

MYTHS OF AB TRAINING

Myth #1

TWISTING MOVEMENTS WILL PARE FAT FROM THE SIDES OF YOUR WAIST.

Go to most gyms, and at some point you'll find trainees with a light bar across their shoulders, vigorously twisting from side to side. They do this under the mistaken belief that they will whittle away the fat on their waists. Some trainees have been doing this for years, without success. The twisting may, however, cause back problems.

Myth #2

LOTS OF AB WORK WILL PARE FAT FROM THE FRONT OF YOUR WAIST.

As with Myth #1, muscle and fat are different types of tissue. It's physiologically impossible to whittle away fat through working the muscle beneath the fat. Fat reduction in a specific spot of the body, through exercise, is impossible. The only way to spot-reduce fat is through surgical intervention, which has perils and isn't a long-term cure. The other way to reduce bodyfat is to reduce your food intake and increase your activity level so that you're in overall caloric deficit; then your body will turn to its fat reserves to provide for the balance of its energy needs.

You could build a great set of abdominal muscles, but whether you could see the lines of your abdominals depends on how much fat covers your waist. Well-developed abdominals can, however, show a six-pack to some extent without a low level of bodyfat, because the abdominals will protrude more. It's also possible to have visible but weak and undeveloped abdominals, if you don't exercise but have a low level of bodyfat.

You could do three hours of abdominal work daily, but if your food intake and activity level don't combine to yield an overall energy deficit, you'll never reduce the fat around your waist. On the other hand, you could do no abdominal work, but if you're in sustained caloric deficit you'll draw on your energy stores and thus reduce your bodyfat. Whether

you do abdominal work is irrelevant in determining the amount of fat around your waist. But to build strong, well-developed abdominals, ab work is essential.

Myth #3

THE ABS NEED HIGH REPS.

To strengthen and develop the abdominals -- which is all that ab work can do -- keep the reps moderate and effort levels high, use sufficient resistance to keep the reps down, and keep adding resistance as you develop strength. Treat your abdominals like any other muscle.

A benefit of doing extreme amounts of abdominal work is that it consumes sufficient calories to make a contribution to energy output over the long haul. This, however, is an inefficient way of burning calories. For efficient calorie burning, perform an activity that's easier, involves more musculature, and can be sustained for long periods, such as walking.

No matter how many calories you burn through activity, if you eat excessively, you won't be in caloric deficit, and unless you're in caloric deficit, you'll never reduce your bodyfat.

Myth #4

THE ABS NEED DAILY WORK.

Although the abdominal muscles may tolerate more frequent work than most other bodyparts, they can be overtrained. Excessive training frequency for these muscles is connected to the mistaken belief that a lot of exercise for them will help reduce waist fat levels. Train your abdominals only two, or, at most, three times a week.