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Getting Back in Shape

Diet and Exercise Tips from a Personal Trainer

By Cathy Daniel

Superslow uses circuit machines to work the entire body by first fatiguing the muscles to a state of almost complete failure and then building them back up to achieve a lean, strong, toned physique. Reconditioning your body is not about dropping pounds – it is about getting fit for the long haul.

By focusing on the many benefits that are a result of exercise

(rather than concentrating on just losing weight), you are more likely to stay motivated. Health benefits include: lower blood pressure, increased bone density, improved stamina and mood, and better sleep – but a good diet and regular exercise have to be made part of your daily routine and need to be a priority for you. Rise above the excuses and procrastination and make a plan. Here are some ideas to help you make it a part of your routine:

- Keep a food journal. This doesn't have to be elaborate, but it does need to keep you accountable and make you more aware of what you are eating. Most women want to get rid of abdominal fat and although "ab" crunches will build and tone your muscles, you have to first remove the layer of fat in order to make

them visible. The fastest way to do this is by eliminating sugars and avoiding saturated fats because these types of food often settle right in the stomach area. A food diary can be an effective way to make better food choices on a daily basis.

- Manage your time to allow for daily activity. Aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise each day, but if you find that you can only manage half of that, then using that time for a brisk walk is definitely better than doing nothing. Make yourself a priority.

- Move your body! Exercise is not complicated but you do have to move your body to get in shape and to stay in shape. Consistent efforts will pay off. Give yourself at least 6 to 8 weeks to notice a change in your body.

- Find an exercise program that you enjoy. Whether you choose a personal trainer, a gym membership or a home gym, you will be the one who has to do the work. If you don't enjoy it, you won't do it. ■

* Always check with your physician before starting any exercise program.

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After the delivery of a baby, a woman's body begins the slow process of recovery. During this time, new mothers should always be sensible about exercising and be sure to listen to their bodies so that they don't "over-do" it.* Although there are several exercises that will strengthen specific areas of the body, it takes weekly strength training, combined with good, overall nutritional intake and cardiovascular activity, to get results. Spot reducing is a myth.

So what types of exercises will help to get you safely back into shape? "Superslow" is one strength-training method that is not only safe but very effective as well. With only two 30-minute sessions each week (and making sure that you rest at least 48 hours between sessions),