



# Exercise Myths explained

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## Can I turn fat into muscle?

This popular myth survives because, as muscle tone increases with exercise, body fat tends to reduce alongside, assuming you have a healthy, calorie-controlled eating plan. These processes essentially happen simultaneously, without directly influencing each other. Physiologically, it's simply not possible to turn one into the other.

Too often, people - especially women - avoid strength training altogether or stick with light weights and avoid failure through a fear of developing big muscles. However, this myth means a lot of people are short-changing their ability to burn body fat. They aren't developing valuable, lean muscle tone, which increases your metabolic rate, making you an effective, fat-burning machine.

## Can I shift fat from specific areas like my stomach?

It never fails to amaze me how many people I meet who do hundreds of sit-ups in a bid to reduce their waist size. Research shows fat reduction comes down to burning calories each day - the body doesn't give us a choice over which fat stores it takes from. Abdominal exercises strengthen and develop muscles but being able to see their shape comes down to shredding body fat covering them - combining good nutrition and exercise.

Eat less, move more, enjoy the process and be patient as your body uses different fat stores.

For both men and women, excess calories are stored as fat around the vital organs - liver and kidneys as well as the reproductive organs (especially women). Because the body sees this fat as playing a vital role, it is reluctant to use it for energy when a calorie deficit is created.

This is why fat reduction often shows on other areas first (i.e. face), and why tummy fat seems reluctant to go!

## Will using weights give me big muscles?

NO, NO, NO, NO, NO!

Muscle hypertrophy (increased muscle size) requires a specific training approach, combining high sets (10-12 sets), low reps (6-8 reps) and split routine workouts 4-6 times a week.

For women in particular, our natural hormone blueprint actually makes it hard to gain muscle mass. It is important to remember that female bodybuilders only achieve their look by nutritional supplements and training twice daily!

To achieve lean muscle tissue and tone, aim to use weights (machines, cables or dumbbells) that allow you to do 15 repetitions a set. If you get to 15 and could do more, the weight is too light! Make sure that 15 is the maximum you can manage - if you don't overload the muscle you can't improve the tone.

Pushing yourself and going to failure means more calories burned and improved muscle tone, not increased size!

## Is it true muscle weighs more than fat?

Yes, it is! A pound of lean muscle allows you to burn 50 additional calories a day, while a pound of fat burns nothing. If you build five pounds of muscle you burn 250 extra calories a day. Multiplied by 365 days and divided by 3,500 (the calories in one pound), with this added muscle you will lose an extra 26 pounds in just one year!

Muscle weighs more than fat, some research suggests muscle is a massive 18% denser than fat! Using only weight as a guide to fitness and health is now perceived as simplistic and inaccurate, especially for those who exercise regularly.

