

FITNESS MYTHS—101

MYTH 1: You need to work out an hour a day in a gym.

Absolutely not. There are plenty of ways to get fit without stepping into a gym, such as jogging, walking, dancing and lifting weights at home. Even a half-hour walk three or more times a week significantly reduces your risk of heart attack and stroke, lowers blood pressure, relieves stress and boosts your energy and immune system.

MYTH 2: The best time to exercise is in the morning.

In reality, the best time to exercise is for you to decide. A morning routine will get you energized for the rest of the day. In the afternoon you're more flexible, your reaction time is quicker and strength is at its peak. However, an intense workout before going to bed can interfere with sleep.

MYTH 3: Exercising the same body part every day is the fastest way to strengthen it.

This is the fastest way to cause an injury. Your muscles need at least 48 hours to recover after a weight-training session.

MYTH 4: If I'm not sore the next day, I didn't work out hard enough.

Soreness is normal for only the first few days of a new workout routine. If you feel sore beyond that, you've overextended yourself.

MYTH 5: Sweating gets you in shape.

It's okay to sweat as long as you replace lost fluids by drinking enough water. Sweating doesn't mean you're getting a better workout. In fact, sweat glands use energy to cool the body down, and this means you'll have a little *less* energy to devote to your workout.

MYTH 6: Abdominal exercises flatten your stomach.

Sit-ups and other "core" exercises strengthen muscles and improve posture. However, if you have extra fat around your stomach, you won't be able to see those muscles no matter how many sit-ups you do.

Exercise Tip: It's more fun to exercise with a buddy. Grab a friend, family member or pet and get moving!

