

# Fight the flab!

Starting today, tone up with fitness professional Nawaz Modi. Her fortnightly column will address various health and fitness issues, new research and readers' queries in **SUNDAY MID-DAY**

## NAWAZ MODI

**E**VEN though a workout routine may be highly effective, it doesn't stay that way. Our bodies adapt quickly to additional demands placed on them, making us immune to the routine. After the initial spate of results where the body performs, it reaches a plateau. Unless one overloads and progresses, on a wider scope than just within the same routine, nothing is gained further.

In order to gain constant results, it is important to continuously challenge the body differently by engaging in a wide variety of activities. This is commonly known as cross training and is the key to long-

term success. The boxer and the other is the pad person. Often in both upper and lower limb work each participant offers resistance to his/her partner.

Naturally, intensity options are always given to accommodate participants of all ages and fitness levels, with modifications implemented wherever necessary.

The whole circuit may be done once or twice. Often, in the second round, the circuits may or may not remain the same. While the exercises change, circuits may be combined with a separate cardio segment to further propagate fat loss.

If the class caters to the general population, a perfect circuit class includes a

## a PERFECT fit

term success.

These activities may include walking, jogging, swimming, cycling, yoga, racket games, rope-skipping and roller-skating.

In a formal class setting, these may include circuit training, step, boxercise, hi-lo fusions, calisthenics, callanetics, slide training, body sculpt, new body format, pilate, weight training and more.

One ideally should be careful to address all major aspects of physical fitness in the programme. These include body composition (lean body mass versus body fat), endurance (both cardiovascular and muscular), flexibility and strength.

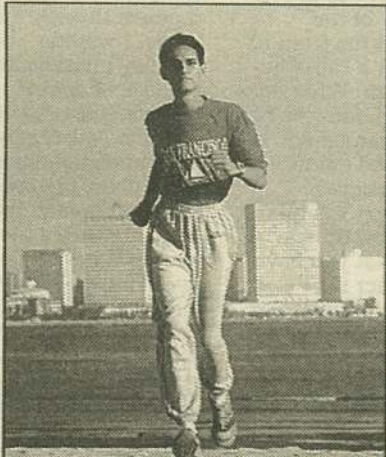
Circuit training can envelop all of these. Both aerobic and anaerobic activities should be included.

Circuit training involves use of various circuit stations placed around a room. These may include steppers, skipping rope, boxing gloves and pads, speed balls, punching bags, free weights, slides, fist grips, X-ertubes, body bars, dynabands, hip, thigh toners, among others. A participant goes from one circuit station to the next in an orderly fashion, taking a go at each stop for one to three minutes. Ideally, this is done with a partner. For instance, in the boxing circuit, one person is

cardiovascular segment, and targets all major muscle groups while toning, reshaping and correcting postural deviations

such as rounded, droopy shoulders, or a forward pelvic tilt.

If the class caters to a specific population with specific requirements, for instance athletes, ballet dancers, cricket team, the mentally challenged, then naturally modifications must be made after the goals pertaining to a certain group



Cross-training activities like jogging are a key to long-term fitness

is redefined.

For instance, an athlete would be interested in building up cardio-respiratory stamina, lower limb strength and endurance, rather than upper body tone, strength and coordination.

Circuit training can be experienced in our own homes as well. With a little bit of imagination and modification, you can create your own equipment and a fabulous workout.

Running up and down one or more floors of your building, and/or wall-to-wall touches can give you a great cardiovascular workout. Using a bathroom stool or a thick book, one can get into calf raises to target calf muscles. This can be done by keeping only the front half of your feet on the stool/book and the rest off it. Keeping legs



Working out: Columnist Nawaz Modi

straight and upper body erect, rising on the ball of the feet or toes is the working phase of the exercise. The stool can also be used for triceps dips and (if it's not too small) back hyperextensions.

Push-ups are great for upper and even mid-body strength and stamina. When starting an exercise programme, modified push-ups may be more appropriate (bent kneed or even standing against a wall) rather than the full classic push-up. One can move on to this at a later stage in fitness.

Abdominal work — crunches and curls — can be done on the floor, with a mat for cushioning. Free squats and lunges can be added for lower limbs. Keeping a pair of light dumbbells or a barbell around (one to three pounds, for beginners) is a great idea. This way you can do a large variety of exercises, from

bicep curls, lateral raises (upright and bent over), tricep extensions, kick backs, overhead lifts to shoulder shrugs, upright rows, the good morning, the dead lift, and many more basic and not-so-basic moves.

A lot of exercises may be done using a chair. For instance, while sitting down on the floor behind the chair with legs fully extended, get your legs in between the chair's legs. From this position, pushing outward will target all lower limb muscles, particularly the outer thighs. In the same position, with your feet on the outer side of the chair's legs, pushing inward will again target all lower limb muscles, but primarily the inner thighs.

These are just some basic ideas, without regimentation. You can invent your own workouts, too.

Always remember to warm

up and cool down. Doing so greatly reduces the risk of injury and helps body's systems to adjust to new demands being imposed on them.

Maintain good body alignment and form throughout to avoid injury and get maximum out of your workout.

Pay great attention to correct breathing patterns. A general thumb rule is to breathe out during the most difficult part of an exercise, and to breathe in during the easier segment. Never hold your breath.

Now if you're still reading this, you're already well on your way!

Nawaz Modi is fitness professional, certified by International Dance Exercise Association and American Council on Exercise in the USA. She founded Body Art in 1991, which is a workout studio and gym in south Mumbai