strength all at once, chances are you will struggle. Different goals require different approaches. Focus on one or two goals at a time and give it everything that you have. Then when you are successful in that goal you can look to the next thing that you would like to achieve. List everything that you would like to achieve and prioritise them. Then go through your goals one by one and achieve them. It may take time, but the sense of satisfaction that you will gain from doing this will be more than worth it.

71 Do not sacrifice everything in your pursuit for a new body. Yes getting in shape does require sacrifices, but overall it should be an enjoyable process. If you find that you are constantly restricting yourself and are hating the process of dieting and getting in shape, then you will not be successful. You will lose motivation, become miserable, and most likely quit. It is great if getting shape is important to you, but do not restrict other areas of your life in order to achieve that goal. As with everything in life, balance is important. Strike a good balance between your fitness goals and the rest of your life, and you will achieve exactly what you want.

72 Do not make excuses when it comes to food. If you are dieting it becomes very easy to try and barter with your own mind. You may justify it by saying *'Oh well it's Christmas time' or 'I haven't been out for a meal for ages.'* Of course balance is important but if you want to get into great shape, you need to be in control of your eating habits. Having a treat here or there is not going to do you any harm, but don't be afraid to be your own person. If you are eating out and all of your friends go for a dessert, don't feel compelled to order one as well just because they are. Be proud of what you do and stay strong, even when temptation is all around you!



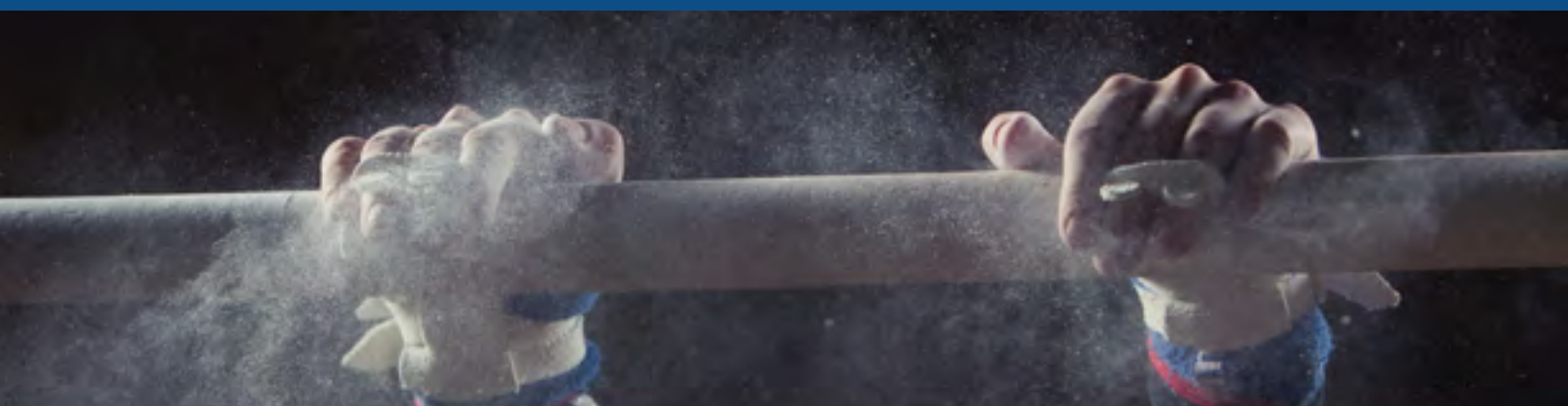
73 If you like eating nuts, try including nut butters into your diet. These great tasting butters, which come in varieties like peanut, cashew and almond make a great snack and are full of a whole number of vitamins and minerals. Try them with some chopped vegetable sticks or mixed into your morning oatmeal. One word of warning though – always go for natural nut butters. These literally just contain the nuts that have been blended. Cheap nut butters on the other hand contain a whole load of other ingredients that will slow your weight loss down. They are often full of hidden sugars and oils that are full of fat. Natural butters may be a bit more expensive, but the extra price is definitely worth it.



74 Stay focused in the gym to get the most out of your sessions. It is very easy during an hour-long session to let your mind wander, but you will get much more from your sessions if you focus on the task in hand. This is not always easy. If you struggle, take 5 minutes before your session to just think about exactly what you are going to do during the next hour or so. Picture the exercises that you are going to perform and then imagine how you want to look. Making a clear connection between your workout and what you want to achieve will really help to focus your mind, which will get you the results that you are after.

75 The gym is not for socialising. Although it is great to have a friendly chat with the regulars, if it is at the expense of your session, then you are in trouble. To prevent this from happening, keep chitchat to either the beginning or end of your workout. Take your headphones into the gym with you and show people that you are not there to mess around. It may feel a bit anti-social, but as long as you smile and make time for them at the end of your session, then you won't end up offending anyone.

76 Take a stopwatch to the gym with you and be strict on rest periods. Often people just guess how long they rest between sets when they are lifting weights. This is not ideal, as different rest periods should be utilised depending on your goals. When you work out how much rest you should be taking depending on what it is that you want to achieve, you need to stick to it. The best way to do this is to take a stopwatch to the gym with you and time your rest periods. It may seem a little extreme, but it is the only way of accurately keeping on top of your rest periods. It may be another thing that you need to pack into your gym bag, but I can guarantee that it will greatly improve the quality of your workouts.



77 If you have a weak grip, it might be holding you back in other areas. Your grip strength is heavily tested during any exercise that recruits the back, as well as any exercise that focuses on the arms. If you find during moves like deadlifts or bent over rows that it is your grip that fails you first, it might be worth paying a bit of attention. To build grip strength, hold a heavy bar in each hand at the end of your session. See how long you are able to hold it for, and record that figure. Do this two to three times a week, each time trying to beat your previous score. When you can hold the bars for a number of minutes, increase the weight on the bar and go again. This will have a really positive knock on effect on your overall muscle mass.



78 Don't neglect your legs if you are serious about building an impressive physique. Not only does a huge upper body balanced on a pair of tiny legs look strange, but it will in fact hold you back from getting the results that you want. Training legs produces a massive surge of growth hormone in the body, which is key to muscle growth. So when you train legs, you are in fact benefiting all of the other muscles in the body. Training legs will also strengthen your lower back and core muscles, which will increase your overall strength and help to carve out an impressive six-pack.

79 You don't have to spend hours training your abs to build an impressive six-pack. Big moves like squats and deadlifts give your abs a real workout. Combine this with a good diet that helps to reduce your body fat levels, and you can build a well developed six pack without having to spend hours doing crunches. This is a great option for those of you who want to build an impressive physique but may not have hours to spend in the gym each day

80 Your abs are a muscle groups like any other, and should be trained as such. For some reason people believe that the best way to train abs is perform hundreds of sit-ups and crunches. This is not true! Your abdominal muscles do respond better to slightly higher reps, but you don't need to go any higher than 20-25 reps for each move. If by the final few reps you are really struggling, then you have judged it right. This will ensure that your abdominal muscles have been properly stimulated, but will save you the hassle of having to spend 20 minutes doing crunches at the end of your session!



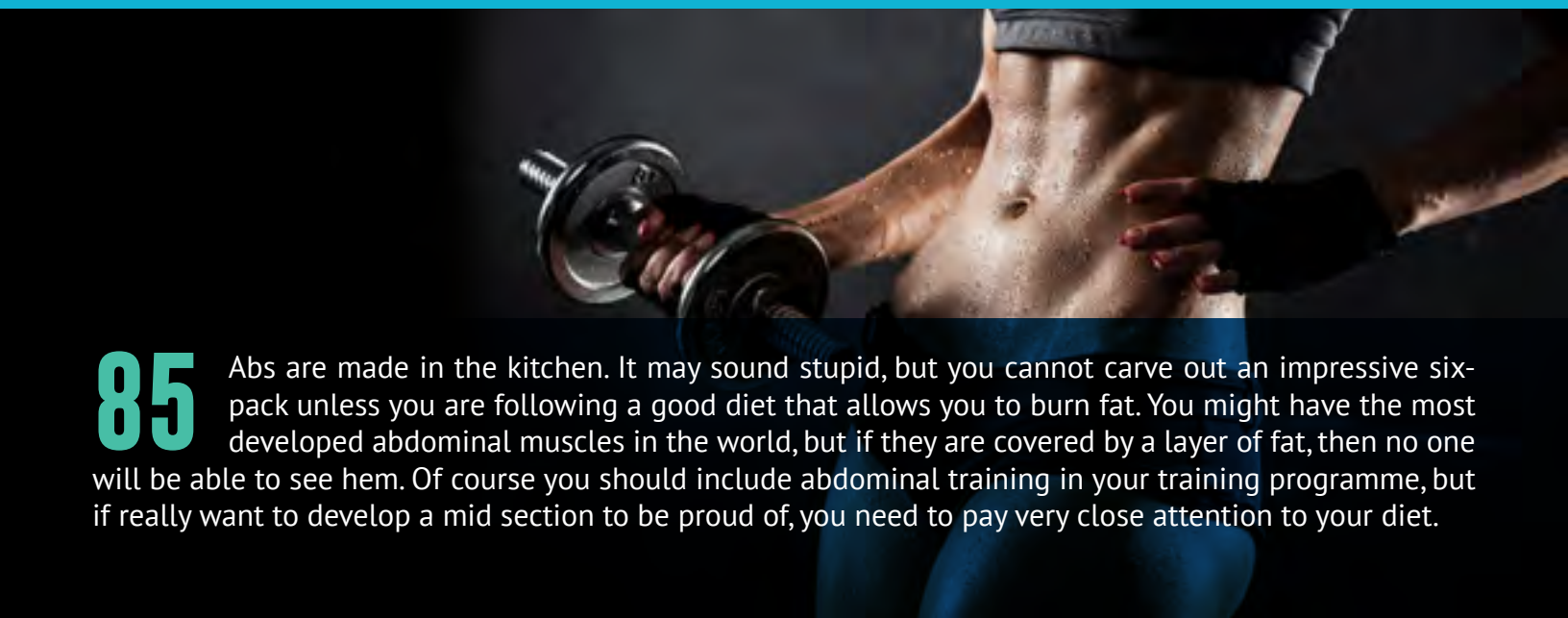
81 Always train your abs at the end of your session. Training them at the beginning will have a negative impact on the rest of your session. This is because your abdominal muscles are responsible for your core strength. This core strength is key for big moves that recruit large numbers of muscle fibres. Therefore if you train your abs at the beginning of your session, you will weaken your core muscles and will not be able to lift as much weight on your big lifts. To stop this from happening, save them until the end. Your core will already be tired from your workout, and it won't need much additional stimulus to really get those abs working hard.

82 If you want to get a six-pack, stop doing sit ups. This might sound pretty crazy, as sit-ups are the go to exercise for anyone trying to sculpt a toned midsection. However sit-ups are in fact a fairly inefficient exercise. Contrary to popular belief, they do not target the abdominal muscles that effectively and instead work the hip flexors. These are muscles that tend to be very tight in the majority of people, which leads to muscle imbalances. If these imbalances become too great, the risk of injury is greatly increased. So stop wasting your time doing sit ups and instead focus on moves like hanging leg raises, crunches, and the roman chair.

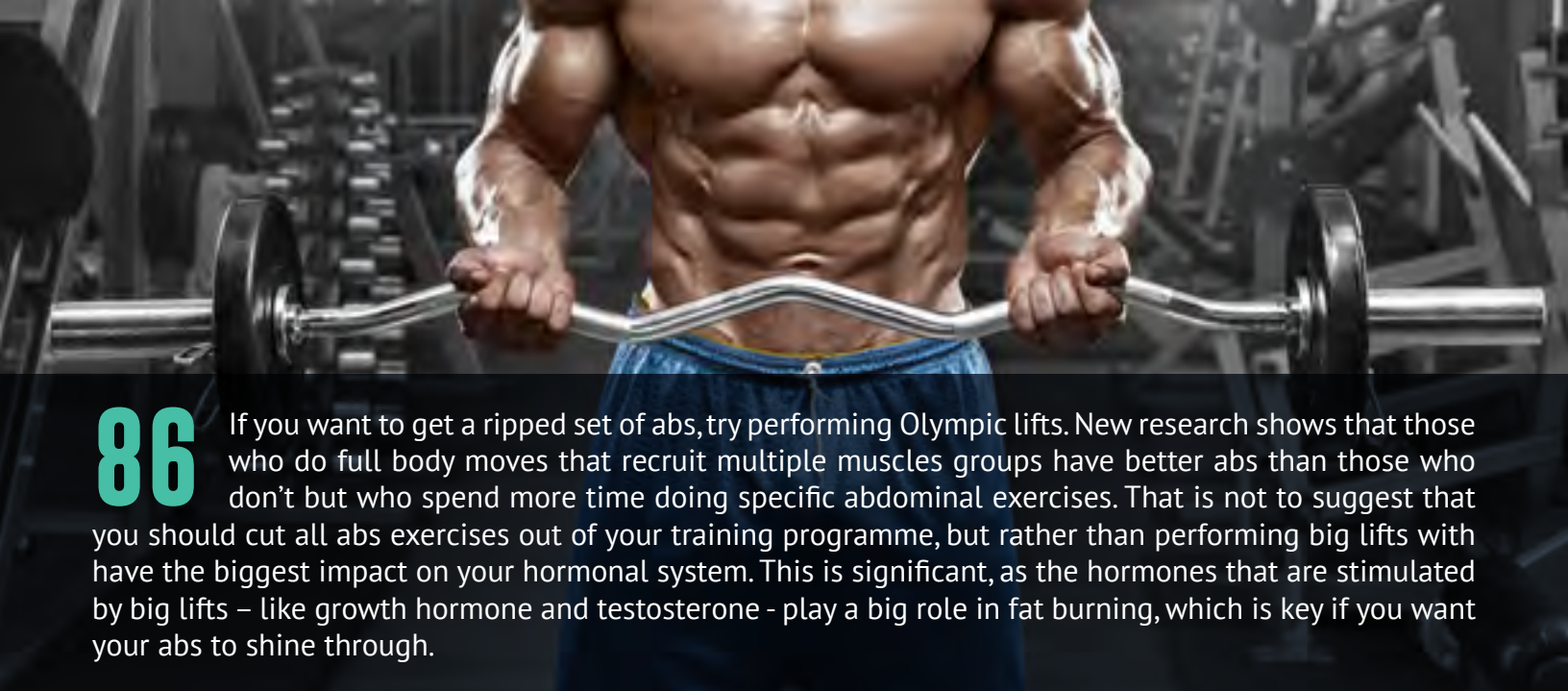


83 If you are tight on time but still want to do all of your normal abdominal training, try staggered sets. This involves adding sets of ab training into your workout where your rest periods would normally be. So if you were doing bench press for example, you would do a set, then go straight into a set of crunches. You would then rest briefly before going back to the bench press. This is certainly a tough way of training, but it allows you to get a lot done in a short period of time. It also works very well on areas of your body that you might feel are slow to respond. If you have a great chest but small arms, then you could use staggered sets to build up your lagging biceps.

84 Do not be afraid to add weight to your ab exercises. People have often said that using weights for your abs will build a 'chunky' midsection that doesn't look aesthetic. That is not true. Weight is merely another form of stimulus that will help to build an impressive set of abdominal muscles. You should not use weight for all of your ab exercises, but it is a great tool to combine with regular ab training to help you build the six pack that you are after. Some of the best moves to use with weights are cable crunches, weighted crunches, and hanging leg raises with a dumbbell between your feet.



85 Abs are made in the kitchen. It may sound stupid, but you cannot carve out an impressive six-pack unless you are following a good diet that allows you to burn fat. You might have the most developed abdominal muscles in the world, but if they are covered by a layer of fat, then no one will be able to see them. Of course you should include abdominal training in your training programme, but if really want to develop a mid section to be proud of, you need to pay very close attention to your diet.



86

If you want to get a ripped set of abs, try performing Olympic lifts. New research shows that those who do full body moves that recruit multiple muscles groups have better abs than those who don't but who spend more time doing specific abdominal exercises. That is not to suggest that you should cut all abs exercises out of your training programme, but rather than performing big lifts with have the biggest impact on your hormonal system. This is significant, as the hormones that are stimulated by big lifts – like growth hormone and testosterone - play a big role in fat burning, which is key if you want your abs to shine through.

87

If you are lactose intolerant but still want to invest in a protein shake, try either soy protein or a vegan blend. Like whey protein, soy is also fast digesting. This is key after you have worked out, because your muscles need nutrients quickly. A vegan blend makes another great option, as it contains a number of lactose free protein sources. Having a multi source protein is advantageous, as it ensures that your body properly absorbs it, which is key for recovery.

88

Do not skimp on the quality of your coffee. The instant stuff might be cheap and easy, but it is not good for you. Coffee has a number of great fat burning, and general health benefits, but quality is important. Good quality coffee helps to control blood sugar levels and decrease the risk of diabetes. It is also full of antioxidants. Conversely, instant coffee is much lower in antioxidants. Good coffee might be a little bit more expensive, but if you are a real caffeine fiend then you could really benefit from switching from instant to the real stuff.

89

Stay hydrated to avoid hunger. Most people do not drink enough water. This has many negative impacts, of which overeating is one. If you do not drink enough, you are very likely to mistake thirst for hunger. You may think that you are hungry, when in actual fact, you are just thirsty. The impact of this is not to be underestimated. If this happens every day – which is highly likely when you consider how little people drink – then it will lead you to snack more often and overeat at main meals. To avoid this, always keep a water bottle with you and sip from it almost continually.



90

Drink lots of water at your meals to stop you from overeating. It has been shown that you are much less likely to overeat at a meal if you drink a lot of water with it. This is because it helps to fill your stomach up, which in turn gives you the feeling of being satisfied. This trick works particularly well if you are eating out or are at a buffet. You may be tempted by everything on the menu, or to keep returning to the buffet cart, but if you have a drink of water after every mouthful you will get full quickly. You will then be much less likely to overeat all of the high calorie foods on offer.



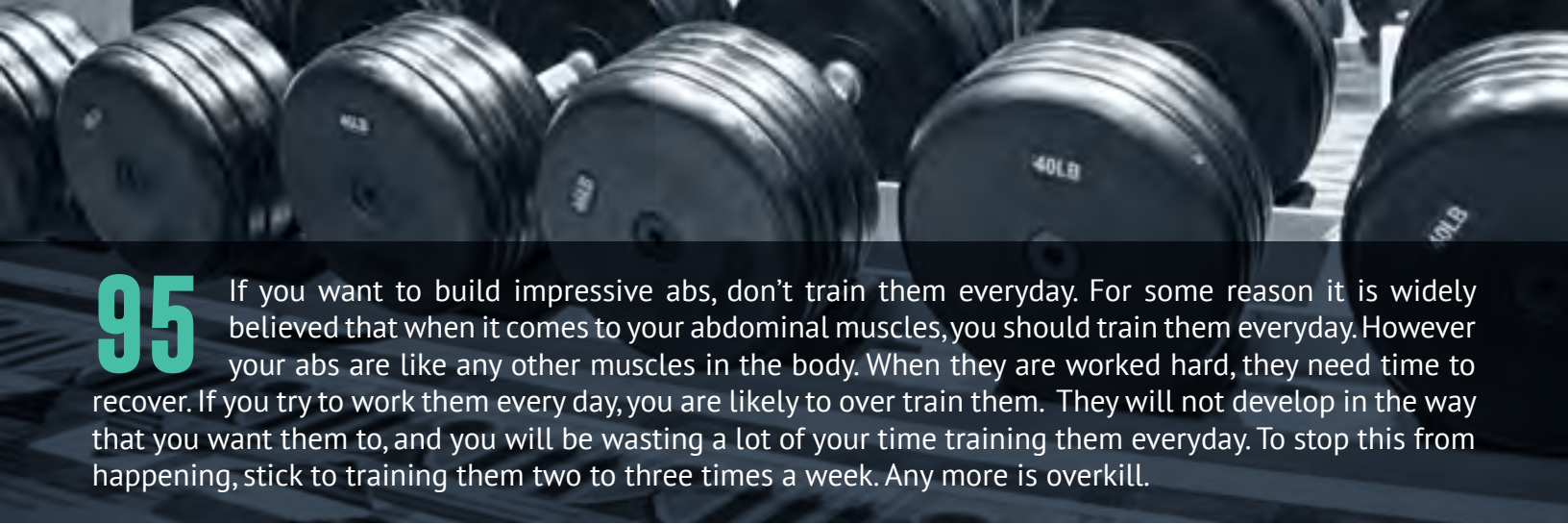
91 Eat lots of green vegetables with every meal to fill you up. Hunger when you are dieting can be your worst enemy. It makes you feel uncomfortable, miserable, and it often leads you to make poor food choices. When you are really struggling with hunger, you will be much more likely to dip your hand into the cookie jar. Including lots of green vegetables with every meal is one of the best ways to beat hunger. These kinds of vegetables are full of fibre and water, which helps to fill you up and get rid of hunger. They are also full of antioxidants and lots of different vitamins and minerals, so are great for your general health too.

92 If you are looking to burn fat, stop adding milk to tea and coffee. It may seem like nothing, but if you regularly drink tea and coffee and always have it with milk, you could be consuming a few hundred extra calories every day. That may not sound like much, but it all adds up. If you really cannot stomach your tea or coffee without milk, try switching to herbal tea or flavoured coffee. The latter may be a little pricier and is only usually available from markets or special coffee shops, but the taste is worth it. Another option would be to go for skimmed milk. It is not ideal, but it will help to cut down on the amount of fat and calories that you consume each day.



93 Do not fall into the trap of thinking that your legs *'get a workout'* when you go for a run. If you want to build muscle, you need to train your legs with weights in the gym. Running will work the muscles in the legs, but not to the extent where they will get bigger and stronger. In fact, if you look at any long distance runner, you will see that their legs are very small and spindly. To make sure that you aren't walking around on toothpicks, treat your legs like any other body part and train them hard in the gym. Use a mixture of free weights and resistance machines, and you will be on your way to building an impressive pair of wheels in no time.

94 If you are trying to lose fat, take a close look at some of the *'healthy'* foods that you are eating. You might think that your breakfast bars and smoothies are good, healthy snacks to include in your diet, but in actual fact they could be holding you back from getting the results that you want. Often these products contain a lot of hidden sugar and calories. They may seem like a healthy option, but often they contain the same amount of sugar as unhealthy options like chocolate bars or cookies. Have a very close look at the labels of the foods that you are eating to make sure that you aren't accidentally eating foods that will slow your results down.



95

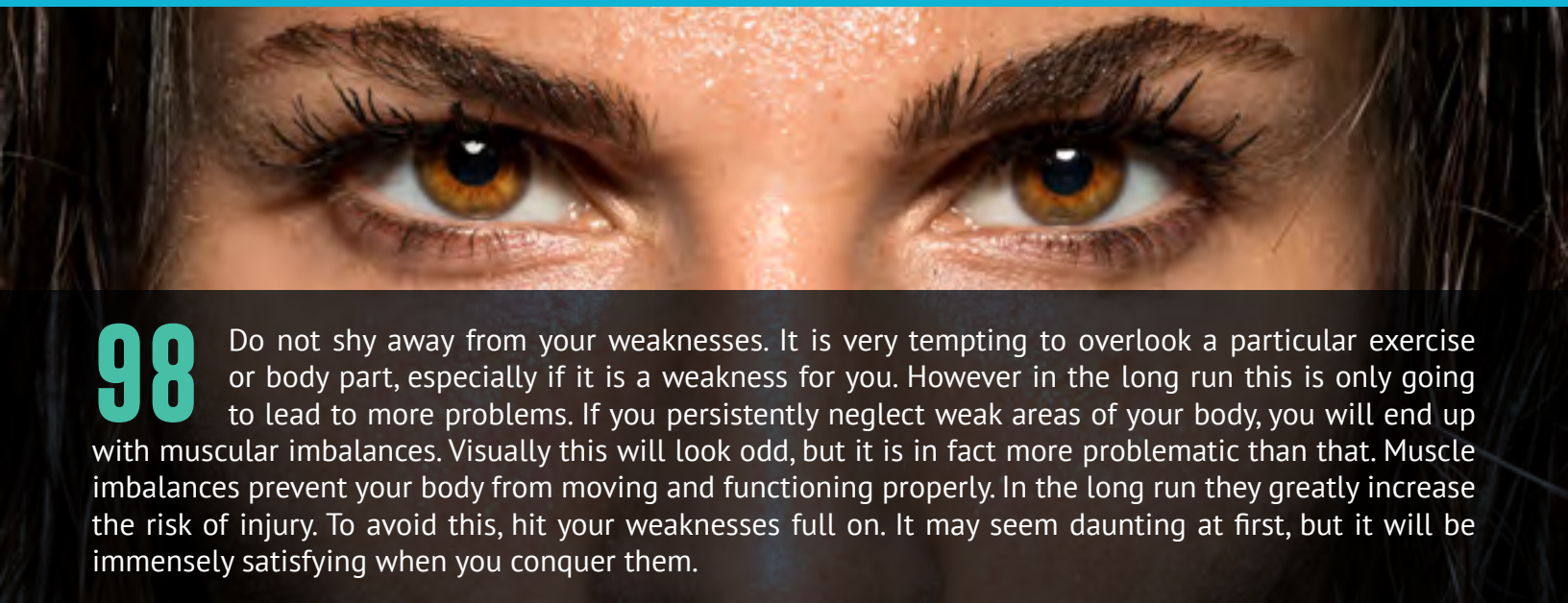
If you want to build impressive abs, don't train them everyday. For some reason it is widely believed that when it comes to your abdominal muscles, you should train them everyday. However your abs are like any other muscles in the body. When they are worked hard, they need time to recover. If you try to work them every day, you are likely to over train them. They will not develop in the way that you want them to, and you will be wasting a lot of your time training them everyday. To stop this from happening, stick to training them two to three times a week. Any more is overkill.

96

Always keep your weights workouts under an hour. When you go beyond this point, the level of the hormone cortisol begins to rise rapidly in your blood. This is bad news. Cortisol has a detrimental affect on testosterone and can in fact cause muscle wastage. To prevent this from happening, keep your workouts short but sharp. To get the job done you really should not have to spend any longer in the gym than 45 minutes. If you find that you are, then try reducing your rest periods or your overall number of sets.

97

If you struggle to squeeze out those final few reps at the end of a set, try counting backwards. It may sound stupid, but psychologically it will give you a boost. Rather than thinking about how many reps you have done, you will be thinking about how many you have left. This will give you something to focus on and it will help you to push yourself to get through to the end of the set. You can also try breaking the set into smaller denominations, if that works for you. So if you were going to perform 12 reps, you could count to 4, 3 times.



98

Do not shy away from your weaknesses. It is very tempting to overlook a particular exercise or body part, especially if it is a weakness for you. However in the long run this is only going to lead to more problems. If you persistently neglect weak areas of your body, you will end up with muscular imbalances. Visually this will look odd, but it is in fact more problematic than that. Muscle imbalances prevent your body from moving and functioning properly. In the long run they greatly increase the risk of injury. To avoid this, hit your weaknesses full on. It may seem daunting at first, but it will be immensely satisfying when you conquer them.

