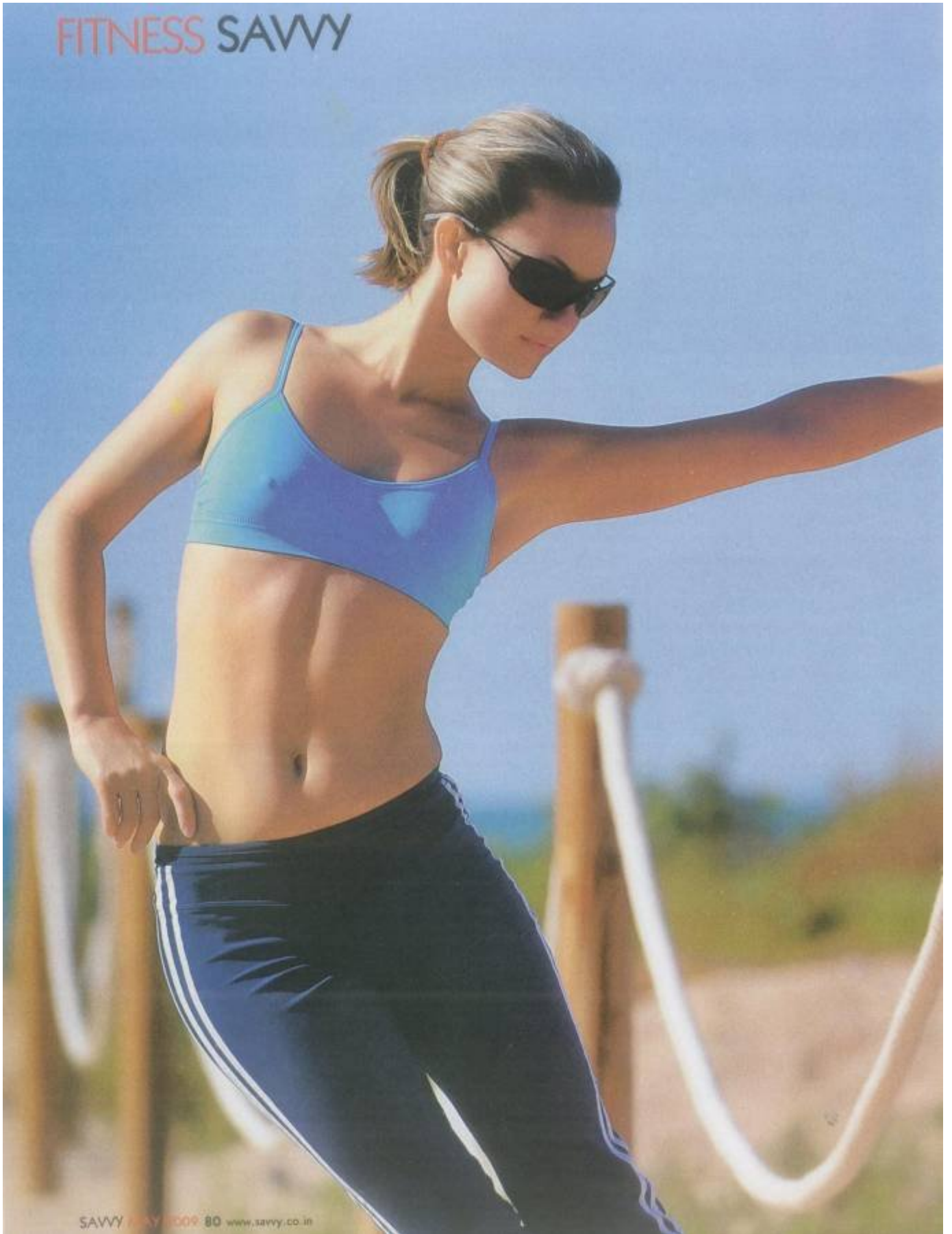


FITNESS SAVVY



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COOL OFF!



