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Weight Loss Wednesday: IsoBreathing lowers weight, reduces inches

11:37 AM CST on Thursday, November 11, 2004

Meg Farris / WWL-TV Medical Reporter

Is it possible to lose more inches without sweating just by changing your breathing during a light workout?

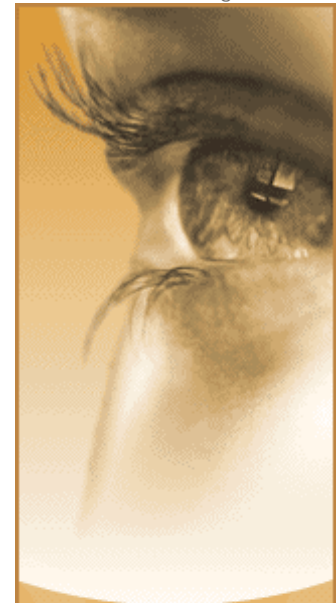
Last year, Northshore personal trainer Ellen Miller created IsoBreathing, a new way for men and women of all ages to lose weight. Her clients swear that nothing in the past has taken off the inches so fast and given them so much energy.

Most are women ranging from 30 to 70. Some have had cancer or fibroyalgia, while others just wanted to lose weight, and even the men are claiming a lower golf score without the aches after the 18th hole.

"I know that I'm hitting the ball farther and that I am more flexible and stronger than I was," said Don Brown, DDS.

IsoBreathing creator Ellen Miller says for 20 years she practiced and preached the usual way of getting into shape: the weight lifting, the Jane Fonda aerobics...and then she

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realized she wanted to get out of bed in the morning not feeling achy.

"I'm always yelling at everybody breathe, breathe, breathe, and of course I had to come up with a way doing something a little bit different to get my clientele to breathe while doing an exercise," Miller said.

So she incorporated the 50 & 60's type of isometrics and stretching like Jack Lelane did: with a special way of breathing. Miller believes her clients are losing as much as five inches a week by eating several small meals a day in combination with IsoBreathing technique.

"You're getting in more oxygen, you're breathing deeper, you're becoming more efficient, and why does that help you lose inches faster and build muscle faster? I find that the combination of the exercises, of course the healthier, smarter choices to this day don't believe in diets," Miller said.

"Thirty years ago I used to teach Hatha yoga and that's exactly what Hatha yoga is; you hold postures, so it's an isometric contraction, and you breath through the nostrils," said LSU Health Sciences Center exercise and weight loss expert Melinda Sothern.

According to Sothern, there are benefits to what she calls a modified form of yoga, which has been used for centuries. Deep breathing reduces stress and she says this would be especially beneficial for the obese but after combing through all the medical literature and sound science, Sothern remains skeptical.

"There is no scientific proof for this type of mixture; you know, deep breathing, IsoBreathing, with isometric exercise to suggest that it would result in enhanced weight loss or enhanced body composition changes increased muscle mass decreased fat mass there's even very little scientific evidence that it causes weight loss at all," Sothern said.

Sothern is concerned that they are not doing



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isotonic exercise, like the typical weight lifting where the full range of the muscle is used while moving. She says everyone, especially seniors, needs this for everyday functioning, but she has an idea why IsoBreathing is giving clients more energy.

"What 's happening is these women are enhancing the ability of the brain to send messages to the stomach to contract. It's neurological changes there's no muscle structure changes in at least three to four weeks," Sothern said.

In any fitness program she said that in the first few weeks the brain actually forms more communication pathways to the muscles, so your body becomes a more efficient machine.

Miller agrees she has no science to back her program but she says she has results, even in a client who broke her leg and never left the sofa.

"Within the seven days I had her measure herself before and after, and she lost two inches by sitting on the couch she did not change her eating habits. All she did was breath," Miller said.

A far cry from the sweat and out of breath kind of exercising that we're all used to hearing about.

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