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perfect fit

focuses on slide training, a fabulous cross-training activity, and here's why.

Slide into shape

Slide training and its benefits

IS YOUR workout routine getting to be a real chore? Boring, monotonous and uninspiring? Yet, the moment you stop, you can feel and see those fat pockets creep back in. It seems to be a lifelong struggle, doesn't it? To make matters worse, are you no longer seeing the results anymore? Stalemate! So now what?

These are the reasons cross training becomes so important. In other words, engage in more than one type of physical activity.

It's important to challenge your body in different ways constantly. The body gets immune to the stresses and strains of your activity, and unless you cross train, you will stop seeing results. After the initial spate of fat loss and other benefits, one doesn't see continued progress. It's equally important to ensure that you also mentally challenge yourself, otherwise exercise can get very mundane, unmotivating and monotonous.

If you work out at a fitness centre, cross training can mean rotating activities such as aerobic classes, boxercise, slide training, new body weight and resistance training, pilates, step classes, circuit training, trampoline workouts, and many more.

If you don't workout at a centre, then you could rotate activities such as walking, playing a racket game such as tennis, squash or badminton, rope jumping, stair climbing, jogging, swimming, and so on. This way you also reduce the risk of injury due to overuse, which is rated as high if you continuously stick to only one type or form of exercise. Today's article

Slide training is lateral movement training. As the very name suggests, the primary movement or motion, which is the core of the routine, is sliding.

Benefits include burning fat/calories and muscle toning. This routine targets the hips and thighs heavily. It is cardiovascular and athletic conditioning. Being a very low-impact activity, and often non-impact, it's very safe, while being very effective. Low impact just means that at least one foot stays on the ground at all times. Non-impact implies that both feet remain on the floor right through.

Can anyone participate?

Yes, anyone can participate. There are exceptions though. Slide training is not recommended for those having an active knee problem or an obesity problem, though standards of what exactly is considered obese vary. If you are 18 kg or more than your recommended weight according to most height-weight charts, for this purpose, consider it as obese.

Is special equipment required?

Yes, and guess what it is! A slide! A slide is a long flat surface with rubber gradients on the ends, which act as

stoppers. As the very name suggests, the basic idea is to slide from one end to the other.

Basics of slide

It's important firstly, to get the slide strap out from under the board. Having the slide strap under the board can not only hamper one's ability to slide across smoothly, but it can also puncture the slide surface.

You have to get your slide socks on over your shoes. Make sure they cover the entire sole of your foot, at least. This makes the surface more conducive to sliding.

Always keep your knees bent. This protects the knee joint, adds greater degree of intensity to your workout, and since this lowers your centre of gravity, one is more stable. This increases the ability to be able to slide across to the other end of the board.

Keep your feet facing forward at all times. Try and slide your way across to the other end in one single motion only.

Initially, you may make it only halfway or three quarters of the way down. Instead of making your way back from wherever you ended up, make sure that you step over to the nearest rubber gradient first.

This is important as this is the only thing that offers you stability, and allows you the push-off you need in order to make your way through. If you avoid doing this, at best you won't make it across. At worst, you'll fall.

Your routine ideally should last for about 40 minutes or so. This way, fat- and inch-loss is maximised. If you feel the need to stop due to exhaustion, slow down instead. You're probably working too hard to be burning stored fat anyway.

Make sure the slide surface is kept clean at all times to keep it smooth. It's equally important to keep the undersurface clean, else the slide will not remain firmly on the floor. This should be done with a wet cloth.

Starting up

Initially when starting up, you will feel a little unsteady on your feet. It helps to keep an eye on your feet in the mirror. This will help you feel more stable, and create a feel and awareness of where exactly the slide is placed even when you aren't looking at it.

Keep a bottle of water or a sipper along with a pair of lightweights near you at all times. This way you can access them easily without having to get off the sliding surface. This gets tough due to your slide socks. It's very important to stay well hydrated in order to regulate body temperature and make sure that the fluids lost through sweat are replaced so you can continue working out aerobically.

