

Well Worth it

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Health and Fitness

The 'Fat-Burning Zone': A Fitness Myth Debunked
An American Council on Exercise Study

There's a lot of misinformation out there about exercise and [nutrition](#); commonly believed myths that are just plain wrong. **Cedric Bryant, chief science officer of the American Council on Exercise**, for the facts about the so-called [fat-burning](#) zone.

Myth: I will lose body fat more efficiently by working out in the fat-burning zone—doing my aerobic workouts at a low, rather than high, intensity.

Explanation: Many aerobic exercise programs and videos feature low-intensity [workouts](#) purporting to maximize fat burning. The argument is that low-intensity aerobic training will allow your body to use more fat as an energy source, thereby accelerating the loss of body fat. While it is true that a higher proportion of calories burned during low-intensity exercise come from fat (about 60 percent as opposed to approximately 35 percent from high-intensity programs), high-intensity exercise still burns more calories from fat in the final analysis.

For example, if you perform 30 minutes of low-intensity aerobic exercise (i.e., at a level of 50 percent of maximal exercise capacity), you'll burn approximately 200 calories. About 120 of those, or 60 percent, come from fat. However, exercising for the same amount of time at a high intensity (i.e., 75 percent of your maximal exercise capacity) will burn approximately 400 calories, and 35 percent of them, or 140 calories, will come from stored fat. So by sticking to the fat-burning zone for their workouts, many individuals are wasting valuable time. Keep in mind that you [lose weight](#) and body fat when you expend more calories than you consume, not because you burn fat (or anything else) when you exercise.

Of course, the less intense form of exercise has its benefits as well. For example, because many overweight people tend to find that lower-intensity exercise is more comfortable, they may, therefore, be willing to engage in such workouts. The point to remember is that low-intensity workouts do, in fact, promote weight and fat loss. You just have to do them for a longer period of time.



Living Living

Don't Skip Breakfast to Cut Calories
Tufts University Research

When you're trying to lose weight, cutting out breakfast may be tempting. You figure you're saving yourself some calories and you get a couple extra minutes to snooze. But research has consistently shown that the people who successfully lose weight are the ones that wake up and eat! Furthermore, people who eat breakfast regularly have better vitamin and mineral status and eat fewer calories from fat. So it seems that breakfast really is the most important meal of the day.

Eat Early, Weigh Less Later

Why does eating breakfast help people lose weight? It defies common sense that eating all those calories in the morning instead of simply skipping them would help.

Many studies, in both adults and children, have shown that breakfast eaters tend to weigh less than breakfast skippers.

Why? One theory suggests that eating a healthy breakfast can reduce hunger throughout the day and help people make better food choices at other meals. While it might seem as though you could save calories by skipping breakfast, this is not an effective strategy. Typically, hunger gets the best of people who skip breakfast, and they eat more at lunch and throughout the day.

Another theory behind the breakfast–weight control link implies that eating breakfast is part of a healthy lifestyle that includes making wise food choices and balancing calories with exercise. For example, consider the successful weight losers followed by the National Weight Control Registry, all of whom have lost at least 30 pounds and kept it off for at least one year. Some 80% of the people in the Registry regularly eat breakfast (and also follow a calorie-controlled, low-fat diet).

It's worth noting that most studies linking breakfast to weight control looked at a healthy breakfast containing protein and/or whole grains—not meals loaded with fat and calories.

Eating breakfast also gives you energy to do more physical activity and be more productive in everything you do, which is also vital to weight control. So make the effort to get up in the morning and fix yourself a healthy meal.

Keeping It Real

The Awesome, but Often Elusive Six-Pack Effect **Cedric X. Bryant: American Council on Exercise**

With spring just around the corner and temperatures rising, Americans are feeling the pressure to trim some extra padding off their midsections.

The message hasn't gotten lost on companies. Infomercials showcasing picture-perfect bodies vow that you too can enter the Promised Land of rock-hard bodies and ripped abs. All it takes is a few minutes of your time, their equipment and a good credit card number. Magazine ads touting the "before" and "after" belly effect of popping diet pills also offer quick fixes as long as you're willing to pay for them.

If only it were that easy to get that awesome ripped, six-pack. So here comes the 'ugly' truth: To sport washboard abs of the likes of Olympic swimmer Dara Torres and rap artist LL Cool J you need to be genetically blessed, eat healthy and exercise—a lot.

I know what you're thinking: If "awesome abs" are out of my league, I may as well just curl up on the couch with a bag of chips and continue watching the miracle work of the cynical medical genius "House" or CSI's forensic scientists on television. Ultimately, this defeatist attitude will only add more pounds to your frame, zap your energy and likely deteriorate your health condition and physical well-being. Studies have shown that physical inactivity and an unhealthy diet are risk factors for chronic illnesses, including diabetes, heart disease and obesity.

The Truth About Better Abs

The good news is that working on a healthier, more physically active lifestyle, doesn't have to be painful. It just takes consistency and a willingness to stick to a plan that's right for you. While not everyone will be able to build the perfect abs, trimming overall body fat can go a long way toward a flatter tummy.

Why Spot Reduction Doesn't Work

A common fallacy that many people cling to is that by working the ab muscles alone, the fat layers will magically disappear.

However, spot reduction never works.

When we gain weight, we gain weight over the entire body. Everybody has areas on their bodies where we store more or less fat. Hence, when we lose weight, we lose it in similar proportions. The idea that you can target specific areas for weight loss, such as the torso or buttocks, simply doesn't work.



Did You Know?



Tufts University Research

Question:

I've read that wild blueberries are good for you, but most of us have access only to cultivated berries. Does this mean that cultivated berries are not as good for you?

Answer :

It's true that USDA testing in 2004 found that wild blueberries had more antioxidant capacity than the same size serving of cultivated blueberries (while also scoring higher than cranberries, strawberries, plums and raspberries). But the nation's leading researcher on the health benefits of blueberries, James A. Joseph, PhD, a research physiologist at Tufts' Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging, says that from a nutritional standpoint, wild and cultivated blueberries can be considered equal.

Tufts researchers and others are studying blueberries' antioxidant benefits, including the promise that they could boost brain functions that weaken with aging. Other research has suggested that blueberries may help improve cholesterol levels, protect against stroke, aid urinary-tract health and even inhibit tumor growth.

If you really want to seek out wild blueberries, note that they can often be found frozen. Whether wild or cultivated, frozen blueberries are an economical way to "go blue" even when fresh berries are out of season; typically frozen when the berries are at their peak, they offer the same nutritional benefits as fresh.

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We hope that our information will increase your desire to learn more about the subject and engage in obtaining correct information.**