



## Beat the plateau

Nothing compares to the fantastic feeling of getting a stunning, toned body from working out. But sometimes you hit an exercise plateau when, no matter what you do, you just don't seem to make any improvement.

Personal trainer Jeff Archer says: 'If you stop seeing results, it may be because your body has got used to the work and you need to make some changes. But that doesn't necessarily mean increasing the weights you use or the length of your exercise session.'

Pick and mix from the following tips:

- Decrease your rest periods, either between sets of repetitions or training sessions.
- Change the number of repetitions per set or the total number of sets per session.
- Do something different: a class, swim or the gym instead of your usual run.
- Alter the speed you complete each bike ride, walk, run or set of yoga exercises.
- Change the order of the exercises.
- Do a different movement for the same muscle group. Try push-ups instead of chest presses or running instead of cycling.

## Work that sandwich

Once a week aim to burn the number of calories in the gym that you ate in your sandwich at lunchtime.

'It doesn't matter if the machines' calorie counters aren't totally accurate,' says Jamie Baird, head fitness trainer at London's Sanderson Hotel. 'The main thing is that having a new goal focuses your mind and eases the boredom factor.'



## GET FIT ON THE NET

For motivation and inspiration, sign up for Nike's Jumpstart UK women's fitness plan. You can choose between three four-week training plans – running, cross training or home-based – which can be tailored to suit any fitness level. If you sign up before the end of March you'll qualify for a free day-pass and a two-for-one gym membership at national gym chain Virgin Active. Visit [www.nikewomen.co.uk](http://www.nikewomen.co.uk) for details.



## DIE-HARD DIARY

■ 13–21 March: Dive into your local pool to join the world's largest swimming fundraising event – the **Butlins Swimathon**. Not only will you tone up, you'll also raise money for Macmillan Cancer Relief. This year participants get their own online trainer. For your nearest participating pool, call 0845 367 0036 or visit [www.swimathon.org](http://www.swimathon.org).

■ 27–28 March: **Stompin' In Brighton 2004** is a weekend dance workshop where you'll learn to jive, swing and salsa. Vigorous dancing has all the benefits of aerobics – toned muscles, strong bones and a cardio workout – but it's more fun, the rhythm keeps you going and you can burn at least 300 calories an hour. Call 01903 209340 or visit [www.eventsforcharity.co.uk](http://www.eventsforcharity.co.uk).

**MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL** A recent study found that women who exercised in front of a mirror felt more tired and less positive than those who didn't. 'Mirror-gazing can make you self-critical,' says Professor Kathleen Ginis at McMaster University, Canada. 'If you feel uncomfortable with the mirrors, stand where you can't see them.'