Disclaimer: FSI claims no rights to any of the image in this document. They are sourced from around the web and are used merely to better illustrate points made in this article.
In gyms all around the country there are thousands of women who are frustrated and disheartened by a lack of health and fitness results. Despite how much they try, no matter how many hours they spend pounding the cardio machines and attending various latest craze fitness classes they still don’t seem to get the results they desire.

We are here to help!! In this article we will outline the ultimate female training plan, detailed with information, guidelines, and specific examples of training programmes.

One of the fundamental mistakes most females make is they simply avoid doing resistance training i.e. weights! The primary concern women have when it comes to weight training is, “I don’t want to get big or bulky.” we are here to tell you that you won’t!
The hormone testosterone is largely responsible for the large increases in muscle mass seen when men lift weights. Women’s testosterone levels are a fraction of men’s testosterone levels. Normal testosterone levels in men are 200-1200 ng/dl while 15-70 ng/dl are normal in women. As you can see, men’s testosterone levels are SIGNIFICANTLY higher than women’s. Even if a man is at the LOW end of the men’s normal testosterone range (200 ng/dl), he still has more than twice the amount of testosterone as a woman at the HIGH end of the women’s normal testosterone range (70 ng/dl). If we look at the median or mid-range testosterone levels in men and women, men = 700 and women = 42.5. So on an average, men have 16.47 times more testosterone than women! It is clear that women do not have the hormonal support (testosterone) to gain muscle mass like men. Therefore, the fear of becoming big and bulky and looking like the guys on the front of men’s fitness and body building magazines is not going to happen.

Now you may be saying,

“I have seen some female bodybuilders who are very muscular and look similar to men in their build.”

The real reason they look like that is they are most-likely using exogenous testosterone injections and/or other anabolic steroids. When women use exogenous testosterone/steroids they may show signs of hair growth on the face and chest, increased muscle mass, a redistribution of body fat from a female pattern of storage to a male pattern of storage, deepening of the voice, and other effects. So unless you are on exogenous testosterone or other anabolic steroids, you will not become big and bulky from lifting weights.

This is not to say that you will not gain any muscle, you will, but you will not gain muscle like a man. Instead, you will become toned and shapely. Remember to achieve a sleek, toned body you will need to look to add lean muscle.
What women think training weights will do to their bodies...  

...what REALLY happens when women train weights properly
Curve Appeal

Exercises to Help Add Sexy Curves

In gyms all around the country there are thousands of women who are frustrated and disheartened by a lack of health and fitness results. Despite how much they try, no matter how many hours they spend pounding the cardio machines and attending various latest craze fitness classes they still don’t seem to get the results they desire.

1. Deadlifts
   Deadlifts are a full body exercise, meaning it stimulates just about every muscle in the body. Deadlifts hit the legs, back, traps, abs, obliques, etc. Deadlifts are a must for building a fully developed body. If you don’t do them, you are selling your results short.

2. Squats
   Squats are perhaps the most effective exercise you can do for overall leg development. Squats are a compound exercise that hits the entire upper leg, quadriceps, hamstrings, and glutes. Like deadlifts, if you don’t squat you are selling yourself short. These are a must for sexy, toned legs.

3. Lunges
   Lunges are great for targeting the glutes, hamstrings, and quadriceps. Lunges will help tighten up your legs and bum and give you the curves you want.

As we said before, women need to lift challenging weights in order to gain muscle. Lifting heavy weights will not cause women to get big and bulky like men because women produce a fraction of the testosterone that men do. When women begin working out, their goals are to tone up and gain shape/curves and doing resistance training will accomplish just that!
Proper Form
We cannot stress enough how important it is to maintain strict form on all movements. This means stabilizing your body and contracting your abs so you isolate the primary intended muscles. For example, when doing a standing barbell curl, tighten your abs and do not rock or swing the weight. By tightening your abs, you stabilize your body and prevent momentum. This will also help condition your abs and save your lower back from injury.

