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WHEN LESS IS MORE

Sales of slim-soled sneakers rose nearly 300 percent in 2011, and runners aren't the only ones beating a path to the trend: Gym rats are taking a load off too. George Holmes, M.D., a foot and ankle specialist at Rush University Medical Center in Illinois, shares three rules to keep in mind before donning minimal training kicks.

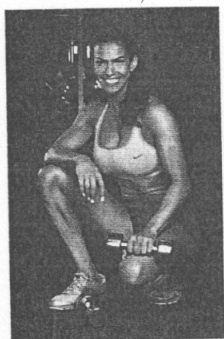
1/ CONSIDER YOUR WORKOUT Thin, flexible soles help your feet feel more connected to the floor, making these sneakers well suited for balance moves and low-impact classes. But stick with standard court shoes for activities that require lots of stop-and-go movements (like tennis and basketball); with little ankle support, minimal footwear may up your risk of sprains and strains.

2/ DO A BODY CHECK If you're overweight, have low bone density, or overpronate, you already have a higher chance of stress fractures, plantar fasciitis, knee pain, and shin splints. These shoes (which have less shock-absorbing cushioning) could increase your risk.

3/ TREAD LIGHTLY To prevent injuries, pain, and fatigue, give your feet time to adjust to this design. Begin by wearing the sneakers for only half of your workout, then add a few minutes each week. During high-impact activities like jumping rope or plyometrics, focus on landing on the balls of your feet, which will help reduce the impact.



SHAPE.COM BONUS! Check out our pared-down picks at shape.com/minimal-trainers.



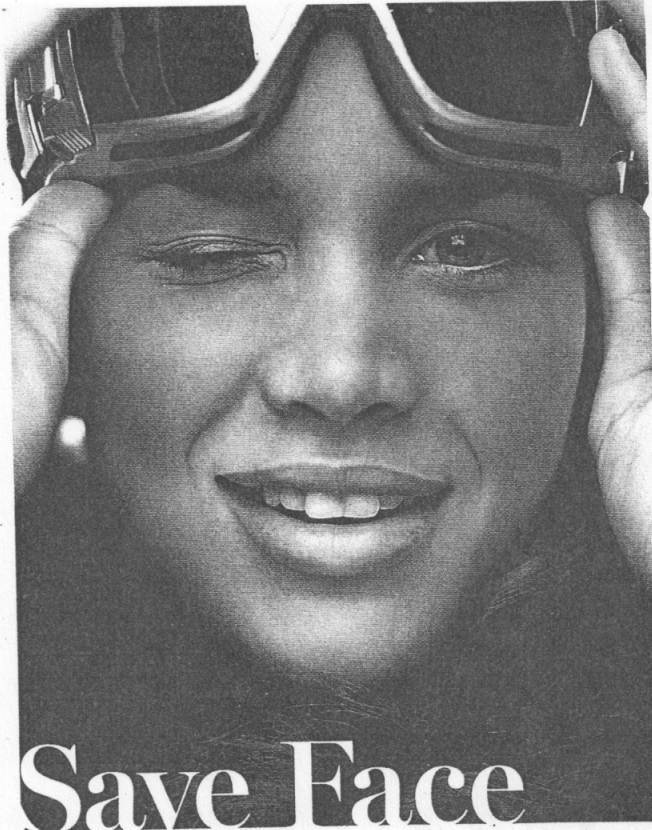
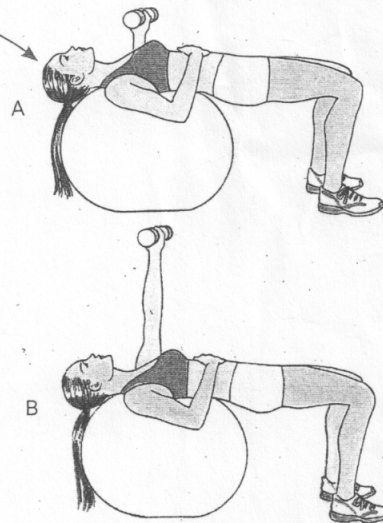
"You naturally lean toward the side of your moving arm, so your core has to work hard to keep your body aligned," says Muresan (above).

MASTER CLASS

Single-Arm Chest Press

Take your workout to the next level with this advanced move from Mona Muresan, editor-in-chief of *Muscle & Fitness Hers*.

➔ Lie faceup with head, shoulders, and upper back on a stability ball, knees bent and feet on floor. Hold a 5- to 10-pound dumbbell in your left hand in front of your left shoulder, palm facing away from you, and place right hand on belly [A]. Press dumbbell straight up over chest [B]. Return to starting position. Do 15 reps, then switch sides to complete set. Do 3 sets.



Save Face

Want to maximize your mountain time before winter ends? Cover up! A study conducted by the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine in Natick, MA, had people stand in the cold while wearing goggles and a ski mask, then again with their faces exposed. Protecting their mugs kept the volunteers' body temperatures higher for an hour longer. Plus, they felt warmer and more comfortable. So add layers and get schussing—60 extra minutes on the slopes equal 484 more calories burned!