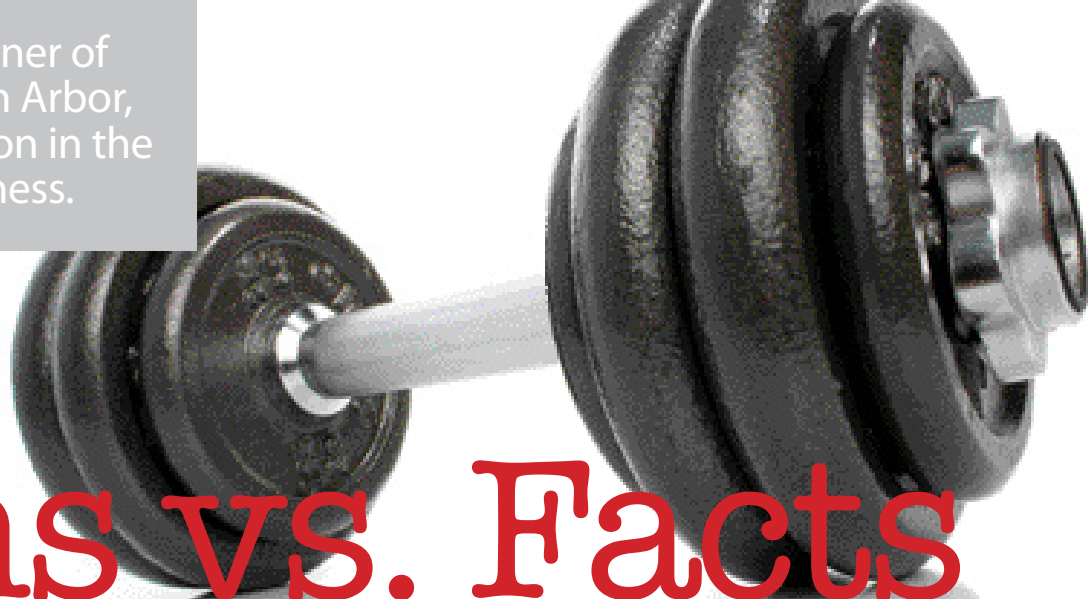


Shaun Hadsall, co-owner of Fitness Together in Ann Arbor, separates fact from fiction in the area of women's fitness.



Strength Training for Women:

Myths vs. Facts

There is so much misleading information in the marketplace when it comes to fitness. Read a newspaper or magazine, or turn on your radio or TV, and you'll find a half-dozen "quick" fixes, "magic" pills or "miracle" diets that contradict one another.

By providing women with the "Fitness Truth" and shattering some fitness myths, Fitness Together will lead you on the right path based on sound science and real-world results so you can make a long-term lifestyle change.

MYTH: Aerobics is better for shaping up than strength training.

FACT: To transform your physique, you must train with weights.

Research shows that after performing a normal target heart rate cardiovascular exercise session your metabolism will be back to baseline or normal within 60 minutes. After performing an intense strength-training workout, it takes up to 12 hours afterwards before your metabolism slows down. In other words, lifting weights can potentially speed up your metabolism 12 to 14 times longer than normal cardiovascular activity!

MYTH: If women lift weights, they'll get "bulky."

FACT: Strength training helps women create lean, toned bodies.

In study after study, muscle has been shown to be twice as metabolically active as fat. Therefore, women should be afraid of not having enough muscle rather than having too much! Men will always gain more muscle than women because they have a higher level of testosterone than women; therefore, women should not worry about becoming too muscular. Also, fat takes up five times the space as muscle. This means you could replace the fat on your legs with the same weight in muscle; your thighs get smaller, without gaining a pound on the scale.

MYTH: Muscles grow while you're working out.

FACT: Exercise is the stimuli for the results to occur while you rest.

Most women think that aerobics classes and 100 crunches a day along with a "diet" will transform their bodies. Well, here's news for you! The absolute best way to lose inches around your waist, hips and thighs while toning the rest of your body is to train with weights *intensely* 3 or 4 times a week for no longer than 45 to 60 minutes. Remember, more is not better. It's about the quality not quantity. Many studies show that anything longer than an hour of intense exercise could actually hinder results and break down your immune system. The objective with weight training is to push the muscle to failure and force it to adapt and rebuild stronger and firmer. Also, this process takes place when you're resting and recuperating. If you don't learn to push yourself to the point where the muscles fail, where you can no longer lift the weight, it won't work. You might as well ride the stationary bike.

MYTH: Once you reach a certain age, you can't get in shape.

FACT: You can improve your health and energy, at any age.

From their early 30s to their mid-60s, the average woman's body fat can bulge from 33 to 44 percent. The older you get the more muscle mass you lose as a woman, and this number nearly doubles after menopause. Since muscle is so much more metabolically active than fat, it only makes sense to fight the natural process through progressive strength training. In fact, research shows training with weights can actually increase your flexibility. You don't have to go through a special conditioning program or have any other experience to step into a training room. Whether you're a beginner or experienced, if your health level permits, you're ready to reap the many rewards of strength training.

The bottom line is this: Any woman who's interested in losing fat, gaining strength, increasing muscle tone and transforming her physique should be weight training.

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