Warm-Up Properly
Before every session you should warm up properly, involving foam rolling, dynamic stretching, mobility exercises, static stretching and activation exercises prior to starting your main session workout.

Rest, Don’t Nap, Between Sets
We recommend 60-90 seconds of rest periods between sets. This allows your body to recover some of its expended ATP but is not so long that you lose the flow of the workout.

Exercise Tips:
We are here to help!! In this article we will outline the ultimate female training plan, detailed with information, guidelines, and specific examples of training programmes.

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What is the most common thing you see women do in the gym? Cardio! And if they do lift weights at all, they tend to pick up the 2kg dumbbell and do endless reps. As mentioned already women must complete challenging resistance exercise up to 12 reps, for multiple sets.

Now, we will go over a few essential free-weight and compound exercises that you must be doing -
Channa’s Resistance Training Plan

**Day 1: Legs**
(Each set 10-12 reps or to failure)
- Squats x 5 sets
- Front Squats x 4 sets
- Lunges x 3 sets
- i) Sumo Squats  ii) Jump Squats x 3 sets
- 1 Legged Squats x 4 sets
- Jumps Lunges 3 sets x 30 reps (30 sec rest)
- Standing Calf Raise 3 sets x 40 reps (6kg dumbbells)

**Day 2: Arms**
(Each set 10-12 reps or to failure)
- Bicep Curls x 5 sets
- Hammer Curls x 5 sets
- Concentration Curls x 4 sets
- Cable Curls x 4 sets
- Tricep Pushups 5 sets x max reps
- Tricep Kickback x 3 sets
- Overhead Extensions x 4 sets
- Triceps Pushdown x 4 sets

**Day 3: Back**
(Each set 10-12 reps or to failure)
- Pull-ups 50 reps total
- Incline Dumbell Row x 4 sets
- Seated Cable Rows x 5 sets
- Cable Pullover x 4 sets
- 1 arm Dumbell Row x 4 sets
- Stiff Leg Deadlifts x 4 sets
- Jump Squats x 3 sets of 20 reps (30 sec rest)

**Day 4: Chest/Shoulders**
(Each set 10-12 reps or to failure)
- Wide Pushups x 5 sets
- Standing Dumbbell Press x 6 sets (last 3 are drop sets)
- Seated Dumbbell Press x 2 sets + 30 plus reps burnout
- Seated Lat Raises x 6 sets (last 3 are drop sets)
- Front Raise x 4 sets
- Cable High Rows x 4 sets
- Pushups x 3 sets

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**Convince Me**

So right now would be the perfect time to give you three examples of female fitness models and their actual resistance training sessions. We hope by providing actual resistance training programmes of fitness models you can see the great results that resistance training can achieve, and why you SHOULD be doing it. Now do these girls look big or bulky?
Kerri’s Resistance Training Programme

Day 1: Chest/Triceps
(Each set 10-12 reps or to failure)
- Flat Bench x 3 sets
- Incline dumbbell press x 3 sets
- Pushups on Bosu x 3 sets
- Cable flyes x 3 sets
- Rope tricep extension x 3 sets
- Dips x 3 sets of 20 reps
- Tricep kickbacks x 3 sets

Day 2: Hamstrings/Glutes
(Each set 10-12 reps or to failure)
- Leg Press x 4 sets
- Hip extensions x 3 sets
- 1 legged deadlifts x 3 sets
- Lunges x 3 sets
- Weighted Step ups x 3 sets
- Leg curls x 3 sets

Day 3: Back/Biceps
(Each set 10-12 reps or to failure)
- One arm dumbbell row x 3 sets
- Dumbbell reverse flyes x 3 sets
- Lat pulldowns x 3 sets
- Chin-ups x 3 sets
- Weighted back extension x 3 sets
- Close grip barbell curls x 3 sets
- EZ bar preacher curls x 3 sets
- Standing hammer curls x 3 sets
- Standing straight bar cable curls x 3 sets

