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Women's **start!** Health Issue!

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Fighting to KO Heart Disease

WOMEN'S BOXING CHAMP TAKES ON NUMBER ONE KILLER

WRITTEN BY WENDY IDA

While most women think the leading cause of death in women is breast cancer, the truth is heart disease is number one in the United States. It's bigger and by far nastier than most women are aware. In fact, more women die of heart disease than all types of cancer combined—in spite of the fact that heart disease is one of the most preventable maladies.

Each year, the figures show that death rates due to heart disease in women are growing. Why? The reason is simple. More than ever before, women are leading incredibly unhealthy lifestyles. The American Heart Association is working to turn this around with the help of Laila Ali, former women's boxing champion and daughter of boxing legend Muhammad Ali.

Says Ms. Ali, "I participate in programs that encourage people to live healthier lives because it's the right thing to do. Programs like Start! are needed because our country is facing so many health problems like heart disease. I feel celebrities should use their visibility to promote programs that are created to help make our world a better place."

Ms. Ali says one of the easiest ways to combat heart disease is simply to

walk. "People just need to be active regularly. Whether you walk, swim, or play sports, the main thing is to just get up and get moving."

The American Heart Association's Start Walking Now Web site (startwalkingnow.org) offers a wealth of prevention information, as well as an organized program to raise money and awareness of this growing concern. Heart disease is this country's number one killer. But by exercising for as little as 30 minutes each day you can reduce your risk. That's what the Start! Movement is all about: Walk more. Eat better. Live a longer, healthier life.

If you have a family history of heart disease it is urgent you do something about it now so you don't follow in the same footsteps. Don't be fooled into thinking it can't happen to you



Decisive Fitness Expert Wendy Ida offers the following tips for a healthy heart:

- 1. Get off the couch and away from the TV,** exercise or participate in an activity that will challenge your heart for at least 30 minutes daily. That means make sure during your activity you are pushing your limits. You should barely be able to talk if you're on a treadmill.
- 2. Seek out more nutritious meals,** swap out old eating habits for the new. Never eat the skin on poultry or fatty meats. Limit your salt, trade in saturated fats for olive oil, and eat an apple instead of nachos.
- 3. Give up smoking;** it dramatically increases your risk of heart disease.
- 4. Reduce alcohol consumption** and add years to your life, need I say more?
- 5. Check with your doctor.** By all means know your stats or where you stand on the medical charts. Get your annual physicals and demand a written report to further understand your body. I always recommend to my clients that everyone not only have a medical doctor (the band-aid approach to health) but, a holistic doctor too (they use the proactive approach to helping your body heal itself).

Ida says, "You have the power, you can take control, but you have to want it!"