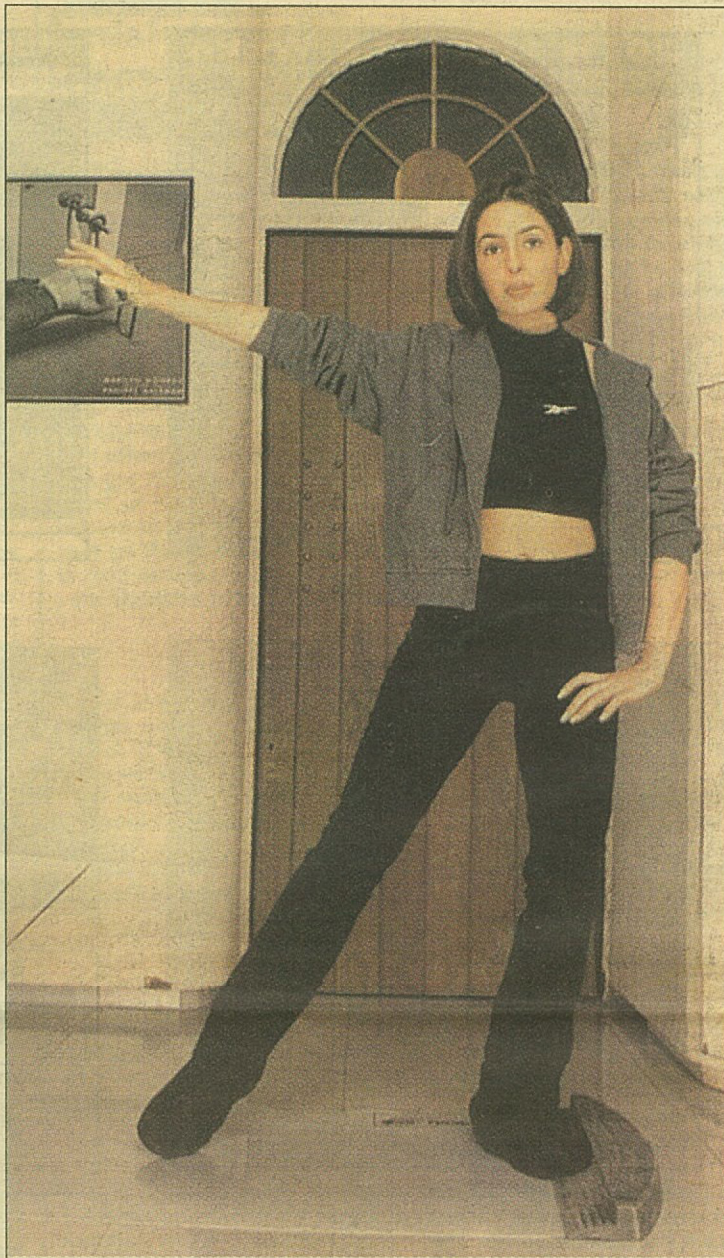
Make sure you warm up and cool down adequately. Your warm-up should last for about 4 to 8 minutes, and should include stretches for the back and lower limbs and whole body moves. This will get your muscles and heart ready for your workout.

Your cool-down should also last for about the same time. It ought to include a gradually decreasing range of motion moves, along with stretches for the whole body.

Make sure all the muscles of the lower limbs are well stretched out after your slide session, or you're bound to be stiff and sore the next day.

Flexibility exercises allow the muscles in question to rid themselves of the waste matter of exercise, which includes excess blood, lactic acid and carbon dioxide. This is what causes pain, typically 24 to 48 hours after exercising.

Don't compromise on footwear. Get a good pair of cross training shoes with a thick sole for adequate



Demonstrated here is a basic slide motion with a lunge

Progression of slide moves

cushioning. Your lower limbs require good support. Air-soled shoes are usually far more supportive and provide better cushioning than others.

Cotton exercise wear (especially during the hotter months of the year) is ideal as it allows the body to breathe easily. So the heat build-up, which is a natural by-product of exercise, can easily be dissipated.

Synthetics, like spandex, lycra and nylon, on the other hand, are avoidable, as they don't allow the body to breathe easily. It's therefore difficult to continue exercising, as the core temperature, which is built up during exercise, cannot be easily dissipated. As a result of this, one may additionally suffer skin irritations and rashes.

Initially, it'll be quite a task just being able to slide from one end to the other. No worries! Allow yourself to be a beginner. Take your time and work at your own pace. The class you're in might be fancy stepping its way through with impressive choreography. Don't feel pressured to keep up with its pace. Just do as much as you're comfortable with, and leave the rest out. Add on bits and parts whenever you feel ready to take on more.

Watch your pulse! Chances are that it will race way above ideal levels. Slide is an intense routine. Especially if you're not accustomed go easy to keep your pulse under check. Generally, you should keep your target heart range between 16 and 18 on a six-second count.

