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Contemporary Findings Show that Exercise does NOT Make you Thin!

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Some health club owners have realized that exercise has zero impact on weight loss, but many still address weight loss in their sales presentations. Even if one percent of the clubs in the United States continue to sell exercise as a weight loss solution, health clubs will be seen as "tricksters," that we don't tell the truth and that we'll do anything for sales.

In the 1970s obesity researchers began promoting exercise as critical for weight production. But consider this:

1. Only five percent of people trying to lose weight keep it off, even when they were more likely to exercise.
2. Some research shows that obese people already expend more energy than people with comparable height, weight, sex, and bone structure. In other words, they burn off more calories for the same amount of exercise. .

Contemporary Findings Show that Exercise does NOT Make you Thin!

- According to an article in the August 17 issue of *Time Magazine*, the role of exercise in weight loss has been vastly overstated. Dr. Timothy Church, Chair of metabolism at Louisiana State University divided 464 overweight women who didn't exercise into four groups. Three of the groups worked with a personal trainer for 72, 136, and 194 minutes per week for six months. The fourth control group made no changes in their lifestyle. **Surprisingly, women who exercised with the personal trainer did not lose significantly more weight than the control group of non-exercisers.** Some of the groups actually gained weight up to 10 pounds (most likely from building muscle)! Even so, they did not lose more body fat than the control group.
- A 2001 report from *Obesity Research Journal* stated that a pound of muscle burns approximately six calories a day in a resting body compared with the two calories a pound of fat burns. In other words, after you work out hard enough to convert 10 pounds of fat to muscle, you would be able to eat only an extra 40 calories per day before beginning to gain weight.
- The *International Journal of Obesity* reported that in an 18-month study of 538 students, those same students ate up to 100 calories more per day.
- A 20-oz bottle of standard Gatorade contains 130 calories. If you're hot and thirsty after a hard workout, it's easy to guzzle that bottle, making your intake and caloric expenditure approximately equal.

The Good News about Exercise is Still True

Exercise prevents disease, improves mental health and cognitive ability. Older people who exercise at least once a week are 30% more likely to maintain cognitive function. People with back pain who exercise four days a week have 36% less disability than those who exercise only two or three days a week.

That said, many obesity researches argue that frequent low-level physical activity – the kind that human beings have been doing for thousands of years – may actually be more effective than the occasional bouts of intense exercise from a gym, in part because sitting all day long and then having 30 minutes of exercise produces stress.

To What Extent Should You Rely on Research?

Gina Kolata, a science writer for the New York Times and speaker at an International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association Convention, wrote the article *Ultimate Fitness: The Quest for Truth about Health and Exercise* in 2004. Even as a committed exerciser, Kolata debunks most of our cherished fitness myths that health clubs promulgate about the benefits of exercise and how to do it.

Extremely few pure research studies are done in the area of health with true control groups, so the vast majority of data about health is anecdotal. We also know from the work at Dartmouth Medical School, which focuses on Evidenced-Based Medicine, that the majority of decisions made by physicians is not based on evidence, but rather on past experience, tradition and local norms. Dartmouth tested this when researchers ran random studies with children with infected tonsils, and for whom their tonsils would normally be surgically removed. In the study every other child with infected tonsils was simply treated with antibiotics, and results showed that there were no measurable benefits in performing surgery. Because of this, tonsils are rarely removed today. Many of us are old enough to recall that that infected tonsils were always removed in our childhoods, but it turns out there was no medical evidence for this old surgeon's tale!

What Can You Do About These Issues?

Some health club owners have realized that exercise has zero impact on weight loss, and even take all the scales out of their club. But many still address weight loss in their promotions (look at the photos) and in their sales presentations. Even if one percent of the clubs in the United States continue to sell exercise as a weight loss solution, health clubs will be seen as “tricksters,” that we don't tell the truth, and that we'll do anything for sales. This undermines our integrity as an industry.

So, clean up your act, get the scales out of your health club, and remove “weight loss” out of your promotions and sales scripts. Exercise is exercise, weight loss is weight loss, and smart club owners will keep the two separate. If you have a nutritional program like Take it Off developed by Casey Conrad, or APEX and/or the Body Bugg in a structured program to change eating habits, you can certainly promote weight loss.

The OpporThreat here is that if you take the separation of fitness and weight loss seriously you have a strong rationale for selling such a nutritionally based weight loss program in addition to your fitness program.

Tell Us What you Think

What do you think about this news? Do you agree? Do you have contrary data? Of course we all have anecdotes, but I mean true research that shows exercise drops weight consistently. What have you done in your club to have a real weight loss program that is based on nutrition and attitude changes?

Read More

Time Magazine Article

<http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1914857,00.html>

Ultimate Fitness: The Quest for Truth about Health and Exercise – by Gina Kolata

http://www.amazon.com/Ultimate-Fitness-Quest-Health-Exercise/dp/0312423225/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1251112082&sr=1-3

Take it Off Weight Loss Program

Considering adding weight loss to your club? The Take It Off program was founded by long time club industry consultant, author and speaker, Casey Conrad.

<http://www.takeitoffweightloss.com/content/publish/default.shtml>

Apex Fitness Group

You set the goal, we provide the path.

<http://my.apexfitness.com/>

- **Body Bug – Personal Calorie Management Plan**
<http://www.bodybugg.com/>