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The Self-Help Gurus

SLOW DOWN, SHAPE UP

Here in the land of beautiful excess, we are constantly encouraged to get more, have more, and do more. So it's no wonder that most Angelenos approach exercise the same way. However, this lack of moderation can be counterproductive and even harmful, especially when it involves spending hours at the gym pushing our bodies to perform countless sets of repetitive motions. Enter Linda Cole of **4 Ideal Fitness** (310-231-8228, 4idealfitness.com), a different kind of fitness studio where there are no mirrors, no music, no cell phones, no distractions—and less really is more.

Cole practices SuperSlow; a challenging, high-intensity strength-training program that, despite requiring just 30 minutes a week, gets your heart rate up, and your muscles burning and shaking each and every time. Cole explains, "First, you have to learn a form to do. We go eight to 12 seconds out and eight to 12 seconds back on every movement." These intense motions resemble reps done on traditional equipment, but instead of 15 to 20, you do a few reps very slowly on specialized equipment made by Medx. "There's no injury to the joints, because we eliminate all momentum and acceleration in the exercise," Cole says. "It's not weight that causes injuries. It's when you have a movement that's done in a ballistic way. But if you go slowly, then the muscles are forced to do all the work, rather than the joints. And muscle failure is good; it's what we are looking for." Cole stresses that

these difficult, concentrated sessions push the muscles into fatigue, and only then can the musculature begin to change, and overall body strength can increase.

Devotees of SuperSlow include *CSI: Miami*'s Emily Procter, *Monk*'s Tony Shaloub, and *The West Wing*'s Richard Schiff, as well as pro-athletes looking to get more from their workouts. It's easy to see why SuperSlow is ideal for people on a tight schedule, but then again, who couldn't use a little spare time free from sweaty gyms? "We give you freedom," Cole explains. "The freedom to have a life beyond the gym." In fact, Cole doesn't allow her clients to do more than two sessions per week. It's during that break between workouts that the body makes "adaptive changes"—in other words, achieves results—and *that's* where more is a good thing.



Linda Cole takes it slow at 4 Ideal Fitness.