


FITNESS SAVVY

Bikini Babe



...and how you can be one. Fitness expert **Althea Shah** shows you how to get the 'swimsuit' body.



It's April already and the swimsuit season is just around the corner. Maybe you meant to start getting in shape sooner (like back in January) but it didn't happen. So now you're wondering how to get in shape - and fast!

The good news is that you can shape up in as little as four to eight weeks.

But have realistic expectations. If you're hoping to lose 10 kgs a month, it's not going to happen; three-four kgs is more like it.

DON'T GO OVERBOARD

Losing too much weight too fast could actually have adverse effects. If you lose more than three kgs a month, you're losing muscle along with fat.

Severely restricting your diet can also defeat your weight loss efforts because when you do that, your body panics. This can lead to cravings, irritability and a slower metabolism as your body fights to hang on to fuel.

Also working out too intensely, particularly if you've gone from couch potato to fitness fanatic, could put you at risk for injury. And rapid, dramatic weight loss is difficult, if not impossible, to maintain.

So where do you begin?

Watch your diet and sweat it out. A combination of cardiovascular activity half-an-hour to an hour thrice a week and strength training thrice a week is the ideal way for weight loss.

CARDIOVASCULAR ACTIVITY

If you're a beginner though, start with less intense exercises such as walking and work your way up to more challenging activities.

If you've been working out for a while but not seeing results, kick up your program by working at a faster pace or trying something new like walking, jogging, hiking, swimming, biking, skipping, stair climbing...

STRENGTH TRAINING

Building muscle will give you a toned body and help minimize fat. A workout has to be planned targeting all major muscle groups, at least three times a week.

Beginners can start with one set of exercises and build up to two or three. Eight to 12 reps of an activity is standard. The weight should be heavy enough to completely fatigue the



FITNESS SAVVY

QUICK FIX

We all hate to have our thighs rub together, so for this issue do wide squats.

This exercise concentrates on your inner thigh muscles

- Stand with your feet a little wider than your shoulders and then bend till your knees are at a 45 degree angle. Tighten your thighs and hold for 5 seconds and stand back up. Keep your back straight for a good posture, (30 times).

For tightening the hips

- Lie face down on the ground and keep your elbows on the floor at all times. Bend your knees and lift your hips. Then, squeezing your hip muscles, hold for 5 seconds and release, keeping your hips in the air. (20 times per side).

For the upper body - Get rid of that extra flab that always seems to hang out of your bikini bottom

- Do wide push-ups. (25 times)

target muscle by the last repetition.

REMEMBER

To lose half kg of fat in a week, you need to create a deficit of 3,500 calories by eating less and exercising more.

BE CAREFUL

Do it - just don't overdo it!

Injuries tend to rise in people who are out of shape and push themselves too hard. That's why it's essential for beginners to start slowly. Walk instead of sprinting. Gradually work your way up to a more challenging workout.

WARM UP

Spend five to 10 minutes walking or doing a lighter version of your favourite activity.

DRINK UP!

Summer sports and recreational activities also carry the potential dangers of heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

Dehydration increases the risk of these heat illnesses, particularly in people who are not used to the heat.

How much should you drink?

Some people sweat more than others. The more you sweat, the more you will need to replace the fluids lost.

Fruits are abundant in summer - the redder, the better. Blueberries and strawberries are excellent.

If you exercise for an hour, you need to drink a litre of fluid to compensate. Ideally, drink every 15 minutes. Keep sipping on water. Don't wait till you are thirsty.

TIME

It's best to exercise in the mornings or late afternoons, when the sun isn't so hot.

LIGHT WEAR

Wear light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing, a hat, sunglasses and, of course, sunscreen.




EAT RIGHT

Fruits are abundant in summer - the redder, the better.

- Blueberries and strawberries are excellent. Add two kiwi fruits a day to your diet as they have been proven to reduce high BP, are high in vitamin C and considered excellent fat burners.

- Blend carrots, watermelon and mint with a little ice - makes for a great summer drink!

- Lentil beans, soya, lean beef mince and chicken are excellent sources of protein. 

Althea Shah is General Manager, Operations & Fitness Expert, Gold's Gym India