

BODY
black woman's guide
to better health

Revamp Your Workout Routine

Not getting results? Experts show three real women how to switch up their exercise strategy and achieve their fitness goals **BY STACY GILLIAM**



NIA CRAWFORD, 33
Mitchellville, Maryland

HER CHALLENGE

“I can’t run farther than three miles!”

After seven years of short-distance workouts, the positive vibes Crawford gets from running three miles four times a week haven’t been strong enough for her to increase her mileage. After mile three, she’s physically drained. But Crawford, who’s 5 feet 5, 140 pounds, has a long-distance goal: completing a half-marathon.

WHAT THE PROS SAY SLOW IT DOWN

“Crawford’s probably sapping her energy by running too fast,” suggests Boris Robinson, a USA Triathlon coach. “By slowing down, she will be able to run farther and meet her half-marathon goal.” He recommends that Crawford increase her workout duration by no more than 10 percent a week to avoid injury. For example, if it takes her 30 minutes to complete three miles, then she should try running for about 33 minutes this week, about 36 minutes the following week and so on. “Once she progresses in duration to about two hours,” says Robinson, “she can focus on distance, and her mileage will not be a problem.”

LESLEY TREESH, 29
Fort Wayne, Indiana

HER CHALLENGE

“I can’t lose the baby weight.”

After her first two pregnancies, Treesh added ten pounds to her 5-foot 1-inch, 105-pound frame. But with the third, she packed on an additional 20 pounds. A full-time job and three kids mean Treesh has no time to work out. She’s been strapping the baby in a sling to her chest and then walking two miles three times a week—but hasn’t seen any real results.

WHAT THE PROS SAY ▶ TRY STRENGTH TRAINING

Keisher Glymph, trainer and co-owner of True Control Fitness, a gym in New York City, suggests that Treesh shorten but intensify her walks by increasing her speed. With some of the time she’ll save, Glymph wants Treesh to do 20 minutes of total body resistance training using three-to-five-pound weights (to tone her arms, back and legs), plus an eight-minute ab routine to tighten her tummy. “She’ll burn fat more quickly, which will help with weight loss,” says Glymph.

JOHNETTA CRAIG, 49
St. Louis, Missouri

HER CHALLENGE

“I can’t stick to a workout routine.”

Gym memberships, personal trainers, exercise videos, swimming—Craig has tried them all. Now she’s walking about a mile in the park, but only twice a month. After witnessing the results of others who practice Pilates, 5-foot 4-inch-tall Craig is itching to try the technique, and she’s hoping it will help her shed 40 of her 215 pounds.

WHAT THE PROS SAY GO FOR FASTER RESULTS

“Because Pilates has the added element of being a mind-body discipline, not just a physical workout, Craig will likely stick to it,” says Desiree Nunez-Palanisamy, founder of Breathe: Yoga, Pilates & Integrated Movement Studio in Bay Shore, New York. And it produces fast results. “After ten workouts, she’ll feel a difference. It will reshape her body and make her stronger,” she adds. Craig should ease into Pilates with a beginner’s class, using a Reformer machine three times a week. 1-

If You Do Only One Thing...

Start strength training, like Treesh. Not only will it help you shed pounds more quickly, but it will also improve your functional movements and increase your bone density.