

Strong and Feminine

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The Real Value of Exercise for Women

Muscle plays an extremely important role. It contributes both to the cosmetic appearance and to the fitness of the female anatomy.

Muscle and only muscle produces movement of the body. Other factors contribute to and are necessary for organised movement to occur, but only the skeletal muscles produce the contraction forces necessary to propel the body of any woman or man. To increase the size and strength of the skeletal musculature serves to make human movement more secure and efficient.

Muscle also serves to protect the human body from physical harm. Not only does a stronger muscle enable a woman to move more efficiently, but also joint stability, dependent upon the dynamic muscular force about each joint, is enhanced.

Growing muscles directly and indirectly affect stronger tendons, bones and ligaments. Connective tissues such as these grow and respond very slowly to most rehabilitative modalities. But muscles respond very quickly to high intensity exercise. Exercise therefore remains the most efficient method by which to strengthen the entire skeleton.

But what about appearance? It is well documented that so-called feminine curves are the result of female body fat distribution occurring at and continuing after puberty. These curves are cosmetically appealing as long as they are well supported by the underlying muscle and precautions are taken against over fatness. Sagging fat is not appealing. Fat is feminine and appealing only when it is firm and

properly distributed. This suggests that most women's figure problems are related to the conditions of being under muscled and over fat simultaneously.

Since an over fat condition plagues most of us, an increase in muscle serves another valuable purpose. Skeletal muscle is the foremost consumer of energy in the body. When the quantity and strength of a woman's muscles are increased, more fuel or calories are required to sustain them at work and at rest. In essence, her basal metabolism will increase and this will supplement the negative-calorie balance of a moderate reduction diet.

While it is true that exercise is a very efficient method by which to burn excess calories, exercise should lead to firm, stronger muscles that are significantly more expensive calorically for the body to maintain. Stronger muscles can help a dietary over consumption problem.

Also, muscular strength and endurance are extremely important during pregnancy. Not all, but many of the negative aspects of pregnancy, both cosmetic deterioration and labour difficulties, is the simple result of weak muscles. So exercise for a pregnant woman is probably more important than at any other time in her life.

Weight vs Fatness

Another source of misinformation is centred about the bathroom scales.

Weight is quantitative. It is entirely meaningless for anyone to refer to the amount of fat they have as weight. For instance, if you say you weigh 75 kilos without stating its qualities is meaningless in and of itself. 75 kilos of what? ... Fat? Salt?... Lead?... Muscle?... Cornflakes? Rice bubbles?...What? All of the above?... In what proportions then? ... Again, what weighs 75 kilos? Let's here and now make it perfectly clear that weight signifies nothing – not "little" – NOTHING! A woman's body weight is irrelevant. The words "body weight", "overweight" and "underweight" should be removed from all fitness magazines and medical books. Concern should be placed upon obesity or over-fatness.

"LOSE ONE STONE IN 16 DAYS"

How many times have you read such claims in glamour magazines and advertisements? Such phrases mislead women and men alike into believing that there is a quick and easy method to fat loss when advertisements say "weight loss". This is merely a cheap trick to tell women what they desperately want to hear. The truth is that it is possible to lose only three or four ounces of fat per day and know that it is fat. If any more weight than this amount is lost, then this weight is something other than fat, something a woman would rather retain such as muscle or water from the internal organs.

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Notice that some women follow a sensible fat reduction diet, but without exercise. If a woman does this, she is smaller and lighter after several weeks. She is also weaker, lethargic, more prone to physical injury and shapeless with poor posture. She has reduced herself to literal skin and bones. In order to prevent this from happening a strength-training program must accompany a fat-reduction diet so that a woman hopefully increases, and at least, maintains, her muscle tone.

Genes and Fat Distribution

Women are endowed with a natural layer of subcutaneous fat, a layer that covers the muscles, that hides them and gives them the typical female appearance. This fat is also the basis of her hormones that make her feminine. If a rare woman does not possess this layer of fat, she may appear somewhat masculine, but such a condition is totally genetic and has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with any exercise she does. The average, normal woman can no more appear masculine than men can give birth. Nature, by design or chance, provides that exercise can only enhance her feminine appeal. It will never give her unsightly bulky muscles any more than it can feminise a man. This was decided the day our mum selected our dad - totally beyond our control and due to genetics.

Cellulite – a Hoax

An area of focused attention is often a woman's hips and thighs. The BodyTech strength machines such as the MedX and Magnum machines are effective devices used toward strengthening these problem areas. As the muscles strengthen they become somewhat larger. They also grow very firm, stretching out the skin and ugly pockmarks to give her a shapely, graceful contour.

Puckered and dimpled skin is erroneously termed "Cellulite". The American Medical Association has banned this term. This condition is not due to a special kind of fat,

as anti-Cellulite advertisements would have one believe. It is due to three factors:

1. Over fatness.
2. Loss of muscular strength and firmness.
3. Loss of flexibility of the supporting connective tissue in and about the fat depots.

Becoming and staying as strong as possible and remaining lean combats so-called cellulite.

Changes in Size and Shape*

The realisation that muscle "tone," muscle "strength" and muscle "size" are very closely related may frighten some women. But it is expected that a woman's hip and thigh areas might enlarge slightly during the first few weeks of training. If you have never encountered high-intensity exercise, the involved muscles will respond even more quickly than a man's will at first.

Tailored well-fitted clothes might start to fit differently, especially about the hips and thighs. Before your major fat depots will show a decrease in size, you must diligently adhere to a low-calorie reduction diet for several weeks, perhaps months.

Only a few ounces per day or a little more than a pound of fat or 0.5kg can be lost per week. This loss will be from fat stored throughout the body, not just from a particular area that you focus your exercise and attention. Spot reduction is impossible.

Pinch up a fold of skin from the back of your hand ... from your forehead ... your hips. Notice the comparative thickness between your fingers. If a reduction, say 10%, of the fat throughout the body is made, each of these three areas will reduce proportionally 10%. But which of the three will be noticeably smaller?

The larger fat depot, at the hips, will appear smaller; the other areas will be unnoticed. Nevertheless, 10% of the fat throughout the body will be lost.

The staff at BodyTech promise you will "reduce fat", not "reduce weight". Six weeks later, some women will weigh a few pounds more. Muscle is denser than fat. A pound of fat weighs the same as a pound of muscle, but the muscle requires less space. A very obese woman should certainly lose weight as she reduces fat and adds muscle, but many women will become heavier as they become slimmer, leaner and stronger. Remember, weight is meaningless.