

Women, Weight Training, & Weight Loss

# DISPELLING 10 MYTHS

Common Misconceptions

By *Kimberly Garrison*

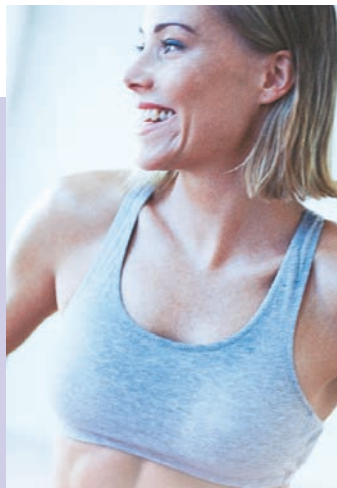


**Myth 1: Strength training causes women to become larger and heavier.** The truth is, strength training helps reduce body fat and increase lean tissue (muscle). Since lean body mass weighs more than fat, these changes

may result in a slight increase in overall weight. However, you'll look sleeker and more defined.

**Myth 2: Women should use different training methods than men.** Women are often encouraged to use lightweights and machines exclusively. Women who train with free weights, manual resistance, explosiveness (high velocity, low force), or exercises that use body-weight as resistance, experience remarkable improvements in their overall fitness and appearance.

**Myth 3: Women should avoid high-intensity or high-load training.** Women are typically encouraged to use limited resistance, such as light dumbbells, in their strength exercises. Women need to train at intensities high enough to cause adaptation in bone, muscle, cartilage, ligaments, and tendons. When exercise intensity provides insufficient stimulus, you'll gain little benefit. To gain maximum results from strength training, women should often perform their exercises at or near the weight/repetition maximum for each exercise.



**Myth 4: Dieting is the best way to lose weight.** Women should avoid dieting at all cost. Women should adopt a comprehensive approach to permanent weight loss that includes daily exercise, proper nutrition, and portion control. In the long run, yo-yo dieting does untold harm to women's health and fitness.

**Myth 5: You Can Spot Reduce.** Contrary to the latest infomercial, there is no such thing as spot reduction. Fat is lost throughout the body in a pattern dependent upon genetics, sex, hormones, and age. Overall body fat must be reduced to lose fat in any particular area.

**Myth 6: You Can turn Fat into Muscle.** You cannot turn fat into muscle or vice versa. You do however, want to increase your muscle mass and decrease your body fat. Muscle is "thermogenic" meaning it burns fat. If you increase your muscle mass, you're more likely to increase your resting metabolic rate. The denser your muscle tissue the more calories you will burn at a state of rest. For every pound of muscle you gain you will burn an additional 35 to 50 calories per day! One pound of fat, on the other hand, burns only one to three calories per day.

**Myth 7: Eating a High Protein Diet Builds Muscle.** Eating a high protein diet does not build muscle mass. High intensity weight training builds muscle.

**Myth 8: Eliminating Carbs is the best way to lose weight.** The only carbohydrates you need to eliminate from your diet are processed and refined products like: donuts, chips, pretzels, instant grain products, white rice, and white flour products. A wholesome diet should be comprised of between 50-55% complex carbohydrates from whole grains, vegetables (especially the dark green leafy variety), and fruit.

**Myth 9: Eliminating Fat is the best way to lose weight.** Essential body fat is a very important source of energy for normal bodily functions and especially vital in maintaining the health of your heart and your immune system. The only fats you need to eliminate are saturated fat (primarily flesh foods) and trans fats found in processed foods with hydrogenated oils. Up to 30% of your calories can come from fat. Good sources of fat are poly and monounsaturated oils. When it comes to fat remember a little dab will do ya. Fat calories are dense and offer 9 calories per gram verses 4 calories per gram for carbohydrates and protein. For example, two level tablespoons of peanut butter equal 200 calories, whereas one tablespoon of olive oil is only 130 calories.

**Myth 10: Skinny Means Fit.** Skinny does not mean fit nor does it mean you are healthy. Some people are genetically lean but that by definition does not mean they are healthy and fit. Despite popular images in fashion and beauty magazines, women come in various sizes and shapes. When it comes to fitness you are only competing against your own best efforts. You can't, nor should you, aspire to look like or be someone else. Personal fitness is not a destination it is a journey in which the goal is to continuously BEST yourself.



Kimberly Garrison is a Certified Personal Trainer, a fitness/health columnist, and a spokes model. Kimberly can be seen regularly on CN8's "Your Morning," 10 NBC's "10 Show," in the Philadelphia area. She also pens a weekly fitness column for the Philadelphia Daily News, Host the "Girlfriends' Locker Room" web site, and she's the host of "Philly Fitness & Health", pod cast. Her articles have appeared Philadelphia Metro Newspaper, Premier Brides, and she has appeared and is quoted often in Philly Style Magazine.