

BATTLE OF THE SEXES

GET SUPER, GIRL

Sore feet, tiny hands, sweaty pits. Some things about being a girl aren't so fun. Here's how you can turn those physical disadvantages to your advantage. —LESLIE GOLDMAN

LUNGS

Women have smaller airways and lung volume than men. Well, breathe easy: Science says we may experience less diaphragm fatigue than men, putting us on track to outperform the guys in ultra-endurance events.

HANDS

More petite hands require tailored equipment, such as narrower grips for golf clubs or tennis rackets and smaller-diameter basketballs. Strengthen your digits by teaching yourself to open a combination lock with your non-dominant hand.

ARMPITS

We don't glow — we get drenched! Wear your pit stains with pride: A recent study found that fit women start sweating faster than unfit women, because our bodies are trained to cool themselves down more efficiently.

KNEES

Female athletes are up to 10 times more likely than male athletes to tear their ACL. Protect your knees by getting in a deep, flexed position (try a squat), which engages your key leg muscles—quads, hammies, glutes—and simultaneously tightens your core.

FEET

Shifting estrogen levels before and during your period can affect foot flexibility and arch height. Consider swapping your sneakers for the **Gel-Kayano 16** from **Asics** (\$112, zappos.com). They're designed to mold and adjust to Aunt Flow feet.

SHOULD YOU TRY IT?

Barefoot Running

Sweet, super-lightweight sneaks, such as the **NB Minimus** (\$100, newbalance.com) and the **Merrell Pace Glove** (\$100, merrell.com), are popping up everywhere this spring. Unlike traditional running shoes, which encourage you to land on your heel, these styles promote a forefoot or mid-foot strike that helps reduce injury,



increase speed and strengthen foot muscles. Here's the catch: You have to use them properly. "Your body needs time to get used to this type of training, and if you transition too quickly, you might get injured," warns Reed Ferber, Ph.D., director of the Running Injury Clinic at the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada. Here's how to stay safe, and take it one step at a time.

STEP 1 KNOW YOUR FEET "If you have recurring foot and ankle problems or you over-pronate (your foot turns inward as you stride), it's probably best to stick with a stability shoe," Ferber says. We like the **Asics GT-2160** (\$100, asicsamerica.com). The firmer foam in its midsole adds support and prevents your arch from collapsing as you run.

STEP 2 GO FOR A TEST RUN "Perform 30 minutes of strides or drills, like A-skips (high knees with a hop), barefoot on the grass to see how your body responds," recommends Blake Boldon, a Run S.M.A.R.T. Project coach. If you feel pain in your feet, knees or hips, focus on your form and building strength. Once you can finish your drills pain-free, try taking your bare-foot-inspired sneaks out for a longer ride.

STEP 3 STAY LOOSE "You need to build strength and flexibility in your ankles, calves and hips before you lose your shoes," Ferber says. Do one-legged calf raises while you're brushing your teeth. Stand on your right leg in the morning and your left leg in the evening.

STEP 4 WORK UP TO IT Start off running just 10 percent of your weekly mileage barefoot or in a minimalist sneaker (preferably on dirt or grass). For example, if you normally run 20 miles a week, then two of those miles should be done barefoot. Then add 10 percent more each week.

STEP 5 PRACTICE GOOD FORM Land with your feet under your hips and keep your steps light (no slapping the pavement). The goal is to keep your body aligned—shoulders, hips, knees and ankles—so you absorb impact evenly and run more efficiently. — L.E.

THE GIRL'S GUIDE TO EATING RIGHT AT SCHOOL

FOLLOW THESE 10 TIPS FOR NAVIGATING THE CAFETERIA MENU, AND YOU'LL WALK AWAY FEELING HEALTHY, SATISFIED, AND FUELED FOR A KILLER AFTER-SCHOOL PRACTICE. BY LESLIE GOLDMAN

MILK

Sport a Milk Mustache A cup of skim milk will satisfy one-fourth of your calcium requirements; girls ages 9 to 18 need 1,300 milligrams per day for healthy bones and proper muscle function. **Treat yourself to chocolate milk:** Research shows the protein-carb combo both feeds and repairs muscles. Sah-weet!

BURGERS

What's Your Beef? A juicy cheeseburger might be calling your name, but all that fat will take forever to break down in your stomach, making you feel heavy at practice. **Try a leaner turkey or veggie burger.** Ask for a whole-wheat bun containing fiber to slow digestion and maintain your energy longer. Swap fries or tater tots for a juicy apple.

DELI COUNTER

Delii Delights Fill whole-grain bread with lean chicken or turkey breast instead of chicken patties (the crispy, golden exterior means it's taken a fatty oil bath). **Layer on spinach, tomato, avocado and cucumber, then add a squirt of spicy mustard, salsa or olive oil and vinegar for a tangy kick.** Cheese, please? Low-sodium Swiss won't leave you dehydrated for practice.

SALAD BAR

Eat Roy G. Biv Rock a rainbow-colored salad: yellow pepper strips, green broccoli, orange carrots, red tomatoes. **Their bright hues scream "nutrient-packed!"** Top with beans, hard-boiled eggs or tuna (without mayo) for muscle-building protein. Sprinkle on some mozzarella (way better than fatty cheddar), and go easy on fat traps like oily pasta salads and ranch dressing.

PIZZA

Get Saucy Skip the pepperoni and grab a slice of veggie instead—we love spinach and mushrooms! If cheese is your only option, pile on diced chicken breast or ham from the salad bar for a protein punch. **Add crushed red peppers to boost your metabolism,** or opt for pineapple chunks rich in bromelain, a natural anti-inflammatory that speeds up muscle recovery.

