

## To Lift or Not To Lift (in the Summertime)

By Karen McCoy

**OK. Summer's here** and you're wondering if you have to go to a traditional gym to get a good workout. Yes and no. It depends on your goals.

- 1) If your goal is to continue to sculpt and tone your body, then you must keep lifting. Period. The body needs constant and continual weight training to progress and stay well toned.
- 2) If your goal is to just *maintain* what you've built, then bodyweight exercises without added weights can help you keep what you have, provided you do it 4-5 times a week, 2-40 minutes.
- 3) If your goal is to not train all summer, then you'll lose tone and likely gain weight. After a 2 month break, expect to take 3-6 months to get back to where you were before you stopped.

**If you want to continue to carve and reshape your body**, then you need to continue lifting weights. Nothing tones and shapes like weights. So use those dumbbells and barbells!

**But many people don't want to bring weights with them**, especially if they're traveling or camping, so non-weighted programs can *maintain* your fitness levels to a certain degree, but you *are* limited.



**Let's look at it this way:** occasionally, I'll have my group classes do circuits – non-stop boot camp-style functional moves like skipping, jumping jacks, and burpees to mix things up. Yes, they're breaking a good sweat. Yes, they are working hard, but it's mainly their heart and lungs that are working. Skipping is going to make you sweat, but it isn't going to tighten your arms, shape your chest, and strengthen your back or glutes!

**So what do we do in the summer?**

**If you just don't want to be inside a gym on sunny days**, then decide your plan of attack: either take some dumbbells outside and do some isolation exercises (shoulder presses, chest presses, squats, bicep curls) or do basic whole-body movements like push-ups, jump squats, lunges, jumping jacks. They will help you hang onto some of the shape you have. And if done non-stop, it will help to burn some fat also.

**You need to build a program around your summertime travel goals.** Make a commitment to *something*, otherwise you'll walk away with *nothing*, and feel discouraged come September. In the area of fitness, if you're not moving forward, then you're definitely moving backward.

**Remember the mantra: your metabolism is in your muscles**, so when you lose muscle (which will happen in summer if you stop training), then you risk lowering your metabolism.

For more info, check out my **Healthy Living Program** at [www.mccoyfitness.ca](http://www.mccoyfitness.ca) with its summertime routines – both in-gym and out-of-door routines. Have a happy, healthy summer!