

MISSION ABDOMINALS

TOP SECRETS

TO SIX PACK ABS!

THE TRUTH ABOUT

**DIET SCAMS &
RIP OFFS!**

CONFIDENTIAL

**MUSCLE BUILDING
MANEUVERS!**

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Mission: Abdominals

**David Grisaffi, the "Abs Guru," Interviews
Tom Venuto, the "Fat Loss Guru"**

*This special report is an excerpt from Tom Venuto's ebook,
The Fat Burn Files: 10 Revealing, Uncensored Interviews
with the World's Most Honest Fitness Guru.*

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MISSION: ABDOMINALS

David Grisaffi Interviews Tom Venuto

DAVID GRISAFFI: Tom, before we get started, I just want to say thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule for this interview.

TOM VENUTO: Always a pleasure, David.

DAVID GRISAFFI: Let's jump right in and talk about a very popular topic in today's fitness news—abdominal fat. Many products claim to reduce abdominal fat. A few years back there was Cortislim, and today we see new products on TV, like Relacore, that talk about reducing abdominal fat. Would you tell us your thoughts on this subject?

TOM VENUTO: There are all kinds of products claiming to reduce belly fat through all kinds of physiological mechanisms including controlling insulin, reducing appetite, increasing thermogenesis, and others. The two products you mentioned claim to reduce abdominal fat by suppressing the hormone cortisol.

No matter what the mechanism involved, I can't put it any softer than to say this whole concept of "take a pill to lose your belly" is the wrong approach and a great way to burn your money, get taken advantage of, and end up frustrated, discouraged, or even harming yourself. If pills really worked in the long term, they would have stood the test of time, but instead, there's a new miracle product every year. That's how the marketing machine works—they keep hooking you with the "next big thing."

People get bombarded with so much advertising that they're conditioned—or I guess brainwashed is a better word—to think that a pill is the answer. But if you look at the history of the diet pill market, it's been one bomb, one scam, and one fraud after another.

The products you mentioned are perfect examples. In 2004, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) filed lawsuits against the makers of Cortislim and Cortistress, charging them with making false and unsubstantiated claims that their products can cause weight loss.

The last news I heard, which was in late 2005, the defendants were paying \$4.5 million in damages to settle, and they were banned from making certain claims in their advertising and from misrepresenting the results of tests or scientific studies. They were also prohibited from using what the FTC called “deceptively formatted television and radio advertisements.”

What I want to point out about all this is that Cortislim is still for sale and so are about a dozen or more copycat products. These companies were not banned from *selling* their products, they were only banned from making certain *claims* about their products.

You’ll notice a lot of them will say something like this: “Cortisol has been scientifically linked to abdominal body fat. Stress causes cortisol release. Therefore, stress causes belly fat. Our product contains ingredients that have a calming effect and reduce stress.” Some of the ads do not necessarily close this loop by saying, “Therefore, taking our product shrinks belly fat,” that claim is simply implied as the next step in the chain of causation. Others are still making fraudulent claims; the FTC just hasn’t caught up with them yet.

One of the things that really bothers me about the advertising in one of the current crop of products is that their ad says, “Excess tummy flab is not your fault.” Oh really? Well whose fault is that belly of yours? Your husband’s? Your kids’? Your neighbors’? McDonalds? Krispy Kreme? Your parents’? Yeah, maybe it’s all genetics. A glandular problem? Yeah, it’s a glandular problem all right—your mouth gland is malfunctioning several times a day, eating too many calories and too much junk food.

Taking 100% responsibility for your body and your health is one of the most important concepts I teach. Most people are happy to take the praise and credit whenever they succeed or produce a positive result, but they won’t accept the blame when they fail or produce a negative result.

If you want a great body, you have to be able to say, “The shape I’m in right now is totally my doing; it’s a result of the choices I’ve made up to now, and that’s the great part. Because I make my own choices, I have control to make different choices today and in the future, and so I have the power to change.”

Not a lot of people are willing to say that. Instead they make excuses or blame it on something else like genetics or lifestyle factors that they perceive to be out of their control—such as stress—and stress is what these new products are hanging their hats on. Clever marketing hook too, because who doesn’t feel at least a little stressed in this day and age we live in?