99

To increase your strength, make sure that you get your breathing right. Always breathe in on the downward phase of a lift and breathe out when you are lifting the weight. This helps to create what is known as intra-abdominal pressure. This harnesses the power of your core muscles and the makes it easier to lift the weight. Breathing consistently like this also gives the set structure. If your breathing is completely random, your set will lose structure and mentally you will begin to feel tired, even if you are not. Breathing like clockwork might take a bit of practice, but it will make a big difference to the quality of your sessions.

100

Get a six-pack by breathing harder. When you are at the top of an abdominal movement like a crunch, breathe out hard. Really try to empty your lungs of air. This engages a greater number of abdominal muscles, which forces your abs to work harder. The harder they are working, the quicker they will grow. This will lead to a better-developed and more impressive six-pack in the long run. Just make sure that you breathe in as you are returning to the start of the movement, otherwise you will get out of puff very quickly!



101

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102

Do not try and exercise when you are ill. It is great to be enthusiastic, but you need to know when to take your foot off the gas a little. If you just have a bit of a cold or a slight headache then you are probably ok. If however your symptoms are below the neck, then you are probably best giving your session a miss. So if you have a chesty cough or chest infection, do not think about going to the gym. If you do you will have a poor quality session and could possibly make yourself more ill. Instead just focus on resting up and recovering. Then when you are feeling better you can hit the gym with a vengeance.

103

You cannot train every day of the week. You may think that training more will get you to where you want to go more quickly, but it does not quite work like that. Your body needs time to recover from exercise. If you train every day, you will not give it time to recover. This will probably make you feel a little burnt out and could in fact lead to injury and illness. In addition, you just will not see the results that you want. It is not in the gym that you get results, it is outside of it when you are resting and recovering. Robbing yourself of this recovery time will also rob you of results.

104

Do not bother with a weight belt unless you are serious about power lifting. Although weight belts are great when you are attempting your 1 rep max, they should be avoided most of the time. This is because they support your abdominal and lower back muscles. Therefore if you become overly reliant on them, you will essentially stop training your abs and lower back. This will lead to weakness and muscular imbalances. It will also mean that you will be very weak without the weight belt. Your core and lower back will not be able to keep up with the rest of your body, and will prevent you lifting anywhere near the kind of weight that you would with your weight belt.

105

Stretch between sets to increase your strength. Rather than sitting still, stretch the muscle that you have just worked. Not only does this give you something to do in between sets, but it has in fact been shown to increase strength. Indeed a number of studies have shown an increase in strength by as much as 20% when subjects stretched between sets. You do not need to stretch for the entirety of your rest period but do hold each stretch for around 20 to 30 seconds.



106

Do ab rollouts to build an impressive mid-section. This very difficult but great move works both your upper and lower abs, helping to build your entire six-pack evenly. To perform it, kneel on a mat with a barbell in front of you. Grip the barbell with a just wider than shoulder width grip. Roll the bar forward until your body is close to the ground and almost parallel to it. Pause for a second, then return to the starting position. This is a difficult move, so you should only be able to get around 10-12 reps out. When you start to get more, increase the weight of the barbell. This will make it more difficult to pull back to the beginning of the movement. If you do not train at a gym but still want to incorporate the move into your workout, you can buy specific '**ab wheels**' from most good sports stores.

107

Train your abs evenly for the best result. A lot of people believe that their lower abdominals are much more difficult to build, and so devote most of their time trying to work this portion of their mid-section. However the lower abs are only '**more difficult**' to train because they are more likely to be covered by a stubborn layer of belly fat. Even when you trim down, it is likely that the fat around your lower abs will be the last thing to go – especially if you are a man. So rather than spend all of your time focusing on your lower abs, train your entire abs evenly. Combine this with a good diet and a training programme that will help you to burn fat, and you will soon have a six-pack to be proud of.





108

If you want to build impressive calf muscles, you need to think like a ballerina. For most people, calf muscles are incredibly difficult to build, and they respond very slowly to training. This can be frustrating, especially if you are devoting time to them but not seeing any results. To change this, do your best impression of a ballerina the next that that you train calves. When you are doing a standing calf raise for example, focus on pressing up and onto your big toe, so that your toe is supporting your whole body weight. This will place more pressure onto the calf muscle and isolate it to a greater extent. This will cause it to break down and then subsequently grow, leading to a pair of bigger, more impressive calves in the long run!

109

Do not train a muscle everyday if you want it to grow. We all have stubborn body parts that just do not seem to respond to training. It might be your arms, your legs or your chest. But whatever your problem body part is, you will not improve it by training it everyday. Your body needs time to repair and recover, and if you do not allow it this time, you will become over trained. This will cause you to burn out and leave you more susceptible to illness and injury. It will also fail to do anything for your lagging muscles. In fact training them too frequently is more likely to cause them to shrink than to grow. If you are trying to bring up a lagging body part train it a maximum of two times a week. This will help to stimulate it to grow, without pummeling it into the ground!



110

If swimming is your chosen form of cardio, make sure that you switch up the types of stroke that you use. This will work your muscles in slightly different ways, which will help to shock the body. If day in, day out you always do front crawl, or breaststroke, your muscles will strengthen and develop in certain ways. In a way this is great, but in the long term it could lead to muscular imbalances. In addition, your body will adapt to the type of exercise that you are doing, and you will burn less calories. Mixing it up by doing a different kind of stroke every session will strengthen a whole range of different muscles in your body, which will boost your metabolism and help you to burn more fat. Some of the best choices are front crawl, breaststroke and backstroke.



111

To improve your health and burn fat, experiment with different types of milk. Although cow's milk has a number of health benefits, it is quite high in sugar and fat. So if you are looking to lose fat, try different kinds of milk. Some of the healthiest choices include almond milk, hazelnut milk and coconut milk. These tend to be lower in sugar and fat, but often contain a whole number of different vitamins and minerals that will help support your general health. They also all taste delicious, and may help to spice up your bowl of oatmeal or your cup of tea or coffee. They are fairly cheap and should be available in most supermarkets.

112

Do not perform static stretching before your workout. This kind of stretching, which is where you hold a stretch still for up to 30 seconds is very effective most of the time. However studies have shown that stretching in this way just before you workout has a number of detrimental effects. It has been shown to decrease explosive power, and has been shown to increase the risk of injury. Therefore it should be avoided, whatever activity you are involved in. This kind of stretching is great for any other time of day though, and works particularly well after your session. To warm up, do some light exercise to get your heart going, and include a bit of dynamic stretching as well.



113

Perform dynamic stretches before you workout. These stretches, which involve moving and stretching at the same time will greatly improve the quality of your session. They will help to warm your body up and will reduce the risk of injury. In addition, they will actually help to increase strength and explosive power. This will allow you to lift more weight or to be more powerful on the cardio machines. To get the full benefit of this kind of stretching, perform a number of different stretches that target the whole body. Combine this with a short warm up on a cardio machine and you are ready to go!

114

Mix up your meat sources for optimal health and performance. Often when dieting people can become a bit comfortable, and tend to go for the same meats and eat them everyday. Typically they go for meats like chicken, which are low in fat. This isn't problematic in the short term, but it can lead to problems in the long term. Over time your body can become resistant to foods that it encounters everyday. This will cause nutrient absorption to decrease. Therefore you will not be getting the full benefit of the meat that you are eating. To prevent this from happening, rotate your meat sources everyday. Go for chicken, turkey and lean cuts of red meat. This will ensure that you properly absorb the nutrients from the foods that you are eating, which will help to improve your energy and general health.



115

Start eating bison. It might not be your staple supermarket meat choice, but it is a great choice for anyone wanting to get into shape. It is full of protein, contains lots of Omega 3 fats, and also contains high levels of carnitine. This last substance is responsible for burning fat for fuel. In addition to the high levels of protein and Omega 3 fats, this will really help you to shape up. The protein will help to keep you full, and will repair your muscles after exercise. Omega 3 fats improve how your body deals with carbohydrates, and also reduce inflammation from exercise. It is a little bit higher in fat, so should not be eaten everyday, but makes a great replacement for beef.

116

Always start your workout with a short warm up. At the very least this should consist of a number of minutes on the treadmill or exercise bike at a low pace. This gets the heart beating faster and gets the blood pumping around the body. This will help to prepare you for your workout. It will also warm your muscles up. This is key, as cold muscles are much more likely to suffer injury. You do not need to spend very long warming up, but neglecting it all together will be to the great detriment of your session.



117

If you are preparing for a weights session, make sure that you warm up properly. A few minutes on the treadmill or cross trainer to get the heart going won't hurt, but if you want to get the most out of your workout, you need to make sure that your warm up is specific. To ensure that this is the case, perform a number of light sets that work the muscles you plan to train. Start incredibly light and perform a number of reps much higher than you intend during your workout. Over the next couple of warm up sets, increase the amount of weight and lower the reps. This will help the specific muscles that you are working to warm up and will increase the amount of weight that you can lift later on in your session.

118

Make sure that you prepare your shoulders properly before you train them. The shoulder joint is incredibly complex, which also makes it prone to injury. If you fail to warm it up before you train, you are very likely to suffer with shoulder injuries. To prevent this, dedicate a good 5 minutes to warming your shoulder muscles up before you train them. Move them through different planes of movement and do not use much weight. Simple movements like rolling your arms backwards and forwards are very effective. After doing this, do a number of very light warm up sets to get the blood pumping to the muscle. It may seem like a lot of work, but a shoulder injury will have a big knock on effect on your results and prevent you from training a lot of other body parts.



119

Lightly exercise to reduce muscle soreness. It may sound counter intuitive, but if you are struggling with serious muscle soreness, doing a bit of light exercise will help. So if for example you have done a heavy legs session and you are walking like a cowboy, try going for a short jog the next day. It might feel a bit heavy going at first, but it will reduce your muscle soreness. This is because it forces blood back into the muscle. Within the blood are high number of nutrients, which help it to repair faster. This light exercise will also burn calories, and help you to burn a bit of fat too.

120

Use super sets if you are tight on time. This involves performing 2 different moves back to back without any rest. It works best with what are known as '**opposing muscle groups**'. Your biceps and triceps are a perfect example of this. When you are working your biceps, your triceps relax, and vice versa. This means that you can go straight from a biceps move to a triceps move, without any rest. This allows you to get a full workout in, in half the time. It works really well with other opposing muscle groups, like your back and chest, and your quadriceps and hamstrings.

121

Keep a close eye on how long you spend resting between sets. If fat loss is your goal, you should limit the amount of time that you spend resting to less than 60 seconds. This increases the stress on your cardiovascular system and helps you to burn fat. If muscle growth is your aim, then slightly increase your rest periods to around 90 seconds. If you want to improve your strength, then increase your rest periods to 2 minutes or more. This will allow the muscle to properly recover between sets, so that you are equally strong each time.



122

Vary your rep range depending on your goals. If you want to increase the size of your muscles, then lift in the rep range of between 8-12 reps per set. Perform around 3 sets per exercise. This is perfect for breaking the muscle down and stimulating growth. If you want to get stronger, lift few reps but with heavier weight. Go for around 5 reps per set. Because you are performing fewer reps each set, you need to perform more sets. A very popular and effective method for increasing strength is to perform 5 sets of 5 reps. If you want to get stronger and increase muscle, combine the two different rep ranges into your training programme.

123

To increase the difficulty of a workout, try to do it in less time each week. So if your workout takes you 40 minutes to finish in your first week, try to finish it in 35 minutes on your second week. This means that you will have to reduce your rest periods. This places more strain on your muscles and on your cardiovascular system. This will improve your endurance, increase your strength and help you to burn fat. Aim to lift at least the same or more weight than the week before. This will keep the intensity of your workout high, and allow you to get a brutal workout finished in next to no time at all.



124

Do not waste your time with lifting gloves. Your hands may get a bit torn up for the first couple of weeks, but they will soon adjust to it. Although you may think that lifting gloves are more comfortable, they could in fact be affecting the quality of your workout. Gloves decrease your grip strength and make it more difficult for you to grip the bar. This will have a knock on effect that will have a negative impact on your results. If your grip strength is weakened, then you will be able to lift less. If you lift less then your muscles will not grow as quickly. Simply getting rid of your lifting gloves will solve this problem.

125

The position of your body during a body weight dip affects the muscles that you are working. If you lean forwards with your elbows out, pressure is forced through the chest. Conversely, if you stand up straight and tuck your elbows in, pressure is exerted through your triceps. So before you begin the move, make sure that you are positioned in the appropriate way to hit the muscles that you are trying to work. If you want to work both your chest and triceps in the same session, you could dips early on with the focus placed on the chest, and then go back later and do dips again, but this time position yourself so that the focus is placed on your triceps.



126

If you struggle to do any pull ups, do negatives instead. Rather than pulling yourself up to the bar, jump. Then when you are at the top of the movement, very slowly lower yourself to the beginning. Jump up again and repeat for the desired number of reps. This will vastly improve your strength and the size of your back muscles. It will also make you much more adept at doing pull ups. After a few sessions of doing this, start by doing a few full pull ups. Then when you can do no more, go back to doing negatives. After a number of weeks you won't need to do negatives anymore as you will be able to bust out a full set of pull ups.



127 Eat cold-water fish whether you want to gain muscle or lose fat. Provided that you go for wild fish, the benefits are numerous. They are full of Omega 3 fats, help to improve insulin sensitivity and are high in protein. This will help you to recover from exercise. It will also reduce inflammation and muscle soreness. On top of all that, it will improve your mental focus and will make you less likely to store body fat. So cold water fish really is worth including in your diet! Try a variety of different fish to keep things interesting. Some of the best choices include salmon, mackerel, perch and sardines.

128 Think back to your lowest moment, and remember it. It may sound a bit extreme, but recalling what it was that first prompted you to want to lose weight will do wonders for your motivation. We have all heard about or read stories of people who lost hundreds of pounds after a certain life-changing moment. They may not have been able to fit into the seat on the aeroplane, or they might have overheard a cruel comment. Whatever it is, they have used it to fuel their weight loss efforts, often with astounding results. We have all had similar low moments, and holding on to yours will really help you during those times when motivation is lacking.



129 Do not try to revamp your entire diet in one night. You may be tempted to try and overhaul your whole lifestyle and diet, but doing so could come back to bite you later on. If you go completely cold turkey, you are much more likely to struggle with motivation later on. To stop this from happening, introduce change slowly. Remove some of the junk food from your cupboard. Increase your consumption of fruit and vegetables. Drink one less glass of wine at the weekend. These all might sound like very small changes, but combined over the week they will add up and make a big difference in the long run. Once you have adjusted to one change, you can then introduce another, and so on, until eventually you are eating and living in a completely different way.

130 You can still include some chocolate in your diet, even if you are trying to lose weight. The key however, is to go for very dark chocolate that has a high cocoa percentage. Anything over 70% cocoa solids is good, but anything above 80% and all the way up to 99% is better. These bars of chocolate contain very little sugar compared to milk chocolate and are also full of powerful antioxidants. These help to boost your immune system and remove harmful waste products from your body, which allows you to train hard and reduces the risk that you will pick up illnesses. Good quality chocolate may be a little bit more expensive, but it will allow you to enjoy something sweet without sacrificing your nutrition. It is widely available and you should be able to pick it up from most supermarkets.

131

Don't allow yourself that you deserve a *'treat'* because you have been training hard. It is very easy to bargain with yourself and give in to temptation, but it is very hard to get in good shape if you reward yourself with food every time that you have a tough session in the gym. To stop this from happening, plan your post-gym meals before you train. This will stop you from changing the plans last minute and going for your favourite food or takeaway. Also try drinking a protein shake after your workout. These usually taste nice and are also sweet, which should help to prevent any cravings that you might have.

132

Do not focus on pulling yourself up when you are doing a pull up. That may sound crazy, but it is true. Rather than thinking about pulling yourself up, focus on bringing your elbows down to your body. This will make the exercise seem easier, and it will in fact engage your back muscles to a greater degree. Do this for lat-pull downs as well and you will quickly find that you can perform more pull-ups and lift more weight on the lat pull down.



133

When things get tough, cover up the display on your cardio machine. Make sure that you keep track of how long you have been going for, but don't focus on how fast you are going or how much further you have left to go. Our minds can play funny tricks on us, and if you focus intently on the speed at which you are running or cycling, you are more likely to tense up, which will in fact decrease your performance. In addition, covering the display up may allow you to reach new heights of performance that you didn't know you had. Because you have no idea what speed you are going, you will be more likely to push yourself harder. This could see you smash all personal bests and have the most intense workout of your life.

134

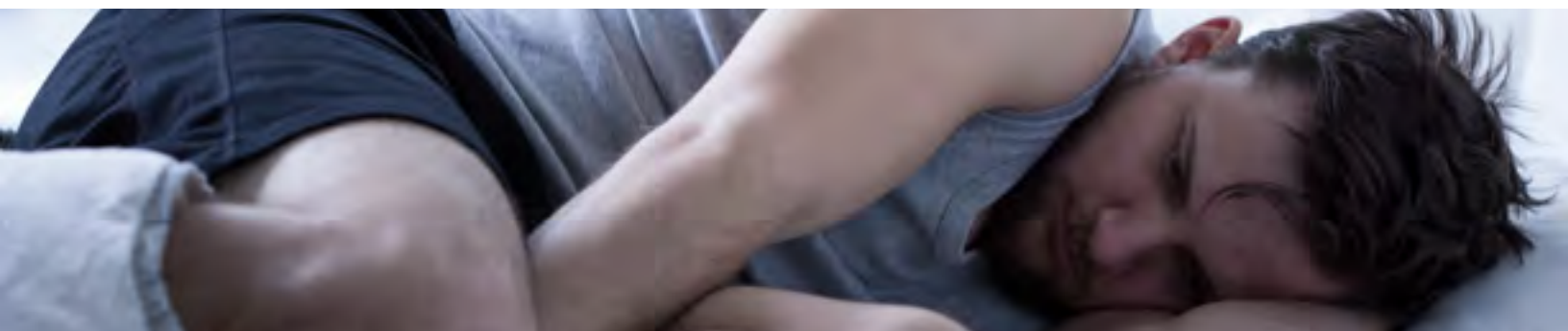
Always aim for rep ranges, rather than specific numbers. This will allow you to get much more out of yourself and of the session, which will speed up your results. If you choose just one number, your mind will focus on that number, and you will stop when you get there, regardless of whether you have to really push yourself to get there, or whether it is in fact quite easy. To stop this from happening, shoot for a rep range rather than a specific number. If you were trying to build muscle example, you would aim to lift in the rep range of 8-12. If you get to 8 and you can go for 4 more, then do it! If you can get to 12 and could still go for more, then add more weight and go again. This is a much better way of challenging yourself and will force you to really push yourself to the limit.

135

Include burpees in your circuit training or cardio workouts. These are a very tough move that works almost every muscle in your body. They require no equipment and can be performed anywhere. They also help to strengthen your core and lower back muscles, which will allow you to lift more weight when you are in the gym. This will increase the amount of weight that you can lift on all of the big moves that you perform in the gym. To ensure that you get the most out of the move, really focus on squatting down before you throw your legs out behind you. Do not allow your body to slump forward and your chest to collapse. Also make sure that you spring up powerfully at the end of the movement. This will recruit more muscles in your legs and help you to burn more calories.

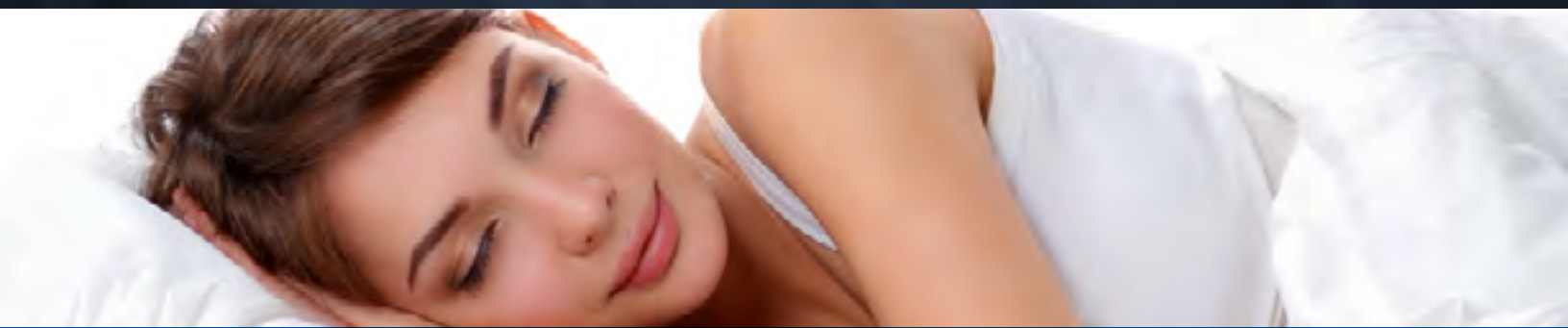
136

Get rid of takeaway menus when trying to lose fat. If you do not, they will be too tempting to resist on those nights when you are too tired or cannot be bothered to cook. Getting rid of them completely will make you much more likely to cook for yourself. This is always the best option, because you can be in control of exactly what you are eating. You will not be adding lots excessive amounts of fat or salt to your meal – as takeaways do – which will reduce the number of calories that you are eating. This will greatly speed up your fat loss efforts, especially if you are the kind of person who lives on takeaways.



137

Sleep deprivation makes everything more difficult. Your productivity will decrease, your motivation will decrease, and your desire to put in gruelling sessions at the gym will decrease dramatically. Strong cups of coffee and energy drinks may help you to feel more energised, but they only provide a short-term solution to the problem. If you are serious about your training, you need to get as much sleep as you can. This will give you more energy, and will also reduce the risk of a whole number of diseases, like diabetes and heart disease.



138

To maximise your results, get up and go to bed at the same time every night. This will lock your body into a cycle and get your hormones functioning properly. A bit of a lie in over the weekend will not hurt you, but try not to go to bed and wake up at wildly different times every night. The better that your hormones are functioning, the quicker that you will be able to lose fat or build muscle. Hormones and proper hormone function is key to success, and certainly should not be underestimated. In fact studies show that those who keep to regular bed times have better body compositions than those who do not. For the very best results, go to bed and wake up early. It might be tough at first, but it will do wonders both for your results, and for your productivity.



139

Remember, if something sounds too good to be true, then it probably is. The fitness industry is full of clever marketing campaigns and adverts that promise new training programmes or diet plans that will deliver the results that you want in record time. Now as promising as these adverts and campaigns often seem, do not allow yourself to be duped by them. If their scheme really was as simple and effort free as they always tell you it is, then the whole world would be in amazing shape. So if something promises to help you to lose **'10 pounds in 10 days'** or **'Get a six pack in 6 weeks'** – you can be almost certain that they are full of it. As unexciting as it sounds, nothing can beat a simple but solid training and diet programme and hard work. Do those consistently and you will get to where you want to go.



140

Eat a piece of fruit when you get cravings for cookies and donuts. It might not sound quite as exciting on paper, but it will really help to keep you on track and satisfy your sweet tooth. Often cravings are very fleeting. They come and go, very quickly. However as we all know, it can be very easy to give in to cravings and start raiding the cupboards for cookies and chocolate. To stop this from happening, eat a piece of fruit. Fruit is sweet and does contain sugar, which will help to satisfy your sweet tooth. It is also high in fibre and water, which will help to fill you up. For the best results, choose sweet fruits like grapes, pineapple, or melon.

141

When trying to build your back muscles, experiment with different grips. Your back is an incredibly large muscle group. Because of this, it needs to be stimulated from a number of different angles. One of the best ways to do this is to vary the kind of grip that you use during your exercises. So for example if you were doing a pull up, you could start with a wide grip for your first set. Then on your second you could use a shoulder width grip. On your final set, you could grab the parallel bars and do pull-ups with your palms facing each other. Varying your grip in this way alters the way that your back muscles are worked. It ensures that all of your back muscles are stimulated, which will lead to increased muscle growth in the long term.

142

If you want to build an impressive physique, you need to focus on working on your **'V'**. This refers to the **'V'** shape that forms when someone has a well developed back and shoulders and a small waist. You may think that the beach body muscles are the chest and abs, but building a **'V'** shaped physique will make you look very impressive. In order to achieve this, focus an equal amount of time on your back and shoulders as you do working your chest and chest and abs. This will also help to balance you out and prevent postural problems. Perhaps the best thing about having a **'V'** shaped physique is that it makes your entire body look better by giving the impression that you are bigger than you really are.



143

If you want to get the body that you want, you need to improve on your performance in the gym each week. Make sure that you are lifting more weight, doing more reps, or finishing your workouts in less time. If you are doing one or all of these consistently each week, then you will be getting the results that you want. If however you are just going through the motions and are not striving to put more weight on to the bar each week, then you will be going nowhere quickly. To stop this from happening, record how much you lift for each move and aim to better it by a few kilograms each week.

144

Remember that some progress is better than no progress at all. Dramatic changes in body composition take time. Even if you follow your diet to the letter and train hard in the gym, both fat loss and muscle gain still takes time. Do not let this dishearten you. It is easy to lose motivation if you are not seeing results as quickly as you would like but just remember as long as you are still seeing results, you are moving in the right direction. It is also important to remember that although it may take you a while to get in the shape that you want, it will in fact be a very short time in the scheme of things. A year may sound like an eternity, but once that weight is lost, you will be able to live the rest of your life with the body that you want.

145

The squat is a very difficult exercise to get right. If you do it wrong, then it can place excessive strain on your lower back and your knees. To prevent this from happening and to get it right, try doing it with an exercise bench behind you. Squat down, and just as your bottom touches the bench, drive up again. This will prevent you from going all the way to the bottom of the movement, which is typically where peoples' form begins to suffer. Once you have mastered this movement, you can replace the bench with a lower object and repeat. Then when you have got that nailed, remove all objects and squat without anything behind you.



146

If you want to gain muscle, eat as soon as you can after your workout. You don't necessarily have to have a protein shake, but you should eat something. Indeed studies have shown that subjects who ate immediately after a workout gained significantly more muscle than those who waited for 2 hours afterwards. Your body is more receptive to nutrients when you finish your workout so it makes sense to eat as soon as you possibly can. For many this will not be possible, but if muscle mass is the aim, try not to wait any longer than 30 minutes before you eat. This 30 minutes is a bit of a **'magic window'** that you should really look to take advantage of if you want to gain muscle whilst minimising fat gain



147

If you want to run faster, try lifting weights. Often cardio and weight training are viewed as complete opposites. However if you are a serious runner, supplementing your routine with some weight training could help you to reap serious rewards. Indeed studies show that 8 weeks of resistance training, combined with running, knocked 30 seconds of the 5k times of experienced runners. That is a significant number that would take much longer to knock off without resistance training. If you are looking to boost your 5k time, focus on lower body moves like squats and lunges, and upper body moves like bench press and pull ups.

148

Squeeze the bar that you are lifting if you want a bigger chest. It may sound crazy, but if you squeeze the bar and force your hands together as hard as you can when you are doing a bench press, you will recruit a greater number of muscle fibres. You will also take the pressure of your triceps, which will allow you to lift more weight. This will overload the chest to a greater degree than you are used to, which will stimulate the muscle to grow. It will also rapidly increase your strength, which will have a positive knock on effect on the size of your chest.



