

# How to Get A Drool-Worthy Beach Body

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## **Is Your Body Bikini-Ready?**

It's Summer, at last! During the winter months most of your body was covered with warm (and concealing) clothes. Peeling off those layers may reveal a body that isn't quite ready for your newly-purchased bikini. Don't fret - analyze which parts of your body needs help and get busy.

Chances are, you've worked out religiously all winter to sculpt your body into its sexiest best. If you aren't satisfied with what you see, try some toning and firming exercises designed to exorcise the flab that's holding on for dear life.

Conditioning exercises are the key to whip problem areas of your upper body, tummy, hips, butt and thighs into shape. Conditioning lets you pinpoint the trouble areas of your body and tone and shape them with specific exercises. Volumes of conditioning exercises can be found online or books and magazines.

It's time to shake the dust off of the weights, jump rope and exercise ball, putting them to use in ways that will have your body bikini-ready in no time. While you're concentrating on body-sculpting, don't forget to get in a cardio workout to keep the metabolism going and the fat burning.

You've heard it many times before, but get your daily fill of water so that you stay hydrated as the summer temperature soars. Water intake flushes toxins from your system and keeps that ugly cottage cheese look called "cellulite" from creeping into your body.

Don't forget the importance of a healthy diet. Your skin will reflect the foods you put into your body, so be especially careful during the summer months to get plenty of fruits and vegetables that are naturally in season - and good for you.

After you've done all you can to firm and tone your body, it's time to think about the condition of all that skin showing off in a bikini - and that's a lot!

To achieve glowing, silky smooth skin that you'll be proud to flaunt, begin by exfoliating. Exfoliating removes dead skin cells that lay on the surface of your skin and leaves it soft and toned. To effectively exfoliate your skin, use a natural bristle brush or your favorite exfoliating cream.

Remove unwanted hair by using a razor, waxing or hair removal cream - and don't forget to use a moisturizer afterward. And, keep your skin in top condition by using a sun screen - and apply it often when you're on the beach. You'll also avoid wrinkles and skin cancer as you age.

Make the time and effort to follow the above tips and your body can be bikini-ready and as sizzling hot as the summer temps.

### **Don't Starve Yourself Skinny - Rev Up Your Metabolism!**

If you're watching calories like a hawk and still gaining weight, your metabolism may be the culprit. Metabolism is the mechanism our body uses to burn calories. Think of it as your body's "motor." The faster your metabolism operates the more calories you'll burn and lose weight in the process.

As we age, our metabolism naturally slows down. So, what's a body to do to keep the metabolism up and the weight down? There are lots of factors that count in the role that your metabolism plays in your ability to lose weight, including your age and lifestyle.

The truth is you don't have to starve yourself to lose weight. In fact, the best way to rev up your metabolism (that calorie-burning chemical process) is to eat! Some of you may have to work harder than others to speed up the process, while others just need to regulate their lifestyle and diet habits.

Most of what we think of as "diet foods" won't help jump start your metabolism. They may be low in calories and even high in fiber, but if you make those foods the mainstay of your diet, you'll gain weight almost immediately after you return to a normal diet.

That's because your metabolism has become sluggish while you were dieting and has lost its ability to burn excess calories. To effectively "fire up" your metabolism, keep in mind the following tips:

- Don't skip meals. It's better to eat four to six small meals per day than to skip a major daily meal -- especially breakfast.
- Cardio workouts (the kind that get your heart rate up) are great for burning calories and to get your metabolism moving at a faster rate.
- Drink plenty of water so that your body can rid itself of the toxins that pull down your metabolism to a sluggish level.
- No matter what you've heard about carbohydrates, remember that they help to boost your metabolism.
- Tone your muscles. Use weights to firm and tone your muscles, ridding yourself of fat and replacing it with lean muscles.
- Don't eat just before bed time. Give your body a chance to take care of excess calories before it slows down for sleep.
- Lower your alcohol intake. Alcohol is like a "go slow" sign for your metabolism. Keep it to a minimum.

