



ACTIVITY TIPS

Couch Potato Fitness: Too Good to Be True?

This activity is a research project on the effectiveness of electronic muscle stimulator (EMS) products for losing weight. It appears in the section *The Body Electric*.

Question and Answers

1. Are EMS products safe?

EMS products are approved by the U.S. FDA (United States Food and Drug Administration), which regulates their safety.

2. Are EMS products effective, and are they based on real science?

Research indicates that EMS devices can prevent unused muscles from atrophying. Physical therapists and sports trainers use them in addition to exercise to improve muscle tone and strength. In cases of paralyzed limbs due to stroke, these can be helpful in training people to be able to use their limbs again. However, according to the FDA, no EMS devices have been proven to help with weight loss or girth reduction without the addition of diet and regular exercise. (Do an Internet search on "FDA Electronic Muscle Stimulators" for verification.)