



WHY MANY WOMEN NEVER GET TONED

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Introduction

If you're like most people, you've tried dieting and learned the hard way that it doesn't work. You've been working out hard, but despite your best efforts, you haven't got the results you wanted and your body looks the same. You just haven't been able to achieve the lean, toned body you want.

Well here's a no-nonsense guide to help you de-bunk many of the myths and misinformation around getting toned, to explain why many women never get toned, and to set you on the right path – so you can look good, feel great and be healthy.



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STARTING with the facts

Firstly, there's no such thing as toning exercises - no particular exercise or combination of sets and reps can directly cause tone. No style or type of training that in itself allows you to tone up a specific area of your body (or your entire body for that matter). There's no magical method or workout that you can do. And no machines, products or supplements that can make you toned (despite the claims of the multi-billion dollar weight-loss and fitness industry).

Secondly, you can't tone a specific area or muscle because it is not possible to target and burn fat from one specific area of your body (spot reduction).

Even though your body tends to deposit fat in certain areas, burning it off doesn't work the same way. The human body is only capable of losing fat from the entire body as a whole. ^{1 2} This in turn means that there is no such thing as losing fat from, and hence toning, a specific area. Sorry!

Thirdly, when people refer to looking 'toned' what they really mean is having some amount of muscle and then having a low body fat percentage so that muscle can be seen. The more muscle you have and the less fat you have covering it, the more "toned" or "defined" or "cut" you will appear to be. Conversely, the more fat covering your muscle, the less visible it will be and the less "toned" you will appear.



THE SIMPLE ANSWER of how to get lean and toned

With the knowledge above, I hope you can now appreciate that when most people say they want to “tone-up”, what they’re actually saying is that they want to be able to see their muscle better than they currently do.

To do this you always need to do one or both of the following:

- Build (some) muscle
- Lose the fat that is covering your muscles so it can be seen (i.e. decrease your body fat percentage)

Muscle + less fat = tone. Simple.

The “muscle” portion of that equation comes from designing a proper weight training program like we do at Active8me. This concentrates on proper exercise selection and an ideal balance of frequency, intensity and volume that progressively and safely overloads the muscles.

The “less fat” portion comes from fat-burning exercises (cardio activity) and good nutrition – which is what Active8me’s exercise programs and meal plans provide.



WHY many women never get toned

When you're trying to lose weight there's nothing you want to see more than the number on the scales going down week after week. It's a gratifying sign that your persistence and hard work are paying off. However, a lot of women (and men too) try to starve themselves into weight loss. They focus so much on "calories in" (nutrition) and "calories out" (exercise) that they fail to appreciate how their bodies use calories.

You see it is your lean body mass (the muscles underneath your body fat) that burns calories 24/7. Our muscle tissue is very metabolically active (more active than fat tissue) which means that it requires a lot of energy (calories) for our bodies to maintain - more calories than fat requires. **So more muscle means you burn more calories, which then increases your metabolism** in the short and long term. This then helps you to continue burning more calories.

If you lose weight because you lose muscle you have not improved your body composition and you are setting yourself up for long-term failure. You are lighter without being leaner. You weigh less, but along the way you've lost much of the muscle mass you already had by not challenging your muscles. As a result your body might still be flabby because you still have more fat than muscle – "skinny fat" as some refer to it. With less muscle mass than you used to have, your metabolism is then going to slow and you're not automatically burning as many calories. It then becomes easier to put on body fat if you overeat just a little bit. This is the mistake made by a lot of people who are trying to lose weight and get toned.

There is a difference between losing weight and losing fat. If your objective in losing weight is generally to look better – to look lean and toned, then you're better off focusing on losing body fat (as opposed to just losing weight). This means you should actually aim to preserve or increase your lean muscle tissue at the same time as losing body fat. **Remember, muscle + less fat = tone.**

To help you do this (lose body fat and preserve or increase your muscle tissue) you should do some resistance/weight training. This type of training forces the body to maintain its muscle tissue, thereby burning more calories, as well as helping you to maintain a higher metabolism. This is the case even if you reduce your calorie intake with controlled nutrition. If you do this you're now burning more calories and

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eating less calories. You're losing body fat and maintaining or building your muscle. Remember - muscle + less fat = tone.

So if weight/resistance training is what women should be doing, why aren't they?

The reason is because most women fear getting too "big and bulky" or "muscly". It's a mistake to think like this and it is one of the most common misconceptions. Lifting weights or doing resistance exercises will NOT make you "get big or bulky" or look like one of those muscle-clad women on the cover of a body-building magazine – not even close! (Those masculine looking girls are often taking steroids and/or spending hours and hours in the gym everyday). Why? Because it is really difficult for a woman to develop muscles to look like that.

A further problem is that many women who do in fact do some resistance training often waste a lot of their time doing exercises that aren't actually helping them get toned. Because they're still worried about looking too "big and muscly" they'll do "light reps for high reps". Think about it. Is doing "light weights for high reps" helping you directly target the fat covering your muscles? No – fat-burning cardio exercise will do this (along with good nutrition of course). Or are you providing the type of training stimulus needed to actually build muscle in the first place? No. You are doing neither of the things that need to be done in order to get toned. (Beware - the same can often be said for yoga and pilates. They certainly have a place, but by themselves will not be the answer). Remember - muscle + less fat = tone.



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So if you've been avoiding doing any weights or resistance training then you're missing out on your body's most efficient fat-burner – muscle! Remember muscle burns more calories and helps you to maintain a higher metabolism. Not to mention, because muscle is denser it takes up less space than fat (take a look below). For example, two people may be the same height and weight, but the person with a higher body fat percentage will wear a larger clothing size.



Can you now see why many women's best intentions fail to deliver the results they want?

Whether you're looking to lose weight or get lean and toned (or both), then lean muscle is your friend. Don't lose weight by losing muscle as it will set you up for long-term failure. Make weight/resistance exercises a part of your training along with your fat-burning cardio-based workouts. Complement that with good nutrition and you will get the results you want.



Conclusion

At Active8me we get as frustrated as you with the myths, misconceptions and misinformation around weight loss and toning. So we hope this no-nonsense and practical guide will help you to navigate through all that frustrating nonsense and know what to do so that your great intentions and actions can result in getting the body you want.

We're not saying it is easy. It takes hard work, discipline and commitment. It takes changing some of your habits and changing your thinking.

But it is worth it! Not only can you look fantastic and feel more confident, but you will be healthier. At Active8me we believe that your health is something that is priceless as without your health you have very little. You can't buy it and you can't live life to the full without it! A wise person once said "Those who think they have no time for bodily exercise will sooner or later have to find time for illness".

So good luck on your journey. We hope that Active8me can be part of that journey and help you along the way.

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