

Tips, Strategies and News You Can Use To Achieve Optimum Health...For Life!

Jan 2007 Issue

# Strength Training Myths & Facts

By Brian Sutton

**N**ow that we're into the new year, you may be starting a strength-training regimen...or thinking of doing so. Strength (or weight) training has **many benefits**: flexibility, improved circulation, increased bone density, enhanced cardiovascular function, an increase in metabolism (even while at rest!) as well as strength and conditioning.

Unfortunately, many people do **not** get all these benefits because they hold **misconceptions** about strength training. For example, some women avoid strength training because they think it will give them "bulky" muscles like a man. Others think they need to train two or three hours a day in order to see results. The myths are endless. So let's take a few minutes to clear up some of the most commonly-held myths. I

will also reveal the *reality* behind each situation. So let's dig in!

## **Myth #1: "To Get Into Top Shape, You Need To Train Two Or Three Hours Per Day"**

**Fact:** The logic, of course, behind this statement is that "more is better". However, that's not true when it comes to weight training. Why? Because it is the **intensity of effort** - not the duration of effort - that determines muscular growth. Muscular growth is also NOT determined by total amount of work or how much weight you lift in one session. Again, it's the **intensity** of the effort that determines growth. For example, an athlete who runs a **marathon** does more total **work** than a sprinter who runs a 100 yard dash. But the energy systems (muscles) that are being stressed are **two different systems or two different types of muscle fibers**. I don't want to get too technical here, but long distance runners do not ordinarily



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look like sprinters. Sprinters, however, have more **intense** sessions than marathon runners. And, as a result their muscles grow larger. Again, intensity - not duration of effort - is the key. In fact, recent studies show that **45-60 minutes is the optimal amount of time for a strength-training session**. Anything longer than that hinders your body's ability to recover fully.

Also: **you do not grow muscles while you are lifting weights!** Quite the contrary. During your workout you break down your muscles! You only build muscle after your session is completed and you recover. Muscle growth is overcompensation. You must give your body time to **recover** from the stress of the workout to overcompensate. That's when your body builds new tissue. *So don't worry: you don't have to be in the gym from dawn til dusk to build muscle!*

### **Myth No. 2: "If Women Lift Heavy Weights, They Will Build Bulky Muscles Like A Man"**

**Fact:** This is one of the most common myths when it comes to women and strength training. The fact of the matter is, unless the woman has an **abnormal** hormone level, it is **literally impossible** for that woman to build bulky muscles! The reason women can't build bulky muscles is the same rea-



son **men** can't breast-feed. **They don't have the right hormones in their system!** It is impossible for a normal woman to build large, bulky muscles. However, what they do build are **small, shapely muscles**. And they may gain two or three pounds of muscle mass maximum. The average woman simply doesn't have the hormonal make-up to support the type of muscle mass a man can. So, ladies: don't let the fear of bulky muscles keep you out of the gym.

### **Myth No. 3: "The Only Way to Burn Fat Is to Do Cardio"**

**Fact:** The reality is, "cardio" is **not** the only way to burn fat.

Most people call aerobic training "cardio". Aerobic training means "in the presence of oxygen", while anaerobic training means "not in the presence of oxygen". That means during aerobic activity, you burn oxygen. In anaerobic activity, you

burn sugar. The "burn" you get in your muscles from anaerobic training is the **waste product of sugar being burned**. However, with aerobic activity, your body has time (because the intensity is low enough) to access fatty acids from your fat cells to burn fat *at the moment you're exercising*.

**Anaerobic exercise (like weight training) can also be a cardiovascular workout.**

For example, you can do weight training at a very rapid pace (called "supersets") and thus keep your **heart rate elevated throughout the entire workout**. While this is not considered traditional "cardio", it's still aerobic exercise.

Every exercise you do at a *rapid pace which raises your heart rate to a given zone of stress* is, in fact, "cardio".

My recommendation is to split your workout into **two segments**, with the weight training first. Once the weight training is done, you begin to burn fat at a more rapid rate. *Why?* Because you've burned through all your sugar stores. And to recover, your muscles have to break down fatty acid molecules for the energy that's needed to replace the glycogen (sugar) that is stored in the muscle. In other words, the **energy that is produced from the fatty acid breakdown is used to replace the glycogen stores used in the workout**.

