

# Hit or Miss?

Nawaz Modi Singhania, Pilates guru and fitness expert, helps bust stubborn but popular myths that trouble the wanna-be-fit enthusiasts all the time

**C**onsume more protein or less? Workout thrice a week or everyday? Should it be cardio or weight training? Have carbs or avoid them? These questions and more must have entered and clouded your mind. Even the strongest will and the best intentions can get foiled when the road ahead is foggy. To clear some of that haze, read on...

your pulse is one way of doing it. Two common pulse sites are the carotid artery on the neck and the radi-



CHECK THAT: Actress Tulip Joshi working out in a gym



Nawaz Modi Singhania

al artery on the wrist.

Ideally, each individual's target heart range/training zone ought to be worked out separately, taking into consideration factors like their age, fitness levels, goals and health limitations. Without this range and the knowledge of how to calculate and implement it, one may be burning other sources of energy like glycogen, quick energy, etc, rather than mainly stored body fats. So, if fat and inch loss is a goal, you could be wasting a lot of time, effort, and possibly money, by overworking and will only end up being very frustrated and disappointed.

**Myth:** The more I sweat, the more fat I burn.

**Fact:** That's not true. Sweat is only water loss, not fat loss! Burning fat and sweating often go hand in hand and so may be confused as being one and the same thing. However, excessive water loss through sweat can be harmful, as it could lead to dehydration, heat exhaustion and even heat strokes in extreme cases. Excessive water loss hinders the ability to continue any form of cardio exercise because as the body overheats, it is then unable to effectively get rid of this heat build-up. Imagine a car to be the human body. The radiator in a car can be compared to our water stores, while the fuel tank can be related to our fat stores. When the radiator is low on water, the car overheats and performance is impaired. When the radiator is completely out of water, the car will stall on you. This has nothing whatsoever to do with the fuel tank (burning fat, in our case). So, to confuse our fuel tank (fat stores) with our radiator (water stores) would be absurd. To facilitate fat loss, one must drink water (preferably before, during and after exercise) to remain well hydrated, or else you'll just end up exhausted and unable to continue with your exercise programme.

**Myth:** The harder I workout, the more fat I'll burn.

**Fact:** Sorry, but if you've been really pushing yourself during your workouts, you probably aren't burning fat. For fat loss, one must stick to working out cardiovascularly at moderate intensities for approximately 30-40 minutes and not at a very high intensity. In other words, one must remain in one's fat burning zone/target heart range. This can be done in various ways. Keeping a tab on

words, to burn fat and to tone up. When we're working in a cardiovascular way, we're burning fat and inches and are going down on the weighing scales. Great! However, when firming up, muscles become heavier and denser (but more compact) than flab is. So, during this segment, while the inches and fat remain low, weight goes up. So, then why not just skip the muscle tone segment and work on the fat loss bit? That way, one can keep the fat, inches and even weight down, right?

**Right.** However, without some degree of muscle tone, visual appeal is greatly reduced. We've all come across women who've lost loads of weight and inches, but yet seem rather shapeless. They still have the extra flab (but not the extra inches) hanging around where they least want it — typically around the lower belly, the inner and outer thighs, triceps (back of the upper arms), etc. That's why building up on muscle tone is important. It's also vitally important in keeping the skeletal system well supported and strong.

**Myth:** Exercise is responsible for the appearance of varicose veins.

**Fact:** Quite the contrary, actually! Exercise can improve the condition. Cardio workouts will increase cardiac and respiratory suction action. Weight or strength training also results in improved pumping action.

Including stretches for the lower limbs will help the peripheral veins.

Keeping the body fat

down via exercise is important in controlling varicose veins.

**Myth:** Vibrating machines and belts will break down my fat.

**Fact:** Besides jiggle you around and possibly feel soothing and relaxing, vibrating belts and machines don't do anything in terms of fat loss for you. In fact, using them poses a potential risk of injury. This claim that vibrating belts "break up fat" and "melt fat" has no basis in fact! The belts might cause temporary water loss from the area and can compress the tissues, so the waistline looks slimmer for a while. However, as soon as you consume water, the figure returns back to normal.

**Myth:** At the end of my exercise programme, I'll have lost a lot of weight!

**Fact:** It ain't necessarily so! The best thing to do is to combine cardiovascular fitness with muscle toning. In other

**Myth:** Once I stop working out, I'll end up putting on double the weight I began with!

**Fact:** Not true! What will happen is that your body composition will change. In other words, when one is working out the fat versus muscle ratio improves. Stored body fat decreases and muscle tone increases. When one discontinues any form of exercise, fat loss is frozen and while your inches remain the same, muscle tone decreases. That's the way it is with muscle — you either use it, or lose it! In fact, one's weight on the weighing scales will actually drop as muscle tone decreases since muscle is heavier and denser than fat. This is provided your dietary habits remain reasonable. I not, get ready to watch all that hard work go down the drain! Therefore eat sensibly — the gates of paradise are narrow! So while you're on the right track, don't start off with all the wrong ideas!