

Blend it like ...



Payal Mondal

Why drink plain, old boring juices? Here's how you can give them a healthy twist

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After a couple of days stationed at the juice counter, Payal Mondal, a resident guest service associate at JW Marriott Pune, got bored of serving the same three varieties of juices – watermelon, orange and mixed fruit – everyday. One fine day when a guest walked up to her and asked for a glass of juice, instead of asking them which variety they would like, she asked

if she could surprise them with a refreshing mocktail. She did her thing – blended this and that, and voila! The guest loved the drink and Mondal was encouraged to get creative with juices. Now, she's the go-to person at the hotel, when guests are feeling unwell and want to gulp down something that will make them feel better. "When a guest comes and tells me that they want a glass of juice, I can make out whether they are under the weather, if they talk softly. If I see that they are coughing or have a cold, I serve them warm ginger-infused non-alcoholic shots," says she. Her specialities include Ginger shots, Basil shots, Melon shots and PHT (Payal's Herbal Tea). Talking about the beverage she has exclusively named after herself, Mondal says, "It is warm and helps when you have a congestion. It's great as a warm beverage any time of the day. If a guest has tried it once, they are sure to come back for it, every day, during their stay here." Mondal has a solution for every type of guests – from gym goers to diabetics. "My favourite guest, Mr Kumar is a diabetic. So I made

a smoothie with spinach and lots of lime for him. Sometimes, I also add cucumber, celery and whatever is good for diabetics and does not contain sugar," says she. If you are feeling tired, Mondal recommends that you use mint in your drink. One of her specials include orange juice with mint and honey blended together. "For a hangover, I give the guests a 60 ml shot with hot water, salt and lemon. Gym goers should mix orange and carrot juice and drink; it is good for the muscles," she says. Mondal likes to shake things up, and so she does with the plain ol' banana milkshake too. She claims to have created a signature banana milkshake by adding honey, vanilla ice-cream and various nuts to the two main components – banana and milk. "I recently invented an avocado shake, which is very healthy, but very expensive. I made it secretly and served tasters to my colleagues to get feedback. Avocado has special health benefits for men and their hormones," says Mondal, who has been working with the hotel for 11 months now.



SHAPE UP

Go for crosstraining

A proper combo of cardio and resistance/ strength training can knock off those kilos



Swiss Ball Core Training

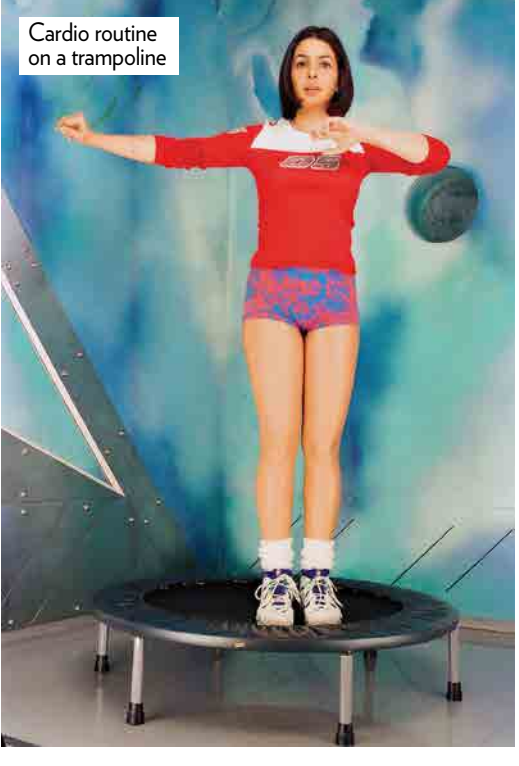
NAWAZ MODI SINGHANIA

So if you're saddled with the extra weight, waiting for your life to begin, and you want to look your slimmest, sexiest best, you've laid your hands upon the right reading material! It's only a proper combo of cardio exercise and resistance/ strength training that's going to knock those kilos and inches off, while toning and firming you up nicely! A sensible low-fat, low-sugar, low starch eating plan must be combined with your workouts to achieve the result you want. If you're new to exercise, start with three hours of cardio, coupled with two-three hours of resistance/strength training a week. Sessions of one hour at a go are ideal. Try and space all your sessions out. If you've been exercising for sometime now, then step up the cardio to five-three hours a week, along with three-four hours of resistance/ strength training.

your walk to ensure that you stay between 160- 180 beats per minute, where fat and inch loss is at its optimum. Common pulse location sites are the radial artery, located in line with the thumb at the wrist, and the carotid artery on the side of the neck just below the jaw-line. If your pulse is over 180 beats per minute, it's important to slow down slightly. If it's under 160 beats per minute, then step up the pace! Intersperse your walk with mild, slow jogging for a few minutes every now and again. When you feel a bit out of breath, come back to walking, and when walking seems too easy, go back to light, slow jogging. A word of caution: Always warm-up before your workout and cool down post it appropriately. Get your trainer to help you on this. Never embark on an exercise programme without your physician's approval. Start now, and in no time you'll enjoy the new and improved you. Life's too short to be anything other than the best that you can be!

