

FITNESS FORUM

“Cardio makes me itch”

Have you ever observed a doctor or a trainer sneaking a “quick puff” when they’ve felt no one was watching? I have, and it’s always left me scratching my head thinking, “Does that look wrong to anyone else?” The health and fitness industry, like others, has its share of idiosyncrasies that are inconsistent with the overall message it circulates to its target audience.

Once, while interviewing a potential trainer, I asked him about his own workouts including his personal fitness goals and objectives. He detailed at length, his weight room routine right down to the reps he would do for each set, and truthfully it was quite impressive. There was no mention of anything cardiovascular at all. When, I asked him about this omission he half jokingly responded, “I’m actually allergic to cardio”.

Over the years, I’ve heard a lot of reasons as to why one might skip a cardio session, but I can honestly say that an allergy was new ground for me. Was this merely a mild case of hives on the treadmill or a full on anaphylactic reaction to the elliptical? I had to know. As I probed, he ironically began to sweat and it became clear that his claim of illness was simply a cover for the fact that he simply didn’t *like* to do it. It was a challenge for him and he found it difficult to give the same importance to cardio as he did his weights. Needless to say, things didn’t work out.

I would love if this individual’s belief was an isolated misunderstanding, but sadly this is not true. There is a pattern that occurs in many gyms around the country that leaves many men and women reaping only half of the potential benefits of a complete exercise program. Upon entering the gym, the typical guy will head straight for the weights while most women will make a b-line for the cardio equipment, avoiding the weights all together. For

many men, cardio is avoided due to the perception that they will lose their muscle mass, while for many women; the non-negotiable “no weights” rule is for fear of instantly sprouting “bulky thighs and bulbous butts”!

This is quite unfortunate because there are tremendous benefits that are gained from a more balanced program. Regular cardiovascular exercise can lower blood pressure, cholesterol and even your resting heart rate so you can bench and squat for another day. If your heart isn’t healthy, it won’t matter how good your pecs or arms look!

There is no doubt that excessive weight training can lead to less than desirable results in a woman’s physique leaving her looking more like a bouncer than a ballerina, however these occurrences are truly very rare. For the everyday woman, weight training along with cardio will have her looking tight, fit and not simply skinny. Blessed with toned arms, sculpted legs and a flat tummy, she’ll be all but envied by those who have chosen to avoid the curls and lunges she has learned to embrace.

There are many roads in this lifetime journey of health and fitness and no highway that will work for everyone. The process of defining and achieving one’s own level of fitness is highly personal and, when achieved, extremely rewarding. Good luck on your journey and if you need help along the way please be sure to contact us at info@ptsprinceton.com or call us at (609) 252 – 1117.

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