149

Do close grip bench presses to boost the size of your triceps. Having your hands close together shifts the pressure away from your chest and onto your triceps. This is increased if you ensure that your elbows are tucked in at all times. To further overload your triceps, squeeze the bar tightly and push your hands apart as hard as you can. This will ensure that your chest is really taken out of the equation and that your triceps are doing all of the work. You will not be able to lift as much weight compared with a normal bench press, but do not let this worry you. Your triceps are a smaller and therefore weaker muscle group than your chest, so that is completely normal.

150

Always train your calf muscles at the end of your session. The calf muscles play a role in supporting the upper leg so if they are fatigued, the rest of your session will suffer. You will not be able to squat as much weight and your upper legs will not be stimulated very much. This will then reduce the amount of growth hormone that is released, which will reduce the number of calories that you burn during your session. To prevent this from happening, keep your calf training to the end of your leg workout. They will already be worn out from your workout, and so will need fewer stimuli to grow. That is not to say that you should neglect your calf muscles, but you don't need to spend hours working them at the end of your session to get the results that you want.

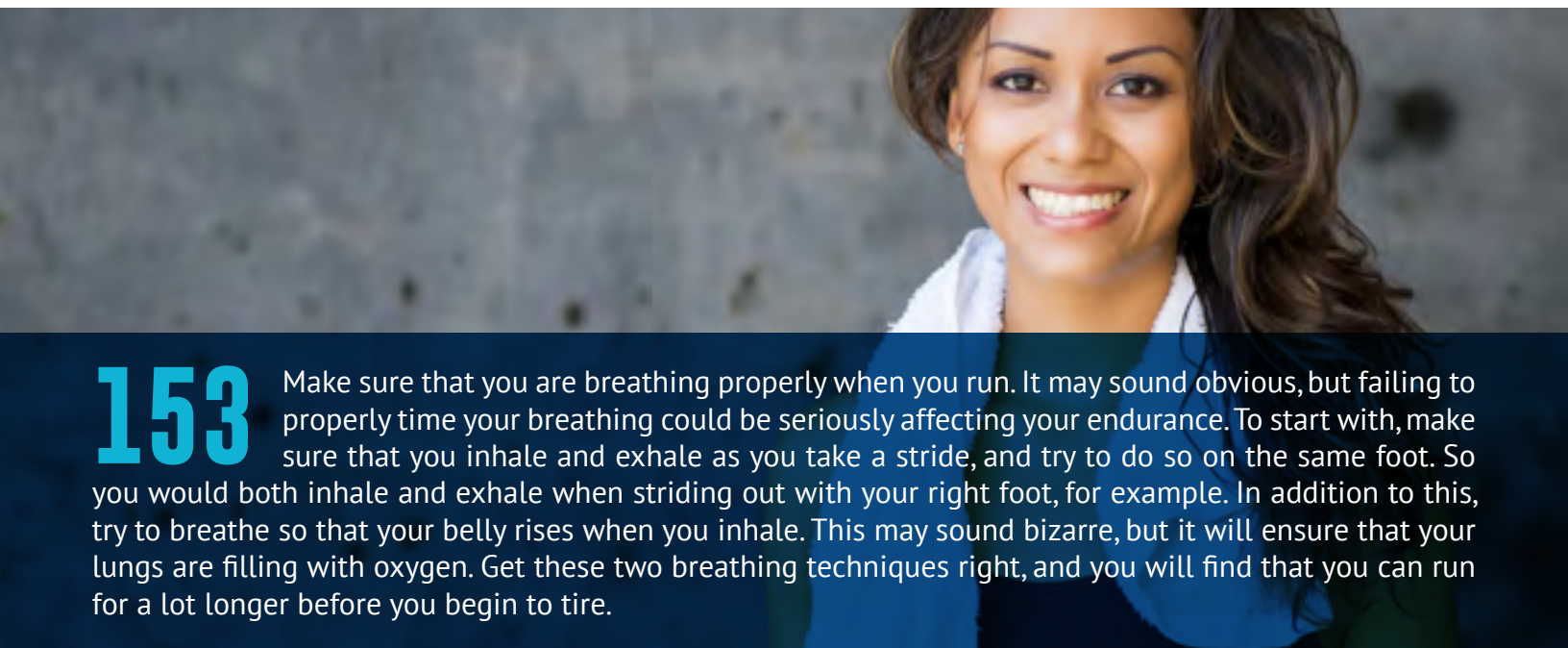


151

The first step that you take on your weight loss journey is the hardest. Accepting that you need to lose weight and deciding that you want to do something about it is very difficult and takes a lot of courage. Having said that, once you have decided to do something about it, commit to it. Do not go back on your resolutions. If you do, you are likely to get into a vicious cycle of guilt where you start, then stop, and then feel terrible about it, before starting it all again. It will at times be difficult to stay focus and keep going, but at those times you need to picture the satisfaction of achieving everything that you want. That will help to push you through, and will stop you from giving in.

152

If you want to improve your running times, run less. This may sound counter intuitive, but it could work wonders for your 5k time. Rather than run long distances at a slow or moderate pace, run short distances flat out. This will help to improve your anaerobic fitness, which will increase your lactic acid tolerance. This is significant, as lactic acid is what causes your muscles to ache and your pace to slow. Still include long runs into your training programme, but do not neglect short but more intense runs in your plan. An added bonus of this kind of training is that it helps to reduce the chance of injury. It is also very time efficient, so is great for those occasions when you can't fit a long run in.



153

Make sure that you are breathing properly when you run. It may sound obvious, but failing to properly time your breathing could be seriously affecting your endurance. To start with, make sure that you inhale and exhale as you take a stride, and try to do so on the same foot. So you would both inhale and exhale when striding out with your right foot, for example. In addition to this, try to breathe so that your belly rises when you inhale. This may sound bizarre, but it will ensure that your lungs are filling with oxygen. Get these two breathing techniques right, and you will find that you can run for a lot longer before you begin to tire.

154

Exercise one side of your body at a time for the best results. Provided that you are not tight on time, working the right side of your body before your left, or vice versa, could be the best way of building an impressive physique. This is because you can devote all of your strength and attention to the one muscle that you are working. This means that your sets will be of a higher quality. You will also be able to lift more weight and perform more reps. Some great example moves to perform in this way are dumbbell bench press, dumbbell shoulder press, and bicep curls.

155 Try not to grunt and grimace when you are working out. Although you may think that it will help you to squeeze out those last few reps, it could in fact be holding you back. By grimacing and grunting you are shifting focus away from the muscle that you are meant to be working. Psychologically it also makes you believe that you are in agony. This will cause you most likely to finish the set prematurely, in the belief that you could not squeeze out one more rep. In actual fact, if you lift weights with a completely straight face, you are more likely to be able to perform more reps, which will lead to increased muscle growth in the long term.

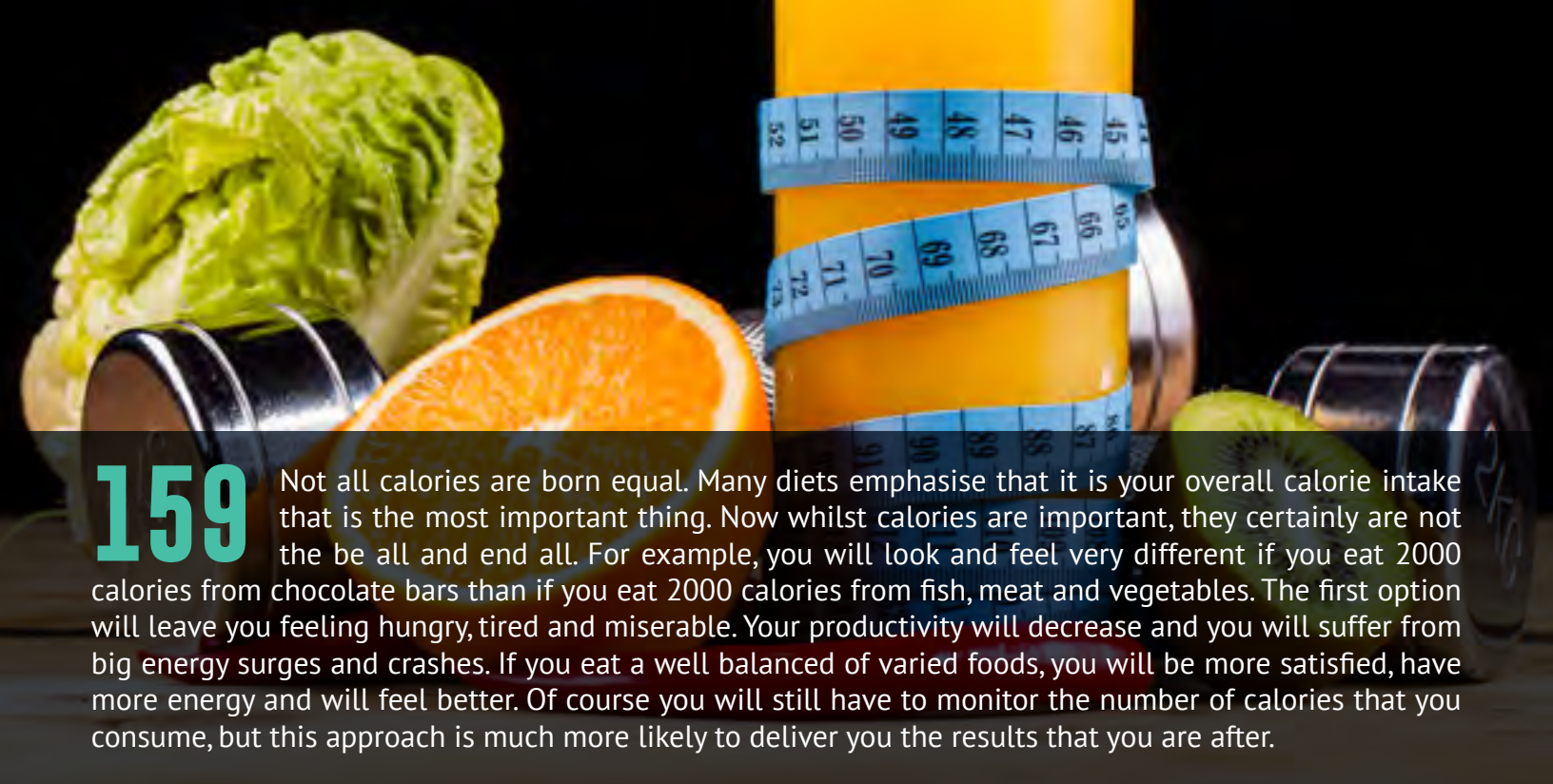
156 The mirrors in the gym are not just there so you can check that your hair is ok. They are there so that you can check your form. Good form is key to muscle growth. If you lift with good form then you will stimulate the muscles that you are trying to work, which will lead to increased muscle growth. If you lift with shabby form, you will not be stimulating your muscles in the correct way and could at worst cause yourself some injury. So when you are next weight lifting, make sure that you use the mirrors. This will allow you to check that you are not lifting in a dangerous or inefficient way.



157 To really get the most out of a muscle, hold it at the top of the lift for a few seconds. This will help to overload the muscle and increase the time that it is under tension. This key for muscle growth, as muscle responds best if it is kept under tension for around 40-70 seconds. Holding the weight at the top of the lift will increase the length of your sets and ensure that your muscles are adequately stimulated. This technique works best with '**pulling**' exercises that typically target the back or biceps. Use it on moves like pull ups, lat pulldowns, and bicep curls.

158 If you find that motivation is lagging, set yourself a challenge. Sign yourself up for a charity fun run, bike ride or triathlon. Pick a charity and raise money for it. Not only will this give your training a real focus; it will definitely stop you from throwing in the towel. It will also shift your attention away from your physical transformation. This can be a good thing, as often people become obsessed with what they see in the mirror, and forget that getting in shape is a holistic process that includes getting fit and improving your general health. You will be doing good for a charity of your choice, and will be getting fit and losing weight in the process, so it works out well for everybody!





159

Not all calories are born equal. Many diets emphasise that it is your overall calorie intake that is the most important thing. Now whilst calories are important, they certainly are not the be all and end all. For example, you will look and feel very different if you eat 2000 calories from chocolate bars than if you eat 2000 calories from fish, meat and vegetables. The first option will leave you feeling hungry, tired and miserable. Your productivity will decrease and you will suffer from big energy surges and crashes. If you eat a well balanced of varied foods, you will be more satisfied, have more energy and will feel better. Of course you will still have to monitor the number of calories that you consume, but this approach is much more likely to deliver you the results that you are after.

160

To increase your protein intake and support general health, add quinoa into your diet. This grain from South America is high in protein, and also in magnesium, which helps to improve insulin sensitivity. This helps to improve fat loss. The more sensitive that you are to insulin, the less likely that you will store fat when you eat carbohydrates. Quinoa is easy to cook, is very versatile, and tastes nice too. Use it in your diet instead of pasta and rice. It is cheap and should be available to buy in most supermarkets. Because it contains all of the essential amino acids required for muscle growth and repair, it makes a great choice for vegetarians, who may consume less protein in their diet.



161

Add cinnamon to your meals to improve your insulin sensitivity. This will prevent you from storing the carbohydrates that you eat as fat. It will also help to control your blood sugars, which will prevent you from suffering from energy spikes and crashes. It is delicious sprinkled over oatmeal, fruit salad or yogurt. You can also put it into tea or coffee, and cook with it – use it to season your food in conjunction with other herbs and spices. If for whatever reason you do not like the taste of cinnamon, then it is also available in supplement form. Take one tablet up to two times a day with meals that are a little higher in carbohydrate

162

Try fartlek training to mix things up and keep your training interesting. This alternative method of cardio is like an unstructured form of interval training. But rather than having clearly defined periods of work and rest, how you structure it is up to you. So you could sprint for a period of time, then jog, then walk, then go back to sprinting. The idea is to constantly mix things up so that your body never has time to adjust to the stress that it is being put under. It is a great way of including variety into your routine and it makes a great choice for those of you who may want to get involved in sport. This is because it mimics the ever changing pace of sports like soccer or football.



163

If you want a short but incredibly intense session, try hill sprinting. Find a very steep hill and run up it as fast as you can. When you are at the top, slowly walk down to the bottom. Repeat the process 8-10 times. It does not sound like a lot, but this is a very gruelling session. It is mentally difficult, but it is definitely worth it. It will burn a lot of fat, keep your metabolism high, and will help you to build muscle as well. Because it is so intense I would not recommend that you do it more than 2 or 3 times a week. Combine it with your regular training plan to burn fat, build muscle and improve your fitness.

164

Avoid hot showers after a heavy workout. Although they may feel soothing, they are in fact one of the worst things that you could do for your muscles. This is because the heat of the shower causes the micro-tears in your muscles to bleed out. This increase soreness. The best option to prevent this and to actually prevent muscle soreness is to have a cold shower. It might not be the most pleasant option after a hard session in the gym, but it will really help with your recovery. It will flush the lactic acid out of your muscles and help to boost your immune system. It is for these reasons that ice baths are so popular amongst top-level athletes.



165

Make sure that you are consuming enough iron. Iron deficiency is surprisingly common, and can cause symptoms like lethargy. To avoid this, aim to eat foods that are high in iron. Great choices include red meat, eggs, fish and liver. It is also found in dark leafy vegetables like spinach. Just to cover yourself, it might also be worth investing in an iron supplement. Unfortunately though many substances block the absorption of iron, so it is best to take just before you go to bed, when you are unlikely to eat anything else



166

If you want to achieve your goals, master the art of visualisation. This may sound a bit new age to some of you, but it is in fact a great technique to help you to be successful. The power of a positive attitude should not be overlooked. It will prevent you from losing motivation, and will spur you on to try and achieve your goals. Visualising what it is that you want to achieve will help with this. Picture exactly how you want to look and feel, and then imagine how happy you would be if you achieved that goal. This will really spur you on and give you something to focus on during every training session. Then when things get tough and your motivation begins to waver, use the power of visualisation to give yourself that mental boost and push through.

167

Try listening to classical music when you do cardio. It may sound crazy, but it might help you to relax. You may think that that is the last thing that you want when you are about to hit a heavy session, but it can in fact be very helpful. When you are taking part in a strenuous activity like running, the last thing that you want to do is make it more strenuous by tensing up and causing your muscles to tighten. If you remain more relaxed, then you can focus more on the actual activity that you are doing. You will expend less energy and will be able to exercise for longer. This will allow you to burn more calories and fat.

168

Breakfast really is the most important meal of the day. I know that you will probably have been told this your entire life, but it is worth reiterating. The implications of skipping breakfast are severe. Skipping breakfast causes your metabolism to slow down and not surprisingly it causes you to feel hungry. This makes you much more likely to overeat later in the day, or to make poor food choices, and go for sweet snacks that are high in sugar and calories. You will also have less energy and will not be able to focus as well at work, which will have negative impacts on your productivity. If you don't have that much time in the morning, prepare something before you go to bed. Then you can eat it as soon as you wake up, or take it to eat on the way to work with you. Natural yogurt with fruit and nuts is a great breakfast choice that doesn't



169

There will be times when you really do not want to go to the gym. You may feel tired, stressed, or just have other things on your mind. At times like these, motivation is usually at rock bottom. However, the important thing to do at these times is to drag yourself to the gym anyway. The first 10 minutes of your workout will be tough, but as you get into it, you will begin to find that you feel better. Your mood will lift and you may even start to feel more energized. When you have finished, you will feel immensely satisfied that you did not miss your session, and you will feel proud of what you have achieved. Conversely, if you give in and spend your night watching TV, you will most likely feel guilty, and may lose even more motivation.



170

Having no time to hit the gym is not a good excuse. I know that there are a hundred things that can get in the way of going to the gym, but if you are serious about getting into shape, you need to make time for the gym. No matter how busy you are, you can make time for the gym. You can get a killer workout done in 20-30 minutes. So all you need to do is find that time from the rest of your day. Wake up 30 minutes earlier, watch 30 minutes less television, or spend 30 minutes less on Facebook. These are all fairly small sacrifices that will allow you to train and achieve the results that you want. Then when you are in the shape of your life, do you think that you will be complaining that you didn't get to spend more time on Facebook!?

171

Don't get sucked in by celebrity success stories or training routines. It is very tempting to look at the amazing results that a celebrity has achieved and they try to copy everything that led to their success. However this will only lead to disappoint. The celebrities who show off their amazing results undergo very intense training regimes and often have their own personal trainers, and sometimes their own personal chefs! They are essentially paid to get into shape and can devote all of their attention on their training. This just does not apply to the majority of the general public. If you try to replicate their results, you are likely to lose motivation and become despondent. Do not focus on what other people are doing, just focus on your own training and results.



172

If you are trying to lose weight, buy smaller plates. There is nothing worse when you are on a diet than having to eat off a nearly empty plate. Psychologically it makes you aware that you are restricting how much you are eating, which alerts you to the fact that you are on a diet. Conversely, if you eat off a small plate that is full, you are more likely to feel satisfied. It may sound bizarre, but it is a subtle trick that really works. It also makes it less likely that you will overeat, as there is less space on your plate for food!

173

Avoid condiments and garnishes if you are trying to lose weight. Although these do help to add flavour to food, they are often full of hidden calories. These calories come from fat and sugar, which is bad news for your waistline. To avoid this, always read the labels of condiments carefully and go for light or reduced fat options where possible. Also try to experiment a little more with herbs and spices. These are virtually fat and calorie free, but can really help to make otherwise boring food, exciting.



174

It is better for weight loss to eat regularly. It helps to regulate blood sugar levels, boost your metabolism and reduce cravings. It also helps to increase the absorption of the food that you are eating. This is significant, as there is very little point in eating food if you are unable to absorb it properly. In the long term, this could lead to nutrient deficiencies, which will affect your general health, as well as your weight loss efforts. To prevent this, have 4-5 small meals spaced out throughout the day, instead of 3 big meals. This allows you to eat more often, which is rewarding, and will prevent you from overeating at each meal. It is also more likely that you will make good food choices, because it is when we are hungry and our blood sugars are low that we begin to crave sweets and cookies.

175

Try baking your food to reduce the number or calories that you eat. Unlike frying, baking requires no oil. This is significant, as cooking oils of all description are high in calories and fat. Even when you try to drain the oil from a frying pan, a large percentage of it has been soaked up by the food that you are eating. This can turn otherwise healthy dishes into very high fat, high calorie dishes that will really slow your weight loss efforts down. To stop this from happening, cook all meat and vegetables in the oven. Not only does this really bring the flavour out in them, but it will reduce the number of calories that you are consuming, and help you to lose weight more quickly.

176

Use a low fat cooking spray to reduce your calorie intake. Cooking oils are great, and some of them – like olive oil – have a number of health benefits. However they are also high in calories in fat. If you fry your food and regularly use cooking oils, you could be consuming a whole load of extra calories without even realising it. Just one tablespoon of olive oil contains around 10 grams of fat, which equates to around 90 calories. If you cook a couple of times a day, you will have consumed an extra 200-300 calories without even realising it. To prevent this from happening, buy a low fat cooking spray. They cook the food just as well, and contain only 1 calorie per spray. They are also cheap and widely available in most supermarkets.



177

Do not skip meals. So many people seem to think that this will help them to lose weight. In fact all it will do is cause them to overeat later in the day. If you skip a meal, your blood sugar levels will drop. This causes your energy levels to drop and your productivity to decrease. In addition, it causes you to crave sweet and sugary foods. This is because these foods will spike your blood sugar levels and give you an instant hot of energy. However they will also spike insulin levels, which will lead to fat storage. Skipping meals is also more likely to lead to overeating. You will be so hungry by the time that you get to your next meal that you will eat far too much. This will negate the calories that you have '*saved*' from not eating earlier in the day.

178

Chew your food to prevent overeating. When we are hungry and are restricting the amount of food that we eat, it is very to easy to shovel our food down as quickly as we possibly can. Not only is this unsightly, but it is not very satisfying. Because you have finished your meal so quickly, you will be more likely to go back for seconds, or go for a dessert. To prevent this from happening, take real time over your food. The best way to do this is to properly chew your food. Chew each mouthful at least 8 times. This will allow you to savour and enjoy the taste of the food that you are eating. It will also fill you up quicker and will make you less likely to go back for seconds.

179

To improve your general health, start cooking with olive oil instead of other vegetable oils. Unlike vegetable oils, olive oil contains healthy fats that can help to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease. It can also be used as a healthy dressing on salads, or over meat or potatoes. Be careful with how much you use though. Despite its many health benefits, olive oil is high in calories and fat. That should not stop you from using it, but be sensible about how much you use.



180

If you have taken a long break from exercise, ease yourself back into it slowly. If you throw everything that you have at the gym straight away, you are likely to become over trained. This will make you feel tired, and leave you more susceptible to injury. It is great to give everything that you have got, but you need to be sensible about things at first. Build up by doing fewer sessions at first and keeping them shorter. As you get used to training again you can begin to increase the number of sessions that you do each week and the length of these sessions. This will prevent you from picking up injuries or illnesses that could prevent you from training for even longer.

181

Use treats as an incentive to stay on track with your training. If you do really struggle with motivation, then reward yourself when things are going well. I am not talking about food here. Treat yourself to a new pair of jeans, a night out with friends, or a weekend away with your partner. This gives you a reason to train and rewards you for your hard work. This will really help to keep you focused and will make the process more enjoyable. If you are hitting your goals then you will be rewarded and you will feel good. If for whatever reason you are not hitting your goals, then you can use that weekend away as motivation to make sure that you do next time!

182

Make sure that you move around as much as you can. If you have the kind of job where you are sat in front of a desk all day, try to get up at least once every half an hour. This will prevent you from developing the kind of shoulder and neck problems that are common in people who sit hunched over a desk all day. You don't have to stand up for long, just get up from your desk and stretch for 30 seconds. This will help to lengthen your tightened muscles and prevent muscular imbalances that could lead to injury in the long term.

183

Do yoga to improve your fitness and lose weight. The benefits of yoga are numerous and very diverse. It helps to get rid of stress, it improves flexibility, and it can help to improve core strength. It also burns calories, which will help you to lose weight. Its stress busting qualities are perhaps what make it so effective. When you are stressed, your levels of the hormone cortisol increase. This hormone causes your fat stores to increase and it makes it more difficult for you to lose body fat. By doing yoga, you will relax, and de-stress. This will lower your levels of cortisol which in turn will allow you to burn more fat just doing every day tasks. It will also improve your general sense of well being, which will help all areas of your life.



184

Do not eat in front of the computer or the television. Studies show that when we eat when we are distracted, we pay very little attention to what, or how much we are eating. This is bad news if fat loss is your goal. Without realising it, you could be consuming far more calories than you in fact need. When you are trying to lose weight, you need to pay close attention to how you are feeling. If you are full then you should stop eating. If however you are watching television or sat at your computer, you are far more likely to overeat without really thinking about what you are doing. If you do this every night then you could end up eating a great many more calories each week than you really require. To prevent this from happening, turn your television or computer off when you are eating and pay real attention to the food that you are eating.

185

If you are a keen runner, try not to do too much too quickly. It may be tempting to try and run as far as you can each week, but to improve performance and reduce the risk of injury, increase mileage by no more than 10% each week. This will allow you to improve your fitness, whilst minimising the risk of injury. Studies have shown that runners who try to increase their mileage drastically week on week are much more susceptible to injury and illness.



186

Leave about 2 hours between your last meal and a cardio workout. It takes about this long for your stomach to empty, which is key to the quality of your workout. If you run on a full stomach you are much more likely to suffer from abdominal cramps and bloating, which will make your run very uncomfortable. To avoid this, go for a higher carbohydrate meal before your run, and avoid a meal high in protein or fat. These digest more slowly so are more likely to cause you problems later on. If you have a very light meal, that is predominantly carbohydrate based, then you can probably run about 90 minutes after eating. Any sooner and you are pushing your luck.

187

Do not run on an injury. If the same body part hurts for 2 runs in a row, then step back and take a little time off. Persistent pain in the same body part is a good indication that that body part is on its way to getting injured. Stop running for a few days, and take part in other activities, like swimming or cycling. These activities will allow you to keep training, getting fitter and burning fat, but will not place your body under strain in the same way. If the pain persists when you start running again, then go and see a physiotherapist. Injuries rarely sort themselves out and if running is your favourite form of cardio, then it will be of your benefit to get it sorted as quickly as possible.



188

We all know that warming up for your session is important, but so is cooling down. This is especially the case when you have been doing cardio. If you stop your session without a cool down period, you could suffer from a whole host of uncomfortable symptoms. These can include cramping, dizziness and nausea. To stop this from happening, do between 5 and 10 minutes of gently cardio activity like walking or light jogging at the end of your session. This will help to clear lactic acid from your body and reduce muscle soreness. It will also allow your body time to adjust, which will prevent you from feeling dizzy or nauseous. Follow this with some light stretching to finish your session off in the right way.

189

To really loosen your muscles and prevent injury, try foam rolling. This involves lying on top of a foam roller and rolling your body back and forth, so that the roller travels up and down your upper leg. Although this sounds fairly innocuous, it is in fact very painful. This is because the process loosens all of the tight knots that form in your muscles when you exercise. It might not be a very pleasant experience but it feels great when you have finished and it will help to improve your performance in the gym. It improves flexibility and addresses muscle tightness that can lead to injury. Do it a number of times a week after your sessions to loosen you up. You can buy foam rollers cheaply and in most good sports stores.

