



## Sweaty She Monday (10/19/09): Got Hygiene? By Susan Farago

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Many of us live in a perpetual state of training. Either we just got done with a workout, are thinking of our next workout, or are in the middle of a workout. And when we are ramping up for "the big event", it is not uncommon to have two workouts a day. This means laundry, food consumption, dishes, and showering also go up 2x. Sweaty She athlete Pam T. said it best when she firmly stated, "Personal hygiene becomes exhausting!"

I am a big fan of showering – probably to a bit of an extreme. I'll take a quick shower at the end of a hectic day because it refreshes me and makes me feel like I just washed off all the emotional and cosmic gunk from the day. I usually work out later in the day or early evening which falls in perfect line with removing the cosmic gunk AND workout gunk simultaneously. Plus I am a "before bed" shower-er so the timing works out great! Showering in the morning is crazy and beyond my comprehension. Getting up early is bad enough, but getting up early and then getting wet? No thanks! It's probably why I've never been a big fan of early morning swim workouts.

As long as I only work out once a day, then I am in perfect personal hygiene rhythm. The problem arises with the two-a-day workouts. Correction. The problem is when the two-a-day workouts *happen separately* – for example, one workout in the morning and one in the afternoon. Do I shower between the workouts? Does it depend on how much I sweat? What if one of the workouts is a swim workout? Do I have to shower after that? If I swim in the lake then maybe I should shower? Am I going to see anyone between the workouts? Maybe I can just get away with putting on dry clothes until the second workout?

This is when laundry also becomes an issue. When I shower twice a day I end up toweling off with the towel I used earlier and sometimes it's still damp. So do I need two towels for the two-a-days?

It's like I need a decision matrix of "if/then" statements to determine number of towels, when to shower, or when to just wipe myself down and call it good. And don't even bring up when to shave legs, armpits, and bikini area! (Questions include: Is this a swim workout? If I wear a wetsuit, will anyone really see my bikini area? What about my armpits? Is it a full wetsuit or sleeveless?) I did try to go "au natural" a few years ago thanks to inspiration from Amy, my college roommate. She was a beautiful, blonde girl who had really hairy legs. I tried that for a couple of weeks and just couldn't stand it any more. Sorry Amy, I tried. And then there's the issue of hair (the kind on my head).

In my opinion, there are only three hair styles for active women. The first is really short hair which allows for a “towel and go” approach to styling and maintenance. The second is long hair where it can be braided and just left alone. And the third is complete baldness (how amazingly convenient THAT would be). Unfortunately for me, my hair length is at the “in-between” stage. Because I don’t want to go through gallons of shampoo per month, I have decided to wash my hair every other time – unless I had a really hard workout. I wear my hair in a pony tail most of the time so I can fudge with my hair not being perfectly clean but close enough. I thought this process was a great way to go. Until I went to my “twice a year” hair appointment.

I had been swimming in Lake Travis the day before my hair appointment. By the time I got home from the early evening swim my hair was mostly dry so I took a quick shower (didn’t wash my hair) and just fell into bed. The next morning I went to see Tony to get my hair cut. He asked if I wanted my hair washed or just a quick rinse (it’s a no frills salon). I planned to swim after the hair cut so I said, “Just a quick rinse will be fine.” So he starts to rinse my hair and out of the blue asks me, “When was the last time you washed your hair?” Why was he asking? Did he find pieces of bark or leaves from the lake? Did my hair reek of Lake Travis water? The really bad thing was that I couldn’t exactly remember when I had given my hair a really good wash. Without asking me, he grabbed the shampoo and started lathering away. How embarrassing. But hey, he doesn’t have much hair and I know he’s not doing two workouts a day. In that, I felt justified for my lack of hair hygiene. But perhaps he did have a point. I’ll try to do a better job of washing my hair. Or at least do so before the next time I get my hair cut!

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