



THE FITNESS COLLECTIVE

7 MYTHS OF
FEMALE FAT LOSS

CONTENTS

03

Introduction

07

Cardio Is The Best Form Of
Exercise For Fat Loss

04

Protein

08

Women Should Train
Differently To Men

05

Lifting Heavy Weights
Gives You Bulky Muscles

11

It Worked For Gwyneth, So
It'll Work For Me

06

Core Work Burns
Belly Fat

12

Five Reasons To Join The
Fitness Collective

INTRODUCTION

*It's your body and only you
can say what makes you
feel at your best.*

The fitness industry is big business, and the media is saturated with images of beautiful creatures endorsing the latest diet or nutritional super-food. In practically every magazine you pick up, there's the promise of fifteen-minute fat loss workouts, two-minute routines and adverts for the latest workout trend or craze which is guaranteed to get you in shape in just four weeks.

You've all seen covers with lines like this:

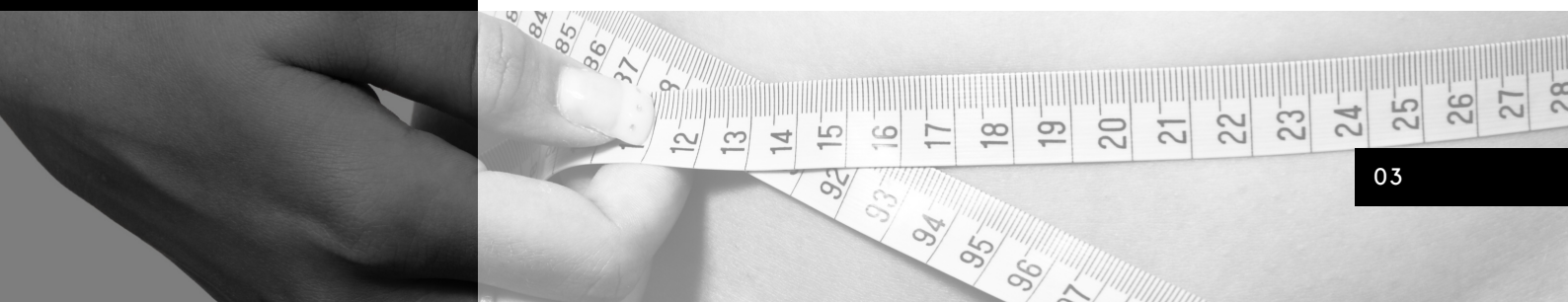
- **Shape your butt with these two moves!**
- **Banish the muffin top in just two minutes a day!**
- **Fourteen days to radiant-looking skin!**

But how much of this stuff will actually hold up for most people and how do we separate what works from what doesn't. In truth, it has probably all worked for someone at one time but much of it is unlikely to work for most people most of the time.

Don't get fooled

We think most of the marketing around women's fitness is BS, and it drives us nuts. The biggest thing you can do is take ownership of your own nutrition and work out what works best for you. You also need to turn your bullshitometer to full and treat everything that you read with a healthy dose of scepticism. Forget what you read; it's your body, and only you can truly decide what makes you feel at your best.

To help you separate fact from fiction, we've compiled the seven biggest fat loss myths that you are likely to encounter. We've also given you sound advice about what you can do that will have a positive effect. And if you'd like to know more about anything covered in this guide, just ask us.



PROTEIN

High protein diets have been shown to help with fat loss.

What you've been told

Protein is for body-builders and guys who want to bulk up, not for women who want a toned, rather than bulky, physique. Don't overdo it on the protein, or else your arms will transform quicker than Cinderella at midnight.

It's not the amount of protein that you consume that leads to muscle gain. It's your total calorific intake that's important. In fact, higher protein diets have been shown to help with fat loss when calories are controlled. Whilst protein is important for maintaining muscle, if you want to ADD muscle then you need to eat more calories than you expend. Protein is hugely important for the growth and repair of our bodies and is essential for a properly functioning system.

So whilst we do need protein for structural reasons it is also important to think about protein beyond just our muscles, considering things such as detoxification and hormonal balance.

Take liver detoxification, for example, and the major role protein plays here. There are two basic stages of liver detox, both of which require protein. Being that the health of the liver is so important to the proper functioning of the rest of the body, diets that are very low or deficient in protein could be problematic long term.