Begin now to rev up your metabolism. Remember, when your metabolism improves, so will your shape!

### Firming Up a Flabby Tummy and Finding Those 6 Pack Abs

Do you have a decent body except for that middle roll of flab that just doesn't seem to go away no matter how much you exercise or attempt to spot reduce that area? The truth is that the spare tire around your middle is fat - and you're not going to see the 6-pack abs buried beneath until you get rid of it.

The trick to reducing fat around your middle is to reduce your caloric intake and eat foods that are proven "fat burners" such as lean protein, salads and vegetables. Reduce your carbohydrate intake, especially in the evening hours when your body is slowing down. Adopt a low fat diet for your lifestyle to burn the unwanted fat and eventually reach the show-off abs you desire.

There is a difference between toning your abs and reducing the fat around your middle. Toning abdominal muscles can be achieved by exercising, but removing the fat must take place from the inside out. It won't do you any good to try spot reduction exercises if you don't get rid of the fat first.

There's no such thing as an immediate "fix" for a flabby tummy. You can spend hundreds of dollars on pills and creams, but you'll soon realize that the only way to 6-pack abs is to work at it!

While you're concentrating on a low-fat diet, you'll want to tone and firm the abdominal muscles that lie beneath the fat with exercise. The key to exercising your abs is to do the exercises correctly. If you're concentrating on tummy crunches to firm your abs and performing them incorrectly, you'll never see success.

So, before you exercise, learn how to do it properly. For example, if you're doing crunches, learn the correct method of breathing as you're exercising. A number of good online sites contain information about how to perform abdominal exercises.

Concentrate on resistance training when firming and toning your abs. Use a "fit ball" (sometimes called "exercise ball") for support if you have problems with your lower back. And don't overdo it. Three sessions a week is plenty when you're exercising muscles that have lain dormant for a while.

Cardio exercises (aerobic) designed to rev up your heart rate can help burn fat, so be sure to include them in your exercise regimen - and include the ones that work both your upper and lower body. It's best to do cardio exercises in the morning - and always on an empty stomach.

Don't be discouraged if you don't see results as fast as you'd like. Remember, those 6-pack abs are buried somewhere beneath that fat roll. It's your job to find them.

### **Exercise to Help Tone Your Arms**

Do you avoid wearing sexy, sleeveless tops or dresses - or refuse to take off your jacket to reveal a sleeveless shell -- because of flabby and unsightly arms? Your arms may sag because you've recently lost weight. The fat cells may be gone, but the skin doesn't know what to do with itself.

The arms are complicated areas to firm and tone, and it's better to exercise them rather than attempt to target your arms for weight loss. The arm area tends to store fat cells than other parts of your body, so try aerobic exercises for overall fat loss and for toning your arms at the same time.

To achieve sexy, firm arms you'll need to build up your biceps and triceps. Biceps are the muscles along the front of your arm, while triceps are muscles found in the back of your arms. When you tone and firm these muscles, you'll be creating muscle where the sagging skin used to be.

All you'll need to begin the quest for sleek and sexy arms are an exercise band and weights. Include the following exercises in your daily or weekly routine:

*Exercise 1:* Hold the middle of the exercise band with your feet. Holding one of the two ends of the band in each hand, bend the elbow on one arm from the waist, stretching the band forward and upward. You'll feel your biceps muscles tensing as you raise the band. Be sure your elbow is always bent slightly. Take turns repeating this exercise on each arm for 8 to 10 times.

*Exercise 2:* Repeat the above exercise, except pull the band outward from the left and right sides of your body.

*Exercise 3:* Repeat the above exercise, except pull the band backward from the left and right sides of your body. This exercise will benefit the triceps of your arms.

Weights are also a great way to tone the arms. Lift the weights when sitting in a chair or lying on the floor. Be sure to begin with light weights and then graduate to heavier ones as you're ready.

Basically, any exercise that causes resistance to your biceps and triceps can help tone your arms. Yoga and Pilates are also proven ways to firm up your arms. Online sites that tout yoga or Pilates will lead you to specific exercises for your arms.