190

If you want to improve the depth of your squat, stand on a golf ball. This may sound ridiculous, but it will help. The muscles in your feet are connected to those all the way up the back of your body. By rolling your feet over a golf ball, the tight knots of muscle that have formed, break down. This causes all of the muscles that run up the back of your body to loosen. This will then allow you to squat deeper. This is significant, as the lower that you can squat; the more your legs will be stimulated to grow. They will be moving through the full range of motion and will be kept under tension for longer.

191

Don't do just one type of cardio when you are trying to lose weight. It is likely that there are some forms of cardio that you prefer or that you enjoy more. These should be the ones that you focus on, because you are more likely to stick to them. However it is a good idea to change things up every now and again. Not only will this help to stave off boredom and keep things interesting, it will help your body too. If you devote all of your time to one kind of cardio, your muscles will begin to adapt to that type of cardio. Changing things up will shock the body, making it work harder. This will cause it to burn more calories, which will help you to burn more fat. It will also prevent injury, as some forms of cardio – like running – do place a lot of strain on your joints.



192

Not every session that you do will be the best session of your life. Even though you might have the best intentions, there will be times when your body just does not want to comply with you. When this happens it can be easy to lose motivation and become disheartened. Do not allow this to happen. Just forget about your session and move on. Not every session that you do will be done at blistering intensity, but that is to be expected. It is important to maintain perspective and to not let yourself dwell on it. Just remember, doing a session – even if it is not the best – is much better than not doing a session at all!

193

Train for what you want to achieve. It may sound obvious, but everything that you do should be directed towards exactly what it is that you want to achieve. So if you are slim but want to look muscular and 'ripped', you need to be lifting weights multiple times a week. If you find that you are only ever doing cardio, then you need to consider exactly what it is that you want to achieve. Conversely, if you are overweight and want to slim down, you should not be wasting your times with bicep curls. You should be combining cardio with heavy resistance training that targets the large muscles in your body. Obviously everyone is different and will have different goals, but you need to direct your training to exactly what you want to achieve.



194

If you are serious about getting in shape, you need to set goals for yourself. These cannot be vague; they need to be specific. So rather than saying **'Oh well I want to get in shape'**, you need to say **'I want to lose 'x' amount of weight in 6 weeks.'** Doing it in this way will help to keep you focused and make you accountable to the goal. It will also help you to track your progress. If you just want to get in shape, it makes it very difficult to assess your progress – as you are either in shape or you are not. If you set specific goals for yourself though, you can break it down into smaller goals that you can see if you are achieving. So if you want to lose 6 pounds in 6 weeks, you are aiming for a weight loss of 1 pound a week. Trying to hit that target every week will keep you focused and training hard.

195

Do not try to achieve your goals on your own. Although it is you who has to exercise and eat well, you should not isolate yourselves from those around you. It is understandable to feel like you are the only one who is having to make sacrifices, but you are much more likely to succeed if you let other people help you. Just something as simple as telling a family member or close friend about what you are doing can help. Then if you ever find that you are struggling with motivation, you can look to them for emotional support. They might not be going through what you are, but that doesn't mean that they can't help to boost your spirits and get you back on track.

196

Get involved in a new sport to get yourself in shape. Not only will this help you to develop a new skill, but it will make your training more enjoyable. It will add a sociable element to your training and give you a focus beside weight loss. Sure you will be losing weight and getting into shape, but it will be a very different experience from running on a treadmill in a gym. Choose a sport that involves a lot of physical activity – like soccer or tennis – and join up. As an added bonus, you are likely to meet a lot of like-minded people who are also interested in physical activity and keeping fit. These sorts of people will help to inspire you and drive you on to achieve your goals.



197

You cannot train hard all year round. If you do, you will suppress your immune system, which will leave you more susceptible to illness. You will also be more likely to injure yourself. On top of all of this, you will begin to burn out, which will affect your life in other ways. To prevent this from happening, take a light week once every 8-12 weeks. During these light weeks you will still go to the gym and train, but you will do shorter and less intense sessions. This will prevent you from backtracking and gaining weight, and will in fact help you to get the results that you want. It will help to 'recharge the batteries' and get you back up to 100%. So when you return to your full training programme you will be in great shape and raring to go.

198

Carbohydrates are not the enemy. So many diets advocate cutting your carbohydrates to incredibly low levels. Now whilst the Western diet is too heavy in carbohydrates, they do have a place in any diet. They are the body's preferred energy source and help to maintain proper hormone function. Indeed they play a vital role in thyroid output, which helps to control your metabolism. Cutting carbohydrates out of your diet completely will slow your thyroid down, which in turn will cause your metabolism to slow down. So far from helping you to lose weight, cutting carbs too much could in fact stall your weight loss efforts!

199

Nutrient density should be one of your top concerns when you are dieting. If you are restricting how much you can eat, then you need to ensure that what you are eating is high quality. This will help to keep you healthy. In turn this will improve your energy, and prevent you from getting ill, which will keep you training hard. If you go for foods that are low in nutrients, you are likely to burn out. You may become deficient in nutrients and will be much more likely to pick up illnesses. To stop this from happening always go for high quality food sources like lean meats, fish, eggs, and lots of fruit and vegetables.



200

If in doubt, go for single ingredient foods. These foods, like meat, fish, eggs, fruit and vegetables are the best food choices when you are dieting. They are full of nutrients and contain nothing besides what they are. If you go for heavily processed foods, there are a whole list of different ingredients. Many of these are chemicals and preservatives that do nothing to support general health. They also have a negative impact on your hormones, which makes you more likely to gain or store fat and makes it more difficult to lose fat, even if you are dieting. To speed up your weight loss, stick to whole foods that don't contain any added ingredients. They will do much more for your health, and for your waistline.

201

Manage your time properly to burn fat and get into shape. You may think that time management has very little to do with getting in shape, but you would be surprised. If you do not manage your time properly, you are likely to become stressed. This will increase the level of the hormone cortisol in your body. This powerful hormone is to be avoided at all costs. It reduces the body's ability to burn fat and increases the likelihood that the food that you eat is stored as fat. It also decreases your ability to gain muscle. This will cause your metabolism to slow down, which in turn will reduce the amount of fat that you burn each day. So if encroaching deadlines make you feel stressed, make sure that you do everything in your power to manage your time and get them done on time. You will be surprised by how much of a difference this could make.



202 Drink ice-cold water to speed up your metabolism and burn more fat. If you drink very cold water, your core temperature begins to drop. To prevent this from happening, your body has to work to maintain your body temperature. This expends energy, burning calories and helping you to reduce your body fat levels. To get the most out of this calorie burning effect, drink ice-cold water when you first wake up in the morning, and then at your biggest meal of the day. This will kick start your metabolism at the beginning of the day, which will cause you to burn more fat and calories during the rest of the day. Having another cold drink with your biggest meal will help to reduce the number of calories that you consume during that meal, reducing the likelihood that you will gain fat.

203 Milk is a great drink that you should include in your diet. But if you are looking to burn fat, then you should avoid it before you hit the gym. Unfortunately milk is what is known as '*insulinotropic*'. That means that it causes persistently high insulin levels. That blunts your ability to burn fat during your workout and reduces the number of calories that you will expend during your workout. If you are a big tea or coffee drinker, make sure that your last brew before you hit the gym is black.



204 Don't add extra calories into your diet through liquid. Juices, all soft drinks and sugary tea and coffee add unnecessary calories into your diet that all add up. You might not think that the odd can of coke or a sugary mug of tea will do much damage, but you would be incredibly surprised by the amount of sugar contained within these drinks. This sugar causes a spike in your insulin levels, which then causes fat storage, particularly around your lower belly. To stop this from happening, don't add sugar to your drinks, and go for low sugar squash on those occasions when you feel like a sugar fix.

205 Avoid having sugary cereals for breakfast. Although they are an easy option and often taste very nice, they could really be slowing your fat loss progress down. The sugar in the cereal will cause an insulin spike that will result in fat storage, particularly around your lower belly. Further, these cereals tend not to be very filling. This means that you will be more likely to snack more often, or to overeat later in the day. Instead, start your day with a meal that will fill you up – include a good source of protein and some whole grains. This will fill you up and set you up right for the day.

206

If you drink a lot of tea or coffee, save your strongest brew for when you hit the gym. It has been shown that drinking a caffeinated drink before a workout increases endurance and strength. It also increases mental focus, so makes a great choice for those of you who might struggle to push through your workouts. To get the greatest effect, keep your tea or coffee black and don't add sugar to it. Drink it around 30-45 minutes before you hit the gym. If you don't like caffeinated drinks but still want to enjoy the benefits of caffeine, you can also buy it cheaply in supplement form.



207

If you want to lose fat, avoid eating fruit before you hit the gym. Whilst fruit is a very healthy food choice that has a whole multitude of benefits, it will hinder the quality of your workout. This is because it lowers your metabolic rate and blunts fat burning. This will reduce the amount of fat that you burn during a workout, which is obviously a bit of a problem! That is not to say that you should avoid fruit, just eat it earlier in the day, or later in the evening after you have worked out.

208

Avoid heavily processed foods if fat loss is the goal. These kinds of foods tend to be laced with sugar and hidden fats, and are often very high in calories. In addition, they are often very easy to overeat. This makes for a pretty devastating combination. Your best bet is to avoid them completely. If a food has a list of ingredients as long as your arm, or if it contains ingredients that you cannot pronounce, then you are probably best avoiding it. Some of the most common processed foods that we indulge in are things like cookies, potato chips and processed meats.

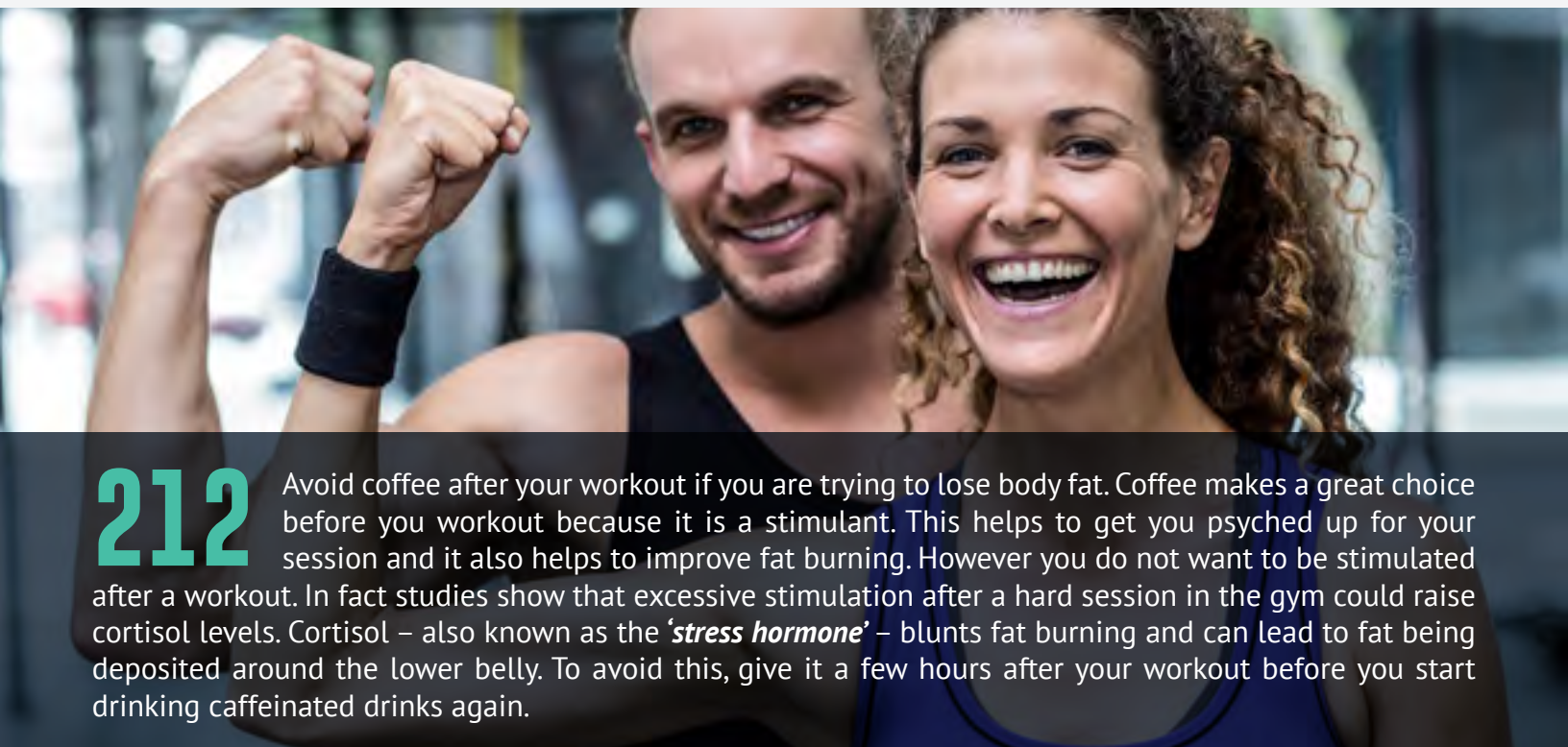
209

It is important to remember that fat is not the enemy. Many people try to eliminate all of the fat from their diet when they are trying to lose weight. This is a bad move, as good fats that come from foods like nuts, certain oils, and fish have a whole host of important functions in the body. They are vital for proper hormone function and help to boost the immune system. Indeed studies show that those who consume between 30-50% of their daily calories from fat have lower body fat levels than those who severely restrict fat intake. This is not an excuse to rush out and stuff your face with cheese, but it is important that including some fat in your diet will help you with your weight loss goals.



210 To improve your general health and improve your performance, increase the amount of water that you drink. It may sound simple, but increasing your water intake is one of the best things that you can do for your body. Water helps to detox the body, and is key to keeping you hydrated. This will improve your energy and your performance. If for whatever reason you don't like water, add a little bit of zero sugar squash to it to make it more palatable. Aim to drink at least 3 litres a day. Spread this out over the course of the day, and make sure that you always have your water bottle with you.

211 Eat fewer processed carbohydrates to improve your health and burn fat. Many people have a diet that is centered around carbohydrates like bread and cereal. These are heavily processed foods that have salt, sugar and other unwanted substances added to them. Instead choose foods that are more naturally occurring or that have been processed less. Sweet potatoes, fruit and rice make great choices. You don't have to ditch bread completely, but focus more on consuming less processed carbohydrates. You will feel more energized and your fat loss efforts will be more successful too.



212 Avoid coffee after your workout if you are trying to lose body fat. Coffee makes a great choice before you workout because it is a stimulant. This helps to get you psyched up for your session and it also helps to improve fat burning. However you do not want to be stimulated after a workout. In fact studies show that excessive stimulation after a hard session in the gym could raise cortisol levels. Cortisol – also known as the '**stress hormone**' – blunts fat burning and can lead to fat being deposited around the lower belly. To avoid this, give it a few hours after your workout before you start drinking caffeinated drinks again.

213 To speed up your fat loss efforts, limit your sugar intake. Sugar causes spikes in your insulin levels. In turn this leads to fat storage, particularly around the lower belly. So if you are trying to ditch your love handles or spare tyre, limit your intake of sugar. This will reduce the number of spikes in your insulin levels, which in turn will reduce fat storage. An easy way to limit sugar is to cut out processed junk food. This tends to be full of sugar and hidden calories that will have a very negative impact on your weight loss efforts.



214

To make sure that you stay on track with your diet, remove all temptation from your house. It is very easy to have a small slip up on your diet if you have a cupboard full of potato chips and cookies. You have easy access to cookies and chips whenever you want them, and chances are that at some point you will cave and have one. If you don't allow yourself to have that kind of food in the house then you will be much less likely to cheat on your diet. Sure, you will probably still suffer with cravings, but because you have no way of fulfilling them, they will go away. Do not give yourself the option to fail, and you will not.

215

If you are the kind of person who finds themselves reaching for the cookie jar come mid-morning, try having a breakfast that is high in protein. Protein is very filling. So if you start your day with a few eggs or some Greek yogurt and fruit, chances are that you will feel much fuller for longer. You won't suffer that mid-morning hunger crash and you won't make poor food choices because of it. Combine your source of protein with some slow releasing carbohydrates and some fruit or vegetables and you will really set yourself up for the day.



216

The quality of the food that you eat is very important. Cheap meat and fish contain very few nutrients compared with more expensive cuts. If your budget allows, go for meat that is organic and has been grass-fed. Choose fish that has been reared in the wild and go for eggs from chickens that have not been battery farmed. This kind of produce might be a little bit more expensive, but it will make a big difference to the way that you look and feel, and to the results that you get from your training.

217

Increase your protein intake to burn more calories, even when you are in bed! Protein is not very easily digested by the body. Therefore when you eat a food that is high in protein, your body has to expend a greater number of calories just to break it down. If you increase your protein intake then, your body has to work harder and you will burn more calories, even when you are resting. Go for good quality sources from foods like meat, fish, eggs and dairy. Spread your intake throughout the day to improve absorption of the protein and maximise its fat burning effects!



218

If fat loss is your goal, then avoid trans-fats like the plague. These harmful fats are often found in processed foods and in spreads like margarine. They increase cholesterol and can lead to heart disease and strokes. In addition, they are found in foods that are generally high in calories and are nutritionally very poor. Cutting them out of your diet completely will improve your cholesterol health and reduce your risk of a number of potentially life-threatening diseases.

219

To get the most out of your weight training sessions, vary your lifting tempo. This refers to the speed with which you raise and lower the weights. To boost growth hormone levels and really get the heart going, spend much longer on the downward phase of the lift. Raise the weight as quickly as you can, and then lower it as slowly as you can. This causes greater muscle damage and will lead to much better gains in muscle mass compared with lifting and lowering the weight to the same tempo. It also makes your heart and cardiovascular system work harder, which will benefit your general health and help to burn fat.

220

If fat loss is your goal, do not waste your time on energy or sports drinks. These are full of sugar and calories, and are only really appropriate for people involved in long distance sports like marathons. If you are just weight training, or are performing fairly short sessions of cardio training, then an energy drink will have a very negative impact on your results. It will replace all of the calories that you have lost during your session and will cause a spike in your insulin levels, which will lead to fat storage around the lower belly area. If you fancy a sweet drink when you are training, just add some zero sugar squash to your water bottle.

221

If you are not training hard, then you will not get the results that you want. It may sound overly simple, but it is true. Regardless of whether you are following an amazing diet and training programme, if you are not pushing yourself during your workouts then you will achieve what you want to. Treat every workout like it is your last and attack it with everything that you have got. Of course, you need to make sure that you are eating well and taking time out to recover, but if you are just going through the motions when you are in the gym, you are unlikely to achieve very much at all.

222

Your body is most receptive to nutrients just after you finish your workout. Because of this, you should place the bulk of your carbohydrates in the meal following your workout. Your body will be very receptive to them, and they will be used to replenish the glycogen stores used during exercise. This also means that they are much less likely to be stored as fat, which can happen at other times of the day. This increased receptivity of nutrients also allows you to get away with higher calorie meals or cheat meals at certain times. If you have a friend's birthday or a social event coming up that you know might be a bit indulgent, you can just hit a killer workout shortly before you go, and then enjoy the rest of your night guilt free!

223

Do not fall into the trap of thinking that you need to avoid carbs at night. Although it has been believed for a long time that eating carbohydrates at night makes you fat, studies have shown that this is not the case. In fact, eating certain carbohydrates later on at night can help you feel relaxed and sleepy. This is exactly what you want late at night, as it will help to improve your quality of sleep. Sleep is key to recovery, so if you are starting to feel burnt out or lethargic, adding a small bowl of oatmeal or a bit of fruit into your last meal of the day could really help to improve your quality of sleep.



224

If you have trouble getting to sleep, then try drinking tart cherry juice. This juice helps to raise melatonin levels, which in turn makes it easier for you to get to sleep. Tart cherry juice is available in a lot of supermarkets and is also widely available at health food shops or online. Drink a small glass of it before you go to bed and enjoy the benefits of an improved nights sleep.

225

Get rid of stress to burn fat and build muscle. Removing stress from our lives is certainly easier said than done, but if you are serious about getting in shape, then you need to try. Stress is linked with an increase in the hormone cortisol. When we have excessive levels of this hormone present in our body, we are much more likely to store body fat, particularly around the lower belly. This hormone also blunts the fat burning effects of exercise. So if you are training hard and eating well but are stressed out of your mind, then chances are you will not be getting the results that you deserve. Try to take time each day to relax and switch off. Do some yoga, listen to some music or read a book. Just do whatever makes you feel relaxed!



226

Make sure that you are eating enough fibre each day. Fibre helps to fill you up, which will make you much less likely to eat sugary snacks or to overeat at mealtimes. It is also vital for proper gut health. This may not seem relevant, but a healthy gut plays a big part in fat loss. Fibre also helps to improve insulin sensitivity. This reduces the likelihood of fat gain when you eat carbohydrates. Great sources of fibre are vegetables, beans, pulses and oats. Include some of these sources of fibre into your diet everyday to ensure that your gut is functioning in an optimal way.



227

Work on your lower back strength to improve your overall strength and muscle size. Your lower back plays a key part in almost every major lift that you do in the gym. It is used in squats, deadlifts and even moves like shoulder press. Therefore if you have a weak lower back, you will struggle to improve on all of these kinds of moves. Your back will be your weakest link and will prevent you from training the rest of your body properly. To improve your lower back strength, include moves like Romanian deadlifts, good mornings and hyperextensions into your training programme. One word of warning though, always be conservative with the weight that you use – the last thing that you want is to injure your lower back. Warm up properly and slowly increase the weight that you use week by week – do not try and push things too quickly.

228

Always warm up your shoulders before you hit the bench press. Most moves that target the chest do also recruit your shoulder muscles. If you fail to warm your shoulders up properly before you train chest then you could risk shoulder injury. Shoulder injuries are not only very painful, but they will also bring your training to a grinding halt. To prevent this from happening, always perform a thorough warm up that targets your shoulders before you train your chest. Perform a few light sets of shoulder presses and lateral raises, and then warm up with a few light sets of bench press. This will ensure that your shoulders are warmed up properly and reduce the risk of injury. As an added bonus, you will also be able to lift more!



229

Perform bent over rows if you want to add thickness and size to your back. Not only is this a very easy move to perform and one that requires very little equipment, but it is incredibly effective at adding muscle to your back. To perform it properly, grab a barbell with a slightly wider than shoulder width, overhand grip. Stick your bum out behind you and bend over, keeping your back straight. Then lift the weight up so that it is line with your lower abs. To keep tension and your back and improve the results that you get with this move, make sure that do not use momentum to bring it up. Add 3 sets of 10-12 reps into your normal training routine to build a back to be proud of.



230

For a killer workout that you can do in no time, try giant sets. This intensifying technique involves performing a whole number of moves back to back without any rest. However, unlike circuit training, where you target a number of different muscles, giant sets focus on just one muscle group. So if you were training your chest, you could perform a giant set that went: incline bench press, flat dumbbell bench press, cable flyes, incline dumbbell flyes, press ups. You would perform all of those moves back to back without any rest. It may seem like a lot of work for one body part, but it is one of the best ways to get results. Not only will you be working your muscles hard and exciting some quality muscle growth, but your cardiovascular system will be working hard too. This will improve your fitness and help you to burn fat in the process.

231

To burn fat and build muscle at the same time, include tri-sets into your training programme. This time saving technique involves performing 3 moves back to back without any rest. This places the muscle under tension for an extended period of time, which in turn causes it to grow. Because this training involves little to no rest, it will also work your cardiovascular system hard as well. This will improve your fitness and help you to burn fat too. This technique works best with the same body part, so choose moves that target the same muscle group – like back, for example – and then perform them all in a row. Rest for around 90 seconds after you have finished the last move, and then go again!



232

Mix up your training by alternating between dumbbells and barbells. Each of these will place a slightly different stress on your muscles, which will help you to get the results that you are after. The greater the variety of stimulus that you can place your muscles under, the quicker your muscles will grow. Switching between dumbbells and barbells will alter the angles that your muscles are hit from, which will ensure well-rounded muscle growth. It will also improve your strength and help to build your stabilizing muscles, which are crucial for developing overall strength and size. It also helps to keep things interesting. If you are constantly performing the same moves in the gym day in, day out then things will start to get boring and you are likely to lose motivation. Switching between dumbbells and barbells is one of the best ways of mixing things up and keeping your training interesting.

233

Incorporate cables into your training routine. Provided that you train in a gym that has them, you should include them in your programme and use them towards the end of your session. Start your workouts with big moves that require dumbbells and barbells. Then towards the end of your workout, switch to cable machines. These place a different kind of tension on your muscles and place tension on your muscles at different points through each move. This helps to isolate your muscles in a different way, which forces greater stimulus through the muscle. Often it will place tension at the extremities of the movement, which is where the muscle is weakest. This will help to improve the strength and increase the amount of weight that you can lift when you go back to dumbbells and barbells. This will lead to more muscle growth in the long run.



234

If you take sugar with your tea or coffee, try switching to stevia. Stevia is a natural sweetener that tastes great and won't do any harm to your body. Whilst sugar may taste great in tea or coffee, if weight loss is the aim, it should really be avoided. Table sugar causes a spike in your insulin levels, which then signal the body to promote fat storage. It also contains a high number of calories, which will all add up and slow your weight loss efforts right down. Conversely, stevia has almost no impact on your insulin levels. It also contains no calories. This allows you to enjoy the sweet taste of your tea and coffee, without having a detrimental affect on your physique. Stevia is not expensive to buy and can be found in most health food stores, or online.

235

If you are not strong enough to perform body weight dips, try bench dips. This is a great exercise that really works the triceps hard. In contrast to many other tricep exercises, bench dips work the entire tricep – which is split up into 3 separate '**heads**'. This makes it a good choice for those of you who are trying to add overall mass to your arms. To perform bench dips, get 2 benches of equal height and place them a number of feet apart. Place your hands behind you on one bench and your feet out in front of you, on the other bench. Your heels should just be on the edge of the bench in front of you. Lower your body until your arms are parallel with the ground, and then press back up through your palms. Begin your tricep workouts with this move to pack mass onto your arms quickly.



236

Do not believe the myth that eating carbohydrates after 6pm will make you fat. It has long been stated that this is the case – the idea being that any carbs that you eat after 6pm will be stored as fat, because you do not need them for energy. This is nonsense. You will not get fat by eating carbohydrates later in the day – it is the total number of calories a day that you consume which is important. So if for example, you are meant to be eating 100g of carbs a day on your diet, it makes very little difference what time of day you eat them. Provided that you are expending more energy than you are consuming through food, you will be losing weight. Eating your carbs later on in the evening may also help to keep you on track, as you will be able to enjoy a meal with your partner or family, and won't have to create your own low carb meal.

237

Do not be afraid of eating red meat. Inaccurate articles in the paper continually warn us of the dangers of too much red meat. These are largely because red meat is high in fat. However red meat does have a number of other health benefits that are often overlooked. It is high in protein, which is vital for muscle repair and growth, and it contains high levels of creatine and carnitine. Creatine helps to provide you with short bursts of energy, which will allow you to train in the gym for harder and longer. Carnitine causes the body to turn to fat as an energy source, meaning that you will burn more fat when you exercise. Because red meat is high in fat and calories, you shouldn't eat it all the time, but definitely do not cut it out of your diet, even if you are trying to lose weight.