What you can do

You need to get enough protein so that your body can look and function at its best. If you're active, it's more than likely that you'll need more than if you were sedentary.

Your requirements will also change based on the other foods that you eat. If you choose to reduce or limit carb intake, for example, you will probably need to make up some of that difference in calories with additional protein. Protein is available in lots of different guises and is available in both animal and non-animal food sources.

Significant amounts of protein are found in meat, fish, eggs, nuts, dairy products and legumes, for example, which are all foods from our Nutrition Made Simple green list.

The reality is that without taking into account the rest of an individual's nutritional intake it is almost impossible to give an exact figure for personal requirements. A good starting place for anyone looking to make changes to their health and physique however is stage one of our nutrition model combined with our foods on the green list.

LIFTING HEAVY WEIGHTS GIVES YOU BULKY MUSCLES

What you've been told

Lifting heavy weights leads to instant muscle gain and lifting anything heavier than a couple of kilograms buys you a one-way ticket to bulky muscles and an unsightly physique. Lifting heavy stuff makes the body grow and, as a woman, you certainly don't want to build any muscle.

Heavy is relative to the individual, but your shopping bags weigh more than a couple of kilos, as do your kids. Has carrying either of these turned you into the incredible Hulk? No, precisely. And it's highly unlikely - almost a certainty, in fact - that doing a few sets of challenging weights a couple of times per week is going to see you pack on pounds of muscle either. Most women who use resistance training as part of a general fitness programme can't and won't gain more than a couple of kilos of lean mass (muscle, bone, connective tissue... you know, all the good stuff), even if they wanted to. It doesn't happen by accident when you pick up a dumbbell. You have to actually want to do it.

Lack of calories, typically inconsistent sleep and training volume, together with a less anabolic hormonal environment mean that women find it very difficult to increase muscle size. Anyway, adequate lean mass is hugely beneficial for women as they approach their thirties and beyond. You certainly don't need muscles in gorilla-like proportions, but you do need enough to maintain good posture, keep you strong and keep your joints stable.

What you can do

Challenging your body through resistance training a couple of times per week and eat just enough calories from good quality foods daily. Beyond that, run, walk or practice other active hobbies as often as you can.

At the Fitness Collective, we typically recommend two or three full-body strength training sessions per week for women who have general fitness goals. We use a combination of heavier and lighter weights depending on the exercise, but we encourage everyone to challenge their body whilst they increase their strength.

This is enough to maintain and, in some cases, even add a little bit of muscle, which will improve posture and help you gravitate to their natural shape. It also leaves time for other activities and hobbies that you might have. You know, life stuff. The stuff that makes you happy!



CORE WORK BURNS BELLY FAT

A toned stomach will only show if your body fat is low.

What you've been told

Crunches, sit-ups and core training deliver great looking abs. If you want a great-looking midsection, you need to perform these exercises regularly focusing on high reps for toning.

You cannot burn fat in a particular area by doing exercises that try to isolate that body part. Doing crunches will not target fat that is stored around the abdominals, for example. It's worth noting also that a toned stomach will only show if your body fat is low. Whilst perhaps beneficial for reasons such as core strength and stability, isolation movements like crunches and planks do very little for fat burning around the stomach. They don't cause enough metabolic disturbance, which is key in forcing the body to change.

Core training could also have been one of the seven myths!

Sure, you need to condition the abdominals, the same as any other muscles, but you do not need to spend hours focusing on specific core exercises. If there is injury or weakness more focus might be needed, but a little is enough for most healthy people. A toned stomach will only show if your body fat is low.

What you can do

Prioritise big multi-joint exercises such as squats, deadlifts, push-up variations and pulling exercises. Progress and become more proficient with the big exercises and don't overdo the isolation stuff. Focus on exercises like those featured in our Classes. Combine these with a good diet, and you've got the perfect recipe for a sculpted middle.

You can still do your direct abdominal exercises. Just save them for the end of your workouts when you've done the main event.

Be sure to balance abdominal exercises with lower back ones to maintain balance, according to your requirements.

CARDIO IS THE BEST FORM OF EXERCISE FOR FAT LOSS

Successful fat loss will be down to your diet, not cardio.

