

# WELL, THIS IS AWKWARD

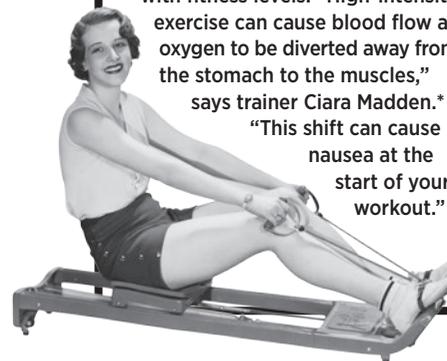


TOO EMBARRASSED TO ASK THE INSTRUCTOR WHY YOU MADE THAT SOUND DURING A PARTICULARLY GRUPELLING DOWNWARD DOG? STRUGGLE NO MORE. WE HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS...

**Y**ou're mid-workout and your body is doing something. Something weird. You look around – nobody else's body is doing that. What's up with yours? You want to know, but there's no way you're going to tap that gym-instructor on the shoulder to find out. So instead you stay silent, persevere, then go home feeling ashamed for not just *asking*. Well, save your blushes as we've left our pride behind and asked the experts everything you *really* want to know.

## WHEN I DO CARDIO IT MAKES ME QUEASY – AM I REALLY THAT UNFIT?

Good news: this has nothing to do with fitness levels. "High-intensity exercise can cause blood flow and oxygen to be diverted away from the stomach to the muscles," says trainer Ciara Madden.\* "This shift can cause nausea at the start of your workout."



**THE SOLUTION:** Warm up well, raise your heart rate slowly and avoid eating one to two hours, and drinking 10 minutes, prior to exercise. Feel funny afterwards? "This might be due to the natural fall in blood pressure that occurs after stopping exercise," explains Dr John Etherington, president of the Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine UK. Warm down slowly.

## Why do I have a wet patch there? And is it really sweat?

Biology-lesson time. There are two types of sweat glands: eccrine (produces moisture) and apocrine (makes things smell). Our skin's covered with around two- to five-million glands – but, due to higher fat levels and hair, our groins and armpits contain the most apocrine ones. Add legs-together workouts and a suspicious-looking patch is almost inevitable. Think you sweat more than others? That's totally normal and comes down to lots of factors, from the room you're in to how stressed you feel that day.



**THE SOLUTION:** Do *not* wear grey marl. Stylish? Yes. Sweat-magnet? Even more so. And choose a comfortably fitting cotton thong. It's also worth noting that we sweat much more when we're stressed, and stress-sweat comes from those pesky apocrine glands – so you really will sweat out that bad day if you choose a heavy workout when wired. But also: remember that *everyone* perspires. It's the sign of a good workout. Be proud of your patches. >

## How do I stop that yoga-class wind?

Vaginal fart, vart, daisy pump: whatever you call it – it's embarrassing. "I describe the vagina as a letter box, the front and back walls of which should be supported by muscle and fascia connective tissue," explains Kate Walsh, specialist pelvic physiotherapist at Mallucci London. "Weaknesses within the vaginal walls can create pockets where air gets trapped." The twisting of yoga can release these.



**THE SOLUTION:** "Regular pelvic-floor-muscle exercises can help strengthen the support around the vagina," says Walsh. You can also exhale, rather than inhale as you raise your hips. This reduces the amount of air your body takes in on the movement, eliminating the potential for embarrassment. It also helps not to eat one to two hours before class.





TRUST ME TO GET STUCK WITH THE TOE CREEP

## I don't really like being touched - what do I tell my trainer?

They sometimes need to touch you. Just putting that out there. And, of course, that can cause all sorts of worry, for you *and* them. But how much is too much? And do they *need* to breathe down your neck as you perfect your squat? It can be tricky to know, but trust your instinct. "A good personal trainer will only make physical contact with you if it's essential or beneficial for safety or technique," explains Paul Swainson, head of personal training at Future Fit Training.



### THE SOLUTION:

"Try saying 'I think I'd find this easier with a bit more space - can you coach me through the exercise verbally, or is there an alternative I can do?'" advises Swainson, adding that a professional trainer would always rather you said something. A rule of thumb: ask them to stick to touching joints (like elbows and knees) rather than soft and squidgy parts (like thighs and stomachs) which, generally speaking, are more intimate.

## Why do I always need to pee when I lift weights? Am I broken?

This is completely normal. It happens because of the increased abdominal pressure that's acting in a downward direction on the bladder. As for "doing a Paula Radcliffe", that's due to the up-and-down motion of running, which can stimulate the colon.



### THE SOLUTION:

Both can be made worse by chugging water, which fills your bladder *and* loosens stools. Drink only what you need to, and avoid eating at least an hour before a serious session, to sidestep accidents.

## SHOULD I SWERVE THE GYM WHEN I'M ON MY PERIOD?

There's a scientific reason why watching *Gilmore Girls* in bed is more appealing than a workout at this time, and it's all to do with your hormones. "Just before and during your period, there's a drop in oestrogen and progesterone, which play a key role in soft-tissue strength," says Walsh. "Basically, your muscles fatigue faster." Some scientists, however, think the dip in hormones can increase pain tolerance, so do what feels right for you.



### THE SOLUTION:

"If your period comes with a side order of low mood or tiredness, the endorphin boost from exercise can help," says Keith McNiven, founder of PT company Right Path Fitness. Just do something gentle that works with your energy levels.

## And the questions you should never ask...

COME HERE OFTEN?

▲ Repeat after us: they don't fancy you. They're being nice because it's their job. Sorry.

HEARD OF THAT GUY JOE WICKS? EVER THOUGHT OF DOING THAT?

◀ Yes, they have. No, they don't want to be reminded that they're not a multi-millionaire.

SO... ARE YOU ON STEROIDS?

▲ Remember: steroids can make people angry. We advise you not to poke the bear.

