

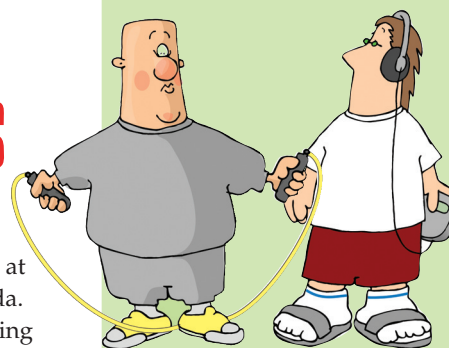
Back to School, Back to Fitness

By Mark Spreizer

It's just about time for the kids to head back to the classroom, and this means at least a little more well-deserved free time for the busy parents of South Florida. Some of you may be considering starting (or re-starting) a fitness routine during this month. Some of you may also need a little guidance during this time, especially with all of the conflicting fitness information in the media. This month's article is geared specifically towards you. It consists of ten simple and easy ways to fine-tune your workouts. These tips are based on the very same program I use with many of my new clients during their first month of personal training; and they can easily double the effectiveness of your workouts. Keep it handy and use it as a guide on your journey towards weight loss, muscle tone, and a healthy lifestyle.

- 1 Hit the Weights.** Muscle is the largest calorie-consumer of the body. The more muscle on the body, the more calories the body is burning. This equals a faster metabolism, more fat loss, and a toned athletic-looking body.
- 2 Do Weights Before Cardio.** Physiologically, the body has more energy for both weights and cardio if weights are done first. More energy equals more intensity, which equals better results.
- 3 Use the Active Rest Principle.** Don't just sit and do nothing between sets. Instead, walk around the gym, do some calisthenics, or workout a different muscle group while resting. This greatly increases the number of calories burned during the workout.
- 4 Listen to Music.** Studies show that subjects listening to their favorite music workout harder and burn more calories than those who don't.
- 5 Work to Failure.** There is a type of failure that is actually good in the gym. Use a heavy enough weight that makes it impossible to perform any extra repetitions past the desired rep number. This ensures the highest intensity for each set.
- 6 Up the Cardio Intensity.** Don't be lulled into a false sense of security by doing cardio only in the low-intensity "fat-burn" zone. Although, the body does burn a higher percentage of fat than sugar at low intensities, the total number of calories expended is still very low, which will limit results. Alternate between "fat-burn" and higher intensity cardio workouts.
- 7 Work Your Arms Last.** Arm strength is essential for almost all upper body (and some lower body) exercises. If too fatigued, they'll give out before the other muscles of the body can be challenged.
- 8 Get on Your Feet** – Perform exercises in a standing position. The body burns more calories in a standing position than seated or locked into a machine. The standing position also trains functional strength and teaches the body to support itself.
- 9 Drink Water.** Water is essential for many biological functions including fat-mobilization. Drink a minimum of 64 ounces per day.
- 10 Doing crunches will not reduce belly fat.** There is no physiological connection between muscle and the body fat directly above them. Spend more time on standing, full-body exercises to burn more calories and work more muscles.

Implementing just a few of these ideas into your routine can really make a difference. Give them a shot and email me at mark@sustainableshape.com. Also, don't forget to submit your questions for next month's Fitness Q&A.



Fitness Q&A

Question – I'm doing 300 crunches a night and I still can't lose my stomach! What am I doing wrong?

Richard Martin (Miami Beach)

Answer – The crunches you're doing are good for training the muscles of the stomach (although, if you're doing 300 of them, it's probably time for a more challenging exercise), but crunches don't reduce body fat. In fact, no strength exercise burns fat directly. You need to focus on the other aspects of your program. Are you doing a minimum of 30 minutes of cardiovascular exercise three times per week? Are you eating 5-6 small meals per day? Also, be sure to strength train your whole body at least three times per week to gain muscle and boost your metabolism. Fat loss requires the synergy of all parts of your diet and exercise program to be effective. Keep in mind too, that it's your genetics and gender that determine where your trouble spots will be, not just the exercises you're doing. So don't get discouraged if you lose from other parts of the body before your stomach shrinks.



Mark Spreizer is an ACE Certified Personal Trainer. He educates, coaches, and empowers clients seeking weight loss, muscle tone, and a healthy lifestyle.

*For further information on his services, including his **new online training programs**, contact him at 305-773-8288 or marks@sustainableshape.com*