

HEALTH NEWS

Exercise Exam

It's final-exam time! Here's a short test of your fitness IQ.

1. True False **You should stretch before you do any exercise.**
2. True False **The fewer crunches you do, the better.**
3. True False **If you're not sore, you didn't work out hard enough.**
4. True False **Late-night snacking won't make you fat.**
5. True False **Energy drinks will help you work out harder.**
6. True False **Exercise can decrease your risk for heart disease in less than a month.**
7. True False **You should reach your target weight before you start weight training.**
8. True False **Weights first, cardio second.**

Answer Key:
1. False

Warm up before you stretch. That doesn't mean you need to do your entire cardio routine—just roll out your wrists and ankles, then do five minutes of light activity, like walking or jumping rope. Then stretch, do your usual workout, and stretch again.

2. True

Quality trumps quantity, so you're better off doing 25 perfect crunches than 100 sloppy ones. Take two seconds to lift and two seconds to lower, and make sure your abs—not your shoulders or neck—feel the burn. And don't skip cardio, because all the crunches in the world won't give you washboard abs if they're buried under a layer of flab.

3. False

Don't judge your workout by your aspirin consumption the next day. Focus on less painful factors: Did you increase your workout time, your benching



weight, or your reps? If you're seeing improvements in strength or endurance, your workout is good enough.

4. True

Your metabolism doesn't care what time it is. If you're eating more calories than you're burning in a day, you'll gain weight. If you eat less, you'll lose—even if some of those calories come from a late-night pizza.

5. False

A Swiss study found that caffeine limits your body's ability to boost blood flow during exercise. Blood flow dropped 22 percent in those who exercised after two cups of coffee. (They tested coffee, but odds are it's true for energy drinks as well.) Bottom line? The buzz may make you feel more alert, but it could actually be hurting your performance.

6. True

It may take a while to see major weight loss, but the

lifesaving changes kick in pretty quickly. A recent study found that a high-fiber, low-fat diet and an hour of walking every day drastically decreased health risks like high cholesterol and diabetes. It may even reverse type 2 diabetes—42 percent of the men had diabetes when the study started, but by the end, only 23 percent did.

7. False

Muscle helps to boost your metabolism. When you start an exercise program, make weight training a part of it. Don't worry about bulking up—you'll actually burn more calories and drop the pounds more quickly.

8. False

Switch it up. A tough cardio workout will wear you out, so you may not be able to lift as much. On the other hand, heavy lifting can leave you slogging through your cardio. Alternate the order of your workout for the best results.