In addition, **your body's**

**entire metabolic rate is boosted by weight training.** Weight training *indirectly* burns fat after the workout. That's tied to muscle fibers.

Because of this, you will burn more fat weight training than you would doing "cardio" or aerobic activity by itself. So, for the *ultimate* in fat loss, you want to combine both anaerobic and aerobic with the weight training coming first, aerobic last.

#### **Myth # 4: "Certain Foods Are More Fattening Than Others" / Or: "Carbs Are Fattening".**

**Fact:** Carbs are **not** fattening at all. You could live on (not that I would recommend this) chocolate milk and sugar doughnuts if you needed 1500 calories a day and you burned 2000 calories a day in your daily activities! It's simple math. You would indeed lose body fat.

**A pound of fat is roughly 3500 calories.** So if your maintenance calorie level is 2000 calories per day and you took in 1500 calories a day (from any source), you would lose exactly 1 pound of fat per week! You would have a 500 calories per day deficit.  $500 \times 7 \text{ days} = 3500$  calories, or one pound of bodyfat.

So, if your maintenance calorie level is 2000, and you had 1500 calories per day of **chocolate milk and doughnuts**, you would lose **1 pound of fat per week.** A calorie is a calorie. Now, obviously you need to make sure you're getting a balanced

diet, the right amount of protein, fiber, vitamins, etc. My point is that no one type of food is inherently "fattening".

#### **Myth #. 5: "You Can Lose More Than Two Pounds Of Fat Per Week"**

**Fact:** This is false. Even the most active man - *even if he's doing manual labor* - rarely burns more than 3000 calories per day. So for him to lose two pounds of fat per week, he would have to be at 2000 calories per day with a 3000 calorie per day expenditure. **In other words, he would need a 1000 calorie per day deficit to lose more than two pounds of fat per week.** That is about the maximum I see people do. Usually when someone tries to lose more than two pounds of fat per week, they end up pushing their body into "starvation mode". This means the body hoards calories and slows down metabolically. While they might lose more than two pounds on the scale, most of the time of it's water weight and even worse, **muscle mass.**

See, a pound of muscle is only 800 calories because muscle is 80 percent water. A pound of fat is only 15 percent water. So if you dump a bunch of water in a crash diet, you are losing much of the water from your muscles - and sometimes you even burn the muscle tissue itself!

When you see people on TV shows like "**The Biggest Loser**", who shed more than two pounds per week, what they are really losing is water and muscle weight.

People often say, "I want to lose 10 pounds in two weeks". And I say, "Well, I can chop your leg off below the hip." That's the quickest way to lose 10 pounds in two weeks, because you **not** going to lose 10 pounds of fat. It's impossible.

I told a woman recently to **focus on losing one pound per week.** That may not seem like much, but it



Focus on losing one pound of fat per week - that is significant fat loss. This pound of butter is one pound of fat!

is. Look at that pound of butter above. That is a pound of fat! Now imagine a pound of butter dropping off your body each and every week. Your scale weight may go up a pound or two, but a pound of fat per week is a significant loss. That same lady has now lost 40 pounds! And more importantly, her strength stayed the same. She has not lost muscle and doesn't look gaunt. Success stories like this are possible for you, too. All you have to do is get in the gym and **start strength training!**

I hope this article has cleared up some of the myths surrounding weight training. It truly is one of the cornerstones of a healthy lifestyle!

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# The Problem With Eating Healthy



Everyone knows eating healthy is **not** as easy as you would like. However, it certainly has its benefits if you make it a priority. Every one of us has excuses and “reasons” that prevent us from eating a healthy diet...however, the good news is that every excuse has a solution! In this article, I’m going to remove some of the rationalizations you’ve been using as a crutch to avoid eating healthy.

**Excuse #1:** “There are too many tempting foods no matter where I go”.

**Solution:** This is the most common excuse I hear. Planning is the *only way* to overcome this problem. Simple willpower alone will not save you. Think about where you're going and what healthy foods will be available when you get there. Try to mentally rehearse making “healthier” choices in the most tempting situations.