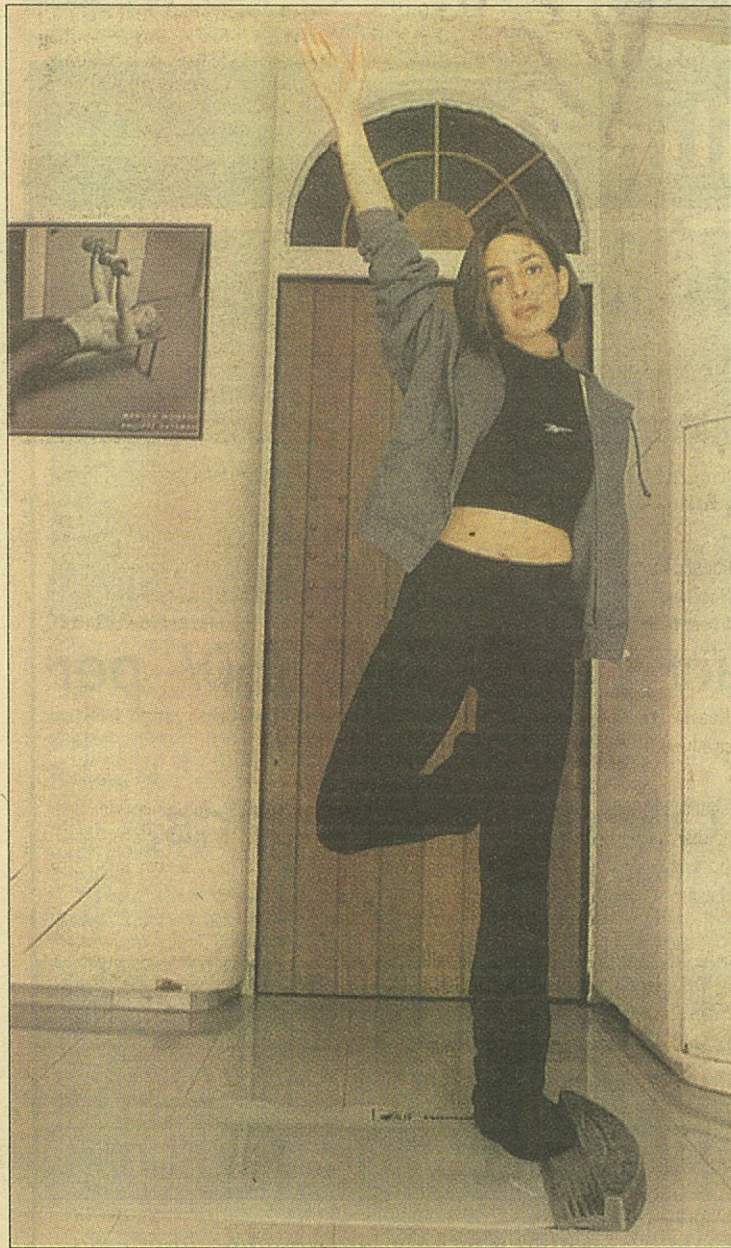
You can add on the lightweights eventually. They'll add to upper body tone.

For those of you who are no novices to this routine, weights will help keep your pulse up. When sliding, make sure your legs don't drag on the slide. This can be stressful on the knees.

Below I have described some basic slide moves, around which choreography can be designed. Basic slide is just the move we have described so far. In other words, what's the most basic thing you can do on a slide? Slide from side to side, right? That's it! Once you've gotten the hang of just that, you can either stand straight up or squat down with your feet together on the ends before making your way back. Then, try sliding while keeping your legs wide apart, even on the ends.

As you progress and start getting more comfortable and confident, instead of standing or squatting on the ends, you could move into a tiny leg lift to the front, side, or a tap back behind you. You might want to add a knee lift or a hamstring curl. Arm work could be anything from lifts overhead, to pectoral presses, bicep curls, tricep back kicks, arm extensions, reach and pulls to the front or the side or anything else you can fathom!

Your class will help you focus on technique, form and body alignment. Some more moves, such as cross country wide and narrow skiing, will be taught to you as well at a later stage. Couple your slide session with some general toning for the upper and the lower body to get the maximum from your session. Don't forget to target the abs as well. You'll tone, strengthen and reshape your muscles. This segment also corrects postural deviations such as rounded droopy shoulders or a forward pelvic tilt. Toning is crucial in the way you end up looking, and is also largely instrumental in injury prevention. It's a fabulous routine. It's great fun and is highly effective. So get cracking and slide into a new body.



Here we have basic slide with a hamstring curl