
Confused about exercise?



Exercise Myth #1

Doing crunches is the best way to get rock-hard abs and a strong core.

«**N**ot so,» says McKinnon. «Research shows the muscles you target doing crunches don't really play much of a role in building true strength in the midriff or support for the back.»

In fact, by overdoing it on crunches, you may end up weakening the other three layers of abdominals that are key for building strength and support for the spine. Choose an exercise routine that focuses equally on all elements of the core.

Exercise Myth #2

Abs are the most important muscles for a strong core and trim midriff.

Focusing only on the abs can lead to a bad back, so it's important to take a systematic and thorough approach to core training.

«There are more than 25 muscles that are considered 'core' muscles,» says McKinnon. «By overemphasizing abdominal workouts, the other core muscles remain underdeveloped and underactive.»

When workouts are structured this way, your core suffers and you may be putting yourself at risk for back issues.

Exercise Myth #3

A good workout includes being sore. Pilates is too gentle to be effective.

If your goal is to feel strong and energized, with good posture and toned muscles, you don't need to feel sore to get results. According to McKinnon, one of the reasons people think Pilates is «too gentle» is because training with optimal movement means subtle motions that feel like «nothing is happening.»

«When we look at exercise neurologically, teaching people how to do the movement properly, before focusing on pushing the limits, actually makes sure the muscles are turned on so they can get strong. Training the body with 'optimal movement' as priority one leads to great posture, superior and

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balanced muscle tone, a strong core and a feeling of lightness.»

As a result, it is likely you won't feel that typical soreness that has become synonymous with a workout worth doing. But your muscles will be working more efficiently and you will be gaining strength.

Exercise Myth #4

Pilates is just for your abs. It isn't a full-body workout.

Any well-designed Pilates program works the entire body in many positions, from lying down to standing up. Exercising the abs is an important aspect of a workout, but is by no means the whole picture. Because your limbs and torso work together to build integrated strength and optimal movement, an effective Pilates workout should always include exercises for your arms, legs and back.

«You need a balance between strength and mobility from head to toe for the best health and fitness,» says McKinnon.

Exercise Myth #5

Women should just do cardio to get lean.

Women need to build strength and muscle, especially to help combat the effects of osteoporosis.

«It's never too late to start training for bone density. The earlier you start, the stronger, taller and healthier you will be as you age.»

Plus, building muscle doesn't always mean building bulk or only using weights. Try a muscle-building workout that's designed to help participants build

balanced muscle strength and increased bone density.

To learn more about Margot McKinnon or Body Harmonics Pilates, visit www.bodyharmonics.com.

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