

Ask A Personal Trainer

Breaking Through Fitness Plateaus

(NAPSA)—If you feel like you're running in place when it comes to staying fit, it may be time to ask a personal trainer for advice. Trainers can help you work past fitness plateaus, avoid injuries and see results fast.

Amy Dixon is an exercise physiologist who writes a monthly column for Women's Health magazine and stars in the magazine's two new DVDs, "Total Workout in 10!" and "Ultimate Fat Burn!" She offers a few answers to common fitness questions posed by readers:

Q: *I'm having a problem getting rid of my "muffin pouch," "love handles" and inner-thigh bulge. I'm an avid runner, but don't have much time for strength training. Please help!*

Cody

A: Sounds like your body has reached a plateau and it's time to change up your fitness routine. Vary your workouts by running three days a week and up your intensity with speed work and different terrain. Add cycling and stair-climbing into your workouts and try weight lifting, too. But it's also time to take a serious look at your diet. Chances are you're eating more calories than you think. Start a food diary and check out the calorie and fat contents in the food and drinks you consume.

Q: *Do you have any suggestions to curb late-night eating?*

Crystal

A: Try doing something productive that stimulates the mind, such as reading. If you can just get through several nights without hitting the fridge or the cookie jar,



Photo: Ondrea Barbe

Exercise expert Amy Dixon offers up advice.

you'll have more willpower the next time around.

Q: *I had my first child a year ago. I've lost most of the weight I put on; however, I can't seem to get rid of the fat that's on my belly. What can I do?*

Amanda

A: Typically, the first place you put weight on is the *last place* that it's going to come off. In order for you to shed the excess fat, you're going to need to increase the intensity in your cardio, keep up with a weight-lifting program and take a detailed look at your diet and make the necessary changes. Trust me—I've been there twice.

You can send your own questions to Amy or learn more at www.womenshealthmag.com.