

Ask Joe Weider: Using exercise to fight cellulite

by Joe_Weider

Tip of the Week: Never train on a full stomach, or an empty one.

This may sound like a paradox, but really it's just about making sure you do a minimal amount of planning your meals with respect to your workouts. Obviously, you don't want to train shortly after eating. This leads to both ineffective digestion and ineffective workout, as your blood is partially shunted from its role in aiding digestion to assisting taxed muscle and organs.

However, you do want to make sure you have a small reservoir of easily accessible nutrients to make your workout more productive. I recommend having a small meal, such as a couple of slices of whole-wheat toast with a natural preserve spread on top and a glass of milk. A little protein and some carbohydrates, and you should have the fuel you need to get you through your workout and get your muscles the nutrition they require.

Q: Is there a particular way you recommend splitting up the body when it's trained over several days? Also, do you recommend a particular order of body parts within each workout? Thanks, Joe!

Joe: Since it's no small task to train the entire body in a single workout, it's wise to break up your entire body training over the course of two or three workouts. How best to split the body up has been a subject for discussion in bodybuilding circles for a very long time, and to this day there isn't a single definitive answer.

Generally speaking, most trainers like to pair up complementary muscle groups. For example, both the back and biceps are considered "pulling" muscles, while chest, shoulders and triceps are "pushing" muscles. Thus, the pull-push split is popular. Of course, when we get to legs, we're mixing things up, since the quadriceps (front of thigh) push while the hamstrings pull. This leads to another training methodology — training antagonistic muscles together.

The theory behind antagonistic muscle pairing is that it prevents overtaxing of the smaller paired muscle. Because biceps are enacted when training the back, they can become over-trained if worked in the same session as the back.

Of course, the important thing is that you train your entire body once or twice per week, using a system that suits you best. As far as training order goes, this is a little more definite. As a rule of thumb, work the bigger muscle groups first, as they require the most energy.

Q: I'm a 28-year-old woman, and while I'm not overweight â€” I'm 5 feet, 6 inches and 135 pounds â€” I am trying to lose 5 pounds before bikini season. I'm sure I can do it, but the problem is that no matter how low I ever get, it seems like I can't get rid of the cellulite on my thighs.

It's not terrible, but I notice it and would love to find a way, other than surgery, to get it off. Any advice would be greatly appreciated.

Joe: I'm going to come straight out and tell you that as far as I or anyone else knows, there is no way to reduce cellulite other than liposuction, and even that isn't treating the condition that causes cellulite so much as it is removing fat stores.

Cellulite is a condition in which fat appears under the skin in a bumpy pattern, usually on the lower body, and more often in women than in men. No one is quite sure as to why cellulite forms as opposed to smoother-appearing fat, but the best guess is that it has to do with fat cells being partially constricted by rigid connective tissue.

If you've ever worn fishnet stockings, you'll notice that when you take them off your skin that pushed through the loose weave retains the pattern of the stockings. This is a pretty good analogy for cellulite. (For the record, having been married for almost half a century, I am privy to such things.)

Because cellulite is in fact fat, the best you can do is to keep your fat levels to a healthy minimum. From the height and weight you've given, I would bet that your cellulite isn't as much of a visual problem as you might believe it to be. We are our own worst critics most of the time â€” and yes, I am speaking from experience here.

Joe Weider is acclaimed as "the father of modern bodybuilding" and the founder of the world's leading fitness magazines, including Shape, Muscle and Fitness, Men's Fitness, Fit Pregnancy, Hers, Golf for Seniors and others published worldwide in over 20 languages.

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