SODA MACHINE

Pop Quiz How much sugar is in one can of soda? Eight teaspoons. Yeesh! After a momentary sugar high, you'll feel bloated and sleepy in no time. **Choose the naturally sweet stuff, like OJ (packed with potassium and vitamin C)** or Welch's 100 percent juice made with Concord grapes (high in heart-healthy antioxidants).

EXPECT DELAYS

VENDING

Snack attack! Those nacho cheese-flavored chips may have your mouth watering, but their empty calories, **fat and sodium will never satisfy you and may ultimately sabotage your performance.** Instead, choose baked or multigrain chips, like SunChips, which have 30 percent less fat than potato chips.

DETOUR

WATER

Wet Your Appetite Between classes, practice and hanging with your friends, you barely have time to stop at the water fountain. But **thirsty muscles are weak ones, and your brain needs water to power you through** sixth-period physics. Drink enough H₂O that your urine is pale, not bright yellow, and stash a water bottle in your backpack.

TRAYS

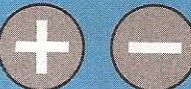
Tray Chic Always use a tray when gathering your goods. Research shows that **students who utilized cafeteria trays ate more vegetables.** Those who bypassed the handy carrying device consumed 21 percent less salad.

EXIT

Head Off-Campus If you're near a Subway, try the six-inch low-fat Roast Beef or Veggie Delite sandwich, or get the foot-long and save half for after school. **At Wendy's, order the small chili and plain baked potato** (high in immune-boosting Vitamin C). At Starbucks, oatmeal topped with dried fruit and nuts, plus a piece of fresh fruit, will keep you energized through p.m. classes.

START
HERE

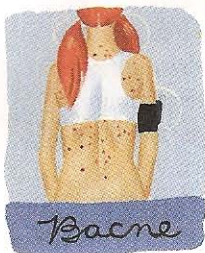
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OMG!

Your Most Embarrassing Health Problems Solved

When it comes to our bodies, gross stuff happens to all of us. And nobody really wants to talk about it. Which is why we thought it was high time we had the conversation.



OMG! #1 I've got bacne!

THE FIX Body bumps popping up faster than your Facebook status updates? Join the club: "We're all guilty of not washing our sports bras, or not changing out of sweaty clothing as soon as practice is over," says Nancy Redd, author of *Body Drama*. But such laziness encourages bacteria to multiply, especially in places where sports bras, underwear and headbands hit the skin.

Ditch your sweaty gear after a workout, shower off and keep your skin clean and dry. **Redd says to avoid harsh acne products, which can irritate sensitive skin, and resisting the urge to pick.** If the problem persists after a few weeks of improved hygiene, ask your mom to set up an appointment with a dermatologist.



OMG! #2 "Super" tampons aren't cutting it!

THE FIX Plowing through tampons isn't just inconvenient — losing all that blood can be downright scary. If you're soaking through a tampon or pad every hour for two or three hours in a row, or bleeding for more than seven days, call your doctor. Otherwise, keep in mind that a **heavy flow isn't necessarily a bad thing** — think of it as your body being super

efficient at shedding its monthly lining — and try a tampon-backup pad combo, keeping a stash at the ready. A doctor may prescribe a low-dose birth control pill to curb a heavy flow.

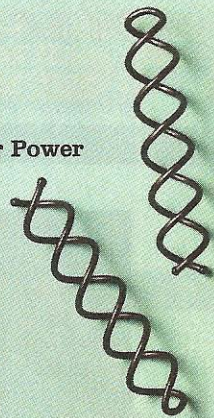


OMG! #3 Stanky gas is cramping my style!

THE FIX Your stink bombs may be due to anything from pregame jitters to a school cafeteria bean burrito. Avoid trigger foods like cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower) or dairy (if you're lactose intolerant and have trouble digesting dairy). **And don't eat too quickly: Inhaling your food can trap gas inside.**

Feeling brave? Redd encourages you to let loose. "Everyone farts: Get over it. Walk to the side of the court and let go a discrete SBD." —L.G.

Spin Pins & Flower Power



UPGRADE YOUR UPDO

I'm bored of my basic ponytail. How can I dress it up?

The ponytail is the vanilla ice cream of hairstyles. Popular—and predictable at the same time. Add some flair to this hairstyle staple with a few fast and easy tweaks. Add an eye-catching accessory at the base, like a **fun flower from Tarina Tarantino** (\$30, sephora.com). Or transform your look by wrapping the tail into a bun and securing the end with a clip like this **glittery rose from Forever 21** (\$2.50, forever21.com). Then take the whole look to the next level with these **ingenious Spin Pins** (\$5.99, walgreens.com) from Goody. Slide them in like bobby pins for a totally chic approach (it works—we've tried it!). And finally, add instant flair with **headbands and ponytail wraps from Braidies** (\$8, ulta.com). It'll look like you've woven in an elaborate braid, like the ones Lauren Conrad use to sport on "The Hills."



MAKEUP TO GO!

I don't want to carry a ton of makeup in my bag, so what can I use for touch-ups at school?

Two words: **blotting papers**. They absorb shine without disturbing the rest of your makeup. We like the ones **from Sonia Kashuk** (\$6.99, target.com). Add to that a handy cover-up, like **Neutrogena SkinClearing Blemish Concealer** (\$9.99, drugstore.com), which helps fight breakouts and hide them at the same time. **Another great stashable solution: Mark Hook-Ups** (\$6, shop.meetmark.com). A small black gadget allows you to connect any two products of your choice—such as skin treatment, lip gloss, mascara, or eye shadow—on either side, creating a smart, two-in-one, Sharpie-sized stick.