238

Make sure that you take at least a couple of days off each week from the gym. This allows your body to recover and repair itself from the exercise that you have been doing. It is during this period that you get the results that you are after. Therefore if you do not take time off each week to recover and rest, you will not get the results that you want. You will not be able to train with intensity, and you will soon burn out. This will most likely lead to illness and injury, and will soon begin to affect your motivation. This is a slippery slope and one that you want to avoid. Give yourself at least 2-3 days off a week. Any less and you put yourself at risk of overtraining.

239

For the best results, try to space your training out evenly over the week. If work or other commitments prevent you from doing so, then do not worry too much, but if you can, place your rest days in between your training sessions. So if you train 4 times a week for example, it would be much better to train on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday than it would to train straight through from Monday to Thursday and then take the weekend off. You will recover more from your sessions and be better rested, which will improve your sessions and allow you to burn more calories and fat. If you train on four consecutive days, you will begin to feel pretty tired and lose focus as the week goes on. Then when the weekend arrives you will be much more likely to stray away from your diet because you have so many days off.



240

For a quick and delicious snack, mix natural yogurt with dried fruit and nuts. The yogurt is high in protein, which will help to repair and rebuild your muscles. The fruit is high in vitamins and minerals, which will help to boost and support your immune system. The nuts are also high in protein, and also contain healthy fats, which help you to burn fat, and helps to improve your focus and productivity. It is cheap and easy to make and can be stored easily, so you can take it to work or when you are out and about. This also makes a great choice for a guilt free dessert. Just swap the dried fruit for fresh fruit of your choice and add a drizzle of honey over the top. Then you can enjoy a dessert with your family or friends without slowing down your weight loss progress.

241

Use different rep ranges depending on your goals. If you want to add muscle mass, then perform between 8 and 12 reps per move. If you want to gain strength and add muscle, then perform less reps but with a heavier weight. Stick in the rep range of 6-8. If you are purely interested in gaining strength and do not want to increase the size of your muscles, then lift very heavy weights but do not lift more than 5 reps per move. That is not to say that you should only ever lift in one rep range, but focus the majority of your efforts on lifting weights in the rep range that corresponds to your primary goal.



242

For maximum results, structure your workout in the correct way. If you are lifting weights, you need to train in a certain way to get the results that you want. Big muscle groups – like your back, legs and chest – require much more energy to train than smaller muscle groups – like your shoulders, arms and abs. Therefore to get the most out of your workout, structure it so that you train your large muscle groups first. Once you have trained these larger muscle groups – which should take up the majority of your workout, you can devote your attention to your smaller muscle groups. These need fewer stimuli to grow anyway, and will have been worked during the earlier part of your workout. So they make a great finish to your workout – a small number of sets on each body part is all that you need to get the results that you want.



243

Snack on foods like nuts and seeds. These are full of healthy fats, and contain lots of different vitamins and minerals. They will help to fill you up and will reduce the chances of your making poor food choices later in the day. Great choices are almonds, cashews, Brazil nuts and macadamia nuts. If you do not like them on their own, then you could try incorporating them into other meals by sprinkling them over salad or oatmeal.

244

Limit your carbohydrate intake if you want to lose fat. That is not to say that you should get rid of carbs completely, as they do play an important role in your diet. But if you are the kind of person who has cereal for breakfast, a sandwich for lunch and pasta for dinner, then you may benefit by reducing them. Do not simply cut them out – instead replace them with protein and fat. So if you normally have a chicken sandwich for lunch, try having a chicken salad with an avocado and a drizzle of olive oil. This will reduce your carbohydrate consumption, which in turn will reduce the number of insulin spikes that you have each day. Insulin is linked with fat storage, so the less insulin spikes you have, the less likely you will be to gain body fat.



245

Do your training outside to mix things up and keep it fresh. We all know how boring it can be to do cardio on a treadmill or on a stationary bike. So if the weather allows and it is safe to do so, get outside and do your cardio in the great outdoors. The variety in terrain and scenery will make your session much more enjoyable and will in fact help to challenge you in different ways. It might not always be possible to train outdoors, but when you find that motivation is wavering, it can be a great way of mixing things up and making your routine exciting again.

246

If you are serious about getting in shape, you need to track what you are eating. It may sound extreme, but there are hidden calories in food and a whole number of hidden substances. You may think that you have eaten 'x' number of calories, when in actual fact you have eaten many more. Tracking food is also useful because it is very difficult to remember exactly what you have eaten each day. You may think that you only had one cookie for lunch, when really you had two. It might not sound like much, but these small differences do add up and can result in widely different results in the long term. If you want to track the food that you are eating, there are a number of apps available like myfitnesspal – which are easy to use and have a very large database of all of the kind of foods that you will be eating.



247

If you want to lose fat, increase your consumption of Omega 3 fatty acids. These fatty acids, which are found in foods like fish, organic meat and certain dairy products have a whole host of benefits. They will help to improve your metabolism, will reduce inflammation and lower the risk of certain diseases like cancer. They are available in supplement form, but it is a great idea to include some of these foods into your diet each day.

248

Use coconut oil to burn fat and improve energy. This oil, which is perfect for cooking, is a medium chain fatty acid. Studies have shown that it helps to improve brain function, promote general health and help you to burn fat. It is not always available to buy in supermarkets, but it should be in most good health foods stores. It is perfect for cooking, and because of its high smoke point, is great for dishes that are cooked at a very high temperature. Use it in conjunction with olive oil for the best results.



249

Eat butter to improve your health. This may sound a bit crazy, as it has long been believed that butter is bad for you and will make you fat. However, provided that the butter you buy is high quality, it will in fact support your health and fat loss goals. It contains high levels of fat-soluble vitamins like vitamin K, and it is also full of bone-strengthening calcium. The easiest way to include it in your diet, is to cook with it. It works particularly well when cooking meat, like steaks or chicken.

250

Include a variety of vegetables in your diet to improve your immune system and boost fat loss. We all have our favourite vegetables, which is great but if fat loss is your aim, it is important to eat a wide variety of different vegetables. This will ensure that you consume many different vitamins and nutrients, which will help to support your immune system. Not only will this stop you from picking up illnesses, but there is a fairly strong link between your immune system and your performance in the gym. The better your performance, the more calories and fat you will burn each session. Great choices are all green and leafy vegetables, as well as colourful vegetables like carrots and peppers.



251

If you really do not like vegetables, there are still ways that you can include them into your diet. One of the best ways of doing this is to blend them. Certain vegetables - like spinach for example - have no taste when they are blended, so you can put them into smoothies or yogurts without noticing. It will change the colour of your yogurt or smoothie to bright green, but that is about the extent of the change. You can also make chunky meat and vegetable soups. This will make the vegetables more palatable and you can make big batches that you can store in the fridge. If all of this is still too much for you, then you could invest in a greens drink. These powdered supplements contain a whole load of fruits and vegetables. They are fairly cheap to buy and come in a number of different and exciting flavours.



252

To stay on track with your diet, cook your food in bulk. This may take an hour or so one evening, but it will be worth it. Cooking your own food and taking it with you to work each day allows you to be in control of what you eat. If you are prepared in this way then there will never be a time when you have to sacrifice the quality of the food that you are eating. It will also help to save you money. Cooking in bulk is cheap, and is certainly much cheaper than buying food when you are out. If you work long days, then it might be worth cooking a number of different meals in bulk, so that you can mix it up. Not only will this ensure that you are eating a wide range of different nutrients, but it will stop things from getting boring too!

253

Avoid processed nuts if you want to get in shape. Nuts make a great snack, as they are full of protein, healthy fats, and fibre. However you need to be careful about the kind of nuts that you buy. If you are going to include nuts into your diet, stick with plain nuts. These are full of nutrients and do not contain any added chemicals or preservatives. By contrast, nuts that are heavily roasted or salted contain much fewer nutrients. In addition, they are often higher in calories and bad fats, as they have been cooked in harmful vegetable oils. These are the kind of nuts that you usually find in restaurants or in bars.



254

Be careful about the portion size of your snacks. It does not matter how healthy your snacks are, if you eat too much of them, you will struggle to lose weight. A perfect example of this is overeating nuts. Nuts are a great snack and are very healthy, but they are also high in fat. So if you find that you are '**snacking**' on nuts, but are in fact eating a whole bag of them everyday, you could be consuming your entire daily intake of fat just from nuts. This will greatly increase your calorie intake and seriously slow down your weight loss efforts. That is certainly not to say that you should avoid nuts or other healthy snacks, but just remember that just because something is healthy, it does not mean you can eat as much of it as you want.

255

Do not over do it on fruit if you want to lose fat. This may sound like an odd tip, because fruit is full of antioxidants and contains many health benefits. However it does also contain high levels of fructose. This can be bad news for fat loss. Studies have shown that high levels of fructose cause blunt fat burning. They also lower the metabolism and lead to fat gain, particularly around the belly area. This is of course not to suggest that you should cut fruit out of your diet altogether, but if you are trying to lose weight, then limit it somewhat. Stick to around 1-2 pieces of fruit per day. Have these after your workout, or after your evening meal, as a treat. Get the rest of your vitamins and minerals from vegetables.



256

Build your entire chest by varying the angle of the bench that you are on. If you want to build an impressive set of pecs, you need to work your entire chest evenly. Roughly speaking, bench press on an incline bench works the top of your pecs, bench press on a flat bench works the middle of your chest, and bench press on a decline bench works your lower chest. So to develop a well-rounded and impressive chest, mix your sessions up and vary the angle of the bench that you are sitting on. This will ensure that all of the muscle fibres in your chest are stimulated, which will cause your chest to grow quicker. Incline bench press is the most difficult, as it recruits the largest amount of muscle fibres. Start your chest sessions with this move, and then go on to flat bench and decline bench press later on in your session.

257

When you are constructing your training programme, create sessions that work complementary body parts. For example, when you train back, your biceps also get a good workout, as your biceps are involved in all of the pulling exercise that work your back. Similarly, your triceps get worked when you train your chest, as they are involved in most pushing exercises. So if you want to great workout in and train multiple body parts in one session, combine back and biceps into one workout, and chest and triceps into another workout. This way you will be hitting the large muscles which will help you to get bigger and to burn fat, and also be working the smaller muscles that will give your physique the finishing touches. Just make sure that you train your larger muscles at the beginning of the session when you are at your strongest.

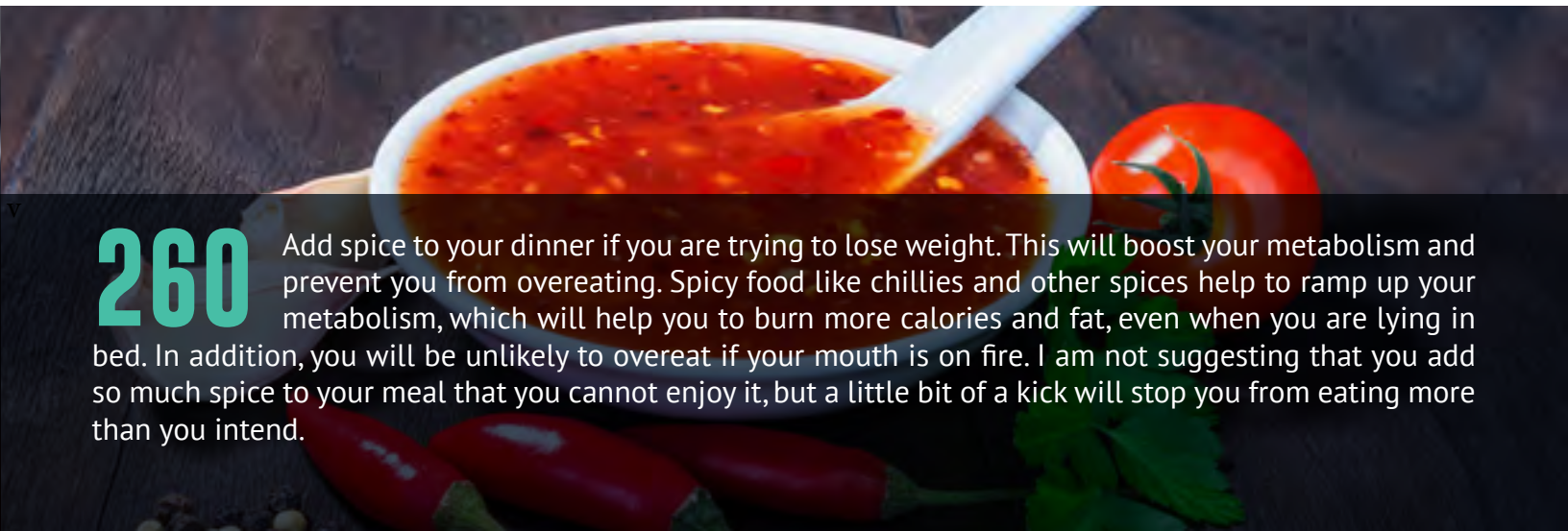


258

Take a '*before*' photo to keep yourself motivated. When you start your weight loss journey there will be times when you feel disheartened and begin to lose motivation. You may not feel like you are getting results as quickly as you would like, or you may just be finding sticking to the training and diet hard. Whatever it is, looking back on photos of your old self will help to give you a real boost. You will be able to see how far you have come and why you started your weight loss journey in the first place. When you take your photo, be honest about it. Do not try to make yourself look better or worse than you really are, and do not try to play any tricks with lighting or shadow. You may feel embarrassed or upset by the photo, but looking at it will help to spur you on to achieve the goals that you want.

259

When eating out at a restaurant, force yourself to make smart choices. It is very easy to throw it all out of the window and indulge, but you can still enjoy a nice meal out without completely sacrificing your waistline. Always go for foods that have been steamed or grilled, rather than fried. These will not have been soaked in oil and so will be much lower in calories and fat. Also don't be afraid to ask them to change things for you slightly. If you fancy a steak but the one on the menu comes with a huge plate of French fries, ask instead for it to come with steamed vegetables. You will still be able to enjoy your steak, but will have cut a whole number of excess calories from your meal.



260

Add spice to your dinner if you are trying to lose weight. This will boost your metabolism and prevent you from overeating. Spicy food like chillies and other spices help to ramp up your metabolism, which will help you to burn more calories and fat, even when you are lying in bed. In addition, you will be unlikely to overeat if your mouth is on fire. I am not suggesting that you add so much spice to your meal that you cannot enjoy it, but a little bit of a kick will stop you from eating more than you intend.

261

Do household chores to burn calories. I know that you have to do these chores anyway, but you may do them with a bit more gusto if you consider them as a fat burning workout. Even simple chores like hovering, cleaning the kitchen and mowing the lawn burn surprisingly large numbers of calories. This all adds up over the week and could help to make a real difference to your physique in the long run. To burn even more calories, don't let technology do the work for you – switch your leaf blower for a bag and a brush, and your power hose for a bucket and sponge. Not only will this save you money, but it will help you to get into shape as well!



262

Reassess your attitude towards training. So many people who are trying to get in shape think of their workout as a chore. This makes every gym session a task in itself, and makes it so much more difficult to stay motivated in the long term. To prevent this, try changing your attitude towards exercise. Rather than thinking of it as something that you don't want to do but have to, think of it as your **'me time'**. It may sound stupid, but when else do you have 30-60 minutes by yourself to gather your thoughts. Running on a treadmill or hitting the weights might not be your ideal way of spending your alone time, but changing your perspective on things could really make a difference to your motivation, and therefore to your results.



263

Include pomegranates in your diet to burn more fat. It may sound simple, but these sweet fruits have been shown to have a number of specific fat loss benefits. It is particularly high in a number of rare antioxidants, which prevent fat absorption. Pomegranates also improve cardiovascular health and may also reduce the risk of certain types of cancer. You can either eat the fruit whole or you can drink pomegranate juice. Pomegranate extract is also available from most health food stores. Including one of these 3 sources makes a great start to your day and also boosts your vitamin C levels, helping you to fight off infection and illness.

264

Add garlic to your meals to shift body fat. Not only does garlic help to add flavour to almost all meals, it will in fact help to get you in better shape. This is because it helps to improve the ratio of brown fat to white fat in the body. Brown fat is considered good, whilst white fat is considered bad. Indeed studies show that garlic can really help to reduce fat gain. It also helps to improve blood flow, which reduces the risk of heart diseases. Include fresh garlic in your meals whenever you can. You can also supplement with garlic tablets if you do not like the taste or want to go for a higher dose. This can be bought from most supermarkets or health food stores.

265

Start taking probiotics to improve your results. Gut health is crucial, whether you are looking to burn fat or build muscle. If your gut is not functioning properly, then you will not be able to properly digest or absorb the food that you are eating. If you cannot properly absorb the food that you are eating, you put yourself at risk of nutritional deficiencies. This will vastly reduce the quality of your training and will also compromise your health. Something as simple as taking a probiotic would help to prevent this. A probiotic will support gut health, which in turn will improve your general health and fat loss efforts. They are cheap to buy and can be picked up from most good health food stores.



266

Always go for slow releasing sources of carbohydrate in the meal before your workout. You may think that a packet of sweets or an energy drink will help you to get the most out of your workout, but in fact it could be stopping you from getting the results that you want. A quick releasing source of carbs, like sweets, will give you an initial burst of energy that will make you feel great for a few minutes. However this will quickly wear off. Your energy will crash and you will feel completely wiped out. To stop this from happening, choose carb sources that digest slowly – perfect choices are foods like oats, sweet potatoes and brown rice. Eat these around 90 minutes before your workout for a source of energy that will keep you going for your entire session.

267

Generally speaking, brown foods are better for you than white foods. This is not always the case, and I am certainly not suggesting that all white foods are bad for you. However, when it comes to most grains and a lot of carbohydrates, brown beats white. This is because white grains – like white rice, white bread and white pasta, have all been highly refined. This means that they are more quickly absorbed by the body, which causes your blood sugar to spike. When your blood sugar spikes, insulin is released, which promotes fat storage. Brown grains like brown bread, brown rice and brown pasta does not have this same effect on your blood sugar levels, and so does not promote fat storage in the same way.



268

Do not be afraid of eating eggs. Many people avoid eggs because they fear that they will increase their cholesterol levels and cause them to gain fat. This is not true. High cholesterol is the result of a number of different factors but is exacerbated by a high carbohydrate, low fat diet. This causes inflammation and can in fact increase cholesterol levels. Rather than making things worse, studies show that including eggs in your diet – and reducing your carbohydrate intake could in fact help to improve cholesterol. In addition, eggs are high in protein, which will boost your metabolism and help your muscles to recover from exercise. I would not recommend eating them everyday, but try to eat them at least a few days a week.

269

Include avocados into your diet to improve your health and burn fat. Avocados are high in *'good'* fats, and also contain lots of different nutrients and antioxidants. In fact studies have shown that you are less likely to gain fat if you include avocados in your diet. They are fairly high in calories and fat, so you cannot eat multiple avocados each day if you are trying to lose weight, but you should aim to eat some everyday. Slice it up and have it with salad or as a side dish, with a little olive oil drizzled over it. They are versatile and work well with a whole number of dishes. They are also cheap and have a very good shelf life.



270

Spice up your food by making your own dips and sauces. Shop bought sauces are often filled with fat and salt, and can add large numbers of excess calories to your meal. You do not need to do away with your favourite sauces, just make your own. You can easily make your own guacamole and salsa, both of which, if done properly will add lots of flavour, as well as a number of different vitamins and minerals to your dish. Both salsa and guacamole is easy to make and can be stored in the fridge for a number of days. Make it in batches so that you can take it out whenever you need to add a bit of flavour and variety to your meals.

271

If you enjoy a warm cup of cocoa before you go to bed, you don't need to worry about it stopping you from losing weight. Provided that it is high quality and contains a high percentage of cocoa solids, it will in fact help you towards your training goals. Cocoa powder that contains a high percentage of cocoa solids is high in antioxidants. This improves cardiovascular health and will help you to lose weight. Indeed studies have shown a link between the consumption of high percentage cocoa solids and a lean physique. One word of warning though, do not mix your cocoa powder with milk. Unfortunately dairy blocks the powerful benefits of the antioxidants, and so should be avoided.



272

When doing bicep curls, completely straighten your arms at the bottom of the movement. This will cause your triceps to flex and your biceps to relax. When you then go to lift the weight again, your biceps will engage from the beginning of the move, which will force more pressure through them. It will also ensure that you are lifting the weight through its entire range of motion. This will overload the biceps and completely isolate them. This will increase the stimulus that they are exposed to and will cause them to grow quicker.



273

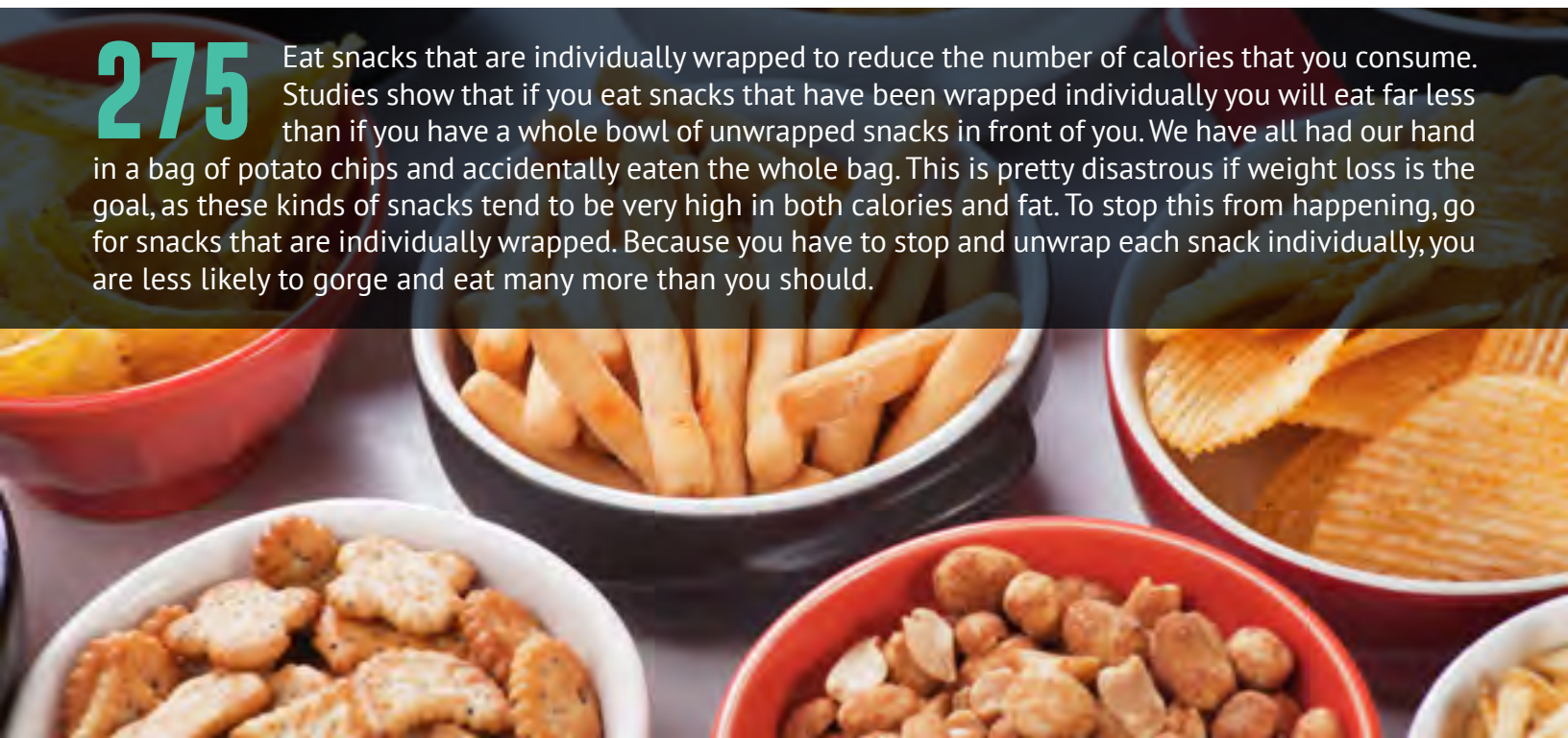
Do not allow yourself to cheat when you are in the gym. As your session goes on and you begin to get more tired, it is understandable that your form will begin to suffer. However, you can prevent this from happening by putting yourself in a position whereby you cannot cheat. For example, if we take a look at bicep curls, which a lot of people tend to cheat on. They often use their bag and hips to throw the weight up. If this sounds like you, then try standing with your back to a wall. You will not physically be able to move your back, and so will be forced to lift the weights with your biceps. This will force all of the tension through your biceps, which will stimulate them to grow.

274

If you want to lose weight without dropping any muscle, try carb cycling. This involves varying and manipulating your carbohydrate intake depending on your training. So on your heaviest training days you eat the greatest amount of carbohydrates. When you are training hard your body requires more carbohydrates, and you will be much less likely to store the carbohydrates that you eat as fat. Then on your lighter training days or rest days you decrease your carbohydrate intake. Because you are expending less energy, you need to consume fewer calories. This will prevent you from consuming an excess of calories and storing body fat on those days where you are not as active. Reducing your carbohydrates on these days is one of the best ways of achieving this. Keep your fat and protein intake high and you will have lots of energy to get through your day.

275

Eat snacks that are individually wrapped to reduce the number of calories that you consume. Studies show that if you eat snacks that have been wrapped individually you will eat far less than if you have a whole bowl of unwrapped snacks in front of you. We have all had our hand in a bag of potato chips and accidentally eaten the whole bag. This is pretty disastrous if weight loss is the goal, as these kinds of snacks tend to be very high in both calories and fat. To stop this from happening, go for snacks that are individually wrapped. Because you have to stop and unwrap each snack individually, you are less likely to gorge and eat many more than you should.



