

STAY STRONG

Health

SPECIAL!
HEALTHY
EATING ISSUE

198 Best
Foods, Tips &
Recipes

**Burn Crazy
Calories...
Hiking!**

FASTER

**Julia
Louis-Dreyfus**
**HAPPY AND
SO FIT**

A word to
beginners: "You can always
take an easy hike and
make it more challenging,"
says exercise physiologist

ts to
down

and hike leader **Franci Cohen** of Fuel Fitness in Brooklyn, N.Y. (think varying the intensity with speed bursts). "What you can't do, though, is make a hard hike easier." In other words, don't try to tackle Machu Picchu the first time you go off-road.

Next, get in good form

As with any sport, you want to protect your body from injury and get the best, most efficient workout. On flat stretches, says **Cohen**, "walk like you are proud—shoulders pulled back and relaxed, spine in line and leading with your chest, not your

knees." On downhill sections, reduce the length of your stride to make the slopes more manageable and increase traction. When you encounter a monster climb, do a light squat to balance better. Just don't walk around hunched over: You could strain your back and make your knees more prone to injury if you're hyperflexing them, cautions **Cohen**. No matter how much fun you're having as a trailblazer, take breaks whenever your body is so tired that your form starts to suffer. And keep downing water. (See the great bottle picks on page 20.)

Slow down, woman!

You don't need to go superfast or tackle insane inclines to ramp up results. In fact, experts agree that if you're new to this, you're better off taking a trail with a few smaller hills and going at an easy pace—meaning you're putting in about the same effort as you do during a slow jog. You should be able to talk comfortably and in complete sentences. This way, you can last and stay in your fat-burning zone. "When you go at a slower pace for a longer amount of time, your body burns more fat than carbohydrates,"

says **Cohen**. Over time, you'll lose inches faster. And don't blow through the downhill sections: They can require your body to work extra hard. As **Silberberg** explains, "When you take downhills slowly, you get into a plod-stop-plod-stop rhythm, so your muscles have to conspire to stop you. That makes the effort more challenging and a bigger calorie burner."

Seriously boost the burn

To increase the fitness benefits of a hike, **Cohen** recommends lunging up slight inclines, jumping on and off cut tree stumps, or grabbing a tree trunk, sinking into a squat and pulsing there for 60 seconds, then repeating the move several times.

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