

A few exercise tips from your Fitness Director☺ Jennifer Wenning BS, CPT, CSN, CGFI, CFYI

1: Using Bad Form on Cardio Machines

The problem: Hunching over or using a death-grip on the handrail cheats your body and can throw off your alignment, jarring your spine, shoulders, and elbows.

Better Technique on Cardio Machines

Don't set the incline or resistance so high that it causes you to hang on to the machine too tightly. Use a natural gait with a light grip. For a more challenging workout, hold on lightly with one hand and move the other arm, switching arms periodically. And save the reading for after your workout so you can focus on good form

2: Exercises Done with Goal of Spot Reduction

People who do strengthening and toning exercises in an effort to trim fat from a certain area — thighs, hips, stomach, or arms — have the wrong idea. Although these exercises can help firm muscles, if the targeted area still carries an extra layer of fat, it won't look much different. You can't isolate fat loss to one part of the body.

The Solution: Cardiovascular exercise will torch calories, but resistance training is a big part of the equation if you want to burn fat. Boosting your muscle mass increases your metabolism, so you burn more calories all the time, even when you're not working out.

3: Always Lifting with a Weight Belt

The problem: Too many people wear weight belts too often. Unless you have a back injury or other medical reason — or are lifting a lot of weight — the weight belt may let your core muscles slack off — and you need your core muscles all the time in everyday life.

The solution: Back off the weight belt unless it's necessary.

4: Any Exercise Done Wearing the Wrong Shoes

Even if you're doing everything else right, your efforts can be undermined by improper footwear. Working out with the wrong shoes increases pounding on the joints, and can lead to injuries like plantar fasciitis or tendinitis.

Shoe Solution

The key, experts say, is to choose a shoe that is specific to your activity and that suits your particular foot. They recommend shopping at stores specializing in athletic shoes, where you can seek advice from a knowledgeable salesperson. And don't forget to replace your shoes when they show signs of wear. I found many of my clients will wait until their shoes look extremely dirty or start to “fall apart”. Many of us only wear certain shoes for certain activities. You may have extremely clean shoes with worn soles or insoles. If you are not sure how to tell when you need new shoes, ask your trainer or bring your shoes to a specialty store when shopping and ask.