



EXERCISE & FITNESS

Belly **Fit** or Belly **Fat**

Do you ever wonder why you can't see your abdominal muscles even though you do hundreds of crunches AND you have gotten your body fat to a healthy percentage?

Well, the other day I looked at my abdominal muscles and I could not believe that I could not see any muscle definition despite the fact that I have been doing the perfect crunch for years. So I began to wonder what I have been doing wrong, and do you know what it was? I'm doing crunches....that's the problem!

Ok, at this point you are thinking, oh my goodness, my trainer has lost it, she doesn't want me doing crunches any more, what will I do! But I promise you that I came to an epiphany that you will definitely benefit from. In doing some research on previous studies, I learned that the best way to get great abs is to do everything but regular crunches!

Before I tell you my secret, let me remind you that you must eat a good, balanced diet along with a consistent workout program to attain and maintain a healthy body fat percentage. The healthy body fat percentage for adult females is between 18-27% depending on age and weight; for adult males it is between 8-22% depending on age and weight. You will not be able to see muscle definition with an unhealthy body fat percentage, but you will always benefit from gaining strength in your abdomen to support and protect your spine.

So, the way to a fit belly instead of a fat belly is to perform a variety of activities that place a demand on the muscles of your core (abdominals, spinal erectors, hip flexors, & glutes). This makes an abdominal workout open to many, many possibilities such as sprinting, heavy squatting, and muscle training with movements on multiple planes. This may not make sense to you right now but I will be sure to let you know when you are performing a "belly fit" exercise during your workout!

Please feel free to ask your trainer more about this topic.

Get a Cardio Boost with Interval Training

Has your cardio routine been the same for the past 2 months? If you answered yes, your body may be suffering from the principle of adaptation.

The body is an amazing machine, and it is able to adapt to activities performed on a regular basis by programming muscles to remember particular movements, or skills. An example of this phenomenon is walking on the treadmill at the same pace every day for 3 months and then feeling like the activity has gotten easier. "By repeating a particular skill or activity, the body adapts to the stress and the skill becomes easier to perform." Of course it feels great when an activity gets easier, but if you want to reap the benefits of your hard work, you have to change your program approximately every 8 weeks.

In order to avoid these dreaded plateaus in your workouts, (periods when you work hard and feel like you aren't making weight loss progress) you must vary your cardio workout. One way to do this is to add at least 1-2 days (no more than 3) of interval training to your current program.

Interval training involves alternating short, fast bursts of intense activity with slow, easy activity. The great thing about interval training is that it is based on your own level of fitness. Ask your trainer to design your program today.

Below are several examples of interval training:

- Run at a challenging pace for 1.5 minutes and alternate with 1 minute of comfortable walking. Perform this interval program for 20-30 minutes.
- Walk on a steep incline for 1 minute and then drop the incline to a comfortable level for 2 minutes. Perform this interval program for 40-60 minutes.
- Climb the stair climber at a comfortable level for 1 minute and then increase it to a hard level for 1 minute. Perform this interval program for 20 minutes.
- Ride the recumbent bike at a comfortable level for 1 minute and increase to an intense level for 1 minute. Perform this interval program for 40-60 minutes.

Interval training is a great way to cross train because it allows you to increase your endurance without over-training. This type of training will also boost your calorie burn, which can help you lose weight over time.

Please be cautious when beginning a new program. Always talk to your fitness professional before you begin a new training program. Warm-up and listen to your body. Ask your trainer for more ideas to get the most out of your cardio workouts today!

