

Your instructor, with a little help from *Fitpro* – the only magazine for group exercise instructors – brings you advice on insomnia, stretching your glutes, and how hormones can help you shape up.



TOO MUCH EXERCISE?

Find yourself unable to sleep after exercising in the evening? Clinical exercise physiologist William Sukala advises what to do when insomnia kicks in.

We all know that exercise is a good thing, but you do need to be careful not to get carried away and fall into the overtraining category. This will occur if you stop "listening" to your body, and start to exceed its ability to recover in between training sessions.

Overtraining can cause all sorts of physical and psychological changes, including insomnia. Other symptoms include mood changes, lack of motivation, irritability, loss of appetite and impaired performance during workouts.

It does all depend on the person, but if you feel tired all the time, it's probably time to slow down. If you're doing hour-long sessions, six times a week, try cutting back the length of your workout, the number of days, or lowering the intensity.

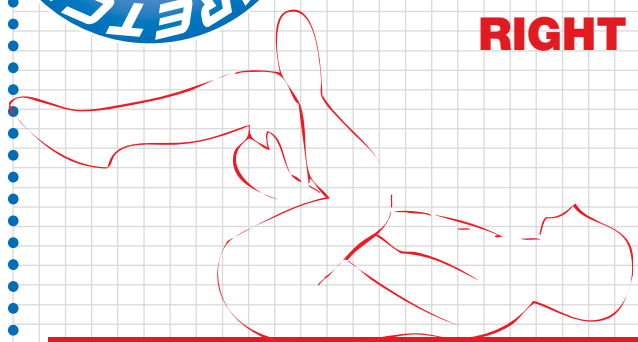
It's also worth looking at your diet. Caffeine will keep you awake a night, so cut back on tea, coffee, soft drinks and chocolate.

If you're still having trouble sleeping, I'd advise you to contact your physician.

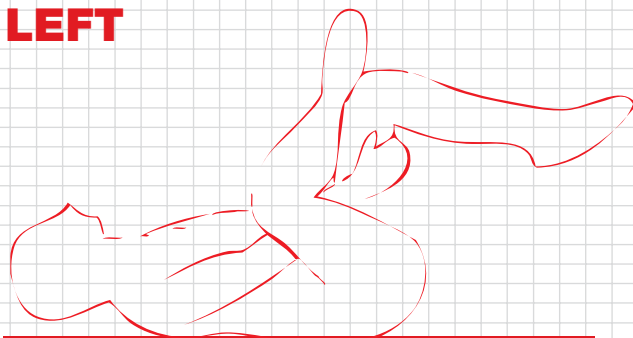


GLUTES

RIGHT



LEFT



WHY?

Well, who doesn't want a better butt? Stretching the large muscles in your behind after a workout can also help avoid training-related injuries and stiffness in the lower body.

STEP 1

Lie on your back with your legs straight.

STEP 2

Bend one knee and draw it up to your chest. Then cross the other leg over the opposite knee.

STEP 3

Clasp your hands under the knee and gently pull it towards you – you should feel the stretch in your buttock.

STEP 4

Gently move the knee into and out of the deeper stretch, feeling the muscle progressively relax.

STEP 5

Hold the stretch for 15-30secs and repeat with the other leg.

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ARE HORMONES HOLDING BACK YOUR WEIGHT LOSS?

The jury's still out on whether spot-reduction fat loss is really possible – but there is a case that harnessing your hormones can play a role in shaping up, writes celebrity PT Dax Moy.

Jelly belly?

Fat gathers around the abdominals because of a hormone called cortisol, also known as the stress hormone. Although cortisol helps manage stress and fights infection, when too much is released through very high stress levels, it can result in fat being stored around the stomach.

Cortisol levels are lowest between 10pm and 2am, then start to rise as you get closer to waking up, impairing the quality and quantity of your sleep. Going to bed by 10pm means your sleep will be of the best quality.

Cortisol levels rise with even a tiny bit of light, so dim the lights in the evenings, and stop working on laptops and other devices at least an hour or so before bed. You can control cortisol levels with a magnesium supplement such as Magnesium Orotate.

Bingo wings

High oestrogen levels directly linked to cortisol levels are to blame for fat that collects around the arms and thighs, leading to flabby bingo wings and chubby legs. As oestrogen rises, thyroid absorption goes down, and this affects the metabolism.

Look at the amount of xeno-oestrogens in your diet, which can come from things like plastic containers and bottles, and ditch caffeine and products containing phthalates (commonly found in lotions, powders and cosmetics, and which can result in high oestrogen levels). Avoid unfermented soy for the same reason.

Love handles and muffin tops

Fat stored around the lower back and sides of the waist can be a result of high insulin levels. Look closely at your diet and avoid too much rice, potatoes and pasta. Low levels of thyroid can also result in fat collecting around the hips.



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