Day 4: Shoulders
(Each set 10-12 reps or to failure)
- Drop set dumbbell side raise x 3 sets
- Seated military press x 3 sets
- Barbell upright row x 3 sets
- Dumbbell front raises x 3 sets
- Low cable rear raises x 3 sets

Day 5: Plyometrics

- Weighted Squat jumps x 4 sets of 15 reps
- Drop jumps x 4 sets of 10 reps
- Split squat jumps x 4 sets of 15 reps
- Lateral hurdle jumps x 4 sets of 10 reps
- Double leg vertical power jump x 4 sets of 10 reps

Day 6: Glutes/Hamstrings
(Each set 10-12 reps or to failure)
- Sumo squats x 3 sets
- Stiff legged dead lifts x 3 sets
- Stability ball leg curl 4 sets
- Thigh abductor (drop sets) x 3 sets of 30 reps
Krissy’s Resistance Training Programme

Day 1: Shoulders and Abs
(Each set 10-12 reps or to failure)

- Shoulder Press x 4 sets
- i) Lateral Raises
  ii) Front Raises x 3 sets
- Arnold Press x 3 sets
- Single Arm Cable Shoulder Press x 3 sets
- Bent Over Reverse Flyes x 4 sets
- i) Cable Crunches
  ii) Cable Wood Choppers x 3 sets
- i) Bicycle Crunches
  ii) Medicine Ball Oblique Twists x 3 sets
- Bosu Ball Plank (1 min) x 3 sets

Day 2: Legs and Biceps

- Leg Extensions x 3 sets
- i) Wide Stance Squats
  ii) Pop Squats x 5 sets
- i) Lunges
  ii) Good Mornings x 3 sets
- i) Single Leg Cable Kickbacks
  ii) Glute Hip Thrusts x 3 sets
- Plie Squats x 3 sets
- i) Incline Dumbbell Curls
  ii) Barbell Curls x 2 sets
- i) Hammer Curls
  ii) Barbell Curls x 2 sets
Day 3: **Chest/Back/Abs**  
* (Each set 10-12 reps or to failure)  
- Wide Grip Lat Pulldown x 5 sets  
- i) Straight Arm Cable Pressdown  
  ii) Reverse DB Flies x 5 sets  
- i) Single Arm DB Row  
  ii) Bench Crunches x 3 sets  
- Dumbbell Bench Press x 4 sets  
- Seated Cable Chest Press x 2 sets  
- i) Dumbbell Flies  
  ii) Medicine Ball Oblique Twists x 4 sets  
- Oblique Crunches x 4 sets

Day 4: **Legs and Triceps**  
* (Each set 10-12 reps or to failure)  
- Barbell Squats x 6 sets  
- Prone Hamstring Curls x 3 sets  
- i) Walking Dumbbell Lunges  
  ii) Hip Raises x 3 sets  
- i) Good mornings  
  ii) Bodyweight Squats x 4 sets  
- Standing Calve Raises x 4 sets  
- Cable Triceps Pushdown x 2 sets  
- Kickbacks x 2 sets
Cardio Prescription

Why do trouble areas of fat exist?
Most women have “trouble areas” or places on the body where the most fat is stored and it is difficult to get rid of. In most women these areas are primarily the thighs, glutes (bum), and in some women the triceps (back of the arms) and “love handles”. After dieting to lose weight and tone up these trouble areas the last thing you want to do is regain excess fat. If you don’t keep your diet clean and controlled you will gain fat, and it will most likely be in these trouble areas. We will go over why these trouble areas exist and then outline a plan to keep these trouble areas lean and sexy while adding lean mass.

