



Build muscle (and use it) to lose weight

I want to exercise more to help me lose weight. Should I focus more on strength training or aerobics?

The only answer most professionals would be comfortable with is, of course, "both."

Although aerobics are important for tipping the energy balance in favor of weight loss, strength training is also extremely important. Without it, you'll likely lose about one pound of lean body tissue — muscle — for each three pounds of body fat lost when dieting. The thing is, muscle burns more calories than fat. So when you lose muscle, you lose some of your body's natural ability to burn calories. And if you begin to gain weight after a period of weight loss (that nasty yo-yo syndrome), the weight you gain will likely be 100 percent fat. That, in turn, will decrease your body's muscle ratio even more — making it even easier to pile on the pounds and more difficult to lose them.

Weight training while dieting helps preserve your lean mass (muscle) and helps stimulate your metabolism, which should assist in losing weight. But if you're not accustomed to working with weights, start slowly and find a program you like. Whether that means joining a gym or buying a set of weights to use at home is up to you — the key is finding something you like so you will actually do it.

But strength training isn't the

sole exercise you need. Aerobic exercises — such as brisk walking, jogging, swimming, biking, aerobic dancing — are those that use the body's large muscle groups in continuous, rhythmic movements and require you to expend energy.

If you're not accustomed to regular aerobic exercise, the best way to start on that path is, again, to find something you enjoy, and start by doing it at least three times a week. If you enjoy the exercise — whether a power walk around the neighborhood with a friend or an aerobics video that gets your heart pumping in the privacy of your own living room — you'll be more likely to keep up with the program.

Work yourself up to at least 30 minutes of aerobic activity on most days, and then to 60 minutes daily. If you can't find that big of a chunk of time to devote to exercise, break it up into 30-, 20-, or even 10-minute segments. A longer period of sustained exercise is best for heart health, but any aerobic exercise will be beneficial for weight loss.

Besides burning fat, aerobic exercise helps your heart, reduces risk of diabetes, and boosts bone density and mental health. Set a goal to get 30-60 minutes nearly every day. Build endurance gradually — progression is the name of the game.

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

**For the week of
Jan. 21, 2007**

By Martha Filipic

(614) 292-9833

filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu

Editor:

This column was reviewed by Jackie Buell, director of sports nutrition and instructor in the Department of Human Nutrition, College of Education and Human Ecology, at Ohio State University.

To receive Chow Line electronically, send an e-mail to filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu or sign up to our news subscription service at <http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~news/subscribe.php>.

**Section of Communications
and Technology
News and Media Relations**
2021 Coffey Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1044
(614) 292-2011

208 Research Services
Building
1680 Madison Ave.
Wooster, OH 44691-4096
(330) 263-3780

OSU Extension embraces human diversity and is committed to ensuring that all educational programs conducted by Ohio State University Extension are available to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, age, gender identity or expression, disability, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, or veteran status.