NUTRITION AWARENESS

PROTEIN

Egg Whites
Mahi-Mahi
Chicken//Turkey Breast
Tuna
Salmon
Swordfish
Sushi/Sashimi
Halibut
Wahoo
Tofu
Fat-free Dairy Products

STARCHY CARBS

Potato/Sweet Potato
Corn
Tomato
Peas
Oatmeal
Butternut Squash
Cream of Wheat/Rice
Brown/Jasmine Rice
Couscous
Corn Tortilla
Barley
Quinoa

FIBROUS CARBS

Broccoli
Carrots
Cauliflower
Asparagus
Spinach
Bell Pepper
Eggplant
Cabbage
Onions
String Beans
Cucumber
Kale
Artichoke

Supportive Eating Protein + Starchy Carb + Fibrous Carb = A Supportive Meal



Roasted Brussels Sprouts

If you have wanted to try brussel sprouts but you just don't think you'll appreciate the little green things, you have got to try this simple recipe. Brussel sprouts are unexpectedly flavorful and they go great with any meat dish.

1 1/2 pounds Brussels sprouts
3 tablespoons good olive oil
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Cut off the brown ends of the Brussels sprouts and pull off any yellow outer leaves. Mix them in a bowl with the olive oil, salt and pepper. Pour them on a sheet pan and roast for 35 to 40 minutes, until crisp on the outside and tender on the inside. Shake the pan from time to time to brown the sprouts evenly.

WHITE VS BROWN FOOD

Many of the typical white foods found at your local market do not start out white.

Bleached foods such as white rice and white bread begin as naturally whole sources of nutrition. During the milling/bleaching process these food items are stripped of the inner and outer husk, thus removing important nutrients, and then fortified with synthetic sources of vitamins.

When comparing nutrition labels of brown food and fortified, white food, you will notice that there is not a huge difference in the amount of calories from fat, carbohydrates and protein. What you will find is that the white has more nutrients than the brown. This is because companies add more synthetic nutrients back to the food after the milling/bleaching process is complete to compensate for nutrients lost. And although some synthetic nutrients are added back to the processed foods, the loss of important nutrients is still substantial.

Important vitamins such as Vitamin E, Thiamin, Riboflavin, Vitamin B6, Potassium, Iron, Magnesium, and many more are found in smaller amounts in white versus brown foods. All of these nutrients are essential for cellular health and function, which is important when you live an active lifestyle.

Another very large difference is the insoluble fiber content found in brown foods versus fortified, white foods. Brown foods have on average three times more fiber than white foods because the bran is intact (remember the bran in the inner husk is stripped away from the white foods during the milling process). The fiber content alone is a significant reason to switch to whole grain foods. Fiber is very important for digestive health and it has been associated with decreased risk of heart disease. It also promotes a sense of fullness which can help you with portion control.

If you have tried brown rice or whole grain breads and you just can't stand them, you may need more time to adjust to the natural taste of the food. I suggest adding sauces, spices, or spreads to mask the flavor until your taste buds adjust.

Always read ALL food labels carefully. Attempt to avoid foods that are high in sodium, total fat, and saturated fat. Ask your trainer for nutritional guidance if you are not sure that you are eating a healthy, well balanced diet.

Lifestyle

It's another year, and like all new years, this one holds the possibility of health, wellness, and happiness. If this year's goals sound the same as last years and you still have not attained them, then maybe it's time to find out why.

Your habits and the reasons you have them are based on your attitudes and values. This is called your lifestyle, which is "the way a person lives". Your values (why you do what you do) promote your lifestyle.

Take a look at your daily activities, and why you choose them. Do they promote your goals this year? If they do not, take a moment to jot down a definition of the lifestyle you would like, and then write down some goals that will lead you to that lifestyle.

Here are some examples of goals to attain a more healthful lifestyle:

- I will perform 30-60 minutes of cardiovascular activity 4-6 days a week
- I will weight train 2-4 days a week
- I will control my portions during week day meals
- I will drink 2 large bottles of water Monday-Friday
- I will limit my sweets to 1-2 days a week
- I will spend some time 2 times a week doing something that makes me smile



Leading the lifestyle that you desire is your choice. The daily decisions you make determine what that lifestyle is. Think about what you want this year and build your lifestyle around that.

This year take advantage of the energy that comes with the prospect of a new year, and begin the lifestyle you want. Set your goals today.

