

# fitness

## roped in

Want to reshape your shape? Try jumping rope. That and knowing your body type may make all the difference.

Wendy Schmid taps into a training program guaranteed to get you fit.



It hadn't occurred to me that I might be exercising wrong, though I suppose the signs were there. I would drag myself to the gym semi-regularly and go through the motions of walking (sometimes jogging) on the treadmill and doing light weight training. But I rarely broke a sweat. I didn't have the energy. "Just doing it" wasn't cutting it. My body wasn't improving. In fact, certain areas were getting bigger, overly muscular. I needed someone to kick my butt—and reduce it too. New York City-based fitness entrepreneur Edward Jackowski promised that he could do the job—with the help of a simple jump rope and a "Don't just do it—do it right for your body type" philosophy.

Edward Jackowski has built a business out of assessing body types. His book, *Hold It! You're Exercising Wrong* (Simon & Schuster), outlines the most effective (and ineffective) workouts for his four trademarked types (hourglass, cone, spoon, and ruler), and Exude Inc., of which he is founder and CEO, is currently the largest one-on-one motivational fitness company in the United States. Donald Trump recently enlisted Jackowski to slim down the plumped-up Miss Universe, Alicia Machado. It worked: Following Jackowski's program, Machado (an hourglass) lost 20 pounds and went down four sizes in two months. Inspiring, yes, but I sign up with less of an overhaul in mind. I'm in need of a workout that will just fine-tune my particular shape.

At our first meeting, Jackowski has me pegged as a "slender, muscular hourglass" before I've even put on gym clothes. I'm paging through binders of "You changed my life" testimonials in his office—some from as far away as New Guinea—when he comes in. "If you gain weight," he says, "whether it's fat or muscle mass, it's equally distributed on top and bottom." Funny, I only notice the bottom. Can I get rid of this? I ask, pinching my backside. I'm hoping Jackowski can help me lose some of the dense muscle mass I come by genetically. He pats my upper thigh. "You've got a lot of muscle, but there's also some fat there," he says. "Since you haven't really been doing any cardio, you haven't been burning fat, and whatever subcutaneous fat you have has been pushed out-

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ARTHUR EIGORT  
Still life: SCOTT DRICKEY



ward as you built up the muscles underneath.

"You've also been working out this way," he motions, air-traffic-controller-like, forward and back. "Not this way," he motions side to side. To that end, my hips are slim, but my quads and rear are too developed—both areas I hoped to change. "We'll meet for eight sessions spread out over two months," says Jackowski. "You'll do high-intensity cardio to burn fat and calisthenics for toning—with me and on your own. You'll lose inches." Jackowski is a good salesman, but I'm still not convinced I can lose the excess muscle. "Did you read those testimonials?" he asks, adding that Manhattan dermatologist Pat Wexler is a client, as is Donna Karan's juice lady. "We can do what liposuction does, without the risks. Plus, you're going to have fun."

Two days later, as I pedal madly on a stationary bike and Jackowski whips a medicine ball at me (meant to be caught overhead and thrown back equally enthusiastically), I can't quite conjure the word *fun*. "You look strong, but you're a wimp," he chuckles. It's true, I'm drenched in sweat, and I get winded after 35 seconds on the jump rope—Jackowski's secret weapon in the war on fat. This simple two-handled rope is the crux of the Exude philosophy. Beneficial for all body types, the jump rope, according to Jackowski, will burn fat, define muscles, and—the coup de grâce of fitness—even get rid of cellulite. Keep in mind, however, that lazy schoolyard skipping doesn't count; only hard-core jumping—imagine a boxer's fancy footwork—will get results. With his new video, *Jumping Towards Fitness* (800/24-EXUDE), Jackowski hopes to bring the activity to the masses.

