

Do sit-ups blast belly fat? If you do 100 crunches, you'd expect to burn major belly fat. Unfortunately, your body just doesn't work that way. There's no direct metabolic connection between abdominal muscles and the fat cells surrounding them, says Sherri McMillan, personal trainer and owner of Northwest Personal Training & Northwest Women's Fitness Club. The body pulls fat from all over. Its sent to the liver to be converted into fatty acids, which travel back to your muscles as fuel, McMillan explains. That means any fat your body recruits for energy when you're doing repeated sit-ups could come from the arms, thighs, butt and tummy. So what's the secret to shedding belly fat or any fat? Follow a balanced program of cardio and strength training, plus eat a healthy diet. But don't give up the crunches. Even if you're not losing tummy fat, abs workouts help tone and suck in that flabby belly, giving the appearance of a slimmer waist. Plus, toning happens faster than weight loss. It's one of the speediest ways to see changes in your body. *(Life Script)*

GOOD PAIN vs. BAD PAIN? When it comes to exercise, pain can be a good thing or a bad thing. It's crucial that you know the difference. When you work out and truly challenge your muscles, you'll experience the good kind of pain. You probably recognize this as feeling the burn as you finish the last few reps of an exercise. This sensation means you're creating enough resistance to transform your lean muscle tissue. You may feel a bit sore after a challenging workout, which is perfectly fine. On the other hand, bad pain happens when an injury occurs during the exercise or when you aggravate a pre-existing

injury. If this is the pain you feel, stop immediately. Ignoring it and continuing to exercise or pushing through the pain will only cause more damage. If you have a pre-existing injury or health condition, I recommend seeing your physician before starting any exercise program. *(Life Script)*

IS SPOT TONING POSSIBLE? By now you should know that spot reducing (losing weight in a targeted area of your body) isn't possible unless you're willing to go under the knife. But what about spot toning? You may have heard that you can't spot tone and must learn to accept the shape of your body just the way it is. Well, I'm happy to tell you that the spot-toning caution is only half-true. Here's the whole truth: Moving one area of your body over and over doesn't burn fat in that one spot, but it will firm up the area. For example, if you focus only on your thighs by doing hundreds of leg lifts, you probably won't slim down even though you will strengthen your leg muscles. However, if you target your entire body upper, middle and lower with certain resistance-training moves, you can boost your metabolism high enough that your body burns fat all day long. This will help burn fat all over your body, including your thighs. Resistance-training is an important part of your fitness program. It helps strengthen your weak areas, balancing your entire body. Combine resistance training with a healthy eating plan, and you *will* shed the fat. *(Life Script)*