(The writer has trained, taught and certified in America as a fitness professional by American Council on Exercise and International Dance Exercise Association. She founded Body Art, the Fitness Centre in 1992. For more information, log onto www.bodyart.in)

Cardio activities could include walking, jogging, skipping, stair-climbing, swimming, dancing, an aerobic class, step workouts, kick-boxing, slide training, trampoline workouts, biking, roller blading and skiing. Resistance or strength training activities could include gym training, calisthenics (floor-work), calanetics (reshaping & lifting muscles), Pilates, Swiss ball training, body sculpt classes, body weight training and certain forms of yoga. The best thing to do is to get professional help; join a fitness centre which offers you cross training programmes (a wide variety of classes and fitness routines). Keep a written record of your weight and inches every month to mark your regular progress. This is a very important motivational tool. If you want to speed up the process further, then add on a brisk and continuous 45 min-1 hour walk, twice or thrice a week. Keep a check on your pulse every 10-15 minutes during



Cardio routine on a trampoline

FITNESS FUNDAS

'A fit mind and body has given me the ability to focus on things that I want'

used to play cricket in my schooling years. But when I got into Std X, all my activities were stopped, which resulted in fat gain. In those days, my idea for fat loss was to run, cycle and sweat it out, as much as possible. I joined a gym after I finished Std XII, but I couldn't continue for a long period because of my hectic schedule. Over the next few years, I continued running for 7-8 km in the morning. I wanted to develop an athletic body, but I knew something was wrong, as my body was not strong or athletic. On the contrary, it had become shapeless. After engineering, I shifted to Pune and began working in the IT sector. My eating habits went for a toss. The food served in the mess and office canteen did not suit me. I knew it was time that I did something seriously for long-term fitness. I joined a gym and started learning about exercises and eating healthy. Currently, I lift weights, four times a week, to stay in shape and do two days of boxing practice which includes various exercises for developing stamina and endurance. I like to keep my body fat percentage below 17. I have maintained 15 per cent body fat for almost a year now. It goes up sometimes, but now, being a coach myself, I bring it down in a short period of time. My definition of fitness has changed over the years. During my school days, I wanted to be fit to play good cricket. In junior college, I wanted to be fit to play basketball. In college, I wanted to be fit to look good. As



Niranjan Deshpande

Niranjan Deshpande, a fat loss coach and an entrepreneur, shares his fitness mantras

of now, I want to be fit to look good, to perform well in my activities and to be healthy internally. Along with exercises, I now focus on eating healthy for a better lifestyle. I myself cook diet food. I used to watch transformation videos on YouTube. One Facebook group, 'Squats' helped me learn various types of strategies to lose fat. I got amazing results with their technology – when I brought myself to 58 kg from 67 kg in 45 days. Later, I got

certified in Sports Nutrition and Kids Nutrition myself. When you shape your body, your mind gets shaped simultaneously. This is exactly what I have experienced. After my transformation, I found that I am more disciplined, focused, motivated, confident and happy about myself. Body transformation has helped me overcome my low self-esteem problem, as I am no more an over-conscious guy who consistently used to feel bad about his

body, appearance, etc. A fit mind and body has given me the ability to focus on things that I want, not on things which I don't want. My advice for people, who believe in being fit is: Don't just say, 'I want to become fit.' Specify what kind of fitness you wish for yourself, be clear about your goal. Otherwise, you tend to fall for anything and everything which comes under generic term 'fitness'. — AS TOLD TO AYUSHI GARG

HEALTHY BITES

Eating chocolate may boost cognitive skills in elderly



love to munch on chocolates? According to a study, it may improve your cognitive skills such as working memory, visual processing speed as well as help counteract different types of mental impairments, particularly in older adults. Chocolate's benefits can be attributed to cocoa bean, which is its main ingredient and a rich source of flavanols – a class of natural compounds that has neuroprotective effects, the study said. The findings demonstrated that older adults who had a daily intake of cocoa flavanols showed improvements in general cognition, attention, processing speed and working memory. "This study suggests the potential of cocoa flavanols to protect cognition in vulnerable populations over time by improving cognitive performance," said Valentina Socci from the University of L'Aquila in Italy. "If you look at the underlying mechanism, the cocoa flavanols have beneficial effects for cardiovascular health and can increase cerebral

blood volume in the dentate gyrus of the hippocampus. This structure is particularly affected by ageing and therefore the potential source of age-related memory decline in humans," Socci added. Further, cocoa also showed promising results for people, especially women, suffering from chronic sleep deprivation or work shifts, who face less accuracy in performing tasks. The effect of cocoa was relatively seen for a long-time, ranging from five days up to three months, the researchers said, in the paper published in the journal Frontiers in Nutrition. "Regular intake of cocoa and chocolate could indeed provide beneficial effects over time," however, "there are potential side effects," said Michele Ferrara from the University of L'Aquila in Italy. "Those are generally linked to the caloric value of chocolate, some inherent chemical compounds of the cocoa plant such as caffeine and theobromine, and a variety of additives we add to chocolate such as sugar or milk," Ferrara added. IANS

CHILD'S ANXIETY MAY BE LINKED TO FOOD ALLERGY

Is your kid suffering from an anxiety disorder? Beware, a food allergy might be the reason, a research has claimed. The findings showed that children with a food allergy had a significantly higher prevalence of childhood anxiety. Food allergy is particularly linked to elevated social anxiety and fear of social rejection and humiliation, the researchers said. "Management of a potentially life-threatening condition may be anxiety provoking, and some children may experience increased social anxiety about being different from other children depending on their age and how food allergy is managed by adults in a particular setting," said lead author Renee Goodwin, from the Columbia University in New York, US. For the study, published in the

Journal of Pediatrics, the team analysed 80 pediatric patients aged 4-12 years, with and without food allergy and their caregivers from predominantly low socioeconomic status. Among the children with a food allergy, 57 per cent reported having symptoms of anxiety compared to 48 per cent of children without a food allergy. Food allergies were not associated with symptoms of childhood depression or with symptoms of anxiety or depression among their caregivers. The researcher next plan to examine these relationships among older adolescents and young adults with food allergy, who are at the peak of risk for depression onset, especially because early anxiety is associated with increased risk for subsequent onset of depression. IANS

