

The exercise myths that HOLD US BACK

If the workout isn't working post-holiday, it's time to reboot your mindset. *Clare Geraghty* sorts the fitness facts from the fiction

PHOTOGRAPH *Brian Marcus*

1 MYTH: 'IF I EXERCISE, I CAN EAT WHAT I WANT'

TRUTH: WEIGHT LOSS IS 80 PER CENT DIET, 20 PER CENT EXERCISE

'The reality is that you can't out-train a bad diet,' says celebrity trainer Dalton Wong, founder of Twenty Two Training, who has honed the figures of Amanda Seyfried and Jennifer Lawrence. 'Weight loss starts and ends in the kitchen.

Working out is the easy part - it's the other hours of the day that you have to learn to be disciplined about what you put in your mouth.

Exercise makes you lose weight quicker and ensures you can sustain your weight loss, but you'll never drop the pounds on a junk-food diet, no matter how much you train.'

Nick Weiss, master instructor at Equinox gym, debunks the myth that you can work out to 'catch up' for what you put into your mouth. 'To lose weight, you have to plan to create a caloric deficit,' he says.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

'Before eating something, imagine having it naked in front of a mirror,' says Wong. Suddenly that cupcake doesn't seem too attractive. If you are craving a treat, don't deprive yourself, but just have a small amount. 'Three bites satisfies a craving - any more than that is gluttony,' advises Wong.

2 MYTH: CELEBRITY BODIES ARE ATTAINABLE

TRUTH: IT IS PART OF A CELEBRITY'S JOB TO LOOK GOOD. THEY HAVE TO MAKE TIME FOR EXERCISE, AND OFTEN TRAIN FOR A ROLE OR RED-CARPET EVENT

'Celebrity bodies are attainable - just quit your job, forget about your family, hire a trainer: a nutritionist and a masseuse, and commit a few hours a day to the gym,' says Weiss.

'It takes time [to get into celebrity shape],' adds Wong.

'A-listers have the pressure of films and red carpets, pushing them to achieve amazing results in tiny periods of time. Real people's lives aren't like that.'

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

Become the best version of yourself. Accept that you'll never have Cameron Diaz's legs or Madonna's abs and, instead, aim to be a healthier, stronger and leaner version of yourself. 'Comparing yourself to others is simply setting yourself up to fail,' says Nicola Addison, owner of Eqvvs personal training where models Erin O'Connor and Daisy Lowe work out.

3 MYTH: DAYS NOT SPENT IN THE GYM ARE WASTED

TRUTH: REST DAYS AND A PROPER SLEEP SUPPORT WEIGHT LOSS

'Resting is crucial for your muscles, your nervous system, your brain and your body,' says Wong, 'but also for weight loss.'

'Every time you place physical stress on your body, you need to give it time to recover to be fitter, stronger and support your metabolism for the next time you work out. If you're going to go at it every day, how is your body going to recover?' asks Addison.

'Getting sufficient sleep to allow your muscles to repair after an intense workout helps to improve your basal metabolic rate - the amount of energy your body needs daily at rest,' she adds. 'Your metabolism needs to be pushed

to use the food stored in your body to produce energy. Interval training (see opposite) is an effective way to do this. In order for it to work at top speed, you need appropriate rest, which means days off the gym.'

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

Never work out more than five days a week. Try to exercise either on alternate days or on weekdays only. You will also lose motivation quicker if you work out every day.

Make sure you get enough sleep. 'Our bodies work with the rhythms of the sun,' says Wong, 'so we need less sleep (but still at least six hours a night) during the summer, and at least seven hours in winter.'

