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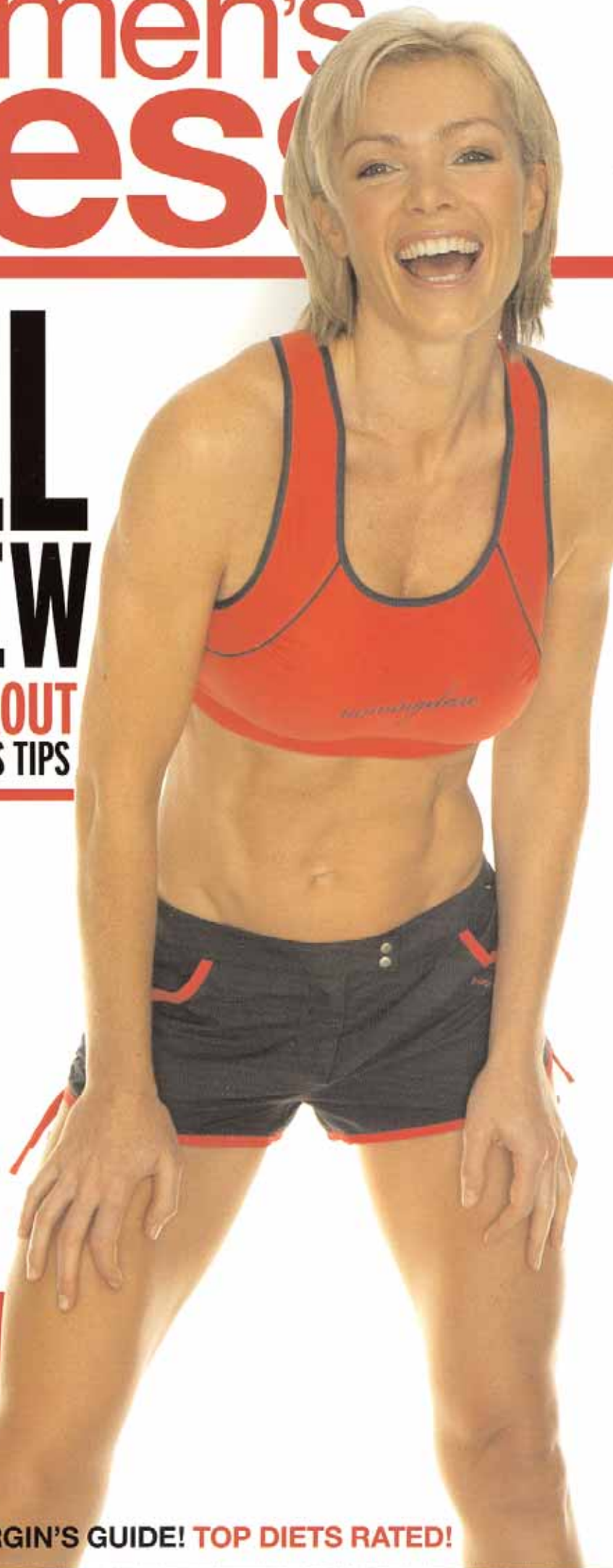
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Do morning workouts burn more calories?

We ask if early morning workouts burn more calories and are more effective than an evening session. Words: **Jeff Archer**

It has long been known that exercise boosts your metabolic rate and can help you burn as many as 200 calories an hour. As you exercise, your heart and lungs work harder to pump more blood and oxygen to the working muscles and the speed at which your whole system operates goes into overdrive; burning energy and mobilising fat from stores all around the body.

Metabolic rate

On completion of your exercise routine, rather than your system returning to normal immediately, your metabolism slows gradually, meaning that for a period following your workout you will be burning more calories than you would at your normal resting metabolic rate. The notion that morning workouts are more effective comes from the idea that exercising early boosts your metabolism for the whole day.

In fact, your body is likely to return to its resting metabolic rate within an hour or two of your workout, so whether you exercise in the morning or at lunchtime or in the evening, it actually doesn't make much difference to your overall daily calorie expenditure.

Best time for you

It is also worth remembering that the number of calories you burn following your workout is much less than the calories you burn during each exercise session, so think about when you are in the best state for exercising and when you will work the hardest.

There's little point dragging yourself out of bed for a morning workout if you're really not a morning person. If the fact that you're in the gym or out pounding the streets when you would

much rather be catching up on some well-deserved beauty sleep means that the quality of your workout is low, then you're better off staying asleep for a bit longer. That way, you'll feel refreshed when you wake up.

Calorie-burning machine

As well as the quality of your workouts, it's important to consider the regularity as well. Working out two or three times a week, every week will ensure that your fitness improves. Exercising at times when you can really push yourself by focusing on your workout without distraction and regularly reaching your best personal effort level will guarantee that you become the most efficient calorie-burning machine that you can be.

So don't be too hung up on trying to squeeze your workouts into the pre-breakfast slot. If morning workouts suit your schedule then fine, stick with them and keep the habit, but if you are someone who struggles to make your early workouts count, don't panic about it. Simply decide what times suit you best for your exercise and aim for these slots instead.

Remember, progress can be slowed if you get into too much of a routine so try shaking up your programme by exercising when your body is least expecting it now and again. ☐

'The notion that morning workouts are more effective comes from the idea that exercising early boosts your metabolism for the whole day'

Some quick facts about morning workouts...

- ★ Morning workouts may help you sleep. Many people find exercise in the evening too stimulating, so try working out first thing and relaxing in the evening.
- ★ Morning workouts definitely get done. Providing you don't ignore the alarm clock, exercising in the morning gets it out of the way.
- ★ Exercise sessions scheduled later in the day get dumped as other priorities take over.