

DID YOU KNOW that it is not uncommon to hear of fitness fanatics using caffeine to boost their workouts, especially if they're trying to lose weight and want that extra edge. Whether you're working out in the a.m. after your morning cup of coffee or stopping by Starbucks after work for an espresso on your way to the gym, your reliance on caffeine may actually be hindering your fitness efforts. While many studies have shown caffeine can stimulate brain activity to make you more alert and active during your workout, a Swiss study shows the dark side of using caffeine to work out harder. After ingesting an amount of caffeine equivalent to just two cups of coffee, blood flow to the heart during exercise can be decreased by as much as 22% at normal elevation, or 39% in high-altitude conditions. Less blood flow through the heart means less oxygen is being delivered to working muscles, which means it won't be long until they tire out. Lack of oxygen is one of the most limiting factors in athletic performance since it forces you to work anaerobically, which increases lactic acid levels and muscle fatigue. Why risk it by overstepping the boundaries of caffeine use? If you must have coffee in the morning and you also work out in the a.m., try switching to half-decaf, and then to decaf. If you're worried about low energy levels before your workouts, grab a healthy, carbohydrate-rich snack instead to fuel your energy needs. (*LifeScript*)

Run Less to Grow Faster Running doesn't build muscle mass. If it did, marathoners would have legs like defensive linemen, and workers in Boston would have to repave the streets each year following the city's signature race. But running shrinks muscle fibers to make them more metabolically efficient, thereby saving the pavement. You'd think you could get around this by lifting weights in addition to running, but your body negates that work through a mysterious "interference effect." Your type II fibers—the biggest ones—will still grow if you run and lift. But your type I fibers won't, and even though they're smaller than the type IIs, they probably comprise 50 percent of the muscle fibers in your body that have any growth potential. Cut back on your running program and you'll see growth in both your slow- and fast-twitch muscle fibers, and perhaps finally get your body to look the way you think it should. *Excerpted from The Book of Muscle (Rodale, 2003)*

DID YOU KNOW that sweating is your body's way of releasing excess body heat to maintain an ideal core temperature of 98.6° Fahrenheit? When you exercise or are exposed to the elements on a hot day, your body will release sweat through the millions of sweat glands located all over your skin. The sweat then evaporates, releasing the heat into the environment and cooling your body down. But what happens when you're sweating so hard you are dripping? Dripping sweat is not a good sign, and in fact, it's signaling you need to slow down and cool off. When sweat drips, evaporation ceases to occur, which means the excess heat your body is trying so hard to get rid of is not actually being released. Your body can only do so much to regulate its internal temperatures, so you have to be conscious of your body heat and rate of sweat production. If you're exercising so hard you're dripping with sweat, make sure you wipe it off with a dry towel as much as you can to allow for evaporation. If it's really hot or humid outside or inside, take a break in a cooler place. And don't forget to replace lost

fluids. You can lose 1-2 liters of sweat per hour in high-temperature conditions, which means you need to replace those fluids. Drink plenty of water and use a high-quality sports drink, such as Gatorade, if you're going to be exercising or exposed to high temperatures for more than 90 minutes. (*LifeScript*)