What you've been told

Weight training makes you big and cardiovascular training makes you thin. If you want to burn fat, you need to do lots of steady cardio training and the more you can do, the better. This is best done at a moderate intensity performed in the "fat-burning zone".

Successful fat loss will be largely down to your diet, not your cardio approach. Plenty of people get themselves into great shape without doing any traditional cardio – some with absolutely no form of cardio whatsoever. It's one tool in your armoury, but it's not the only way, and it's certainly not the most efficient way. What works for one person will not always work for another so it's impossible to say that one training method always trumps another for a specific goal. But, if we were going to do a simplistic hierarchy of fat loss it would probably look something like this:

- **Nutrition.**
- **Resistance training.**
- **Interval training.**
- **Steady cardio training.**

You'll notice that nutrition comes first and traditional steady-state cardiovascular training is last. It's not that it's not beneficial, of course it is. But in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, we see better results when people combine nutrition and resistance training. We often also use metabolic resistance training – the kind of approach that we use in our Team Classes.

What you can do

Training is important but if you get your nutrition on point you're halfway there. Once a sound base of nutrition is in place your cardio requirement comes down to your starting point, the time you have available and your personal preference. Most people have busy lives and only have up to three hours per week to train, so we typically recommend resistance training supported by a basic nutritional programme that meets their specific requirements.

As we progress we might then add some high intensity intervals at the tail end of our sessions, leaving cardio as a back up. If you have more time available to train you can do your intervals on separate days to your resistance training to maximise its effectiveness. For those with more than four hours per week to train we might look to include some steady state stuff if we need to, or you feel you want to, but it's typically not required except for in cases where people have body fat goals that are extreme.

WOMEN SHOULD TRAIN DIFFERENTLY TO MEN

There is no reason whatsoever why women should train differently to guys.

What you've been told

Women should stick to dumbbell circuits and Pilates training that develops a “long, lean and toned” look, leaving the rather un-ladylike lifting and sweating to the guys. They should do that because women are different. Intense training isn't good for women, and it will only serve to “bulk you up”. I mean, look at what it did to Jodie Marsh and Madonna.

Sure, there are considerations that are unique to women such as hormonal fluctuations and the angle of the female pelvis, but the principles are the same for both sexes. There is absolutely no reason whatsoever why women should train fundamentally differently to guys. They should, if they want to look firm and toned, train the same way that guys train.

Body geometry is largely genetic and you have your parents to thank for your lot! The “long and lean” thing breaks us. No exercise can make you “longer”. Muscles are attached to bones via tendons and these insertion points are fixed. If you want to get leaner and more toned, you need to lose fat whilst maintaining muscle mass. The recipe for which is a combination of resistance training and solid nutrition. Add a dash of cardio to the mix and you'll be well on your way. It also helps to reduce cravings and desire for snacking.

What you can do

What's important above all else is that you pick the style of training that you enjoy and are consistent with. For general fitness and fat loss goals, our approach is to prioritise strength training, adding cardiovascular training based upon individual requirements and preferences.

Resistance training builds more than strength. It builds a confidence that can only be gained from being physically equipped beyond doing twenty minutes on an elliptical trainer. As the saying goes, “strength is the mother of all qualities”, which translates to “get stronger and you'll be able to go further, faster and for longer”.

If you want to look good, build confidence and get fit in double quick time you should embrace what might be traditionally viewed as guy training.

Do some resistance training, eat your protein and greens, throw some cardio into the mix and season with a generous sprinkling of focus and consistency and you'll see your body transform. There is no reason whatsoever why women should train differently to guys.

CARBS ARE BAD FOR YOU

Download the Traffic Light Food System for a simple guide to eating healthily.

What you've been told

If you so much as think about eating more than a handful of carbs, they will get stored as fat around your middle. It makes sense then that if you were to eliminate or drastically reduce carbs, you would not run this risk because there would be nothing to be stored as a muffin top.

The argument centres on blood sugar and insulin. When we eat carbs (it is true of some proteins also), blood sugar levels go up, which in turn causes the pancreas to produce insulin to bring these levels down. Insulin is a storage hormone, which transports any sugars not immediately used to the muscles and liver, with the leftovers being safely deposited in our fat cells.