Don't pass up those sexy tank tops because of jiggly underarms. It won't take long to see results - and you won't even have to adapt to a strenuous exercise routine.

### **Do These Breast Firming Exercises to Prevent Sagging**

Most women will experience the discomfiture and embarrassment of sagging breasts - especially large-breasted women. Gravity is the culprit that pulls the breasts downward as we age, but it can actually happen at any time.

The breasts contain no muscles, but a network of ligaments and connective tissue. This network is meant to provide milk to a newborn, and after breastfeeding the tissues shrivel, but the skin around them doesn't, causing the breasts to droop. Even if you're childless or have never nursed, the genes you were born with and the elasticity of the skin also determine how severely the breasts sag and at what age they'll begin to sag.

Amazingly, it's been proven that wearing a bra doesn't prevent breasts from sagging. Some scientific findings have actually found that wearing a bra may increase breast sagging because the breasts are immobile in a bra and therefore will atrophy in time. Wearing a bra will, however, shape the breasts and lift them so that you'll look better in clothing.

The following exercises are known to tone the breasts and prevent sagging:

- Push-ups - One of the best exercises to tone your upper body, including your breasts. If it's difficult to push up from the floor, try doing them against a wall.
- Chest presses - Use weights or stretch bands to work those pectoral muscles. It will do wonders for your upper body and your breasts.

Basically, any exercise that improves your upper body will also benefit your breasts. When you jog, be sure to wear a good sports bra. Bouncing up and down could break down the ligaments in your breasts and make them sag even more.

Practice standing up straight in front of a mirror. Notice how your breasts naturally raise up with your straightened back. This is a quick "fix" but very obvious and is also good for your self-esteem.

Be sure and exfoliate and then apply lotion to your breasts to keep the skin healthy. And don't forget the importance of good nutrition. A healthy diet will help to preserve the elasticity of the ligaments inside the breasts and keep them from breaking down with age.

Losing weight will also help the appearance of your breasts. When fat weighs down the various parts of our bodies, everything begins to sag, including the breasts. You may go down a bra size, but your breasts will be perkier and healthier.

### **Break Out Those Butt Firming Moves!**

Have you ever asked a friend, husband or child the question, "Does this make my butt look big?" As women, our backsides are probably the most thought-about part of our anatomies. We're constantly on the lookout for jeans, pants, shorts or swimsuits that will slim, tuck and hold in our backsides so that we'll feel more confident when we venture out in public.

A considerable number of fat cells (plenty more than we want) can be found in our backsides, and they aren't likely to let go easily. You most certainly won't acquire a tighter, firmer tush without dedicating yourself to a "kick ass" program that will eventually grant your wish.

There are exercises galore designed to tone and trim the butt, but unless you combine them with a good fat-burning diet program - and a firm commitment, you won't achieve the results you desire. But, if you're truly committed to reaching your goal, the results will follow.

The best exercises to firm your butt don't require a club membership or any special equipment. Walking and/or jogging are two of the desirable ways to tone your butt and get a cardio workout besides. Riding a bicycle and engaging in sports such as tennis, swimming and volleyball will also do wonders for the rear.

Two of the best exercises designed to firm and round out the butt are:

*Front Lunges* - With your feet shoulder length apart, step forward with your left foot. Bending at the knee, bring your leg forward until the knee is over the ankle. Return to starting position and repeat with right leg. You may want to hold on to the back of a chair for balance.

*Squats* - Stand with feet apart and squat down, keeping your back straight. Return to standing position and repeat several times. You may also use a chair to help keep your balance. Simply squat and let your butt touch the chair before rising to the standing position.

If you tire of the normal firming and toning exercises, try kickboxing for a change. Many health clubs now offer classes in this exhilarating and tension-busting exercise. The carefully controlled kicks combined with an aerobic workout target the butt and leg areas and also burn fat.

Don't just dream of having a terrific tush - commit yourself to some hard work and see the results in the mirror and in clothes that fit where it matters!