That's the clue to motivate yourself to exercise in summer, says **Althea Shah**

Exercising in the hot weather puts extra stress on your heart and lungs. Both the exercise itself and the air temperature increase your body temperature. To dissipate heat, more blood circulates through your skin. This leaves less blood for your muscles, which increases your heart rate. If the humidity is high, your body faces added stress because sweat doesn't readily evaporate from your skin - which only pushes your body temperature higher. All of which make exercising in summer hotter, horrid and demotivating...

But stay motivated, hot weather or not, because fitness should always be number one on your priority list. Begin with cooling your body, and keep these basic precautions in mind:

Take it slow. If you're used to exercising indoors or in cooler weather, take it easy at first. As your body adapts to the heat, gradually increase the length and intensity of your workouts. If you have a medical condition or are on medication, ask your doctor if you need to take additional precautions.

Drink plenty of fluids. Your body's ability to sweat and cool down depends on adequate rehydration. Drink plenty of water while you're working out - even if you don't feel thirsty. If you're planning to exercise intensely or for longer than one

hour, consider sports drinks instead. These drinks can replace the sodium, chloride and potassium you lose through sweating. Avoid drinks that contain caffeine or alcohol, which actually promote fluid loss.

Eat regularly. It is important to keep eating during the day. Try to get five small meals a day. For many people, the heat decreases appetite, but your body still needs the energy. Fruits and vegetables are great for energy and will also help with some hydration.

Dress right. Lightweight, loose fitting clothing promotes sweat evaporation and cooling by letting more air pass over your body. Avoid dark colours, which can absorb the heat. A light-coloured hat can limit your exposure to the sun.

Avoid workouts in the afternoon. Exercise in the morning or evening - when it's likely to be cooler outdoors - rather than the middle of the day. If possible, exercise in the shade or in a pool.

Wear sunscreen. Even if you are out early in the morning, if you are exposed to the sun, it can give you a burn. Sunburn decreases your body's ability to cool itself.

Warm up and cool down. Warming up

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Five minutes of walking or a light jog is a good way to prepare you for a workout.

before exercise and cooling down after is very important. Give your body a chance to adjust to the outside temperature before beginning your activity. Eg: Five minutes of walking or a light jog is a good way to prepare you for a workout. When you are done with the workout, be sure to cool down. Eg: Walk for five or 10 minutes to allow your heart rate to return to normal. Avoid extreme temperature changes. Never go right from a hot, sweaty workout into cold air conditioning.

HEAT ATTACK

When you're exercising in the heat, be on the lookout for heat-related illnesses. Signs and symptoms may include: Weakness, headache, dizziness, muscle cramps, nausea or vomiting, rapid heartbeat.

If you suspect a heat-related illness, stop exercising and get out of the heat. Drink water, and dampen and fan your skin. If you don't feel better within 30 minutes, contact your doctor.

Exercising in the heat: How to safely work out in hot conditions

These are just a few of the exercises you can do at home that require no equipment. The key is variety, creativity and an open mind!

Chair squats: Grab a chair and place it behind you. Standing in front of the chair with your feet hip/shoulder width apart, bend your knees and slowly squat towards the chair. Let your butt lightly touch the chair and slowly come back up. Do this 10-15 times. Rest for a moment, and then repeat.

Step-ups on the stairs: Keep one foot

completely on the step, and bring the other foot up, tap and come back down. Do 10 per leg. Rest for a moment, and then repeat. Remember to keep the chest high and shoulders back.


Tricep dips: Begin by sitting on the edge of the bed/ chair with knees bent and hands behind you. Bend your elbows



Fruits and veggies are energy boosters

and lower down a few inches, then push your back up. Do this 10 times, rest for a moment, then repeat.

Push-ups: Begin by standing in front of the wall/kitchen counter with feet together. Place your slightly inverted hands on the top of the counter top. With your arms a little more than shoulder width apart, bend the elbows and try and get your chest as close to the counter top as possible. Then power it back up. Do this 10 times, rest for a moment, then repeat.

Cardio: Walking/running. 

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