

what if you could design the body you want?

You can keep your body looking great for years to come ... if you "blueprint" it now.

Toned thighs, perky boobs, glowing skin ... hands up who wants these when they're older? Well, according to experts, you can, simply by introducing good health and fitness habits into your everyday life now. A few small changes can mean the difference between saggy boobs and legs and a lean, tight bod.

teaching yourself thin

Ever wondered how celebs like Heidi Klum bounce back from having a baby in no time? It's because their body is programmed to do it. "You need to teach yourself to burn fat because your body has a really good memory," explains Sydney dietitian Susie Burrell (susieburrell.com.au). "If you follow a poor diet of highly processed carbs, over a long period, your body produces more insulin, which prevents fat loss. Do the opposite - ie follow a healthy diet and exercise regimen - and your body will produce less insulin, which aids weight loss."

Along with a good diet, regular workouts in your twenties will help shape your body for the future. "When we train and lift weights, we fire up our muscle fibres," says trainer Lisa Rancan

(rancansistersfitness.com.au). "If you don't start exercising until you're overweight and in your 40s, these fibres will have been dormant for such a long time that it'll be hard to get them going again."

tone skin by moving it

What's the best way to prevent cellulite? Get moving! "Exercise enhances circulation and collagen production, which prevents fat-deposit build-up around your thighs and bottom," says Rancan. Dancing and doing weights in your twenties are great ways to increase muscle tone and coordination, which will make exercise easier later in life.

mould your mood

Depression can hit at any time in your life and often unexpectedly. Having a good exercise regimen in place sets you up mentally for when issues arise. "If you can combat 'black' days by going for a walk with a friend or taking a boxing class, you're much better prepared to face life's challenges," says Rancan.

Regular exercise, such as yoga, is proven to boost self-confidence, alleviate period pain and foster good posture - this is great for women who become hunched from long hours working at a desk.

good health = longer life

We'd all like to be around - and in top shape - for as long as we can, so it's ideal we put a good health plan in place right now. "Exercise stimulates everything from your circulation, to your kidney and liver function, to your bowel," says Rancan. "I see so many women who are terribly constipated purely from eating the wrong foods and sitting down all day long."

To make sure your insides are working at their optimal levels, use the food pyramid as your guide, and eat lots

of green leafy vegetables, nuts and wholegrain foods.

"Healthy eating has a positive effect on bone density, blood levels, heart disease, diabetes and many inflammatory diseases," explains Burrell. "The more good stuff you can put into your body, the better. A burger here and there won't kill you as your body is programmed to heal itself, but the more crap you eat, the more damaging it is to your health." So, in other words, if you want a good arse when you're 40, steer clear of those doughnuts! □

good habits for the future

Integrate the following tips into your life today for the body you want tomorrow.

- Plan all your meals and exercise ahead of time.
- Aim to take 10,000 steps a day. (New iPod Nanos feature a pedometer.)
- Try to eat three cups of vegetables or salad every day of the week.
- Consume oily fish, such as tuna or salmon, at least three times a week.
- Have a cup of green tea after each meal to boost your metabolism.
- Learn how to decode food labels so you know what you're eating.
- Eat red capsicum, carrots, broccoli and tomatoes - these are high in antioxidants.
- Remember to drink water with each meal.
- Do a weekly sporting activity, such as tennis or swimming.
- Mix up your workout with push-ups, tricep dips, sit-ups, lunges and cardio to work your whole body.
- Think of fitness like getting dressed: it's just something you do!