### **Putting Definition in Your Leg Muscles**

Some people are simply born with well-defined leg muscles - and some of us have to work for them. There are a number of exercises that are specifically designed to sculpt and strengthen your leg muscles. These exercises usually combine fat-burning cardio to decrease body fat with strength training that exclusively targets the toning process of the leg muscles.

Most leg-defining programs make use of aerobic exercises several times per week. Leg-strengthening exercises such as squats, lunges and calf raises will help to sculpt the major muscles in your legs.



Any sport that utilizes the leg muscles to the fullest will also help to strengthen and define the legs and give them those sexy curves that beg to be revealed with short skirts and shorts. Sports such as tennis, water or snow skiing and swimming are excellent methods for overall toning of your leg muscles.

All you really need to exercise your legs to the fullest are a treadmill (or simply take a brisk walk outside) and a workout bench (a yoga mat on the floor will do just as well). You can also add an exercise ball to the workout equipment to get the full effect of stretching those leg muscles.

Some of the best exercises to tone leg muscles are:

- Squats - Bend at your knees, back straight and count to 10. Repeat 5 times.
- Kicks - Laying, stomach down, on the exercise ball, kick upward 3 times with each leg.
- Outer thigh lifts - Balance yourself with a chair and lift each leg outward 5 times each.

Of course, exercise is critical in sculpting your leg muscles, but if you're overweight, you'll need to reduce the body fat to achieve the lean, toned legs you want. Adopting a good fat-burning diet can also help you get the results you desire.

The best diet to burn fat and boost your metabolism is to simply make it a balanced one. Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, especially citrus fruits such as oranges, grapefruits, limes and lemons. These fruits are high in Vitamin C, which can dilute fat so that it can be easily flushed from your body.

Other fruits, such as apples and berries can also boost your system so that you're burning more fat. They contain "pectin," which helps your body place boundaries on how much fat your cells can absorb. Remember to drink plenty of water to flush out the damaging toxins in your body during your quest to improve those leg muscles.

If you really work and concentrate on improving your legs -- before you know it, you'll be showing off those toned and tanned legs in shorts and mini-dresses.

## **Flush Out Fat With These 5 Tips**

Kicking your metabolism into shape so that you burn more calories rather than adding more fat to your body may take some drastic measures. Flushing the fat from your body is one way to increase your metabolic rate. It also rids the body of toxins that cause you to feel bloated and sluggish.

Fat tends to find a home in your body in three main areas - butt, hips and thighs. Flushing out the fat targets these areas of your body rather than other diets where you may actually lose muscle mass.

Here are five tips for flushing unwanted fat out of your body that will lead you to weight loss success.

1. Lower calorie intake. Calorie count should be between 1000 and 1500 daily for the first couple of weeks.
2. During your fat flushing diet, you should add some good fat (such as flaxseed oil) as well as some protein, vegetables and fruit. Spices (such as cayenne pepper) are also a great addition to the diet plan.
3. Drink plenty of water, green tea and other liquids that act as a diuretic to flush out toxins and fat.
4. Get plenty of sleep. Sleep acts as a restorative process for your body and shouldn't be neglected.
5. Keep track of all your activities, food and drink. You can jot the information in a notebook or enter it into one of the many online "journals" that are available.

Exercise is also important during this time, but don't overdo it. You may feel weak because of decreased calorie intake. A brisk walk around the block or ten minutes on the treadmill will suffice.

After two weeks of the above regimen, you can increase your calorie intake to 1500 calories and add more carbohydrates to your diet. Follow this plan until you

reach your desired weight. By then, your metabolism will have the boost it needs to work more efficiently.

Some medical professionals find that drastically lowering your calories is unhealthy and maintain that you'll eventually put the weight back on. It's true that you lose weight rapidly and unless you stick to the diet, you'll more than likely put the pounds back on at a later time.

But you have a deadline to meet (such as fitting into that new bikini before your first trip to the beach), try the fat flushing diet for a couple of weeks to see quick and pleasing results.