With products like these, there is usually a thread of scientific truth woven into a fabric of lies, and that’s what makes it difficult for the average lay person to separate the two.

In this case, there’s a scientifically proven correlation between the stress hormone cortisol and intra-abdominal body fat. But that doesn’t mean taking a pill that suppresses cortisol will remove body fat that is already deposited. It takes a calorie deficit through proper diet and exercise to do that.

Pop all the pills you want and suppress cortisol all you want, but if you’re eating more than you’re burning, you’re going to keep gaining even more body fat. There are also plenty of people with high cortisol who are losing weight because they’re burning more calories than they eat.

To avoid legal or FTC issues, some companies are making it a point to emphasize the importance of nutrition and exercise in addition to taking their pill. This is a good thing, but on the other hand, it also complicates matters because, if you’re working out and dieting, then there’s no way to tell whether the weight loss you achieve is a result of the pill or the exercise and nutrition. Most likely, it’s 99% the exercise and nutrition, if not 100%, and between 0% and 1% the supplement.

Something else I find very deceptive is that some of these companies are making their herbal and vitamin product packaging look like pharmaceuticals. The bottles mimic drug packaging, the

label says “XYZ laboratories,” and the pills aren’t tablets, they’re two-color capsules that look like drugs.

There’s some serious advertising psychology going on here. Not only does this imply that the product is a drug or is as powerful as a drug, if only unconsciously in the consumer’s mind, it also gives greater perceived value. Some of these products are \$50, \$75, even \$100 or more a bottle for a 30-day supply. That’s an insane markup for a few vitamins, minerals, and herbs.

If you’re under a lot of stress, you don’t need a pill to suppress the cortisol produced by the stress, you need to reduce stress! That’s obvious to the point of “DUH,” but people always seem to want the magic pill, don’t they?

I’d recommend taking up a stress reduction program that could include meditation, time in nature, yoga, deep breathing exercises, vacation time, daily and weekly timeouts to decompress and relax, and high quality sleep. You also need to balance your training stress properly with the right amount of recovery.

My advice: Never waste your money on a pill that claims to reduce fat or belly fat. Exercise and proper diet are the way to go if you want permanent results. When you combine those with a proper balance of work and rest, training and recovery, stress and relaxation, then you have everything you need for great health and amazing abdominals.

By the way, I published a free report about cortisol, stress, and body fat, including almost three dozen research references. You can read it online or download it for free. The web address is:

www.BurnTheFat.com/cortisol_stress_belly_fat_information.html

DAVID GRISAFFI: What about hoodia gordonii? The ads say, “It’s the newest phenomenon and most exciting fat loss product available, as seen on *60 Minutes*,” and so on. What are your thoughts?

TOM VENUTO: I have never seen so much hype as this hoodia thing, but I guess that’s what *60 Minutes* and BBC prime time will do. Not to mention millions of spam emails. I usually don’t like to generalize because there are exceptions to almost every rule, but I’m going to

do it anyway and say once again that pills are a total waste of time and money.

If hoodia does anything, it's a quick fix. At the very best, if it contains what it says it contains, and does what it claims to do, it might suppress appetite so you eat less. That might be of value to some people some of the time, but I don't believe suppressing appetite is the right strategy to begin with. Suppress your appetite so you can starve yourself and slow down your metabolism and lose muscle? Great logic there. You need to feed your muscle, not starve it, and burn the fat with exercise.

It's also totally senseless to take pills that you are completely uneducated about. Many people are taking hoodia because of the hype, but they don't even have any idea what it is or what it's supposed to do.

Hoodia is a plant from Africa that has reputedly been used by the Kalahari bushmen to suppress appetite while they went on long hunting trips. In 1997 it was licensed to a British pharmaceutical company called Phytopharm. Then Phytopharm sold the rights to Pfizer, the maker of Viagra. Pfizer's intention was to develop a synthetic version and sell it as an obesity drug. Nothing came of it, and they sold the rights back to Phytopharm—that's interesting because it makes you wonder if Pfizer saw no potential in it.

