Steer clear of these popular fitness misconceptions to avoid injury and maximize your health quotient

1. RUNNING AND USING THE STAIRS ARE BAD FOR KNEES

Running and climbing will do no harm to your knees if you are fit. In fact, these activities are great for your muscles and your heart (unless you have a heart problem in the first place). Before the advent of elevators and escalators, everyone climbed the stairs irrespective of age and health conditions. However, make sure you do it in the right way. While running, be light on your feet and do not thump the ground. That can affect the knees adversely. While climbing stairs, the entire foot should be placed on the step. Most people have the habit of allowing the heel to stay out, this should be avoided.

If you are overweight or have knee problems, running and climbing stairs must be done in moderation. For healthy and strong knees, it is important to strengthen the muscles of the thighs and those around the knees.

2. WALKING AND JOGGING ON CONCRETE IS BAD FOR KNEES

The track surface doesn't matter much as long as the right running technique is followed. With the right technique, your muscles act as shock absorbers, thereby causing minimal impact to your joints. Giving sufficient rest to your muscles between runs is also essential. Excessive running tightens the calves and hamstring muscles. Hence, stretching the key muscles is essential in order to retain their elasticity. The stretch should be held for a minimum of 30 seconds.

3. RUNNING ON A TREADMILL IS SIMILAR TO RUNNING OUTDOORS

Many people believe that running on a treadmill is the same as running outdoors. However, running on a treadmill does not require much effort as the surface continuously moves towards you. But when you walk or run outside, the leg that is forward has to work harder. Walking or running outside is a natural movement and better than running on the treadmill.¹

4. BAREFOOT RUNNING IS HARMFUL
Running barefoot or running with minimum footwear allows you to land on your mid-foot and front-foot rather than your heels. This is the right way of running. Thick cushioned shoes cause our heels to hit the ground first. While purchasing running shoes, look for those that enable you to run with the right foot strike. If you intend to start running barefoot, don’t ditch your shoes overnight. Start slowly and build momentum as your feet acclimatize to running barefoot.

5. EXCESSIVE CRUNCHES OR WORKING OUT ON AB MACHINES WILL FLATTEN THE TUMMY

Doing excessive crunches only strengthens the abdominal muscles and not the back muscles. This imbalance can lead to lower back problems. Doing cardio exercises like running, cycling, brisk walking, skipping and climbing the stairs burns extra calories, flattens the stomach and also helps you lose weight in proportion to the rest of your body.

6. OVER-TRAINING OR EXERCISING ONCE OR TWICE DAILY MAKES YOU SUPER FIT

In order to be fit, one needs to do an optimum amount of exercise. Over-training causes weakness, draining of energy levels and injuries. Sufficient rest to recuperate from vigorous exercises is necessary to avoid wear and tear of your joints.

7. PEOPLE WITH SIX-PACK ABS OR LEAN BODIES ARE FIT

Developing a lean and a chiselled six-pack is surely a trend. But if you’re not a celebrity or a model sustaining a six pack for long may seem more stressful than enjoyable. Rather than aiming for a six pack, work on building strength, stamina, speed, brisk reflexes and proper balance.

8. FOODS WITH HIGH CALORIES, CARBOHYDRATES AND FATS MUST BE TOTALLY AVOIDED IN ORDER TO SHED WEIGHT

It is ok to avoid such foods in the initial stages, but such a diet can cause nutritional deficiencies in the long run. Healthy carbohydrates like fruits and vegetables should not be eliminated from the diet. Fats are also needed for digesting vitamins. Replacing high calorie and fried foods with natural foods will ensure that you get the adequate intake of nutrients and fibre.

So clear all these fitness delusions and live a fit and healthy life!
References