The rope becomes the mainstay of my five-day-a-week interval training, along with jumping jacks, stationary biking (high rpms at very low resistance), and a slew of calisthenics and stretch-

of motion has increased, and my new mission in life is finding places to jump rope. Harder than it seems, since most shock-absorbing floors in gyms are relegated to aerobics-class studios. I navigate class schedules of several New York Sports Club locations, and by week three, I'm feeling like a pro. Thirty-five seconds has turned into 35 minutes, and I've learned a few rules of the game: Along with a good floor, the necessities are good shoes (no running sneakers), a towel to mop up your sweat, and music to cut the monotony and tune out would-be suitors. A woman jumping rope seems to have a mysterious draw on men: One guy proffered Knicks/Bulls tickets; another boasted that his grandfather jump-roped right into *The Guinness Book of World Records*. I buy an armband Walkman shortly thereafter.

Week four takes the wind out of my sails. I'm sidelined with a respiratory flu and skip working out for a devastating ten days. I feel like a failure. I miss my jump rope. In the meantime, I meet with Sara Ryba, R.D., an Exude nutritionist. I've been keeping a food log and I'm ready to be chastised, if not bonked over the head with a "this is a pound" glob of fake fat. My diet consists of excessive amounts of bread, minimal protein, and as much candy as I can eat without feeling sick. Ryba takes me to task in a sweet-mannered way. "You may not be eating large amounts, but the foods you gravitate toward are calorie-dense," she says. She questions me about the amount of oil I use for my post-dinner popcorn. A quarter cup, I tell her sheepishly—with fourteen grams of fat in a tablespoon, I'd rather not do the math. Her instructions are simple: "Try to cut down on the oil, candy, and bread, OK?"

By week six, I'm feeling fit and I'm definitely having fun. I look forward to my appointments and often have to discourage myself from working out more days a week. I want to play soccer, Frisbee, softball in the park. Jackowski isn't surprised. He says one of the best things about the program is that it encour-

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es. The idea—and it's hardly revolutionary—is for me to consistently keep my heart rate up, alternating between aerobic activity and short bursts of anaerobic exercise. The best way to work out, Jackowski says, is to keep challenging yourself. "Always vary your routine or your body will adapt and start working less efficiently." Forbidden activities for my body type: excessive walking on an incline or jogging on the treadmill, biking at high resistance, using step machines (Jackowski has been widely quoted as saying they can actually make butts bigger), and heavy weight training. Similarly, a spoon body type (heavy on the bottom, skinny on top) would avoid these potentially bulking activities for her lower region, but do weight training for her upper body. For a cone (heavy up top, lean below), the opposite would be true.

"A lot of this is basic, but it's also very specific to the individual," says Jackowski. "If you look around in a gym, most people are on cruise control and their bodies aren't changing—at least not for the better. Plus, if they're doing the wrong type of exercise for their shape, they can begin to look worse."

Within two weeks, I've lost three pounds, with no change in diet. My muscles feel less bulky, my energy level is up, my range

ages women to be more active in their everyday lives; it gets them interested in sports again. He's a big believer in not relying on a trainer. His periodic warning, "Get used to not seeing me," is anxiety-provoking. I imagine myself a newborn sparrow about to be cast out of the nest. "You need to know what to do on your own, not just go through the motions because I'm here," says Jackowski. "This is about lifelong fitness, and it's not gym-centric. You can take it anywhere—on vacation, when you're traveling for business—and make it work for you."

Well, it seems to be working. It's the end of week eight—judgment day. My body looks and feels leaner, my muscles are more defined, but I want numbers. I go see Jackowski. The data: I'm five pounds lighter, and I've lost roughly five-and-a-half inches—one inch each from my waist, thighs, and knees, one-and-a-half from my hips, three-quarters of an inch from my triceps, and half an inch from my calves. My body fat has also dropped from an already low 17 percent to 13 percent. My diet has improved slightly—I'm eating more protein and I'm down to a pack a day (of peanut M&M's, that is)—but most of the credit goes to the exercise. Jackowski's parting words: "Just remember 'lifelong' doesn't mean every single day." I can live with that. □