

## The Specialization Routine for Some Typical Women's Issues

By Angela Ursprung, The Body Sculptress<sup>SM</sup>

After spending many years working primarily with women, I've learned that as a gender we have a lot of issues that need to be factored in when it comes to sculpting a leaner, healthier body -- body type, busy lifestyle, menstruation, menopause, fibromyalgia and other chronic issues, and food!

Some women tend to carry their body fat all over their bodies (an apple) while others tend to carry it mainly in their hips and thighs (a pear). As I am an apple myself, I've always been rather envious of those of you who can quickly develop beautifully sculpted abs, arms and backs while covering the higher fat areas of your lower body. Apples on the other hand, have to lose their body fat everywhere in order for any one body part to appear lean and sculpted.

Additionally while some of us tend to be naturally athletic with the ability to quickly gain and lose muscle and fat (mesomorph), others of us have a real difficult time gaining muscle (ectomorph) or a very difficult time losing body fat (endomorph).

Added to the body type issues are the life issues. The chief concern among many women, perhaps, is the inability to find time for themselves while caring for a spouse, children, aging parents, career, committees, and church and neighborhood obligations. I often hear, "but I'm too busy to exercise" and in some cases, it really is true.

Regardless, however, of what is going on and how important each commitment seems to be to you, how important would it be if you suddenly found yourself with a chronic or fatal condition? It is paramount that you make the time for your health--20 to 30 minutes most days is a good place to start.

Then we can factor in our body's monthly battle for our will! Many of us stay on track rather well for three weeks and then go all the way back to ground zero during one emotionally-laden chocolate and ice cream festival. What's my secret? I don't bring temptations into the house! Remember, if it's not good for you, it's not good for your family, either. Don't feel guilty. Feel empowered!

Here's some good news...menstruation affects exercise! Exercising after ovulation - at the midpoint of the menstrual cycle - is easier, and burns more fat, than exercising in the first week of the menstrual cycle. So plan to really burn it up during the midpoint to make bigger fat-burn gains!

Or perhaps we have been blessed by the ending of one war's battle, only to find ourselves in the midst of another very similar onslaught. We are suddenly unable to control our body temperature, our sexual drive, our menstrual cycles, and our emotions as our hormones rise and fall at a rate that we can neither

anticipate nor control. Worse still is the fact that we are having to deal with this as a sleep-deprived zombie!

Like menstruation, the trick is to work hardest when you have energy in order to make big gains and counteract those days when you feel weak and lethargic. Exercise, proper nutrition and rest will all help you minimize the negative effects of this transition.

It is usually during this same time that I hear women starting to use the dreaded words...fibromyalgia and arthritis. We are additionally suddenly held captive by a body which experiences ongoing chronic pain that confuses us and may seem to get worse with exercise rather than better.

We are also suddenly held accountable for poor posture and repetitive-type motions that we have done, perhaps, for our entire lives. For example, if you have been lifting improperly for 20 years, you may find that you have lower-back and knee injuries. If you have been carrying a heavy briefcase in your right hand for 20 years, you may find that you have tendonitis in your right shoulder and/or forearm. And if you have been driving the kids around and eating at fast food drive-ups for 20 years, you may find that you are dealing with osteoporosis or an autoimmune deficiency caused by inadequate nutrition.

For these chronic ailments, you are well advised to seek the counsel of an expert prior to beginning any exercise program. Remember, your best bet is to start a healthy lifestyle before you develop any issues!

And lastly among this article's issues is the fact that as we slow down with career, family and wildly-fluctuating hormones, our bodies begin to accumulate body fat as quickly as our pain and anguish seems to build. This means more cellulite, more self-doubt, and more disease risk to name a few consequences.

So what do we do? We start a diet. Did it ever occur to you that the root of the word diet is "die?" The real problem with diets is that there is a grain of truth to each one which may provide you some sort of progress for some short length of time, but the diet always ends. When the diet ends, our body fat levels rise as our lean mass (muscle and bone) wastes.

Generally speaking at this point most of us decide to try the old diet again or perhaps a new diet--the new "thing" and the cycle repeats itself. And what happens? The diet works for a while, then the diet ends, and the body wastes once more. Every single time this yo-yo effect occurs, your lean mass is less and less able to recover. That means that your metabolism takes hit after hit and as time goes on, it drops dramatically.

So what is a woman to do? There are as many combinations of variables as there are women in the world, so no one program will work perfectly for everyone, but this one will give you a nice baseline to begin with. As you get stronger or decide you want something different, consider contacting me on the internet. I'd be happy to develop something especially for you, designed with your own personal constraints, interests, and abilities in mind.

Until then, however, let me provide a program that all women can use to fight the negative effects of body type, lifestyle, hormonal onslaught, and chronic ailments.

The best health and fitness program is going to incorporate strength training that works every single muscle in your body. I've included "compound" exercise -- exercises that works more than one body part at a time, thereby providing maximal benefit while saving time!

Additionally a good program will cause your heart and lungs to work in order to condition them, too. Anything that is done over a period of 15-60 minutes that you enjoy and that causes you to have to breathe hard is a good starting option for you.

Stretching is another component of a good program as your connective tissue, spinal column and muscle needs to move through it's full range of motion in order to achieve optimal health. And plenty of clean filtered water, a good multivitamin, a women's formula and calcium should be included.

Do your very best to minimize your reliance on processed food in favor of natural food. Fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, seeds and nuts, dairy, fresh and natural meats and fish are all recommended. If you eat 1-2 palmsful of real food every 2-4 hours of the day, you will never have to diet again! Your body fat will simply begin falling off of you as your energy surges and lean mass recovers.

Lastly, and perhaps less apparent is the requirement that you believe that you are worthy and deserving of spending time, energy and money on yourself--not your kids, not your spouse, not your parents, but on and for yourself. You must be able to make yourself a priority or you aren't going to get to ride the health train. It's that simple.

	6:00am	7:00am	10:00am	12:00pm	3:00pm	6:00pm	7:30pm
Each / Most Week Day(s)	Awake, 1-2 glasses of filtered water, 5-15 minutes of planning and meditation <u>Strength</u> 10 jump jacks <sup>1</sup> , push-ups, superman, crunches, sit-stands <sup>2</sup> , chair dips, lunges, and over head press  Shower	Breakfast 1 Water	Snack 1 Water	Lunch 1 Water	Snack 1 Water	Dinner 1 Water	<u>Cardio</u> 15-60 mins Walk, Bike, Run, Elliptical, Jump Rope, Swim, Climb Stairs, etc (i.e. get your heart rate elevated) <u>Stretch</u> Perform at least 1 stretch for each muscle group and hold it for 20-30 seconds.  Drink 2-3 glasses of water

<sup>1</sup> can be low intensity for those with bad knees

<sup>2</sup> find a straight back chair. Sit down, stand up. Repeat.

Repeat the exercise cycle 1-3 times.

Enjoy your new health program, and plan to visit me at [www.thebodysculptress.com](http://www.thebodysculptress.com) for more information.