

# The Vaughan Fitness team answers your most frequently asked **fitness questions**

VAUGHAN  
**FITNESS**  
find your **strong**



■ ***“I don’t use weights because I don’t want to look big. Will I get bigger muscles if I lift weights?”***

**A:** Getting ‘bigger muscles’ depends on three things, two of which are out of your control – your gender, genetics and training intensity (controllable).

**Gender:** Males tend to have larger muscles than females because they tend to have higher levels of testosterone which affect protein metabolism.

**Genetics:** There are two types of muscle fiber types that everyone has, slow-twitch and fast-twitch. Slow-twitch are useful for long endurance-type activities, like long distance running. Fast-twitch are useful for more powerful bursts, like a sprint, however they fatigue much faster.

Fast-twitch muscle fibers use larger muscles more easily than slow twitch, so it depends on what proportion of each muscle fiber you have.

**Training Intensity:** If your goal is to increase muscle size (hypertrophy), then the load you should be using should be high (let’s say 80% of 1-RM). However, keep in mind that hypertrophy can be stimulated any time the intensity is high enough to overload the muscle.

So, even if you are a beginner starting to exercise and lifting lighter loads, this may be enough to cause some hypertrophy, especially if their body has more fast-twitch muscle fibers.



■ ***“What’s the best exercise to get rid of this?”***  
■ ***Me: \*grabs stomach\****

**A:** There’s no one exercise that does this. Both cardio and strength training play important roles. And when I say strength training, I don’t just mean exercises for your abs! Keep in mind, when working out any muscle group, the first muscle that turns on is one of your abdominal muscles to help stabilize through each exercise. So technically your abdominals are getting a workout regardless of what you are doing.

What I tell people to do the most is watch what you eat! Without going too into it, watch your sugar and starch intakes, eat more lean proteins, and get a variety of colourful veggies. Diet plays more of an important role, however, combined with exercise, will lower overall body fat, not just in your mid-section.



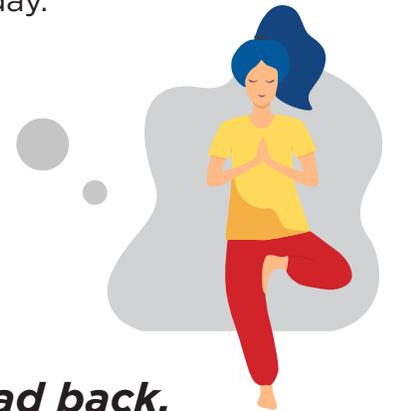
**“What’s better to do first, cardio or strength training?”**

**A:** It really depends on what your main goal is. If your goal is to lose weight, then do your cardio first. If your main goal is to increase your strength, then do weight training first.

For example, let’s say your goal is to lose weight; if you do strength training first, you are still expending energy and fatiguing your muscles here.

This can result in a decrease in intensity in your cardio workout, leading to less calories burned.

If your goal is to lose weight AND build strength, then maybe it’s a good idea to alternate each of these each day.



**“How can I lose all this fat in my arms?”**

**Me: \*jiggles arm\***

**A:** You can’t spot reduce, meaning, you can’t train a certain area and expect that area to solely improve.

You can do as many triceps and biceps exercises as you want and you still may have fat under your arms.

Our bodies are all different and know don’t know exactly where the fat will be oxidized (burned) when we workout.

As we age, our skin becomes less elastic and doesn’t conform to our bodies as it once did. Like I tell a lot of people, there is some fat you might be stuck with. Learn to love it!



**“I have a bad back. What can I do to help this?”**

**A:** Usually when members say this, they’re referring to their lower back. Low back pain can be a result of many things including the type of job you have/had, damage to your discs, nerve compression (sciatica), a muscle sprain or torn ligament.

Avoid exercises that may put more stress to your spine, such as flexion and twisting, or even running. As always, make sure you have doctor’s consent.

Your posture can also affect your back. If you have a “hunched back,” try including exercises to strengthen it in like a seated row. This will help keep your shoulders back. Incorporate squats to correct any postural imbalances.

Strengthen your glutes to avoid and pelvic movements. Try exercises like a bridge, side lying leg lifts, pelvic tilts, bird dog (a great stabilizer exercise for the core while strengthening the glutes), and of course, the plank.

Don’t forget to stretch! From top to bottom, include these in your routine: chest and shoulder stretch, shoulder wall slides, standing side bends, hamstrings stretch, hip flexor and quadriceps stretch, lying knee-to-chest stretch, cat and cow stretch, child’s pose, figure four stretch, and calf stretch.