So the advice is to eat low carbs and to choose foods that are lower on the Glycaemic Index (GI) because they don't have such an immediate impact on blood sugar and insulin.

The truth

Carbs are the new fat, which was the old carbs. Food groups take it in turns to be accused of being the cause of obesity and ill health. With the current vegan diet trend, will protein be next? Let's hope not.

Blood sugar regulation and insulin management is hugely important and it is true that if you overconsume carbohydrates the excess will be stored as fat. That does not mean that carbs are bad however. You might just need to move more or eat less sugar.

The finger is currently being pointed squarely at carbohydrates, but research suggests that what's actually happening is that our consumption of everything is increasing slightly, not just carbs.

We're eating more calories, and expending less, which is causing weight gain. The reality is that too much of anything is not good for you, including carbohydrates.

What you can do

Drastically cutting carbs for a long period of time is a bad idea for most people. You need to work out what works best for you and your goals and part of this is getting your carb intake right to fuel your training and keep you looking lean.

A good place to start is stage one of our nutritional stages model and the green section of our nutrition made simple system, where carbs come mainly from vegetables and fruits. This will help you balance blood sugar levels and you can then tweak things as you go.

You'll likely find that you can start to introduce other carbohydrate sources as you go. If your diet is rich in processed or starchy carbohydrates such as bread or pasta, you may need a reduction in your overall carb intake.

Just be sure to eat enough vegetables and fruit as well as protein and fats from quality sources.



IT WORKED FOR GWYNETH, SO IT'LL WORK FOR ME...

What worked for Gwyneth is highly unlikely to work for the masses.

What you've been told

The media is awash with new and innovative products and systems that promise to get you into the shape of your life. Celebrity expert trainers to the stars reveal their training secrets. You're told about the latest secret ingredient, super- food and revolutionary training system that is your guaranteed ticket to the body of your dreams. It has worked for Gwyneth and other supermodel sorts. All you need to do is buy it and it will work the same miracle for you. All in just seven days.

The basics aren't sexy and don't sell magazines, so they're not typically headline news.

We are all completely different, with different lifestyles, preferences, training and nutritional history and set of circumstances, and thus we will all react differently to certain approaches. We're also going to let you into a secret: there are no secrets when it comes to getting into shape.

Most "systems" are a rather crude rehash of a previous approach and the latest celeb trainer and miracle ingredient will be yesterday's news once we have new things to talk (or write) about. That's why we don't use training gimmicks; just tried, tested methods that work.

What you can do

Forget what is touted in the latest media publication and what the latest en vogue diet and training system is.

The only way to find out what works best is to try things out for yourself and develop an understanding of what works for you. By all means start with what is working for others, but you will need to tweak it to meet your specific requirements.

Pick a sensible nutrition programme that has increased health at its core. It is almost always counterproductive to employ an unsustainable quick-fix approach. Forget the temptation to go with a quick fix and go with something that fits with your lifestyle and something that you could stick to long term.

At TFC we start with stage one of our nutritional stages system, prioritising foods from the green list of our Nutrition Made Simple list. The emphasis is on fruits, vegetables, naturally reared meat, fish and poultry, eggs, nuts and seeds. We then build upon this, adding foods as we go, tweaking and rotating foods according to your individual preferences and requirements. What worked for Gwyneth is highly unlikely to work for the masses.

5 REASONS TO JOIN THE FITNESS COLLECTIVE

1. Train at your convenience

Our 14 hours a day of Small Group Personal Training ensures you can always train at a time that suits you.

2. Welcoming environment

When you train at The Fitness Collective you'll be surrounded by like-minded people in a fun sociable atmosphere where everyone is welcome.

3. Supported by Outstanding Coaches

Our coaches act as a fitness filter. Removing the confusing and conflicting information and giving you what works for you. Our coaches will get to understand you and will develop your programme for long term results.

4. One to one support

Although the majority of our members train in small groups with up to 4 other members, you will have regular 1-1 consultations to discuss and refine your training programme and nutritional needs

5. Education

We provide all our members with comprehensive education in fitness and nutrition. Our member manuals, online guides and regular seminars ensure you understand what works best for sustainable, long term results.

We're not like other gyms. Come and visit us to find out why.

[Touch or click here to find out more about The Fitness Collective.](#)