276

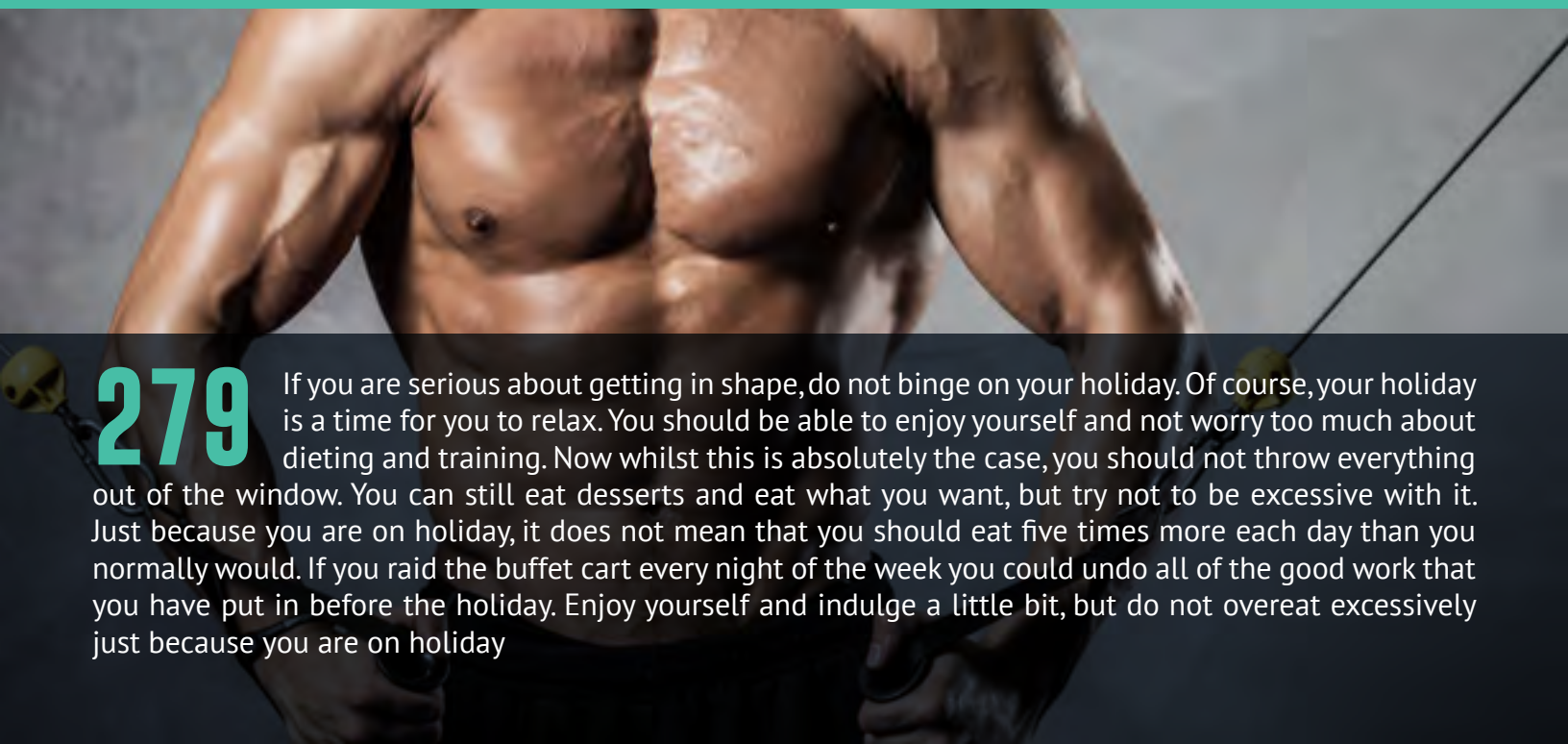
If you are going to eat unhealthy snacks, resolve to make smart snack swaps. For example, if you decide that you really need to treat yourself, then make a swap that allows you to enjoy a bit of a treat without going overboard. A good swap would be to eat a bag of lightly salted popcorn instead of a bag of potato chips. You can still enjoy a bit of a treat, but this swap will have you consuming less calories and much less fat. These small swaps may seem pretty inconsequential but they will all add up and could make a big difference to your results in the long run.

**277**

Use your lunch hour to burn fat or build muscle. It can be difficult for many people to find the time to go to the gym, especially when they get home. But making good use of your lunch hour can ensure that your time doesn't run out and you don't miss your gym session. Find a gym near to where you work, and get your session in during your lunchtime. You may only have an hour, but you do not need to spend a long time in the gym to get the job done. Keep your session short and intense, to build muscle and burn fat like a furnace!

278

Do not add salt to your food. Although salt does add flavour to food, it will do nothing for your general health or your weight loss efforts. Excessive salt intake increases your blood pressure, and increases your risk of heart disease. It also dehydrates you. Hydration is key to performance, and as little as 2% dehydration will have a very negative impact on the quality of your session. To prevent this, do not add salt to your food. Many foods contain salt naturally, and adding more salt will only be of detriment to your health. You can still enjoy flavoursome food without salt, just experiment more with different herbs and spices. This may take a bit of time at first, but soon you will be enjoying a whole host of different and flavoursome dishes.

**279**

If you are serious about getting in shape, do not binge on your holiday. Of course, your holiday is a time for you to relax. You should be able to enjoy yourself and not worry too much about dieting and training. Now whilst this is absolutely the case, you should not throw everything out of the window. You can still eat desserts and eat what you want, but try not to be excessive with it. Just because you are on holiday, it does not mean that you should eat five times more each day than you normally would. If you raid the buffet cart every night of the week you could undo all of the good work that you have put in before the holiday. Enjoy yourself and indulge a little bit, but do not overeat excessively just because you are on holiday.

280

Marinate your food to increase its flavour and keep your diet exciting. If you let your diet get boring, you will be unlikely to stick to it. No matter how dedicated you are, if you only ever eat chicken and vegetables, you will soon lose motivation and suffer from terrible cravings. Eventually you will crack and at worst, might go on a binge. This could ruin your progress and set you back, weeks or even months. Marinating your food can be a great way of keeping things interesting and improving the flavour of even the blandest foods. Create marinades from your favourite herbs and spices and coat your favourite meats in them. Keep them in the fridge overnight and allow them to soak into the meat. Then when you go to cook them the next day, the flavours will come through and you will have turned the blandest dish into one bursting full of flavour.



281

Rotate your hands when bench-pressing to place greater tension on the muscle and build an impressive pair of pecs. When you are using dumbbells, twist your hands as you press up so that your palms are facing towards you. Move the dumbbells together so that they touch at the top of the movement. If done properly you should feel an intense squeeze in your chest muscles. Rotate your wrists back again so that your palms face away from you. This places your chest under greater tension and recruits a greater number of muscle fibres. This will lead to more muscle growth and a chest that you can be proud of.



282

You cannot '*spot reduce*' fat. Many people waste their time thinking that they can target certain stubborn areas of body fat. Typically fat settles around the belly, bottom and upper thigh areas. So people often do hundreds of squats and sit-ups in the hope that they can burn fat from certain problem areas on their body. Unfortunately this is not true. Your body loses fat from all over the place, and if you want to lose the fat from stubborn areas like your belly, you need to focus on reducing your overall body fat levels first. Get a solid diet and training regime in place that will have you dropping body fat, and you will be rid of your stubborn fat stores in no time!

283

Remember that alcohol does not only put strain on your liver – it is also very high in calories. A medium glass of wine for example could contain up to 300 calories, which is about the same as in a piece of cake. So if you have a couple of glasses of wine, you could be consuming a vast number of calories. These are what are known as **'empty calories'**. They have almost no nutritional benefit and are incredibly likely to be stored as fat. To reduce your consumption, spend longer over your drink and savour every mouthful. Try to drink only at the weekend and only if you really want to. Do not drink every day, if you feel like you have to, then you may have an addiction.



284

Make your own healthy dessert by blending fruit and freezing it. It may not sound too exciting, but it does in fact make for a very tasty and refreshing dessert. Choose sweet fruits like grapes, pineapple, melon and strawberries. Then just blend them and add to small dessert bowls and place in the freezer. This will allow you to enjoy dessert with your family or with friends, without having to worry about your waistline. Far from being high in calories, it will be packed with vitamins and antioxidants that will boost your immune system and keep you training hard. It will also be a far better option than store bought sorbets or smoothies – these are often packed with sugar and much higher in calories.

285

Do not neglect your rear deltoids. These are the muscles at the back of your shoulders. Most people forget to train them because they cannot see them in the mirror, but working on your rear deltoids will make both your shoulders and your entire body look better. If you have well developed rear deltoids, your shoulders will look pumped up and much larger than they are. It will also help to improve your posture. This will prevent muscular imbalances and have you standing taller, which will instantly make you look better. To work your rear deltoids, grab a dumbbell in each hand. Bend over with your arms hanging down in front of you. Then lift the weights up and out, as if you are trying to touch the walls on either side of the room. Slowly return the weights to the start point, and then repeat for reps.



286

Always go for fresh, rather than dried fruit. Although dried fruit is delicious and can be very sweet, it is not as good a choice as the fresh stuff. It is lower in fibre and higher in calories, and often has sugar added to it. In addition, it is very easy to overeat. You would not be able to eat 500g of fresh grapes, and although it would be difficult, it would be much easier to eat the same amount of raisins. They do not fill you up or satisfy you in the same way that fresh fruit does. They still make a great snack so do not exclude them from your diet entirely, just be cautious about the size of the portions that you go for.

287

Just because a product is **'free from additives'** does not necessarily mean that it is a healthy choice. Many products contain preservatives and chemicals that are harmful to your health, but are created from plant products. They then advertise themselves as **'natural.'** To make sure that you aren't consuming these harmful preservatives, closely check the ingredients of the foods that you buy. This may seem like a lot of effort to go to, but it could make a big difference to your results. The quality of food that you eat has a big impact on your body's ability to burn fat. It also has an impact on your general health. You will soon get used to quickly scanning over labels and ingredients, and it could make a big difference to the way that you look and feel.

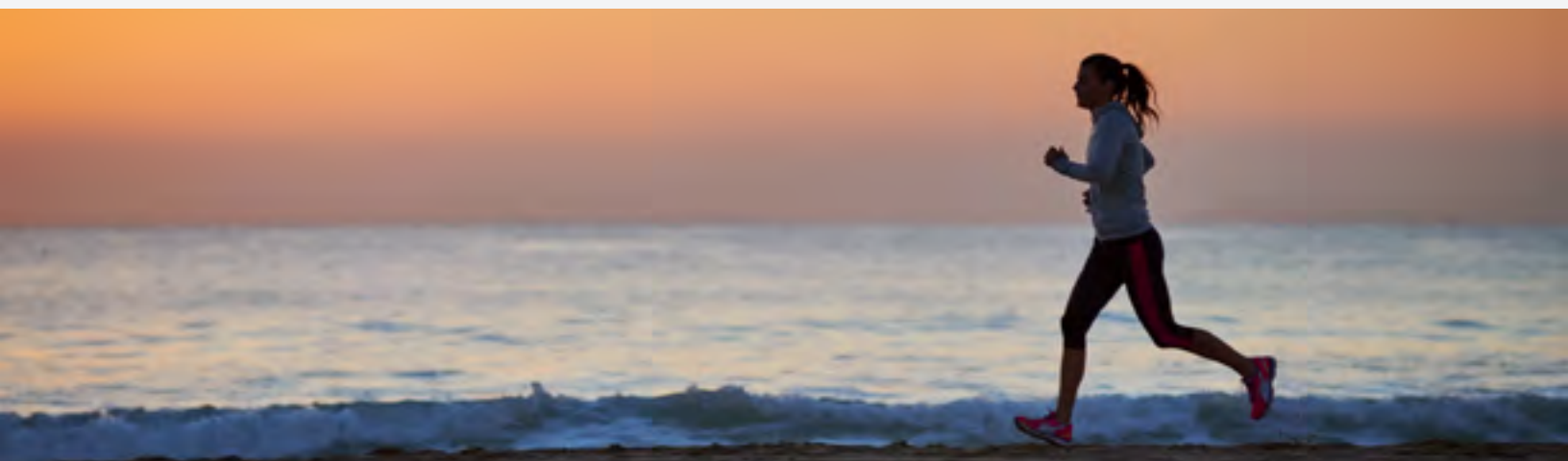
289

Use stairs to get a killer workout done in no time. Running up stairs is very difficult and recruits a great number of muscle fibres in your legs, which are one of the largest muscle groups in your body. To burn fat and build the muscles in your legs, sprint up your stairs as fast as you can. Take the stairs 2 or 3 at a time – this will force more tension through your legs and help you to burn more calories. Jog back down to the bottom of the stairs and then sprint back up again. Repeat 20 times, to get an absolutely grueling workout done in no time. As an added bonus, you don't even have to leave your house! Just make sure that you are careful, you don't want to hurt yourself.



289

Run on a beach to burn fat faster. Running on sand, especially if it is soft or wet will recruit more muscle fibres in your legs. This will make it much harder work. You will have to try harder to maintain your pace. This will cause you to burn more fat and calories in a shorter time. Your legs will also begin to burn, which will place greater stress on your body. Mentally these sessions will be difficult, but they will work wonders for your waistline.





290

Run on soft surfaces to save your joints. Although running is a great form of exercise that burns a lot of calories, it does place a lot of stress on your joints. This is especially the case if you are overweight. Over time, this can cause pain in your hips, knees and ankles. To lessen the stress that your joints are under, run on soft surfaces. This may not always be possible, but if you live near fields, woods or beaches, try to run on them. Running on soft surfaces places much less stress on your joints, which will reduce the risk of injury. This will also allow you to train for longer, which will burn more calories and fat.

291

Use cables to keep constant tension on your shoulders. During a lot of shoulder exercises - like lateral raises for example - your muscles are not under tension at the bottom of the movement. This allows you to rest for longer at the bottom of the movement. Although you may welcome an extended rest, if muscle growth is the aim, you need to keep your muscles under tension for an extended period of time. To achieve this, use cables when you are training your shoulders. Go for cable lat raises - these will keep tension on your shoulders through the entire move, which will break down more of your muscle fibres. This will lead to increased muscle growth and a more impressive pair of shoulders in the long run.



292

To build a pair of biceps to be proud of, perform incline dumbbell curls. Not only do they perfectly isolate the biceps, they also work the muscle through its entire range of movement. When you lie back on an incline bench with your arms by your sides, your biceps are fully lengthened. This ensures that you are working your bicep through its entire range of motion. Lie back on an incline bench with your head pressed into the bench. Hold a dumbbell in each hand with your palms facing away from you. Without moving your upper arm, lift each dumbbell up so that they are in line with your shoulders. Squeeze your biceps hard for a second, and then lower the weight back to the beginning.

293

To work your biceps most efficiently, vary which way your palms are facing. If you are doing multiple sets that work your biceps in one session, alternate your grip to work more muscle fibres and sculpt a more impressive set of arms. To do this, perform some sets with your palms facing away from you, some with your palms facing together, and some with your palms facing away from you. This will ensure that your biceps are worked from a number of different angles, which will lead to increased muscle growth and strength.



294

If you are new to weightlifting, stick to 3 workouts a week to begin with. Rather than focusing on particular body parts in different sessions, perform 3, full body workouts on 3 separate days. Take at least 1 day of rest in between these workouts to ensure that your muscles have recovered properly before you train again. Go for big moves that work the large muscles in your body – moves like squats, deadlifts, bench press and pull-ups. These will allow you to build muscle and burn fat, without placing too much stress on your body. Once you have performed this routine for a number of weeks and are beginning to adapt to it, you can start to add in extra days at the gym or think about adapting your training routine.



295

For a heavy-duty cardio session that will help you to build muscle and burn fat, head for the rowing machine. Unlike other forms of cardio, the rowing machine places a lot of stress on your muscles, which will cause them to break down and grow back bigger and stronger. It will also help you to burn fat and improve your fitness. To get the most out of your session, get your technique right. The movement is initiated from the legs, then the back, and then the arms. Rowing in this way – rather than with your arms as most people do – will allow you to recruit a greater number of muscles. This will increase the number of calories that you burn and help to get you in shape more quickly.



296

If you are training for an endurance event, consume lots of carbohydrates. Endurance training for long stretches of time depletes the stores of fuel (glycogen) that you have in your muscle cells. Consuming lots of carbohydrates, particularly before, during and after your workout, will help to restore your fuel cells. This will allow you to exercise for longer without tiring. Go for slow release carbs like oats and sweet potatoes before your session, and quick release carbs like energy drinks and sweets during and after your session. This kind of eating is not recommended for those of you looking to lose weight, but rather for those of you are looking to maximise your performance in your specific event.

297

If you want to get in great shape, you need to invest in some good quality Tupperware. Preparing and cooking your own food every night is the only way that you can keep track of exactly what you are consuming. You will never have to miss a meal, and will not have to sacrifice the quality of the food that you are eating if you cook your own food each night. After doing this, store your meals in Tupperware and pop them in the fridge. Then in the morning all you have to do is pack them into your bag and you are good to go. Eating out of a box 2 or 3 times a day may take a bit of getting used to, and you might get a few odd looks from curious colleagues, but just ignore them. Eating your own healthy food rather than relying on that which you buy out will work wonders for your waistline and for your general health.



298

Don't be fooled into thinking that shop bought sandwiches are a healthy option when you are out and about. Although you may think that you are making a smart choice when you go for a sandwich, you are in fact probably doing very little for your body. Shop bought sandwiches are often very high in fat and surprisingly high in calories. This is because the bread is usually coated in thick mayonnaise or butter. In addition, they can also be high in salt. This increases your blood pressure and puts a strain on your cardiovascular system. To avoid this, go for salads when you buy food out. Combine that with a source of lean protein – from chicken, turkey or fish – and you have yourself a healthy meal that will help, rather than hinder your weight loss efforts.

299

Do not go for creamy dishes when you eat out at a restaurant. Cream sauces are incredibly high in fat, most of which is saturated. This is bad news if you are looking to lose weight. Fat is very high in calories, and if it comes from bad sources – like cream – it will do very little for your general health. Some fats, from foods like avocados, nuts and olive oil, can in fact help you to lose weight. But other fats will place stress on your cardiovascular system and slow your weight loss right down. To stop this from happening, go for tomato based sauces where you can, or go for dishes that are seasoned simply and are not coated in sauce.

300

For a really punishing cardio workout that you can get done in no time, run with the treadmill turned off. This might sound pretty crazy, but it will burn fat and build muscle in your legs like nothing else. Just stand on a treadmill that is turned off. Push as hard as you can in order to get the belt on the treadmill moving. Once it is moving (which takes a lot of effort in itself) run as fast as you can for 10 seconds. If done properly it will feel like you are running uphill through treacle. Rest for 1 minute, and then repeat the process 5-10 times. By the end of your session your legs should be burning and you should be completely out of breath.



301

Go off road for a great cardio session. Cycling or running outside is fun, and can be a welcome change from the tedium of the treadmill. But every now and then it is a good idea to push things even further and supercharge your cardio session by taking it off-road. Go mountain biking or try some trail running. Not only will it be really good fun and a complete change from what you are used to, but it will be very challenging too. The variety in terrain and the constantly changing inclines will force you to work hard, which will help you to burn fat. All in all, this kind of training will allow you to get a great workout in and have a great time.



302

Enjoying your weight loss journey is key to your success. Many people do not like exercise, and they feel like it is a real chore. But to tell the truth, if you do not enjoy at least one aspect of your training, you are unlikely to succeed. We can only endure so much misery, and eventually you will give in. To stop this from happening, focus on what you do like about exercise. It might be the way it makes you look, the way that it makes you feel, or the structure that it gives to your life, but whatever it is, focus on it. There will be something about exercise that you enjoy, and you need to remember that when you begin to struggle and lose motivation.



303

Make exercise a part of your daily routine. So many people say that they do not have time to exercise, but we can all find a spare 20-30 minutes each day if we try. If you are serious about getting into shape, you need to make exercise a part of your routine. So just like your weekly night out with friends or monthly haircut, you need to write your workouts into your schedule and keep to them. It will also be difficult at first, but once you get into the rhythm of things you will find that including exercise into your routine is in fact very easy, you just need to plan ahead, as you do with everything else.



304

On pulling exercises that target the back, think about squeezing your shoulder blades together. This will force the back to work through its entire range of motion, which will increase your muscle mass and your strength. It will also force your back to contract forcefully, which will exert pressure through the muscle. So next time that you do cable rows or bent over rows, really squeeze your shoulder blades together at the end of the movement. Pause and hold the squeeze for a second, and then return to the starting point.

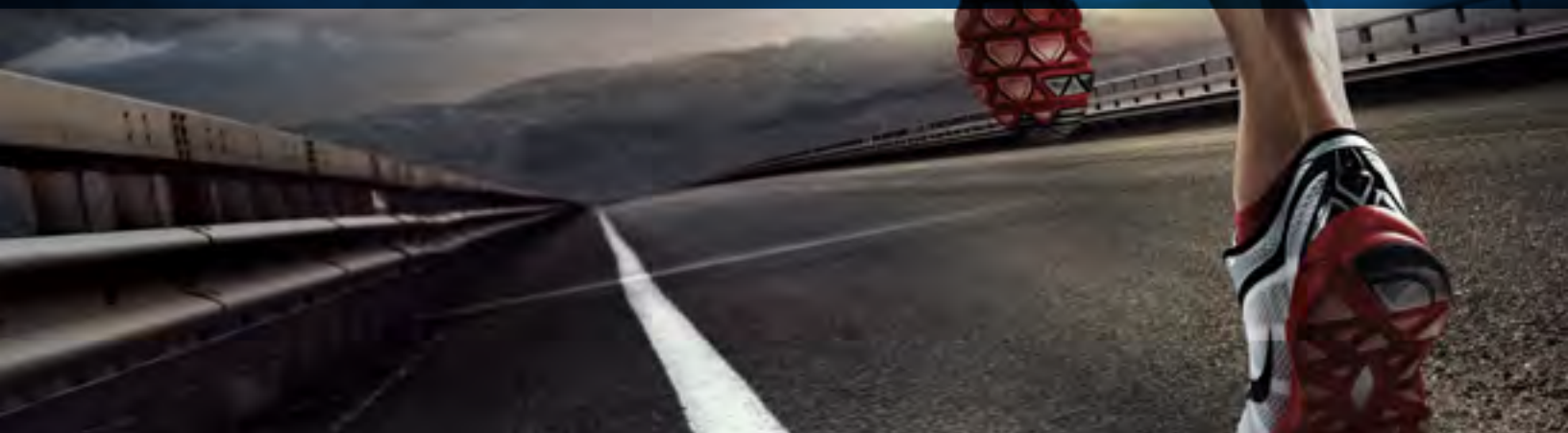
305

If you want to improve your core strength, start doing the plank. This very simple but challenging move works the deep core muscles that are deep under your six-pack. They may not be 'mirror muscles' but they will certainly help to improve your midsection, and in fact your entire body. Having a strong core will increase the amount of weight that you can lift in the gym. This will help you to burn more fat and build more muscle. To do the plank, rest on your elbows and throw your legs out behind you, so that your body is parallel with the floor. Keep your back straight and your bum down and hold it for as long as you can. Rest for 1 minute and then repeat twice more. Do this at the end of your session so that you don't tire your core out before you hit the weights.



306

If you are training for an endurance event, consume lots of carbohydrates. Endurance training for long stretches of time depletes the stores of fuel (glycogen) that you have in your muscle cells. Consuming lots of carbohydrates, particularly before, during and after your workout, will help to restore your fuel cells. This will allow you to exercise for longer without tiring. Go for slow release carbs like oats and sweet potatoes before your session, and quick release carbs like energy drinks and sweets during and after your session. This kind of eating is not recommended for those of you looking to lose weight, but rather for those of you are looking to maximise your performance in your specific event.



307

Do not waste your time by training in the '**fat burning zone**'. Many heart rate monitors and cardio machines feature a '**fat burning zone**', that you are told to stick in if you want to burn fat. This usually sees you working at a fairly low intensity – performing an exercise like light jogging. Now whilst it is true that your body does burn fat more efficiently at a lower intensity, because you are working at such a low intensity, you will fail to burn much fat at all. When you work above the fat burning zone, your body will burn fat less efficiently. Now at first that sounds bad. But if you are working harder then you will burn a greater number of calories. Although you are not in the '**fat burning zone**', many of these calories will be from fat. So working above the fat burning zone will get you the results that you want much quicker than working in the fat burning zone.

308

Choose the right cardio equipment for your session. We all have our favourite pieces of cardio equipment, but if you want to get the most out of your workout, you need to be sensible about the equipment that you choose. For example, cross trainers are great for longer, more moderate sessions. You can get into a good rhythm and stick in it for a long time. But when it comes to performing high intensity intervals, cross trainers are not your best choice. You will not be able to move the handles and footplates fast enough to push yourself really hard and get your heart going. Better choices of equipment for this are probably the rowing machine or the treadmill.



309

Do not neglect press-ups as a tool to build your chest. With so much fancy equipment and a wide choice of dumbbells and barbells, press-ups often get neglected. But they are in fact a very effective move that will help you to build the kind of chest that you are after. To get the most out of them, perform the negative portion of the rep slowly. Lower yourself down towards the ground very slowly and pause with your nose just off the ground. Push up quickly, and then repeat. To place even greater pressure on your chest, try to push your hands together as hard as you can. This will take pressure off your triceps and put it on to your chest, forcing it to grow and get bigger.



310

Rotate your hands during a shoulder press to build more muscle in less time. This was a move created and popularized by Arnold Schwarzenegger, one of the most famous bodybuilders of all time. To perform this move, grab a dumbbell in each hand and hold them by your shoulders, with your palms facing you. Press them up and over your head, rotating your palms to face away from you as you do so. Then as you lower the weights, rotate your hands once more so that your palms are facing towards you. This isolates your shoulder muscles to a greater degree and increases the tension that they are under. This will lead to more muscle and a more impressive pair of shoulders in the long run.



311

Burn fat while you spend time with your family. This works great, especially if you have young kids. If you are trying to lose weight and shape up, get the whole family involved. You can go on long walks, family bike rides, or just go and play in the park together. This will help to keep you active, and your kids will love it. These simple activities, although not strenuous, will help you to burn calories, which will all add up and make a big difference in the long run. Try to spend at least 1 day of every weekend in the great outdoors to have some fun and burn fat while you are at it.

312

Create a play list of your favourite songs and take it to the gym with you. Music has been shown to improve performance and allow you to work harder and for longer in the gym. But often people waste time and kill the intensity of their sessions by messing around with their ipods and changing songs every 30 seconds. To stop this from happening, make your playlist before you get to the gym. Then all you have to do is hit play and you can enjoy your favourite songs without them getting in the way of your workout. Just make sure that your playlist lasts as long as your session – there is nothing worse than running out of music when you are only half way through your workout.



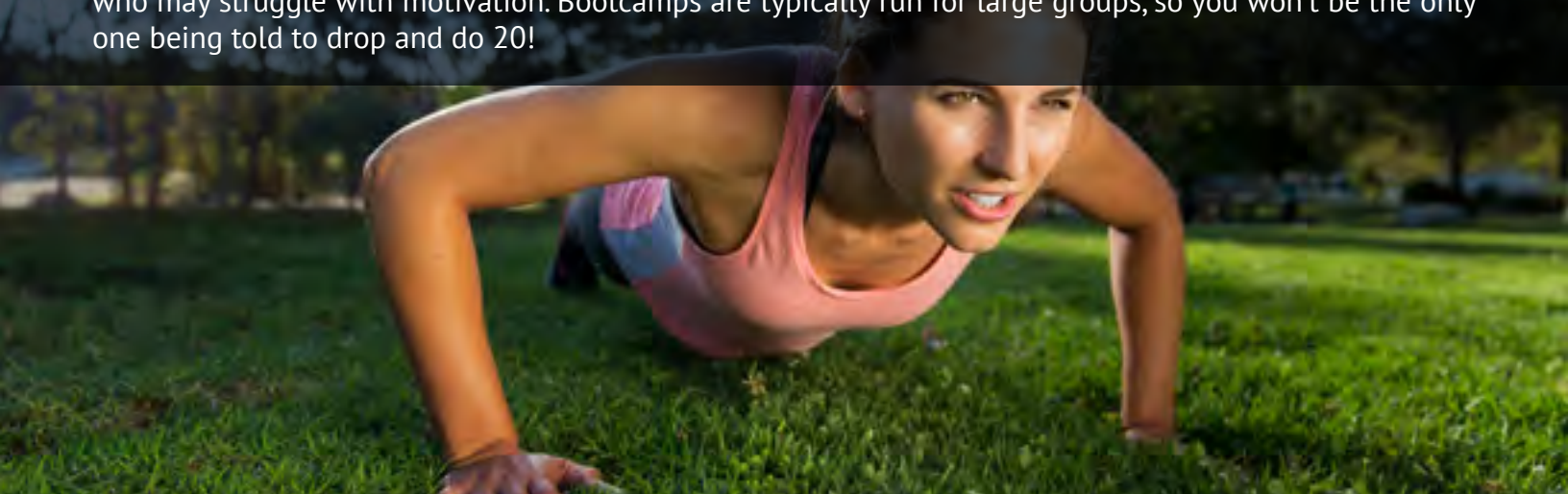
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Vary the attachments that you use on the cable machine when you train your triceps. The tricep pushdown - which involves standing in front of a cable machine and pushing a bar down from around chest height to your legs is one of the best moves for building your triceps. But to make it even better, vary the attachments that you use on the cable machine. Perform some of your sets with a bar, and perform others with a rope. Each variant places a slightly different kind of stress on the triceps, which will cause it to grow quicker. This will see you filling out your shirt sleeves in no time.



