

FITNESS FOLIO

Take time to build swimsuit body

Temperatures are rising, and whether you choose to stay cool by the pool or head to the beach, one thing is certain: Swimsuit season has arrived.



YVETTE CRADDOCK

Skimpy suits and unforgiving summer fashions have many of us checking out our soon-to-be-bared waistlines. Forget the crash diets and the fad weight-loss programs. The following tips will accelerate your long-term fitness goals and move you one step closer to your ultimate beach body.

■ Don't go hungry. Starving yourself and crash dieting can be dangerous. Eat five to six well-balanced, smaller meals per day and replace unhealthy snacks with healthy alternatives. Opt for fresh fruits, veggies, chicken and fish.

■ Amp up your cardio. Increase your cardio to at least 30 to 45 minutes five days a week.

■ Change it up. Varying the intensity and makeup of your workout will work different muscle groups and help generate results.

■ Add weight to your workout. Weightlifting tones problem areas and adds definition. Because muscle burns calories, the more you build, the more you'll burn. And remember that technique is more important than the amount of weight you lift.

■ Stretch and breathe. It is vital to warm up and then stretch. Warm muscles are more pliable and are not prone to injuries. Take time to stretch before and after each workout. During your workouts, remember to breathe, which will aid your body in delivering the oxygen it needs to sustain your workout.

■ Stay hydrated. Drink half your body weight in ounces of water per day. So, if you weigh 150 pounds, drink 75 ounces of water a day to keep your metabolism up and help combat cravings.

■ Bring a cheerleader.

■ Reward yourself.

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