

Fitness Misconceptions, A Fitness Plan & A Big Important Fact to Improve Fertility

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FERTILITY TODAY Magazine (Winter 2007)

The objective of this article is to give you a better understanding of several misconceptions in fitness. This article will help you decipher through the copious amounts of misinformation and give you a solid base for which you can build a fitness program that moves you closer to your goals.

Every day we are deluged with incorrect terms, misinformation and absolutely false statements regarding fitness. Our televisions, radios and magazines are filled with propaganda directly focused on our weaknesses enticing us to believe in what advertisers are selling. They use terms like weight loss, diet, quick fix or miracle pills. Many require a membership and all of them require time and/or money. It does not stop there. Next are several myths and or misunderstood terms.

The First Misconception: Weight

Everyone wants to lose weight. Weight is the enemy and our weight equals our health level. The truth is weight is not the enemy; it is the force with which a body is attracted to earth. It is a measurement of mass, not a measurement for us to dwell on. Your health level while impacted by weight is not the only factor for which a person's health is determined. Losing weight is not what we really want to do, what we really want to do is change our body composition.

The reason why we constantly hear the word "*weight*" is because it is an easy measurement. Anyone can measure weight with a basic scale in their bathroom; hence the reason why everyone is so focused on weight. To move beyond this misunderstood term, let us focus on a new term: "*Body Composition*" the make up of *lean tissue* (Muscle, Bone and Organs) and *fat tissue*. Your body composition can be measured. And, if possible, you can have it measured by a professional trainer at a gym or in the privacy of your own home. In the interim, here are some measurements you should become aware of and you should take these measurements every month as a bench-marker for your progress. You will need a cloth measuring tape and a paper tablet to record your measurements.

Measure these areas of your body each month:

1. Neck
2. Shoulders
3. Chest
4. Upper Arms
5. Waist
6. Hips
7. Thighs

Again, keep these measurements as historical data on your progress.

With a better understanding of the words *weight* and *body composition*, you can begin to focus on what is really important. You want to increase or maintain bone and muscle mass while decrease your excess body fat.

A Big Important Fact

To decrease your body’s excess fat, you will need to begin an exercise/activity program. It should consist of resistance and cardiovascular training for a period of time no less than one-half hour every day. **This is so important, it’s worth repeating, your cardiovascular training should be for time period of no less than one-half hour every day.** For your resistance training, you can use several modalities such as resistance bands/tubing, a weight vest, weight machines or free weights.

A Free and Easy-to-do Fitness Plan

Here is a basic fitness program to get you started. As with any exercise program, please check with your doctor before you begin to make sure it meets with his or her approval.

Using only your body weight, start an activity like walking. Then after a short period of time (5 minutes), insert an exercise like a squat, then continue the activity. Again, after a short period of time insert another new exercise like push-ups then continue the activity. Then after another period of time add an exercise like jumping jacks, then continue the activity.

Exercise	Duration
Walking	5 minutes
Squats 10 Reps x 2 Sets	1 minute
Walking	5 minutes
Push-ups 10 Reps x 2 Sets	1 minute
Walking	5 minutes
Jumping Jacks 20 Reps x 2 Sets	2 Minutes
Walking	11 Minutes

This basic exercise/activity program will get you started and ready to move on to a more advanced program utilizing a weight vest and or resistance bands. I used this exact program with a group of women in Chicago, Illinois called X2 Fit and Fertile Program.

The Fit and Fertile Program was founded by Laurence A. Jacobs, M.D. who specializes in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility. Dr. Jacobs has been practicing in Chicago for 27 years and is a partner at Fertility Centers of Illinois. Dr. Jacobs and I created the Fit and Fertile Program to help overweight and obese infertile women get pregnant. We utilized Dr. Jacobs' expertise and my background as a U.S. Olympic strength and conditioning coach, plus the X2 weight vest which I developed and modeled after the X2 Vest, which is used by Olympians and professional athletes. Those in the Fit and Fertile group have come to learn that simple strength and conditioning exercises like the ones mentioned above are key in controlling weight and handling diet concerns.

The Misunderstood Term: Diet

The word Diet creates instant anxiety; it causes you to think about what you will not be eating. This four letter word is probably one of the most hated English words used today. The truth is the word Diet relates to what you eat and drink, everyone has a diet be it a good one or bad one.

The word Diet was never intended to create such a reaction. So, to alleviate the anxiety, we will use the term "Nutrition Plan." To help you better understand nutritional planning, you need to understand the simple axiom "calories in versus calories out." The more you eat, the more you must exercise to decrease body fat. When developing a nutritional plan you will need to consider your goal and activity level. With a good understanding of the calories you will utilize in your daily activity you can then develop the meal plan.

A good plan will have multiple meals spaced every three to four hours, consisting of proteins and complex carbohydrates. Your meal plan should be well defined with food selections, portions and time between meals. It should begin with how many meals you are planning to eat in a day. Then you will need to consider your time allotment and access to a kitchen. Many of you will not have access to a kitchen so you will need to pack your food, refrigerate and reheat or purchase your food from a restaurant. If you purchase your food it is wise to have a copy of your nutritional plan with you to use as a reference. It will be extremely important that you adhere to your nutritional plan but if you should fall off the plan get right back on it. Perfection is unattainable and you must realize that if you should slip-up you should not dwell on it and beat yourself up about it. Get back on your plan and back to changing your body. I also suggest you seek out a Registered Nutritionist for consultation . . . it will greatly improve your chances for success.

Simply remember, anything starting with "Miracle, Quick or Unbelievable Results," should bring a moment of pause, and then it should be discarded immediately. Most people want immediate results and instant gratification and many unscrupulous companies use these

terms to draw people in. The truth is nothing of any significance can happen overnight, in a week or a month that is healthy.

While you can lose weight quickly by dehydrating your body it is short lived and very dangerous and we are not trying to lose weight but to change our body composition. Most if not all of the quick loss pills or elixirs have a multitude of herbs and compounds with dangerous side effects. Many of them elevate blood pressure, increase heart rate and decrease liver function. The truth is if there was a safe and effective body fat controlling drug a large pharmaceutical company would have it under a patent and only available via a doctor's prescription.

I am not saying that there are not good herbs or natural compounds that can have a positive effect on your body changing plan, because there are. What I am saying is that you need to be aware and informed about what you are putting into your body and that nothing that happens overnight will have lasting positive effects. And, to enact a positive change in your body's composition will take months of work and then a lifetime of continued concentration.

As you finish this article I hope you are more enlightened to the pitfalls, misunderstandings and blatant lies found in fitness. I hope you find the motivation to enact change in your life and begin a program that meets your goals. Remember nothing of any significance happens overnight. Give yourself the time necessary to garner the benefits of your hard work!



Laurence A. Jacobs, M.D. completed medical school and his residency in obstetrics and gynecology at Northwestern University, and then completed a two-year fellowship in reproductive endocrinology and infertility at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN in 1988. Since 1995 he has been the Section Head: Division of Reproductive Endocrinology at Lutheran General Hospital, Park Ridge, IL. Dr. Jacobs authored numerous articles for journals and books, and has a monthly column called "Focus on Fertility" in the *Pioneer Press* newspapers. He has been honored as a 'top doctor' by Castle Connolly in all its editions of *America's Top Doctors* and *Chicago's Top Doctors* (2001-2007). *Ladies' Home Journal* chose him as one of America's 'top infertility doctors' in 2002. *Chicago Magazine* chose him as a 'top infertility doctor' in the Chicago area in 2004 and 2006.

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