**Excuse #2:** “I don’t have the time”. We are a “fast food” generation. In an attempt to keep up with our demanding schedules, we try to fit in meals based on *convenience* instead of *health*. Between work, soccer practice, ballet class and sleep, extra time is rare. This lack of time leads many people to rely on unhealthy versions of take out: fast food and easy-to-fix processed foods.

**Solution:** The truth is that it's not easy to eat healthy when you are busy and on the go. Especially if it's

not a top priority. Even if you have no time to buy healthy food and cook it at home, you still have options. You can make convenience and fast food work for you. Plan ahead by “batch” cooking. In other words, pick one day out of the week to prepare an entire weeks’ worth of healthy meals.

**Excuse #3:** “Healthy food costs too much”. It may seem cheaper and simpler to eat unhealthy foods and, unfortunately, in some cases it is. However according to the USDA Economic Research Service analysis, more than half of the 69 forms of fruit and 85 forms of vegetables included in the analysis were estimated to cost 25 cents less per serving. Eighty six percent of all vegetables and 78 percent of all fruit cost less than 50 cents per serving. However, “convenience” is expensive.

**Solution:** Plan your meals and shopping lists *in advance*. Search out coupons and specials on supermarket websites. Bring your lunch to work or school.

**Excuse #4:** “I don’t have the motivation”. Healthy foods can seem boring or bland. It may also seem overwhelming to change your habits. The reality is that **it does take more work and planning to eat healthy**.

**Solution:** Take a few minutes to write down all the reasons you want to eat healthier. Make sure these reasons are meaningful to you. Then, any time you doubt or need motivation,

refer to your list. Make eating healthy more exciting by learning delicious recipes and finding tasty, healthy restaurants.

**Excuse #5:** “I eat out all the time”. Up to 50 percent of our food budget is spent eating out, and foods purchased outside the home are typically higher in calories and saturated fat and lower in fiber and nutrients compared to home-prepared foods.

**Solution:** There are a lot of ways to eat out, have a good time “stuffing your face” and still eat healthy! Start by picking places that offer healthy choices.

**Excuse #6:** “My family is unsupportive”. This can be a difficult obstacle and put a damper on your diet and influence your behavior.

**Solution:** Set boundaries for yourself when dining out or eating at home. Also, make sure you keep track of your “difficult” family eating situations and think *in advance* about how you are going to overcome them. Give yourself permission to eat **different foods form the ones they're eating** and remain on track.

The bottom line is that **planning** is the key to healthy eating. Whether it's planning meals for the week, writing down the reasons for eating healthy or finding restaurants that offer health-conscious menus. YHT

# “Ask The Expert”

## Question: “What is Lumbar Spinal Stenosis?”

Answer: To answer your question, let me first give you a little background. Vertebrae are the bones that make up the spine. The spinal canal runs through the vertebrae and, in the lower (or lumbar) spine, contains the nerves supplying **sensation** and **strength** to the legs. Between the vertebrae are the intervertebral discs as well as the spinal facet joints.

Discs become less spongy and less fluid-filled with age. This can result in reduced disc height and *bulging* of the hardened disc into the spinal canal. The bones and ligaments of the spinal facet joints can thicken and enlarge (because of arthritis) also pushing into the spinal canal. These changes cause **narrowing** of the lumbar spinal canal which is known as **spinal stenosis**.

Think of spinal stenosis as the lime build-up on the inside of a garden hose. Over time, it narrows the diameter of the hose, just as spinal stenosis narrows the spinal canal.

## What are the Symptoms?

Spinal stenosis does not necessarily cause symptoms. Many people can have significant stenosis on imaging studies but fail to have any symptoms whatsoever. When present, symptoms may include **pain or numbness in the back and/or legs, or cramping in the legs**. Weakness in the legs may occur. Rarely, bowel and/or bladder problems can occur.

Symptoms are often worse with prolonged standing or walking. Symptoms may come and go, and may vary in severity when present. Bending

forward or sitting increases the room in the spinal canal and may lead to reduced pain or completed relief from pain.

## How is It Diagnosed?

Your physician will take a history and perform a physical examination.