Simply put, some areas in the body have more receptors that block fat breakdown than receptors that increase fat breakdown. In men, these areas are the lower abs and love handles. In women, they are the thighs and butt. We will discuss the physiological factors controlling fat loss and then go over a stubborn-fat cardio protocol.
**Stored Triglycerides**

**Body Fat We Want to LOSE**

While all cells contain some fat, it is mainly stored in muscle (intramuscular triglycerides) and in adipose tissue (body fat). Adipose tissue is the body’s main fat storage site and the fat we all want to lose. Adipose tissue is divided into individual cells called adipocytes. These adipocytes hold stored triglyceride (1 glycerol molecule bonded to 3 fatty acids) droplets, which serve as a source of energy for the body. These droplets make up 95% of adipocytes’ volume. In order for this storage of potential energy (60,000-100,000 kcal) to be used and to LOSE BODYFAT (everyone’s goal), it must be mobilized through lipolysis (the breakdown of triglycerides).

Lipolysis involves splitting the triglycerides into a glycerol molecule and 3 separate fatty acids (FFA). Once the fatty acids diffuse (exit) from the adipocytes, they bind to plasma albumin (a protein in the blood) in order to be transported to active tissues where they can be burned. In order to lose body fat, the fatty acids must be burned!

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**Transport of FFA to be Burned!**

Blood flow is of prime importance to the transportation of FFA away from adipocytes and through the circulation to active tissues where they can be burned. This is especially important during exercise where energy requirements are heightened.

Low blood flow could cause the accumulation of FFA within adipose tissue resulting in less available FFA to be oxidized and a greater chance of FFA to be turned back into triglycerides. It has been found that the stubborn fat areas (thighs and butt) have poor blood flow. Therefore in order to get rid of stubborn fat we must increase blood flow. What is the best way to increase blood flow? Exercise! Increasing blood flow throughout the body will assist in losing weight by transporting FFA to where they can be burned.

**FFA Oxidation Burning Body Fat**

When the FFAs reach muscle tissue, they are transported into a muscle cell. Once in the muscle cell, the FFAs can re-esterfy (rebind) with glycerol to form triglycerides to be stored in the muscle or bind with intramuscular proteins to be used for energy production in the mitochondria. In the mitochondria, the fatty acids undergo beta-oxidation, meaning they are burned for energy.

We want the FFAs to be burned in the mitochondria. Increasing energy demands through exercise is the best way to accomplish this.

**Problem with steady state cardio exercise**

As already discussed the main reason women do not get significant fitness results is not mainly due to the lack of cardio exercise but the severe lack of resistance training. That being mentioned the problem with most cardio exercise completed in gyms is that it is completed in a steady state method which means the intensity level remains constantly at a light to moderate level. This type of training is not effective enough to see significant results, and is often very time consuming. There is a more effective method, both in regards to time spent and effectiveness.
Time to HIIT

High Intensity Interval Training or HIIT is training where you alternate between intervals of high-intensity and low-intensity exercise. An example would be sprinting all-out for 100 meters then walking for 100 meters then repeating. One cannot sprint at full intensity for a prolonged time because sprinting and any other form of high-intensity cardio utilizes the anaerobic energy systems, specifically the Phosphocreatine system, which power short-term activity. After going all out, one must rest and give the Phosphocreatine system time to “recharge”. HIIT training is very time effective, it doesn’t take long but you will get maximum benefits, especially to stubborn fat areas.

High Intensity Interval Training is highly effective, and benefits serious fat burning, whilst improving general fitness and conditioning.
Examples of HIIT training

This is just an example of some very effective cardio HIIT training. These exercises can be changed specifically for the individual by adjusting the time or distance, or intensity load. This type of training should be completed 2-4 times a week, and can be incorporated at the end of resistance training sessions, or purely individual HIIT training sessions.

**Putting It All Together**
The training plan would be specific for an individual, based on the number of times you wanted or could commit to train, your goals and current fitness levels. It is vital that you have at least one complete rest day.

These are just three examples of a weekly training overview would look -

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Diet & Nutrition

Men and women do not need to train too differently to see results, but what about diet? Should women eat differently than men? Not really. Men's and women's metabolisms are very similar except that women burn a greater ratio of fat to carbs than men. This may be one of the reasons women do well on lower carb diets. The main thing that needs to be adjusted is one’s total caloric intake. Women need FEWER calories than men because men have more muscle mass and less fat (relative to total bodyweight) than women. The amount of protein, carbs, and fat will be dictated by the amount of calories one eats.