314 Do not neglect your triceps. People who are new to training focus so much of their attention on their biceps. These are the muscles that everyone wants, and they tend to forget about everything else. This is a bad mistake if you are looking to increase the overall size of your arms. Your triceps do in fact make up 2 thirds of your arm. So if you neglect them, you are unlikely to ever get the kind of impressive arms that you are after. To stop this from happening, focus equal or a bit more time on your triceps compared to your biceps. This will ensure that your arms grow quicker and that you are sporting a pair of *'guns'* that you can be proud of.

315 Try bootcamp training to burn fat and build muscle. This relatively new but very popular form of exercise is very effective at burning fat. It often involves difficult exercises like tyre runs, monkey bars and press-ups. It is certainly not for the faint-hearted, but if it is results that you are after you should definitely give it a go. This kind of training is also very well suited for those of you who may struggle with motivation. Bootcamps are typically run for large groups, so you won't be the only one being told to drop and do 20!



316 Do not do more than 1 cardio session a day. This may sound obvious, but lots of people who want to lose weight quickly end up doing 2 or even 3 cardio sessions a day. Not only will this not speed up their results, but it will leave them much more susceptible to illness and injury. When you expend that many calories – as you would with that volume of training – your body goes into starvation mode. Rather than burn fat, it holds on to everything that it can because it fears that it is being starved and it adapts to try and protect you. Remember it is always quality, rather than quantity that counts when it comes to exercise. Perform 1 cardio session a day as an absolute maximum, and do not be tempted to do any more. It will not help you to burn fat, and could in fact bring your weight loss to a grinding halt.

317 Tell people about your aim to lose weight. This will make you accountable to more people and make you much more likely to stick to your goals. If you do not tell anyone that you want to lose weight, then you can give up as soon as things get tough. No-one will know what you are trying to achieve, and you will not have to face them and tell them that you have given up if you do. This makes it much easier to back out. Conversely, if you tell your friends and maybe even a few work colleagues about your fitness goals, you will be accountable to people. They will be interested in what you are trying to achieve and it is up to you to deliver the results. This will put pressure on you (in a good way) to get the very best out of yourself



318

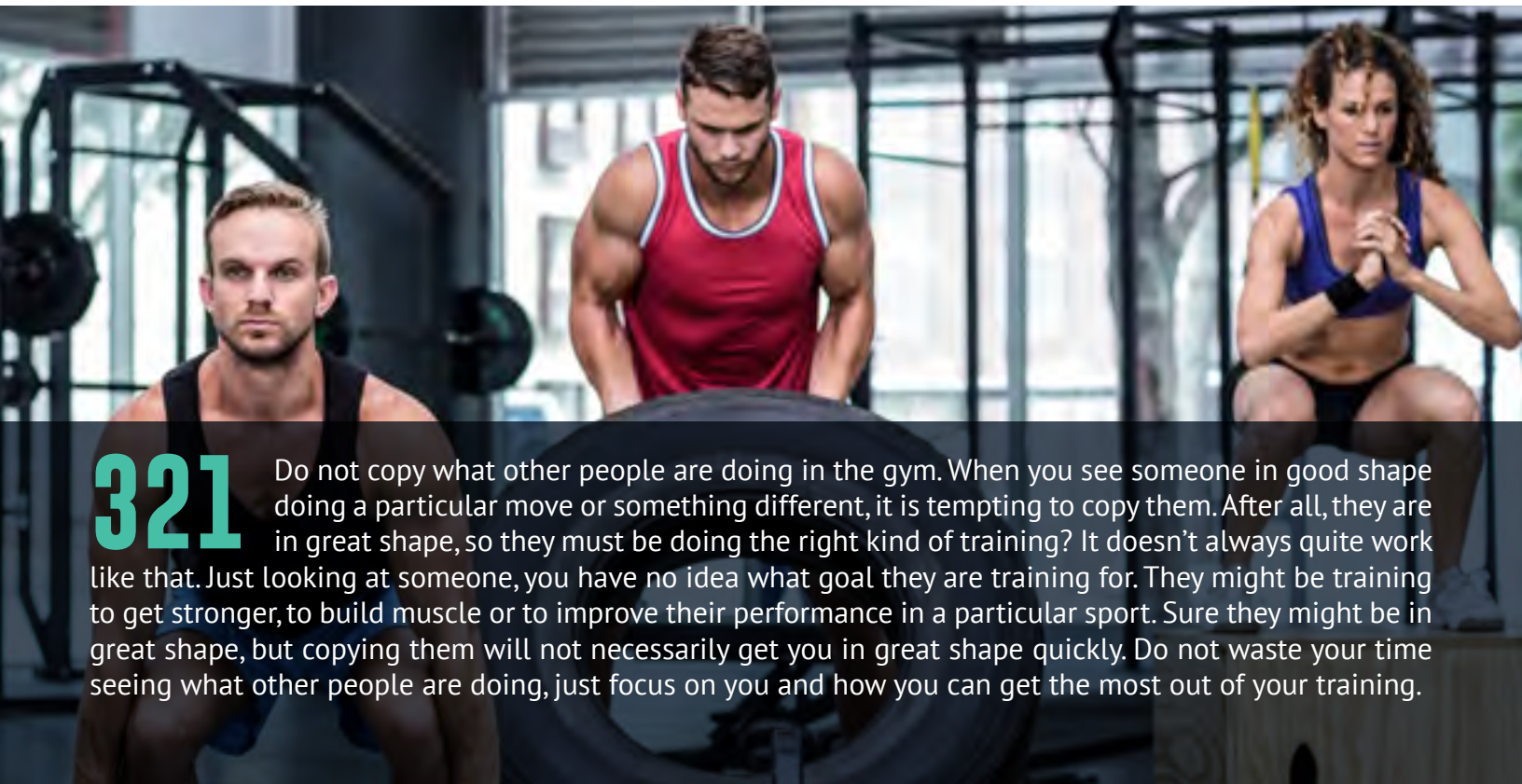
Stop making excuses for yourself. There are probably hundreds of reasons that everyone could give for not eating well or doing any exercise, but when it comes down to it, they are all pretty pathetic. No matter how difficult it is for you to fit exercise into your life, there will always be someone with a greater number of commitments who is doing it. No matter how hard it is for you to eat well, there will be someone who struggles even more than you who is sticking to their diet. Use these kind of people – who have overcome adversity and achieved what they want – to inspire you and drive you on. Stop making excuses for yourself and make today the day that you start.

319

Do not train on an injury. There are a number of common weight lifting injuries, and people can get pain in their elbows, knees, shoulders and lower back. Do not be stubborn with these injuries. As frustrating as it may be, you need to back off and allow your injury to heal. Assess your problem and see which exercises make it worse. Avoid these exercises and try alternative ones that allow you to hit the same body part without causing you any pain. Once you have done this, just be patient. You may not be able to do all of your favourite exercises and moves, but you will be able to work around the problem. Give it a bit of time, and it will not be long until things begin to resolve themselves.

320

Unless you want to gain fat fast, do not mix fats and fast releasing carbohydrates together in the same meal. This is one of the worst combinations when it comes to trying to improve your physique. Fast releasing sugars cause a spike in your insulin levels. When insulin is released, fat storage is promoted by the body. So if you combine fats and fast releasing carbs, you are providing your body with a whole load of fat that will be instantly shuttled in your body to be stored as fat. To stop this from happening, avoid this food combination at all costs.



321

Do not copy what other people are doing in the gym. When you see someone in good shape doing a particular move or something different, it is tempting to copy them. After all, they are in great shape, so they must be doing the right kind of training? It doesn't always quite work like that. Just looking at someone, you have no idea what goal they are training for. They might be training to get stronger, to build muscle or to improve their performance in a particular sport. Sure they might be in great shape, but copying them will not necessarily get you in great shape quickly. Do not waste your time seeing what other people are doing, just focus on you and how you can get the most out of your training.



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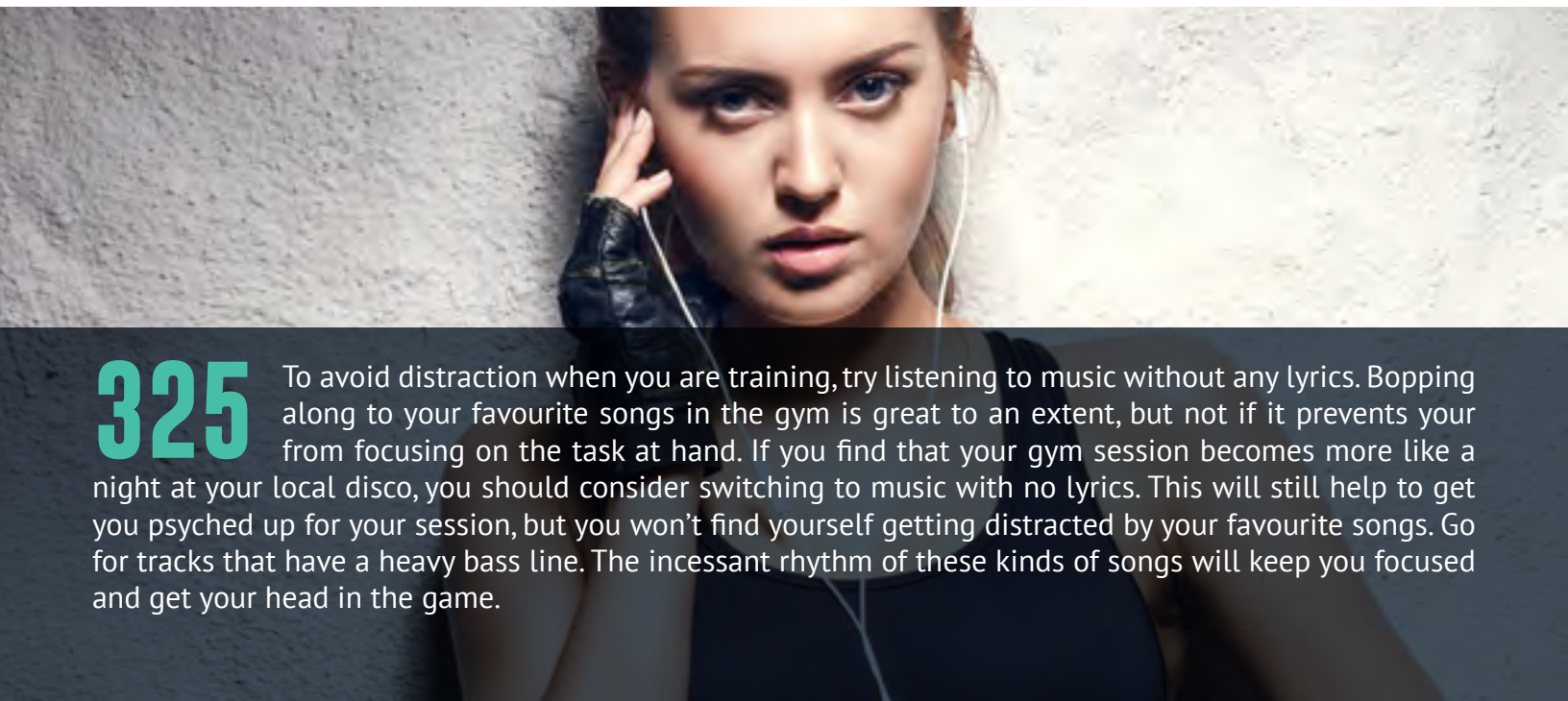
Make your own yogurt to lose weight quicker and improve your health. Yogurt makes a great snack, but a lot of the yogurts that you buy in supermarkets are full of sugar and a whole load of additives and preservative. These can cause inflammation and prevent you from losing weight. To prevent this, make your own yogurt. Buy plain Greek yogurt and put it in the fridge. Then gather a bowl of your favourite fruit and blend it until it is really smooth. Add the blended fruit to the yogurt and stir until they are well combined. As easy as that, you have made your own delicious fruit yogurt without and added sugar or ingredients. Keep it in the fridge and enjoy it as a snack during the day or as a treat after your meal at night.

323

Avoid low fat products if you want to lose weight. This may sound counter-intuitive, as fat is the very thing that you are trying to lose, but low fat products are always too good to be true. Although they are low in fat, the fat that has been removed is often replaced with sugar and salt. This causes a spike in your insulin, which then promotes fat gain. The high sugar content of these products also makes you much more likely to suffer from energy spikes and crashes. To prevent this, avoid products that are advertised as low fat. They tend never to be much lower in calories than the real thing, and will have more of a detrimental impact on your health. Regardless of whether you want to lose weight or put on muscle, stick to full fat products for the best results.

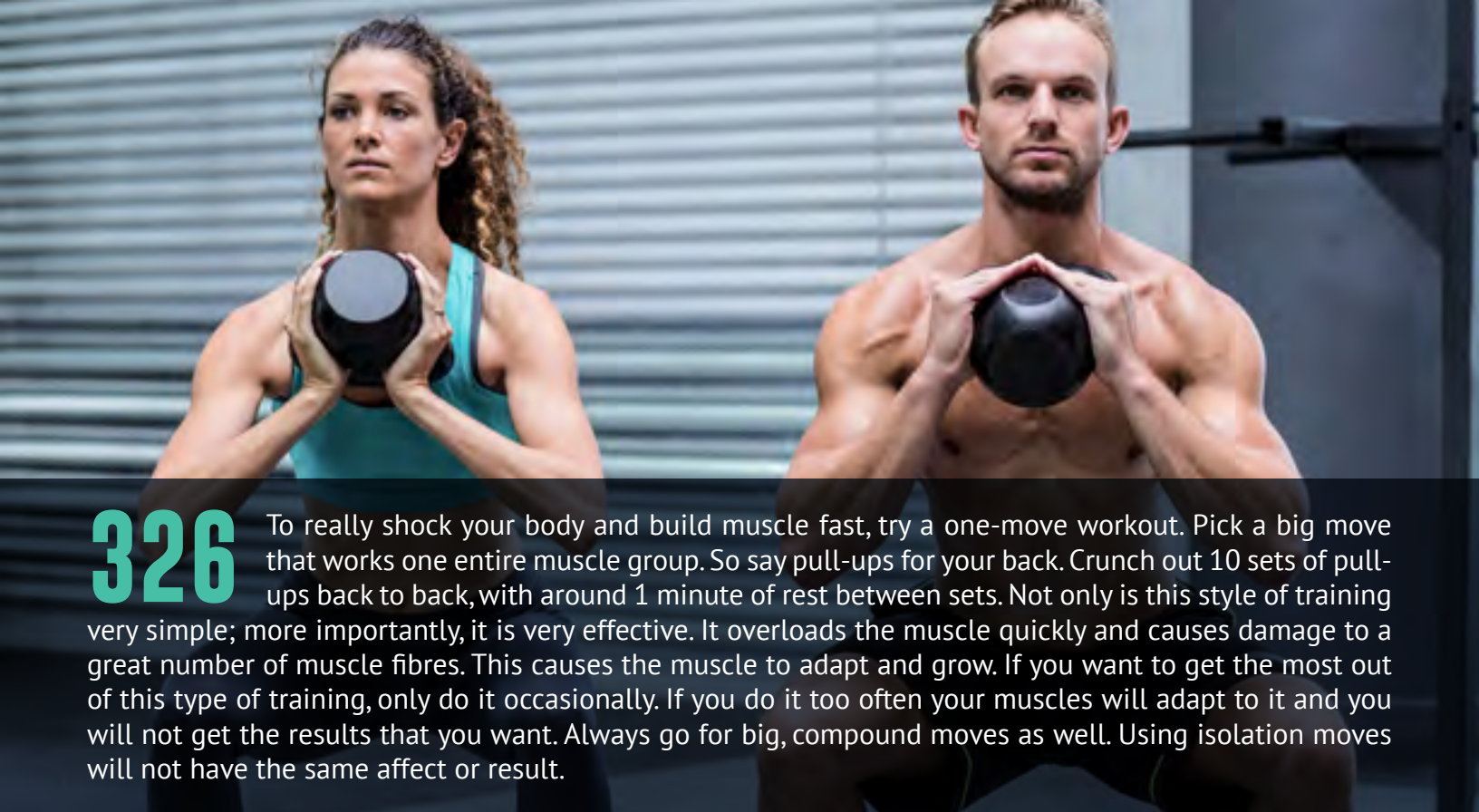
324

Remember that no matter how much you would like to, you cannot look like someone else. I say this because I think a lot of people become fixated on trying to have the same body as 'x' or 'y'. Unfortunately though it just does not work like that. Genetically we are all different. We have different bone structures and different muscles. Therefore trying to look like your favourite celebrity is only going to prove to be a frustrating and fruitless endeavor. Do not focus on what other people look like, focus on creating the best body that you can have, for you. Then who knows, people will be looking at you and wishing that they had your body.



325

To avoid distraction when you are training, try listening to music without any lyrics. Bopping along to your favourite songs in the gym is great to an extent, but not if it prevents your from focusing on the task at hand. If you find that your gym session becomes more like a night at your local disco, you should consider switching to music with no lyrics. This will still help to get you psyched up for your session, but you won't find yourself getting distracted by your favourite songs. Go for tracks that have a heavy bass line. The incessant rhythm of these kinds of songs will keep you focused and get your head in the game.



326

To really shock your body and build muscle fast, try a one-move workout. Pick a big move that works one entire muscle group. So say pull-ups for your back. Crunch out 10 sets of pull-ups back to back, with around 1 minute of rest between sets. Not only is this style of training very simple; more importantly, it is very effective. It overloads the muscle quickly and causes damage to a great number of muscle fibres. This causes the muscle to adapt and grow. If you want to get the most out of this type of training, only do it occasionally. If you do it too often your muscles will adapt to it and you will not get the results that you want. Always go for big, compound moves as well. Using isolation moves will not have the same affect or result.

327

If you want to build a pair of sleek and toned legs, elevate your heels when you squat. For most people, flexibility is an issue when it comes to squatting, Because they are tight in their hamstrings and hip flexors, they are not able to squat below parallel. This means that they cannot fully overload the muscle, which prevents them from getting the results that they are after. Elevating your heels can help to solve this problem. By elevating your heels, you will be able to squat down deeper. This will recruit more muscle fibres in your legs, which will burn more calories and fat. Just put 2 small weight plates behind you (one for each foot). Step onto them so that your heel is elevate but the rest of your foot is touching the ground. Perform your set as normal.



328

Squat below parallel for the best results. If you are really looking to build an impressive pair of athletic or toned legs, you need to squat deeper than parallel. This will force more pressure through the legs, which will damage more muscle fibres. The more muscle fibres are damaged, the better your results, both in terms of muscle building and fat loss. You will not be able to lift as much weight when you go deeper, but this is because your muscles will be working harder. So do not worry if you have to drop the weight a little, as long as you are working hard (which you will be) you will get the results that you want.



329 To build impressive back muscles, perform behind the neck lat pulldowns. This less popular version of the move allows you to increase your range of motion and recruit more muscle fibres. You will also get a better muscular contraction, which will increase the intensity of your session. This will help you to burn more fat and build more muscle. To perform the move properly, make sure that you lean forward. This will help you to get out of the way of the bar without straining your neck. You will then be able to pull the bar down behind you and get a real squeeze in your back, which is a sure sign that you are really working the muscle deep! Mix this in to your routine and combine it with normal lat pulldowns for the best results.

330 Add lunges into your training programme to help build and shape your legs. Although squats are great for working your leg muscles, you should not neglect lunges. These hit the whole of the leg, and depending on how you perform them, they can also work the muscles in your bum really well too. If you want to work the front of your thighs (your quads) then take small strides. If you want to work the back of your thighs and your bum (your hamstrings and your glutes) then take big strides. Either way, keep your chest puffed out and your head facing forward. Also always make sure that you press up through your front leg. This will make the move more difficult and will force more pressure through your legs, causing them to adapt and grow.



331 Try meditating to burn fat and get into better shape. It might sound a little crazy, but spending a few minutes each day meditating could make a big difference to your weight loss efforts. This is because it helps to relieve stress. This is crucial if fat loss is your goal. When you are stressed, your body produces more of the hormone cortisol. This powerful hormone causes your body to stop burning fat and in fact promotes fat storage. Therefore lowering your stress levels also lowers cortisol. This will improve your body's ability to burn fat and speed up your weight loss. You don't need to spend hours each night meditating to get results, just take 10 minutes in the evening and try and empty your mind of thought and worry. Not only will this help you lose weight, but it will clear your mind and improve your general sense of well being too.

332

If you want to build muscular endurance, lift light weights but perform high numbers of repetitions. This is the perfect rep range if you want to increase endurance but do not really want to build muscle. If you are involved in endurance sports like running, rowing or cycling for example, then this kind of training could help to improve your performance. Stick in the rep range of 20-25 reps. On occasion go as high as 50 or even 100 reps. The burn that you will feel in your muscles will be excruciating, and it will really get your heart going, This will also help to improve your cardiovascular fitness at the same time.

333

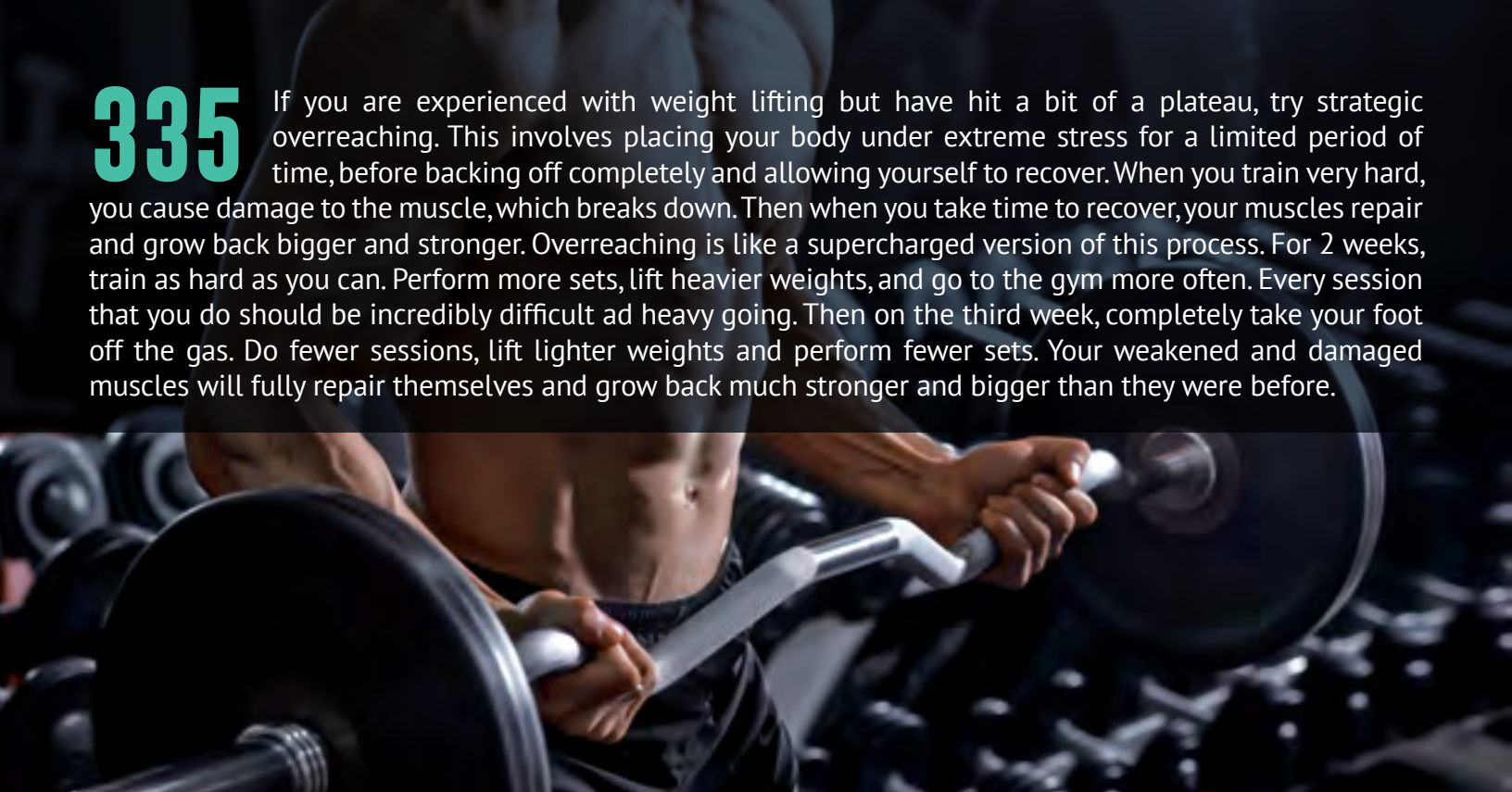
If you want to build an impressive pair of legs, perform more reps. For most body parts, a rep range of 8-12 is perfect if you are trying to build muscle. Now whilst your legs do respond well in this rep range, do not be afraid to go a bit higher. Because you rely on your legs all day just to walk around and stand up, they have developed a great capacity for endurance. This means that a lot of the muscle fibres in your legs are there to help you endure simple day-to-day activities like walking. These are the muscles that respond best to higher rep ranges. Because they are so used to being worked all day, they need more stimulus to grow. Pick a rep range of around 15-20 reps, and on occasion go as high as 20-30 reps for the best results. Combine this with normal rep ranges of around 8-12 to ensure that you work all of the muscles in your legs to build a set of wheels that you can be proud of.



334

If you have experience of weight lifting, try performing pre-exhaust sets to mix things up and shock your muscles. These sets involve working a muscle to failure (when you can not perform another rep) at the very beginning of your session. This causes damage to the muscle fibres and subsequently breaks them down. Then as you continue your session, you will continue to break more muscle fibres down. You will not be able to lift as much weight throughout your session, but your muscles will be in agony. Always pick isolation moves like leg extension and chest flyes for your pre-exhaust moves, and then go on to big compound moves like squats and bench press afterwards. This will ensure that the entire muscle gets worked, which will lead to increased strength and size in the long term. One word of warning though, this style of training is very intense, so should only be done once every few weeks. Any more and your body will quickly adapt to it.



