

8 health myths

YOU SHOULDN'T FALL FOR

AND THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW...

myth 1:

YOU SHOULD DRINK EIGHT GLASSES OF WATER EVERY DAY.

I have guzzled bottles and bottles (glass-refillable bottles, of course) of water for years now. I definitely feel better, but how much is too much? I did have a boyfriend who used to tell me I am going to drown my liver (or was it myself?), but that hasn't happened (yet).

"Drinking eight glasses of water a day is a good start, but this one-size rule does not fit all. According to Mayo Clinic, a variety of factors impact on how much water you should drink, from body weight to activity level. A more general rule of thumb is actually thirteen 250ml glasses daily for men and nine for women." – Mike Del Ponte, co-founder of SOMA

myth 2:

ONE TYPE OF WORKOUT IS ALL YOU NEED.

I used to hit the road and run for hours (well, maybe not hours, but for a long time), and think it was enough to do just that. But, of course, even the long-distance runners (from Kenya, who win every race) actually cross-train. When I realised that, I reconsidered my whole life – well, almost my whole life.

"Different parts of your body need different things. It's important to mix up your workouts, not only for your body, but for your mind as well. Crunches strengthen the abdominal muscles, but they do not burn fat, unfortunately. And that also ties into sweat – it is a biological response to cool the body; it has nothing to do with burning fat." – Sarah Larson Levey, founder of Y7 Studio

myth 3:

TAKING PROTEIN DRINKS AND POWDERS WILL BULK YOU UP.

I work out. In fact, I am in the gym every day. Sometimes I see people in the gym and think, "do they actually sleep here?", but perhaps they think the same of me – because, you know, I am also there at exactly the same times. And we are just chugging away at our protein shakes. Perhaps a little aimlessly, after all.

"Though protein in the diet does support muscle growth, repair and maintenance, consuming protein products, even after a workout, will not necessarily supersize your muscles. Protein is required for numerous processes in the body, including hormone function, bone health and nutrient transport, not just muscle-building. Protein compounds in the body are constantly changing, breaking down and rebuilding with new amino acids from the foods you eat. Exercise and physiological stress can speed up the process of proteins breaking down. Protein is undoubtedly essential to life, and though we get protein from a variety of foods we eat, sometime life gets too busy to get in all you need. This is when convenient supplemental protein from bars, shakes and powders may be helpful." – Tricia Griffin, RD, CSSD, senior marketing manager for technical content for CytoSport and the Muscle Milk brand

myth 4:

WE NEED LESS PROTEIN AS WE AGE.

And there you thought that, when you get older, you'll head to Plett or Florida for the sun and salads. Then again, the over-tanning and too much fresh air can't be that good for you anyway. I'll rather just have some lentils and sit in the lotus position.

"Though this seems logical, the opposite is actually true. The RDA (Recommended Daily Allowance) for protein is 0,8g of protein per kilogram of body weight. This is the amount of protein for all adults to meet basic nutritional requirements. Many experts suggest a higher range of 1,0–1,5g per kg body weight for older adults, to maintain positive protein balance to maximally stimulate muscle growth. Protein needs for adults may be further increased as physical activity increases, to support muscle maintenance, growth and repair. One study of adults over the age of 50 notes that 27–41% of women and 15–38% of men consumed less than the RDA for protein. Health professionals recommend resistance and aerobic training, combined with an overall well-balanced diet including adequate amounts of high-quality protein consumed evenly throughout the day, to help support wellness throughout the lifespan." – Tricia Griffin, RD, CSSD, senior marketing manager for technical content for CytoSport and the Muscle Milk brand



myth 5:

INFUSED OR "HEALTH" DRINKS ARE BETTER THAN SOFT DRINKS.

I have tried them all – every single one. Every health drink at every supermarket, corner store, health store (across six continents – because Antarctica just had boring water), and I have been suspicious every single time I have picked one up. I have always wondered what ingredients that sound like swearwords in Finnish will actually do to my body, and, of course, the very idea of "natural" – well, we know that's everything but natural, right?

"Recent years have seen the rapid growth in popularity of various infused drinks. While many of these beverages are indeed low in sugar and calories, and promise a number of functional benefits, they often fail to explain that they contain a long list of ingredients that customers have very low transparency over." – John Kavchak, co-founder of Sapp

myth 7:

STDs AND HIV ARE A THING OF THE PAST.

I mean, the number of times I have heard this first-hand – "oh, no condoms necessary" – is truly staggering. There is some fairy godmother supposedly protecting these maestros from anything bad happening in their lives. Some of the people who have uttered these words to me have been doctors, and others work in HIV education. You know, it won't happen to them.

"There are actually 54 000 STIs contracted every day in the US. The most at risk? Young women. Unless you are in a monogamous relationship where both partners have been tested, you should be using condoms every single time you have sex. Crazy enough, only 21% of single sexually active women use condoms regularly." – Meika Hollender, co-founder of Sustain

myth 6:

YOU ARE YOUR CALORIE COUNT.

But what if I don't want to be my calories? I ate an apple and it was 100 calories, and I just did a very brisk walk with the dog to the store and back, thinking I burnt that apple. So why am I still confused about what my health app is telling me?

"We don't believe in counting calories. Why? Because calories don't give you any valuable information about the food you're eating. A calorie is a unit of energy, not a food's nutritional quality. And not all calories are created equal; 100 calories of potato chips affect your body a lot differently than 100 calories of fresh fruit. If you want to eat healthier, you should be counting colours, vitamins, antioxidants and other nutrients, and paying attention to how food makes you feel." – Danielle DuBoise and Whitney Tingle, co-founders of Sakara Life

myth 8:

YOU'LL LOSE A POUND OF FAT FOR EVERY 3 500 CALORIES YOU BURN.

I did have a fat moment (I was at university and, okay, I don't have any excuses) and thought there would be a simple formula to apply to lose that gut. In the end, I actually just had to be rational – I ate healthily and played every sport I had ever heard of (air hockey is an official sport) out more. Maybe that's a simple formula, after all?

"People love this one, because it simplifies weight loss to a tried-and-true formula. As anyone who's embarked on a weight-loss journey knows, results aren't as simple as calories in versus calories out. This particular formula (3 500 calories = 1 pound of fat) is inaccurate, because there is no perfect formula for calculating energy expenditure, so it may take anywhere from a 2 000 to 5 000 caloric deficit to lose a pound of fat." – Alexandra Bonetti, founder of Bari ■