



Carla Gray, BSES, HFS, CPT

**H&FM's personal trainer gets to the bottom of all your workout questions! Have a question for Carla? Email her at [info@healthfitnessmag.com](mailto:info@healthfitnessmag.com)**



### How much should I exercise?

**Carla.** Experts recommend 30 minutes most days of the week, or 150 minutes of cardio a week. Work up to being breathy but still able to talk—this is called the talk test. Two to three minutes of warm-up and cool-down are recommended. Resistance train two to three times a week to maintain muscle mass, metabolism and bone density by using free weights, machines, rubber tubing or bodyweight exercises. One hour of daily exercise is recommended for those who wish to lose weight. At least one 20-minute stretching session a week is recommended, or a few minutes every time you work out—stretching, yoga, and Tai Chi help maintain or increase flexibility. While 30 minutes of activity a day reduces your risk of stroke, heart disease and diabetes, even 10 minutes can improve your health. You can also break up your activities into smaller sessions and enjoy the health benefits.

### If I stop my physical activity, will my muscle turn to fat?

**Carla.** No, muscle cannot turn to fat or vice versa. If you stop exercising, you will begin to decondition and slowly lose the muscle you worked hard to build. You will gain fat from burning fewer calories, especially if you consume the same number

of calories you did when you were burning more with physical activity. The good news is muscle has memory and returns faster if you resume working out. Don't stop exercising; resume ASAP! Keep more pounds of muscle and keep fat on the run!

### I heard that stair climbing will make my butt bigger?

**Carla.** This is not true! Stair climbing focuses on quads (the front of your thighs), hamstrings and works your rear (glutes). Just using your bodyweight means you will firm the muscle, expend more calories and burn fat! To increase size, increase the load by adding weights. Stair climbing is great cardiovascular exercise that improves your overall fitness and tones your legs and rear. Tail work is time well spent!

### Cardio or weights?

**Carla.** Perform your weight training while glycogen stores are full. You will be fresh and stronger for resistance activity. Muscle burns calories 24/7, which increases your basic metabolic rate. The more muscle you have, the more calories you burn when you put that workforce into motion. With cardio, you will burn a higher percentage of fat because you used up glycogen training with weights. Always use challenging weights

and strap on a heart rate monitor when you hop on a machine or jog. If your focus is to improve your cardio fitness, then do that first, but if you want to increase tone, boost metabolism, and jack your fitness level, hit the weights first.

### Should I train triceps and biceps together or separately?

**Carla.** The standard recommendation is to train biceps with back and triceps with chest. Biceps are largely involved with the pulling in back movements and triceps are the secondary mover in pushing exercises. Without adequate planning, you could overtrain your arm muscles if you trained them on separate days. In order to increase size, you must increase strength and intensity. However, when training the arm muscles back-to-back, you get a great pump in your arms that is not permanent. This temporary increase in size is good for going out on weekends!! Just sayin'...

#### WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE TOPICS DISCUSSED?

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