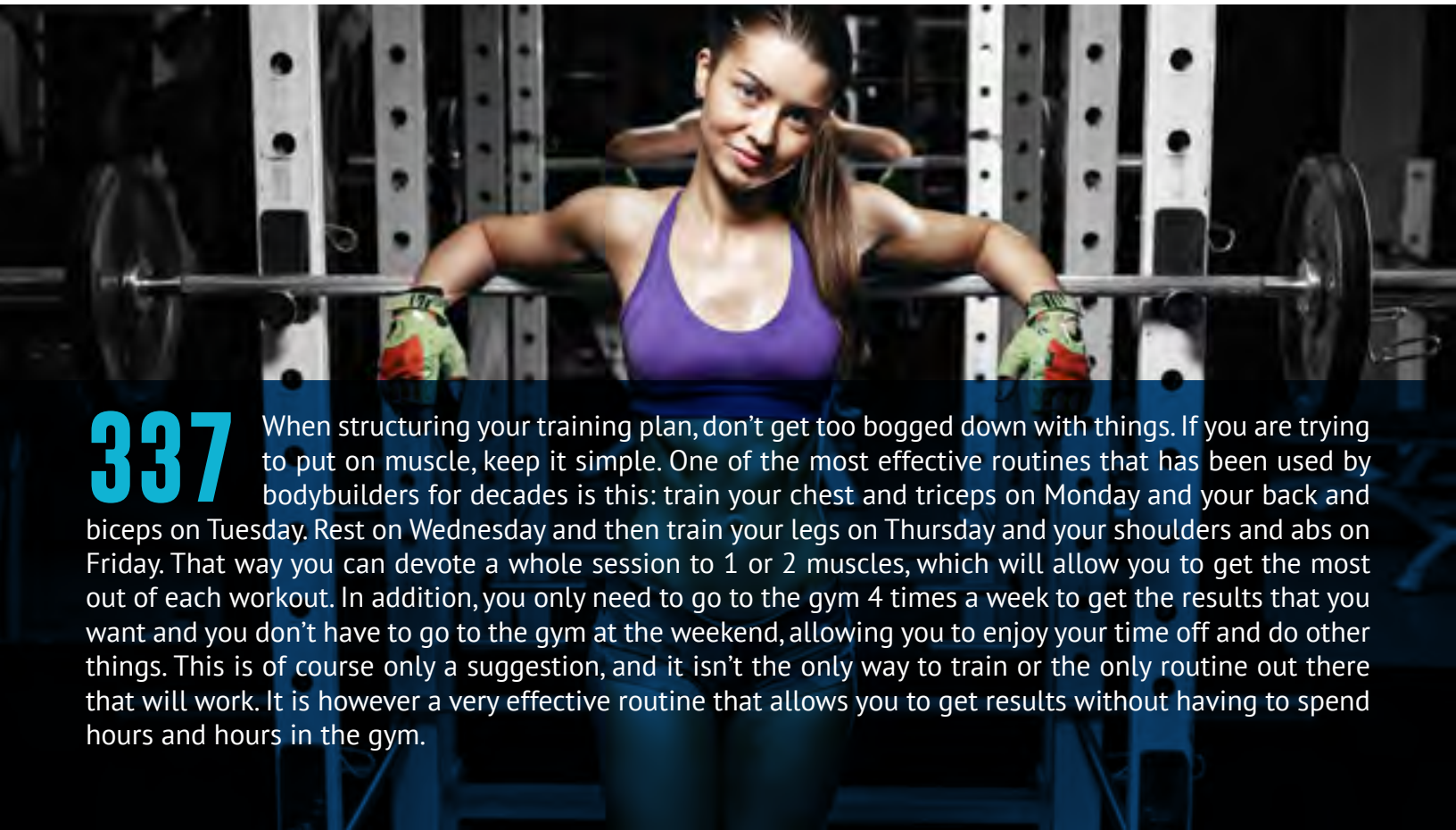
A close-up photograph of a person's torso and arms as they perform a bicep curl with a barbell. The person is wearing a dark tank top, and their abdominal muscles are visible. The barbell has large black weights. The background is dark and out of focus, showing other gym equipment.

335

If you are experienced with weight lifting but have hit a bit of a plateau, try strategic overreaching. This involves placing your body under extreme stress for a limited period of time, before backing off completely and allowing yourself to recover. When you train very hard, you cause damage to the muscle, which breaks down. Then when you take time to recover, your muscles repair and grow back bigger and stronger. Overreaching is like a supercharged version of this process. For 2 weeks, train as hard as you can. Perform more sets, lift heavier weights, and go to the gym more often. Every session that you do should be incredibly difficult and heavy going. Then on the third week, completely take your foot off the gas. Do fewer sessions, lift lighter weights and perform fewer sets. Your weakened and damaged muscles will fully repair themselves and grow back much stronger and bigger than they were before.

336

If you have a lagging body part, train it first thing each week. We all have one body part that does not respond to training as well as everything else. This can be very frustrating, and can in fact lead to muscular imbalances in the long run. To prevent this from happening, train your lagging body part during your first session each week. Do this after a couple of days off, when you are fresh and at your best. You will feel more energised, will be able to lift heavier weights, and will be more focused on your session. This will allow you to overload the muscle to a greater extent, which will cause it to grow quicker. Do this every week, and you will soon find that your lagging body part catches up with the rest of your body.

A photograph of a woman in a purple sports bra and blue leggings performing a lat pulldown exercise. She is wearing green and yellow gloves and is pulling a barbell down towards her chest. She is smiling at the camera. The background shows gym equipment and a blue wall.

337

When structuring your training plan, don't get too bogged down with things. If you are trying to put on muscle, keep it simple. One of the most effective routines that has been used by bodybuilders for decades is this: train your chest and triceps on Monday and your back and biceps on Tuesday. Rest on Wednesday and then train your legs on Thursday and your shoulders and abs on Friday. That way you can devote a whole session to 1 or 2 muscles, which will allow you to get the most out of each workout. In addition, you only need to go to the gym 4 times a week to get the results that you want and you don't have to go to the gym at the weekend, allowing you to enjoy your time off and do other things. This is of course only a suggestion, and it isn't the only way to train or the only routine out there that will work. It is however a very effective routine that allows you to get results without having to spend hours and hours in the gym.

338

If you are looking to burn fat and build muscle, try German Volume Training, or GVT for short. This unique training system, first popularized by weightlifters in Germany is incredibly effective at helping you to burn fat and build muscle. It is very simple in its design, but the workouts are both mentally and physically challenging. GVT involves doing 10 sets of 10 reps for one move per body part. So if you were training legs, you would do 10 sets of squats in a row. To get the most out of it, you need to choose a weight that you could lift for 20 reps. The first few sets will feel easy, but after the third or fourth, when fatigue begins to set in, you will start to struggle. The aim is to make sure that you hit 10 reps for every set. Take 1 minute rest between sets, and do not be tempted to rest for longer than that. Split your training up into 3 days, training back and chest on day 1, legs on day 2 and arms on day 4 (after a rest day on day 3). Pick 2 moves on each day and perform 10 sets for each. Do this kind of training for a few weeks, before taking a break and returning to your normal routine.



339

If you are serious about building an impressive physique, make sure that you work your posterior chain. This comprises all of the muscles on the back of your body. So your back, your bottom, your hamstrings and your calves. If you do not, then you will suffer with a number of different problems. Firstly, your body will look strange. If the muscles on the front of your body are very developed but those on your back are not, you will look odd and out of proportion. Secondly, you will develop postural problems. Neglecting the muscles on the back of your body will pull you forward into a hunch. This again will affect the way that you look, but it will also increase your risk of injury. To prevent this from happening, pay equal attention to the muscles on the back of your body as you do to those on your front. This will greatly improve your physique and reduce the risk of injury.

340

To mix your training up and keep it interesting, try timing your sets rather than aiming to lift a certain number of reps. Muscles grow when they are placed under tension for an extended period of time. The best range for promoting muscle growth is between 40 and 70 seconds. Often if you just lift weights with a rep range in mind, you fail to extend your set for that amount of time. This means that you fail to stimulate the muscle properly, which will have a detrimental affect on your results. To avoid this, try timing your sets. Forget all about reps, and just try and make each set that you do last for at least 40 seconds. Not only will this help to mix your training up a bit, but it will help to properly stimulate your muscles, which will cause them to grow bigger and stronger.





341 To build more muscle and get results quicker, incorporate the rest pause technique into your training. This is a great way of extending your set past failure and really stimulating it, which will cause it to grow back bigger and stronger. When you reach the end of your set and cannot perform any more reps, stop and wait for around 10 to 15 seconds. This gives you just enough time for your muscles to recover slightly and for you to catch your breath back. Then when the 15 seconds is up, try and perform as many reps as you can. Rest for another 10 to 15 seconds, and then go again. This will force you to lift beyond the point of failure. It is this kind of training that really breaks your muscles down and gets the results. Incorporate this into your sessions a couple of times a week for the best results.

342 If in doubt, keep it simple stupid! This might not sound like advice, but in fact it might really help to keep you on track. Everywhere you look there are new supplements, exercises and training programmes being advertised. Each one of these promises amazing results in record-breaking time. Now whilst many of these supplements and training programmes do have their place, you need to make sure that you do not get distracted and lose focus. It is very easy to get enticed in by clever advertising campaigns, but you need to remember that the tried and tested methods are popular for a reason. Cutting edge training programmes and supplements do have their place, but if you are not doing the basics well then you are wasting your time with anything else. Focus on consistently doing the basics right and well, and everything will fall into place with time.



343 To build more muscle and get the results that you are after, incorporate partial reps into your training programme. These are a great way of pushing your muscles past the point of failure and really stimulating them and forcing them to grow. When you reach the end of your set and cannot perform another full rep, start performing partial reps. As the name suggests, this involves lifting the weight through its partial range of motion. So if you were doing bicep curls for example, instead of lifting the bar all the way up to your shoulders, you would just lift it until your arms were parallel with the ground. Perform as many of these as you can, and stop your set when you cannot do any more. This technique works really well for those of you who train on your own, as you do not need a training partner to help you to lift the weight.

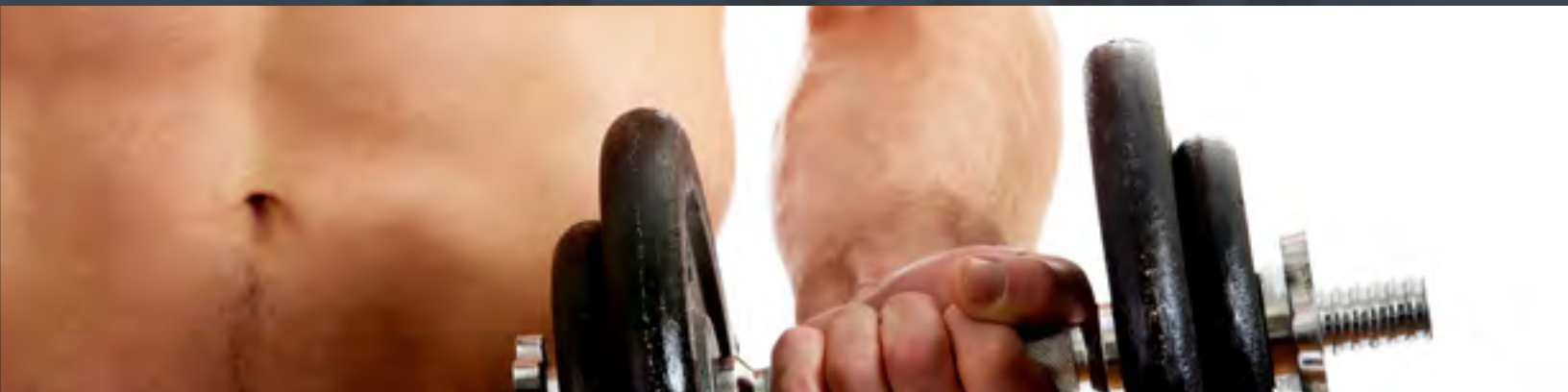
344

Feel the burn to get results. If you are serious about building muscle, start incorporating *'burns'* into your training programme. These are very simple to perform, but are also very hard work. They force your muscles to work beyond failure, causing you to build more muscle in a shorter period of time. To get the most out of them, you need to know exactly when to use them. The best time, is when you have failed to squeeze out that final rep. We have all been there on the bicep curls, and got stuck at the midway point. You have enough energy to lift the weight half way, but cannot get it all the way up. This is when you should use burns. Keep the weight in the highest position that you can, and then just rock it up and down. If done properly, the weight should be moving up and down a couple of inches at a time. Do that until you cannot carry on, and then finish your set.



345

If you train with someone else, incorporate forced reps into your training programme. When you reach the end of your set and cannot perform any more reps on your own, get your training partner to help you. Lift as much of the weight as you can by yourself, and have your training partner help you with the rest. Typically there is usually a 'sticking point' in each lift, and a little nudge from your training partner is often enough to help you push through it and finish the rep. Other times, a little more help may be needed. Either way, include 3 or 4 forced reps on your last set of each exercise. They are incredibly challenging, and will cause an intense burn deep in your muscles. This however is what will stimulate your muscles to grow stronger and bigger. As an added bonus, you will be able to watch your training partner struggle through the pain after you have finished your last agonizing set.



346

If you train by yourself, do one-arm exercises to push yourself beyond failure. When you train with a friend, they can help you during those final few reps, to get the most out of yourself and stimulate the muscle as much as possible. If you train by yourself you unfortunately do not have this option. However, if you perform one-armed exercises, you can become your own training partner. So if you were performing bicep curls for example, you could do them with one arm. When you begin to struggle with the final few reps, you could use your other arm to help you. This will allow you to push yourself beyond failure and get some great results, without having to rely on someone else to help you.



347

Do pullovers to build a big back. The back muscles are notoriously hard to *'feel'*. If I asked you to tense your bicep or your chest, chances are that you could do so with almost no trouble at all. However if I ask you to tense your back, you are likely to struggle. This can be problematic if muscle mass is your goal, as the more that you can *'feel'* a muscle, the more you can force it contract. This will stimulate it more and cause it to grow more quickly. One of the best exercises to help you to *'feel'* your back muscles is the dumbbell pullover. Lie on a bench with a heavy dumbbell in your hand above you. Keeping a slight bend in your elbows, slowly lower the dumbbell until it is stretched out behind you. Squeeze your back and bring the dumbbell back up to the starting point. This will really isolate your back muscles, which will break them down and cause them to grow back bigger and stronger.

348

Opt for an EZ curl bar to reduce the risk of injury. Although barbells and dumbbells are great, if over used they can place strain on your wrists. Over time this can cause pain, which then extends down your forearm and into your elbow. Not only is this painful, but it is likely to have a very negative impact on your training and bring your progress to a grinding halt. To prevent this from happening, use an EZ curl bar when possible. These bars, which can be found in most commercial gyms are curved and angled, rather than being completely straight. This places your wrists into a more natural position when you grab them and reduces the risk of injury.



349

Perform negative reps to get stronger. Provided that you have a competent training partner or *'spotter'* with you, negative reps are a great way of increasing your strength. Choose a weight that is too heavy for you. Go for one that would allow you to perform 2-3 reps at a push. Then rather than lift the weight, only perform the negative portion of the rep. So if you wanted to improve the strength of your chest, you would slowly lower the weight to your chest, and then get your training partner to pick it up. You should not attempt to lift the weight up at all. Then when your training partner has returned the weight to the starting point, slowly lower it again. Repeat this for 5-6 reps. Because you do not lift the weight, you can lift much more. This will overload your chest muscles and greatly increase your strength. It will also allow you to break through any plateaus that you may be experiencing. One word of warning though – make sure that your training partner stays focused at all times, if he does not then you could soon find yourself pinned under the bar.

350

To work all of the muscles in your body and burn fat at the same time, perform deadlifts. This is one of the best moves that you can do to improve your body. Deadlifts work your legs, your entire back, and your core muscles. Because they are so physically demanding they also help to burn high numbers of calories and fat. To get the most out of them, make sure that your form is right. If it is not, you could put yourself at risk of a lower back injury. Always warm up properly and do not try to lift too heavy too soon. For maximum results, always perform them at the beginning of your session. This is when you will be strongest and at your best.

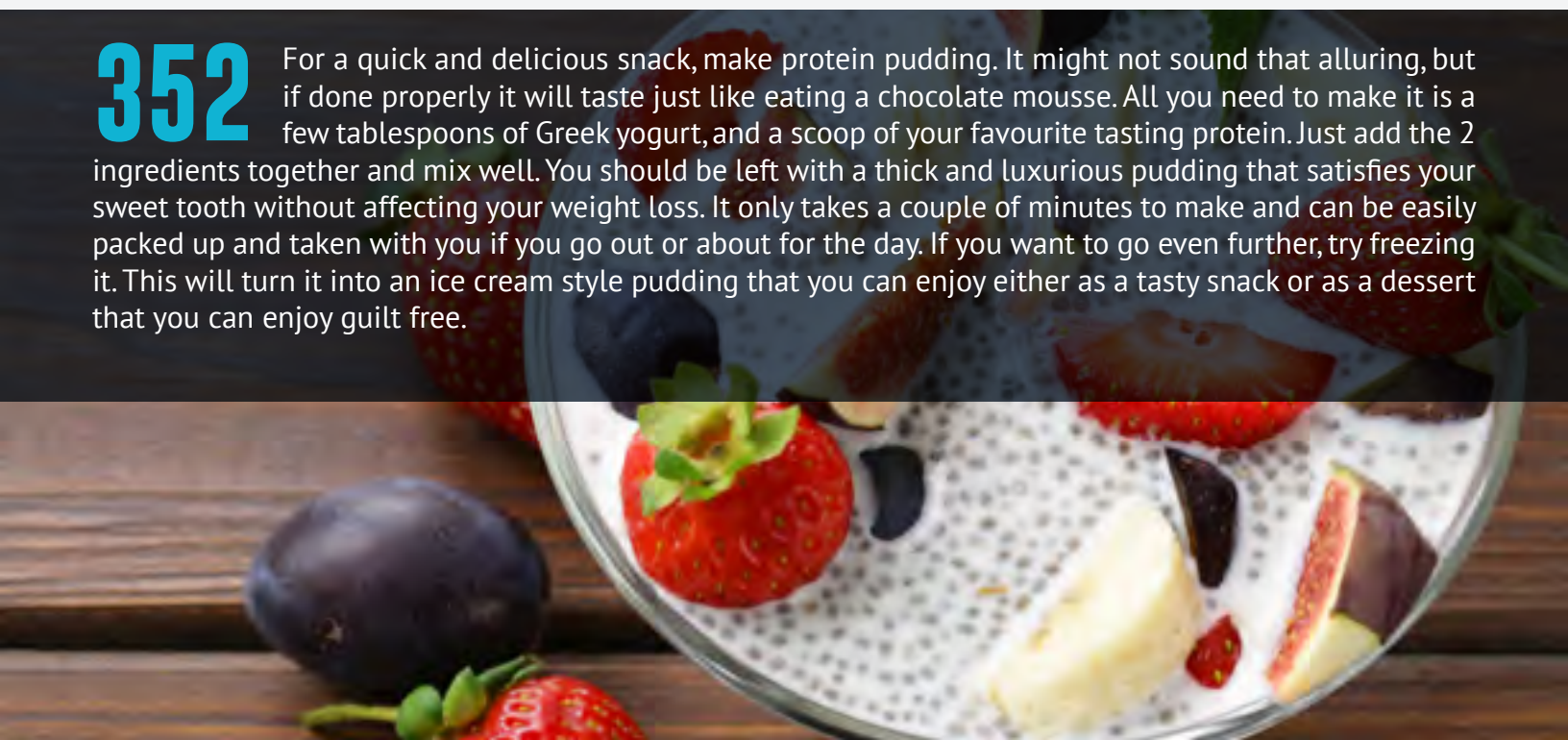


351

Do not underestimate the power of walking when it comes to getting in shape. People always think of running, cycling or swimming as cardio, but walking could make a surprising difference to the way that you look. I would not recommend skipping your gym session to go for a long walk, but making sure that you walk as much as possible is key to helping you to lose weight. Always walk when you can, and try and get out at least once a day just to go for a walk. Not only will this help you to lose weight and burn fat, but it will also improve your general sense of well being. Going for a long walk will allow you to clear your mind and relieve stress, which will have a positive effect both on your training and your other areas of life. To get the best results, take your walking seriously. Really stride out and try to walk as quickly as possible. This will help you to burn fat and get into shape more quickly.

352

For a quick and delicious snack, make protein pudding. It might not sound that alluring, but if done properly it will taste just like eating a chocolate mousse. All you need to make it is a few tablespoons of Greek yogurt, and a scoop of your favourite tasting protein. Just add the 2 ingredients together and mix well. You should be left with a thick and luxurious pudding that satisfies your sweet tooth without affecting your weight loss. It only takes a couple of minutes to make and can be easily packed up and taken with you if you go out or about for the day. If you want to go even further, try freezing it. This will turn it into an ice cream style pudding that you can enjoy either as a tasty snack or as a dessert that you can enjoy guilt free.





353

To get the most out of your time in the gym, stand proud. When you are lifting weights in the gym, you will do so with better form if you stand proud. Push your chest out, your shoulders back, and hold your head high. This will ensure that your posture is good. This will have a positive effect on your training. You will better isolate your muscles, which will stimulate them and cause them to grow. You will also reduce the risk of injury. If you get your posture right when you are lifting, your body will be in a safe position. If you are slumped over, then your lower back is in a compromised position. If you lift heavy then you increase the risk of damaging yourself, which will bring your weight loss to a grinding halt.

354

When you are bench-pressing, think about allowing just your upper back and bottom to touch the bench. Squeeze your shoulders back into the bench and also squeeze your bottom cheeks together. This will allow you to exert more force through your pectoral muscles. The more force that is exerted through a muscle the more it will be stimulated and forced to grow. You will also be stronger, which will allow you to lift heavier weights and overload the muscle to a greater extent. This will lead to increased muscle growth in the long run.



355

Do the phantom chair to build muscular endurance and improve the size of your legs. This is a very simple move but one that will get you the results that you need. It does require any equipment and can be done almost anywhere. Just lean against a wall as if you are sitting on a chair. Keep your thighs parallel to the ground. Hold the position for as long as you can, then rest for a minute and go again. Once you can hold it for more than 1 minute, hold a weight plate in your hand. For the best results, do this move at the very end of your workout. If you do it at the beginning, you will not be able to lift as much on moves like the squat or leg press.



356

Do squat jumps to build muscle and burn fat. This challenging move works great either at the end of a workout, or as a main move in a circuit. To get the most out of this move, squat down very slowly and then explode up as fast as you can. This will engage the muscles in your legs and also work your cardiovascular system. This will help you to burn fat and improve your fitness at the same time. Do not do them at the beginning of your session, but at the end when your legs are already tired. This will cause an intense burn in your legs and your lungs and will overload your leg muscles. If you can perform a very high number of reps, then hold a dumbbell in each hand when you perform the move.



357

For a killer cardio session that you can do anywhere, start skipping. It requires almost no equipment and can be conveniently taken with you wherever you go. This makes it a great choice for those of you who travel with work but don't want that to get in the way of your training. Just pack it into your case and you are good to go. For a great session, do high intensity intervals. Skip as hard as you can for 1 minute, then perform 1 minute at a low intensity. Repeat this as little as 5 times and you will have finished a punishing cardio workout in just 10 minutes. Still not convinced? Just think of all of the famous boxers who are in great shape. Every single one of them will include skipping in their training programme every day.

358

Use exercise bands to overload your muscles for greater gains. Many people look at exercise bands as just something that you use to warm up with, but they can in fact add real intensity to your session. To achieve this, tie them around both ends of a barbell and then hook them a bench or a bar – depending on the move that you are trying to do. So if you were doing a deadlift for example, you could stand on the exercise bands. As you get to the top of the movement the bands will tighten and you will have to work harder to push the weight up. You can do the same for bench press. Put the bands under the bench that you are using, so that when you press up to the top of the movement, the bands start to tighten. In both cases this will place more stress on the muscle, which will increase your strength and your muscle growth.

359

Do Bulgarian split squats to isolate your quads and improve the size of your legs. This is a very challenging move that requires almost no weight, so is a great choice for those of you who might work out at home. To perform it properly, place a bench behind you and put your foot onto it. Place your other leg out in front of you and slowly bend down into your leg is parallel with the floor. Make sure that your chest is pushed out and that you are facing forwards. Once you have completed the set number of reps for long leg, switch legs and repeat with the other. To isolate the quads even further, keep the leg that you are squatting down on close to the bench.



360

Women, do not waste your time with adductor or abductor machines. A lot of women think that these **'tone'** or sculpt your legs. However in reality, they do very little. They do not recruit many muscle fibres, and so have almost no impact on the way that your legs look. To avoid disappointment and improve the efficiency of your sessions, do moves like squats, lunges and leg extensions instead. These moves work your muscles hard. Combined with a good diet and a well-balanced training programme, these moves will help you to develop the kind of legs that you are after.



361

To get the most out of your training, you need to forge the **'mind-muscle connection'**. This might sound a bit wacky at first, but if you master it, your results will go through the roof. This is because the more that you can **'feel'** a muscle, the greater your ability to contract that muscle. It is this contraction (against a weight) that stimulates the muscle and causes it to grow. The mind-muscle connection will also help you to recruit more muscle fibres. This is key to muscle growth and strength, as the more muscle fibres that are damaged, the more will grow back stronger and bigger. To forge the mind-muscle connection, really focus on the muscle that you are trying to work. Picture it working and really try to **'feel'** it working. Try tensing it during your rest periods or squeezing it so that you can feel it working. This will help to improve your **'mind-muscle'** connection and lead to greater gains in strength and size.



362

Don't waste your time with Bosu balls. A lot of people think that Bosu balls and Swiss balls will really improve their core strength and help them to get that six-pack that they are after, but unfortunately it isn't that simple. If you try to stand or sit on one of these stability balls when you are lifting weights, you will not be able to lift as heavy. Lifting heavy weights and performing moves like squats and deadlifts is what helps to build a strong core. If you use a stability ball you will be unable to perform these moves and your results will suffer. Your core may be more stimulated on a Swiss ball compared to a bench, but because you will be lifting so much less weight on all of the moves that you perform, the difference will be negligible.

363

If you want to burn fat and shape up, create your own spinning session. Spinning classes are very popular, and are great for helping people to lose weight and improve their fitness. However, if you are busy with work or other commitments, you might not always be able to make them. At times like these, do not despair; just create your own session. Go for intervals involving periods of very intense work with periods of much more moderate effort. Alternate the difficulty both by pedalling faster and by increasing the resistance on the bike. This will vary the stimulus on your body and muscles, which will burn more fat and improve your fitness more quickly. Keep your session short but intense for the best results.





364 You don't need to go to a swanky health club to get good results. If you are looking to get in shape, all you need is a basic home-gym set up. Buy a barbell and dumbbell set, a bench, and a cable machine. Add to that a squat rack, and you are done. The initial cost might seem high, but it will work out much cheaper in the long run. You will also be much more likely to go to the gym if it is in your house! Do not waste your money on expensive cardio machines – if you are looking to set up a home gym keep to simple forms of cardio like skipping and running.



365 Do rack deadlifts to build strength in your lower back and improve your entire body. This very challenging move specifically targets your lower back. To perform it properly, go to a power rack and set a weight up around knee height or just below. Keeping your back straight and a slight bend in your knees, pull the weight up in an explosive movement. To really work your back hard without going too heavy and increasing the risk of injury, try and perform around 8-12 reps. Always warm up properly and perform this move at the beginning of your session when you are at your strongest. Your lower back is involved in almost every weight lifting move that you do in the gym, and is key to ensuring good posture. So including rack deadlifts into your routine will increase your overall strength and size of your muscles, and speed your results up.