X-rays may be ordered that may reveal evidence of narrowed discs and/or thickened facet joints. A magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) study may be obtained for a more detailed evaluation of spinal structures. Sometimes a CAT scan and/or a lumbar myelogram may be advised for similar improved detail.

Each of these studies can provide information about the presence, location and extent of spinal canal narrowing and nerve root pressure.

## What Treatments Are Available?

If your doctor determines lumbar spinal stenosis is causing your pain, he or she will usually **try nonsurgical treatments at first**.

These treatments may include anti-inflammatory medications (orally or by injection) to reduce associated swelling or analgesic drugs to control pain.

**Physical therapy may be prescribed with goals of improving your strength, endurance and flexibility so that you can maintain or resume a more normal lifestyle.**

Spinal injections (such as an epidural injection of cortisone) may also be prescribed.

## Medication and Pain Management

Your doctor may use one medica-

tion or a combination of medications as part of your treatment plan.

Medications used to control pain are called **analgesics**. Most pain can be treated with nonprescription medications like **aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen or acetaminophen**. Some analgesics, referred to as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs, are also used to reduce swelling or inflammation that may occur. These include aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen, and a variety of prescription drugs. If your doctor gives you analgesics or anti-inflammatory medications, you should watch for side effects like stomach upset or bleeding. Chronic use of prescription or over-the-counter analgesics or NSAIDs should be monitored by your physician for the development of any potential problems.

If you have severe persistent pain that is not relieved by other analgesics or NSAIDs, your doctor might prescribe **narcotic analgesics** (such as codeine) for a short time. Side effects include nausea, constipation, dizziness, drowsiness, and use can result in dependency. All medication should be taken only as directed.

Other medications are available that have an anti-inflammatory effect. Corticosteroid medications --- either orally or by injection --- are sometimes prescribed for more severe back and leg pain because of their very powerful anti-inflammatory effect.

Corticosteroids, like NSAIDs, can have side effects. Risks and benefits of this medication should be discussed with your physician.

Selected spinal injections, or "blocks," may be used to relieve symptoms of pain. These are injections of corticosteroid into the epidural space

(the area in the spinal canal surrounding the spinal nerves) or facet joints performed by a doctor with special training in this technique. Depending on response to initial injection, several follow-up procedures may be performed at later dates. Injections are often done as part of a comprehensive rehabilitation and treatment program.

### Nonsurgical Treatment

Symptoms of spinal stenosis frequently result in activity avoidance. This results in reduced flexibility, strength and cardiovascular endurance. A physical therapy or exercise program usually begins with stretching exercises to restore flexibility to tight muscles. You may be advised to stretch frequently to

maintain flexibility gains. Cardiovascular (aerobic) exercise, such as stationary bicycling or walking on a treadmill, may be added to build endurance and improve circulation to the nerves. Improved blood supply to the nerves may alleviate the symptoms of spinal stenosis.

You may also be given specific strengthening exercises for the muscles of the back, abdomen, and legs. Everyday activities can be less challenging if flexibility, strength and endurance are optimized. Your therapist and physician may advise you on how best to incorporate a maintenance exercise program into your life, either at home using simple equipment, or at a fitness facility.

For some individuals with spinal stenosis, home modification and safety

will be considered. Perhaps the washer and dryer should be moved to a more convenient location. A bedside commode may be advisable. Bathroom safety devices are prescribed if needed. Strategies for preparing meals, pacing activities and conserving energy may be reviewed. Optimal fitting of assistive walking devices such as canes and walkers may be recommended.

Unless significant or progressive leg weakness develops, or bowel or bladder problems occur, the presence of spinal stenosis by itself usually does not represent a dangerous condition in the adult. Therefore, treatment is aimed at pain reduction and increasing the patient's ability to function.

Bottom line, spinal stenosis responds to non-surgical treatment and only requires surgery in extreme cases.

# Health Trivia - Test Your Health And Fitness Knowledge!

This month's quiz is full of questions from the main article on [Strength Training Myths And Realities](#). See how many of these you can get right...and no peeking! Good luck!

**QUESTION #1:** True or False: To really gain muscle and lose bodyfat, you need to be in the gym at least 75 minutes per session.