Phytopharm did one in-house study with a small group of subjects, but so far *there is not one single independent study in a peer reviewed journal that proves hoodia is effective for helping with weight loss*. All this hype is based on anecdotal evidence and a couple of reporter's personal testimonials broadcast to millions of people.

There are a lot of experts—and I'm talking about educated and respected professionals—who say that controlling appetite with various compounds (drugs or natural supplements) is a completely acceptable and effective way to help people lose weight. That may be true if you're talking about temporary weight loss and if you're okay with using drugs, and a lot of people are. Personally, I think that's short term thinking, especially when you figure that you can control appetite just by eating properly and avoiding the types of

junk food and refined sugars that make your blood sugar go haywire.

I believe that if you're not thinking about long term permanent fat loss, then ultimately you're wasting your time. We don't have a problem with people losing weight. The problem is the inability to keep weight off. 95% of the people who lose weight gain it back within a year. That's because 95% of the people who lose weight are losing weight the wrong way—with pills, crash diets, and other quick fixes. The right way is burning the calories with exercise and supporting your workouts with good nutrition.

One last thing worth mentioning is that this *hoodia gordonii* plant is apparently quite rare, and there is a limited supply and a large demand. As a result there has been at least one case of a company selling phony hoodia, and I read one statistic that estimated that two-thirds of the hoodia on the market is phony. That's just one more reason not to bother.

DAVID GRISAFFI: Good information, Tom, thanks. Why don't we stay on this subject of hyped weight loss products. Another one of the new ones is the diet patch. What is your opinion of this product?

TOM VENUTO: The diet patch just makes me laugh even before I analyze the ingredients it supposedly delivers, because like a pill, a patch is not addressing causes, it's just another weak attempt at treating a symptom. What about fixing the cause—inactivity and poor diet—with exercise and good nutrition?

Usually when I say that, someone says back to me, “Yeah, Tom, I will diet and exercise while I'm using the patch,” and over and over again I will keep saying, not only do *none* of these approaches work without diet and exercise, if you ate right and exercised right, you wouldn't need them even if they did work and you could save your money! Spend it on better food and a gym membership or home gym equipment.

But let me play devil's advocate and let's go ahead and look objectively at the facts, assuming it's possible that there might be something valid here, because patches are a legitimate method to deliver drugs transdermally, which means through the skin.

Examples include scopolamine for motion sickness, the nicotine patch for smoking cessation, and the testosterone patch for low male hormone levels and the problems that come with that, and there are quite a few other drugs approved for transdermal drug delivery.

The over-the-counter diet patches of course are not delivering weight loss drugs, but simply claim to contain all kinds of over-the-counter ingredients including guarana, lecithin, L-carnitine, *sida cordifolia*, and others that claim to increase your metabolism or decrease your appetite.

You have two questions to consider here. First, are any of these ingredients scientifically proven to help you lose weight to begin with? Second, does the over-the-counter patch effectively deliver the ingredients through the skin the same as the prescription drug patches? I would say in almost every case the answers are no and no.

Here are some even more enlightening facts:

- In 1988, The FDA seized a supply of Appetoff patches, which were nothing more than circular band aids that instructed users to place a drop of supposed fat-burning liquid on it. The patches were tested and found to contain no active ingredients. If you're wondering whether anyone would be dumb enough to buy such a thing, then consider that \$22 million worth of these patches were seized when the FDA busted down the doors.
- In March 2004, Peel Away the Pounds settled with the FTC, agreeing to pay back more than one million dollars to ripped off consumers after being charged that they made false and unsubstantiated claims about their weight loss patch, such as three to five pounds per week in weight loss.
- In November 2004, Illinois attorney general Lisa Madigan filed a lawsuit against a Nevada corporation, Diet Patch, Inc., for luring consumers to their website with false claims and free trial offers for their diet patch. They were charged with multiple violations of the consumer fraud and deceptive business practices act.
- In December 2004, the Canadian equivalent of the FTC ordered a diet patch company to pay full refunds for purchases of diet

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