We have shown that women do not need to train or diet too much differently than men. Then why do we always see women in gym performing hours of cardio and lifting the lightest dumbbells in the gym for endless reps? That’s if they even go near the weights, most avoid any form of resistance training.

This is most-likely due to not being informed, or even misinformed (by the media and unfortunately even some fitness instructors), about how women should train. What about diet? One of the most common breakfast meals recommended to women is cereal. Where is the protein and essential fatty acids? If you are a woman trying to gain lean muscle, you will need to eat adequate protein and good fats (essential fatty acids). It is time to stop listening to the media and misinformed individuals and time to become educated and get results. In this article, we will deliver the correct information you need for your results based training.
Macronutrient Manipulation
While your total caloric intake is the most important diet factor, the ratio of protein to carbs to fat can dictate whether the weight you gain/lose is muscle or fat. A diet that contains 80% of calories from carbs, 10% from protein, and 10% from fat will produce different results than a diet containing 40% of calories from carbs, 40% from protein, and 20% from fat.

Stay Hydrated
You should drink plenty of water every day. Try to drink at least eight glasses (2-2.5 litres) of water per day. The benefits drinking water provides are optimal hydration as well as a feeling of “fullness” without added calories. Sometimes people will mistake thirst for hunger. Because of this, staying hydrated can also prevent overeating.
Quality Control

Choose fresh, wholesome foods over pre-packaged, processed foods. Packaged foods are loaded with preservatives, especially sodium and saturated fats, and often have high amounts of sugars, such as high fructose corn syrup.

You will be amazed at how fast you can lose fat just by packing meals from home rather than purchasing fast food or packaged foods. You also will save a lot of money!

Insulin Control

Insulin is the “storage” hormone. When it is secreted fat burning is blunted. By controlling insulin secretion by choosing low GI carbs you can decrease fat gain/increase fat loss. Stable blood sugar levels also improve energy levels and ones mood. All of our diets are based around insulin control, leading to leaner muscle gains with little to no fat gain.

Adequate Protein

In order to gain lean muscle you need to eat enough protein to sustain the creation of new muscle proteins. You may not be used to eating the amount of protein recommended, but once you get used to it, you should not have any problems and will enjoy how full and satisfied you feel.

Essential Fats

Essential fatty acids (EFAs) are vital to the proper functioning on your body. Dietary fats got a bad rap due to the diet fads of the 80’s and 90’s, which promoted eating as little fat as possible, but in reality EFAs are needed by the body and are part of a healthy diet. Eating fats does not equate to getting fat. In fact, most EFAs help support the fat burning process and maintaining a lean body. Do not be scared to eat good fats. EFAs are not the enemy.

Women do not need to diet much differently than men. One metabolic difference between men and women is women burn a greater ratio of fat to carbs than men, which is the reason why women tend to do very well on a low carb diet. Due to this fact we recommend women follow a low-carb (not no carb) diet to lose fat and gain toned, lean muscle.
Protein Benefits and Requirements for Active Women

The Protein Problem

Unfortunately, protein is a nutrient often downplayed when it comes to women’s diets. For some reason, many people seem to think women don’t need to emphasize protein in their diets, but we are here to tell you that you DO. Protein is made up of amino acids, the building blocks of many tissues in the body, including muscle. Certain amino acids are “essential”, which means the body cannot make them and they must be obtained through your diet. When you workout, you breakdown muscle tissue. In order to repair that muscle tissue and gain lean mass and become stronger, you must give the body protein to supply the amino acids needed for recovery. If you do not get enough protein in your diet your body will not have enough amino acids, specifically essential amino acids, to work properly and recovery from workouts. Where will it get these amino acids you are lacking?