- a.) TRUE
- b.) FALSE

**QUESTION #2:** True or False: "Cardio" / Aerobic workouts is the best way to lose bodyfat in the long-run

- a.) TRUE
- b.) FALSE

**QUESTION #3:** True or False: Women should avoid heavy training with weights because it "bulks them up" like a man and builds big muscles.

- a.) TRUE
- b.) FALSE

**QUESTION #4:** True or False: Carbs are inherently fattening and should be avoided like the plague.

- a.) TRUE
- b.) FALSE

**QUESTION #5:** If you just work hard enough, you can lose up to 20 pounds of bodyfat per week (like on "The Biggest Loser" TV show)

- a.) TRUE
- b.) FALSE

**Answers:**

1) b 2) a 3) b 4) a 5) b

# Ancient Medicine, Modern Technology

## *The Miracle Of Digital Meridian Imaging*



Mark Talle is using the *Digital Meridian Imaging System* as part of an integral approach to your healthcare. The following will give you more information about the role of Digital Meridian Imaging in your care and why Mark has chosen to use this advanced equipment.

### What is Digital Meridian Imaging?

The Digital Meridian Imaging system is a **computerized tool used to analyze and document the energetic status of the acupuncture meridian.**

Mark Talle will use the system in a short examination by touching a moistened probe to acupuncture points on your hands and feet.

### What are Acupuncture Meridians?

Acupuncture meridians are invisible energy pathways in your body that conduct life-force energy, or Qi (pronounced "chee") in and around all the parts of your body. Blockage or interference in these meridian pathways can result in energetic imbalances that may contribute to negative health conditions. The primary goal of acupuncture treatment is to restore energetic balance and proper energy flow to these meridians, thus allowing your body to function properly and return to health naturally.

### How does Digital Meridian Imaging Help?

The Digital Meridian Imaging system allows your acupuncturist to measure the energy level of each acupuncture meridian and compare the results in a graphical format. Armed with this information, your acupuncturist can make better-informed decision about your condition, and pro-

vide the best treatment possible.

### Is Digital Meridian Imaging Proven?

This system is based on the Japanese acupuncture system of Ryodoraku, which was developed over 50 years ago and has been continually researched and improved by literally thousands of healthcare providers all over the world. Dozens of studies show Ryodoraku is safe and effective, and a reliable method of locating and correcting energetic imbalances.

### Why Did I Choose This System?

The Digital Meridian Imaging is the **premiere** measurement tool of its type on the market today. It provides a fast and efficient exam, gives the most advanced treatment option, and allows your doctor to easily track your progress. Digital Meridian Imaging is the natural choice for practitioners who are committed to high-quality care and **outstanding results.** Mark Talle insists on providing the highest quality care, and this is the most important reason he has chosen this system.

As a reader / subscriber of  
**YourHealthToday**, I've arranged for you to  
receive a **FREE** and confidential consultation  
on how this breakthrough imaging system  
can help you! All you have to do is call:

**(714) 528-9400**

We'll set up a time to visit with you  
briefly and explore all the options. **Call Now!**

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## Here' How To Make Your New Year's Resolution Come True...

If you made a New Year's Resolution to "finally get into shape", but don't know where to start, you're **not alone!** Many people have the **desire** and **motivation** to get into shape, but **lack the knowledge**. They don't know what exercises to do, how to do them and how to avoid injury. This can be frustrating and stand in the way of you getting in shape. **And we don't want that to happen!** This is where Physical Therapy Specialists comes in. You see, our resident personal trainer, Brian, has designed a "get in shape" program *just for you!* Whether you're getting back into shape after a long layoff, or are starting fresh, this program is designed for people just like you. Brian is exceedingly

patient and won't push you harder than you can handle. He understands where you are right now and will take you through the program at your pace: one step at a time. Consistency is the key to long-term weight loss, cardiovascular conditioning, flexibility and strength. You'll never believe how much energy you'll have...and how great you feel after starting Brian's program! So don't be afraid: Reach out and give us a call **right now**. Ask Brian about his special program today and get a FREE session with a true fitness PRO! Call NOW!

**(714 ) 528-9400**