



Find out how to apply kinesio tape correctly at kttape.com.

Sticky Business

You may have spotted a growing number of people at the gym sporting brightly colored tape on specific body parts. It's no mere fashion trend. Kinesio tape purportedly helps reduce pain and inflammation, aids in rehabilitation, and even enhances performance by supporting muscles as they move. "The tape provides stability and reduces pressure and pain," explains Mary Ann Wilmarth, D.P.T., owner of Back2back Physical Therapy. Essentially, it provides a lightweight support system that creates neuromuscular feedback, helping muscles to fire stronger. Although research is still limited about the benefits, there is evidence the tape can be effective at reducing discomfort, Wilmarth says. The key is to make sure it's applied properly. But it's not a permanent fix: If pain continues, get it checked out to make sure you're not doing further damage. —Amy Schlinger

CURB YOUR VITAMINS

Vitamins C and E may play an important role in disease prevention, but if you're an endurance athlete, you might want to consider cutting back a bit on the supps. Researchers in Oslo asked 54 healthy men and women (mostly runners and cyclists) to take either 1,000mg of vitamin C and 235mg of vitamin E a day or a placebo and then complete a tough 11-week training program with one to two interval sessions and two hour-long runs. All participants were fitter at the end of the study period, but only those taking the placebo had increases in biochemical markers associated with the creation of mitochondria (important energy centers of cells). "Training causes oxidative stress, but it seems this same stress has a role to play in muscle adaptation," says Leslie J. Bonci, R.D., director of sports nutrition at the University of Pittsburgh Center for Sports Medicine. "As antioxidants, vitamins C and E may block oxidative stress and therefore blunt the positive training benefits." —A.S.



Butt Out!

You know to avoid first- and secondhand smoke, but there's another invisible danger from cigarettes. Thirdhand smoke—the residue left on clothing, carpets, drapes, and furniture—can be just as harmful as direct contact with cigarettes, according to a study published in the journal *PLOS ONE*. Researchers from the University of California-Riverside found that mice exposed to thirdhand smoke had significant health effects, including liver and lung damage, poorly healing wounds, and higher levels of hyperactivity. "The residue left over from cigarette smoke contains nicotine and toxic chemicals. Mixed with other indoor chemicals, these can pose serious health risks," says Nadya Swedan, M.D., a physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist in New York City. Unfortunately, most thirdhand smoke doesn't get easily wiped away with traditional cleaning products. So if you have a friend who smokes, encourage her to quit—and make plans to meet up in a park or someplace outside her home. —A.S.