That’s right, from muscle tissue! All that hard work will be wasted! In addition to being required to recover from workouts, protein and amino acids are important for many reasons, such as:

- Supports immune system function.
- Promotes healthy connective tissue, hair, nails and other tissues.
- Supports energy levels.

Now that we know why protein is so important, let’s find out how much protein a woman needs.

The recommended daily allowance of protein for SEDENTARY adults is 0.8 grams per kilogram of bodyweight 0.8g per kg of bodyweight. But what about active women, do they need more protein than sedentary women? The answer is a resounding YES.

Protein Facts

The International Society of Sports Nutrition’s recently released its current stand on protein intake:

- Vast research supports the contention that individuals engaged in regular exercise training require more dietary protein than sedentary individuals.
- Protein intakes of 1.4 – 2.0 g/kg/day for physically active individuals are not only safe, but may improve the training adaptations to exercise training.
- When part of a balanced, nutrient-dense diet, protein intakes at this level are not detrimental to kidney function or bone metabolism in healthy, active persons.
- Appropriately timed protein intake is an important component of an overall exercise training program, essential for proper recovery, immune function, and the growth and maintenance of lean body mass.

From this we see that active women would benefit from consuming 2 grams per kg of bodyweight. Ideally your protein should be spaced out throughout the day. If you eat five meals a day, this would be 30 grams of protein per meal, INCLUDING breakfast.
There is no reason why you cannot hit your protein needs DAILY! And if you need to you can always use protein shakes to increase your protein intake. Dietary protein is very important in a woman’s diet. Women need the same amount of protein as men (adjusted for bodyweight).

If you want to progress in the gym and reach your goals for the body of your dreams, eat your protein and don’t let anyone tell you that women don’t need to eat protein!

**Good Protein Sources**

- Tofu
- Lean Beef
- Turkey
- Chicken
- Eggs & Egg Whites
- Fish

THESE TWO GIRLS BOTH DO RESISTANCE TRAINING, EAT PROTEIN, AND DO HIIT CARDIO!!!

Heather Robertson

Laura Cessna
One final area we wanted to discuss that is often neglected by most training articles and fitness professionals is psychological factors. Starting a new training and dietary plan requires planning, preparation, dedication, hard work and often support networks. When starting your new training and dietary programme make sure you have set clear goals in your mind and even written goals or a contract, and have no major events or distractions in the first few weeks of the start of your training.

To transform your body requires dedication to commit to the sessions, and workouts, as well as dedication to adhere to the dietary plan. There is no easy fix, this guide is not ‘the easy guide’, it is however the most effective, nothing worthwhile in life is easy, and that is the case in health and fitness training and achieving great results.

There will be times when even the most strong willed individual requires help or support from others. This can be caused by self doubt, or just times of difficulty, or even tempting social occasions. As difficult as this may be to comprehend often the closest ones to you, such as loved ones are not necessarily the best supporters in your training and dietary regime, and in fact can often be saboteurs. This maybe not a conscious issue but sub consciously those love ones may be scared about you changing, often this is due to their own self issues who fear that their loved one may leave them if they achieve a sexy new look. Our advice would be to share and speak openly to your loved ones about your reasons why you want to achieve your goals, whether it’s to feel better about yourself, or improve your health, or whatever your reasons are, explain to your loved ones, this may help them understand and actually turn them into supporters and help you in your quest.

We would also recommend that you do seek professional support from a fitness trainer or fitness professional. In good gyms they will have staff that understand and will offer you the support you require to help you achieve your goals. Whether it’s specific advice or help required, or just simply knowing that someone is there to help you if you need it.

We have gone over a lot of information and hopefully helped you understand the way women need to diet and train in order to gain lean muscle and lose fat. I hope you now realise the benefit and need to do resistance training as well as HIIT training.

There you have it! It is time to put all this information to action and gain the sexy muscle and curves you’ve always wanted. Time to get your hottest body ever!

We hope you found this article of some value. If you require any further information or advice then please contact us.