



Fitness Facts

Revving Up Your Metabolism—It's Easy With Exercise

(NAPSA)—Why can your friend eat an entire pint of ice cream and never gain a pound while you have to watch every bite, or else? It could be your metabolism.

Each of us has our own metabolic rate—the rate at which our bodies burn energy, in the form of calories. Genetics, gender, age and environment play large roles in our metabolic rates.

The bone structure and body type you inherited from your parents affects your metabolism, as does your gender; men have higher metabolisms than women—they burn between 10 percent and 15 percent more calories than their female counterparts. According to an October 2002 article in *The New York Times*, this is due to men's higher proportion of muscle.

The *Times* article also stated that around age 30, muscle mass in inactive people declines by about 2 percent to 5 percent each decade, causing their metabolic rates to decline proportionally.

Even your environment can affect your metabolism. People in tropical climates or very cold regions generally have higher metabolic rates than those in more temperate locations.

The good news is no matter your genetic make-up, gender, age or environment, you can rev up your metabolic rate through exercise so your body burns more calories all day long.

"The most effective way to increase your metabolism is to combine cardiovascular exercise and strength training," said Lisa Packheiser, corporate fitness



Regular exercise is the key to pumping up your metabolism.

director at Spare Time, Inc. in Gold River, Calif. "The combination of regular cardiovascular activity and strength training will result in a body with more muscle and less fat, which produces a higher metabolism because even at rest, your muscles actively use more calories than fat tissue."

Muscle burns at least 90 percent more calories than fat does. The more you increase your muscle mass, the more calories you burn—around 30 to 50 more per day for every pound of muscle gained. As a result, your metabolism speeds up to provide your muscles with energy. According to Packheiser, "The more muscle you have, the higher your metabolism will be. Therefore, the best thing to do to raise your metabolism is to get and stay active."

At the gym, use a combination of cardiovascular and strength-training machines to get a total-body workout. Most cardio

machines offer different programs to give you an effective workout and ensure variety to keep exercise fun and interesting.

If the gym isn't for you or you don't have time to go to it regularly, incorporate a simple program at home. Exercise equipment manufacturer Life Fitness (www.lifefitness.com) offers a tremendous variety of home fitness equipment to meet a wide range of budgets and exercise needs.

Even if you aren't ready to invest in home fitness equipment, you can still get good cardiovascular and strength-training workouts at home.

"With a little creativity, you can exercise anywhere," stated Packheiser. "Buy a large exercise ball, resistance bands and variable weight dumbbells. Finish your workout with a jog, a brisk walk or a bike ride."

One caution: a metabolism killer is the super-low-calorie diet. Eating significantly fewer calories than you burn can ratchet down your metabolism as your body senses starvation and conserves energy.

So to rev up your metabolism and make your body burn more calories throughout the day, even at rest, get active. By incorporating a strength training routine with cardiovascular exercise, you will build lean muscle mass, and the more muscle you have, the higher your metabolism will be. Maybe soon you'll be able to indulge in that pint of ice cream without a second thought!