

**Top Ten Exercise Myths****1. Myth – the clothes I work out in are important.**

The most important thing you wear while exercising is your footwear. It should be appropriate for the activity you are doing, and should provide the support that you need.

**2. Myth - I can lean on my machines and still get a great workout.**

Leaning on the machine sacrifices the safety and quality of your workout. It can also aid in poor posture or faltered body mechanics, giving you a greater chance of injury. The quality of the workout may decrease when you lean on the machine. Your body is not doing as much work and, therefore; you may not get the benefits you are looking for.

**3. Myth – stretching is a waste of time.**

Flexibility is a major component of fitness. Injuries occur if you are not flexible enough to move throughout a normal range of motion. Those who strength-train often skip stretching as they think it will decrease their strength and muscle size. Stretching after a strength training or cardio workout is a great way to incorporate the flexibility component and it will not affect your exercise routine whether it is strength training or cardiovascular training.

**4. Myth – muscle burn is a good indicator of exercise intensity.**

Muscle burn is NOT a good indicator of intensity. For an aerobic workout the proper intensity is 50% to 85% of your maximum heart rate, this is known as a Target Heart Rate Range. Your heart rate is not related to the presence of muscle “burn”. The use of Target Heart Rate Range or Rating of Perceived Exertion is a good indicator of exercise intensity.

**5. Myth – I should stretch both before and after exercise.**

Stretching before exercise may not be very beneficial. Stretching should be completed after the muscles are warm. A warm-up consisting of dynamic movements will prepare you for activity more properly than doing static stretches. Static stretching should be completed after activity to increase and maintain range of motion and flexibility.

**6. Myth – it’s okay not to do a warm-up if I don’t have the time.**

A warm-up is an essential part of exercise. During exercise your breathing, heart rate, blood pressure, and oxygen consumption all increase. This doesn’t happen immediately once we start exercising. In fact; we are often in oxygen deficit for the first four minutes of a workout while our body is still adjusting to the activity. Your body needs 5-10 minutes to adapt to the exercise you are doing, then you can bump up the intensity a little more.

**7. Myth – I can reduce the size of one area of my body.**

Spot training to decrease your size doesn’t happen. The body loses fat in layers over its entirety. You cannot lose fat over only one area, no matter how many crunches you do.

**8. Myth – I can outrun my genetics.**

You know exercise is great for you and that it can alter body composition and body shape, but there are limits. Not every person will look like a runway model or body-builder, no matter how hard they work out. Your body type is determined by your DNA and not by the amount of time you are on that treadmill.

**9. Myth – the fat burn button burns fat.**

No. Your body utilizes three sources of energy; carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. They are utilized in that order. Fat is the last energy source your body uses and this doesn’t occur until after 90 minutes of exercise. By exercising at a greater intensity (more than the fat burn button has you working at) you can burn more calories in a shorter period of time. You will also benefit your cardiovascular system. The more calories you burn the more fat stores you use.

## 10. Myth – if I exercise, I can eat whatever I want!

Exercise does help to burn off calories. However, caloric balance needs to be addressed. The calories you take in should equal the amount of calories that you use throughout the day. Everyone has a basic metabolic rate, which means that we burn calories naturally to support the functions of our body. The caloric need increases when we do activities, such as walking to class and exercising. To get an estimate of how many calories you should be eating each day and other nutrition information, visit: [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov).

Eating healthy and exercising is the best way to go!

Exercise for the body is beneficial. Remember to take a day off! A day off will allow your body to rest and adapt to the demands that you place on it during exercise. If you can't stomach taking two days off a week, try doing a lower intensity exercise for one day and take the other day completely off.

If you have questions about any nutrition or fitness related information make an appointment at the Sportwell Center.

If you are a registered University of Illinois student and you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: **Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700**

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

Visit the McKinley Health Center Web site at: <http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu>