

curves claims victory

FINALLY, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN DECADES, THE CONTINUING RISE IN OBESITY RATES FOR WOMEN HAS STOPPED. ○ BY GARY HEAVIN

For many of you, Curves is your personal gym. It's a place you can fit exercise into your busy schedule—a comfortable environment where other women encourage you to set goals, eat well, and spend time on your health. You may be surprised to learn that there are almost 10,000 Curves, in 42 countries, with more than 4 million members. According to The International Health Racquet and Sports Association, 27% of fitness centers in America are Curves. Knowing that so many women are exercising at Curves—many for the first time—you may *not* be surprised to learn that the Curves phenomenon could be responsible for halting the trend of rising obesity rates in women.

Survey Says...

Every four years, the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) surveys Americans to determine their rates of obesity. The previous survey, published in 2000, showed a continuing increase in rates of obesity for men, women, and children. In 2000, the rate of obesity for children climbed to 14%. The rate for men was up to 27.5%, and the rate of obesity for women had reached 33%. The most recent survey, representing data collected from 1999–2004, has just come out of Washington, DC. As expected, the rate of obesity has increased for children, up to 17%, and in men, up to 31%. However, the rate of obesity in women did not climb for the first time in decades. It remained high but stable at 33%.

Kudos to Curves?

This is very good news, perhaps the only good news, but could it get even better? Could Curves claim responsibility for

this promising halt in the rise of obesity rates in American women? We believe that we can. Most of our 4 million members are in the United States. A common theme among them is that they weren't working out before Curves. Curves made exercise fast, fun, and available to a group of women who were previously treated as second-class citizens in the conventional gyms of America. Our unique approach to exercise and weight management has allowed these women to move away from the failed method of perpetual dieting, thereby eliminating many of the health problems and disease risks associated with being overweight and out of shape.



If Not Curves, Then What?

We've looked for other factors that might have influenced women's obesity rates during this period, and nothing seems to have the significance of Curves. We've asked the experts at the Baylor University Department of Health, Human Performance, and Recreation to validate our claim. In the meantime, keep up the good work. You're proving that women can take charge of their lives and manage

their weight with a 30-minute workout and the support of the Curves community. We look forward to the next CDC survey, when we hope the obesity rate is not just holding steady, but dropping like a rock. ●

GARY HEAVIN holds a bachelor of science degree in health and nutritional counseling and is the author of four books. He has been counseling exercise and weight management for more than 30 years.

ROB BUCK

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