### **Get Proof of Your Progress**

Sometimes you may feel that you're not making any progress at all with your fitness program - like a gerbil spinning on its wheel - going nowhere. But there are ways to track your weight loss and fitness targets that will provide the incentive you need to keep on keeping on until you reach your goals.

During your fitness quest, you'll want to weigh yourself once a month rather than daily or weekly. This strategy gives your body a chance to react to the weeks of effort you've given. It also keeps you from becoming discouraged if you happen to see a minuscule weight loss on the scale.

Another way to track your weight loss progress is to take your measurements. Sometimes the scale doesn't reflect the inches you're losing and taking measurements will reassure you that you're making some progress.

When you measure yourself, do so without clothing or clothing that fits tight to your skin (such as leotards). There are numerous measurement charts online that provide instructions on how to accurately take your measurements and that will track your progress in inches to your desired goal. You should measure yourself once a week or once a month.

You can also track your fitness progress by measuring your body fat percentage. This method can provide help you realize how much fat you need to lose to reach

the desired fitness goal. Body fat should measure from 25 to 31% for women and 18 to 25% for men.

There are a number of ways to measure body fat, including hydrostatic weighing, calipers, DEXA and bioelectrical impedance scales. But a simpler way to measure body fat is to access an online calculator that uses skin fold or tape measurements. If you belong to a health or fitness club, be sure to ask if they offer any of these methods to measure body fat percentages.

A great motivational tool to be your skinniest best is to actually see yourself thinner via a digitally enhanced photo (before and after). This method will cost you, but if you have trouble picturing yourself thin, it could be a powerful incentive to keep up with your diet and exercise program.

There are several online sites where you can obtain a digitally-adjusted photo of yourself. You simply send them a full body photo; they slim you down digitally and send the enhanced photo back to you by email.

Print them out and post them on your refrigerator door and mirrors to give you a mental reality of what you can be at the end of your quest - a new and thinner you!

### **Choosing a Swimsuit to Enhance Your Beauty**

Clothing can cover up a multitude of body faults, but when summer arrives and you have to face yourself at a mirror in a swimsuit - the truth is finally revealed. That warm winter clothing has been hiding expanded thighs and a definite belly bulge. If you dread having to wear a swimsuit at the beach or pool in your present shape, the following tips may help you select the one that most flatters your figure.

The good news about swimsuit fashion is that you can now mix and match tops and bottoms by size, color and print. Designers and manufacturers finally realized that not all women are created alike - or proportionately -- and you're now able to select from a wide variety of styles.

Before you purchase a swimsuit this year, assess your body type. Then you can shop as an informed consumer, armed with knowledge that you know which

swimsuit will flatter your special shape and size. First, take a critical look in a full-length mirror and decide which of the following body types you are and which style of swimsuit will enhance your figure:

Pear-shaped - Your hips are wider than your shoulders. Choose a suit that will highlight the upper part of your body and play down the bottom. A solid color, dark bottom and a print top will give balance to your shape. Don't select a suit with high-cut legs.

Inverted triangle - Your bust is large and/or you have wide shoulders. Select a suit that minimizes your top and highlights a narrow bottom. Square necked suits tend to shrink large shoulders and color or prints on the bottom half of the suit will pull emphasis from the top portion.

Boyish figure - Small bust and narrow hips define your shape. Choose a swimsuit that seems to add curves to your body. Any suit with ruffles and prints will make you look less boyish. A halter top (padded) or a tankini (bikini bottom and tank top) are also great choices for you.

Plus sizes - You wear "women's sizes" and don't exactly fit the above body types. You'll want to look for a swimsuit that contains a high degree of stretchy lycra. A suit that holds in your stomach is a plus - and be sure you have enough support for your bust.

If you're still uncomfortable parading around the pool or beach in nothing but a swimsuit, purchase a great cover up. Choose from sarongs, wraparound skirts, a long shirt or blouse.

Be sure you try on the swimsuit before you purchase it. Some stores and boutiques don't allow returns on lingerie or swimsuits. You may suffer some uncomfortable moments in your search for the perfect suit, but persevere until you find the one that most flatters your body type.



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