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**How To Overcome Workout Plateaus**

**By Lynn Bode**

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Humans are habitual. They strive on routine and rituals. While it's true that routine can provide a sense of ease and security, I think we'd all agree that the same old, same old can also turn to boredom. And when it comes to working out, routine can be downright toxic.

New exercisers often see quick fitness results such as weight loss and increased muscle strength while engaging in the same workout day after day. However, after several weeks following their fitness routines and they often become frustrated as the gains begin to dwindle. Eventually dieters scales become frozen on the same number or weight lifters are stuck at the same weight size. They hit a plateau.

A plateau typically is the direct consequence of a fitness rut - when an exerciser performs the same workout over and over. The human body is very efficient and quickly adapts to work. Once the body practices the same activity repeatedly, it grows more proficient at performing those moves. So that means it requires less energy and therefore also burns less calories.

Instead of celebrating their body's improved fitness capabilities, exercisers often abandon their workouts. And who can blame them? After all, they no longer are seeing the results they desire and become increasingly bored with their workouts. Plus, hitting a plateau not only can halt fitness gains, but it can even reverse previous successes. But, with just a few simple steps exercisers can easily break-through that brick wall and continue to reap all the rewards of regular physical activity.

Dodging the dreaded plateau is actually very easy. Variety is the key ingredient to continual fitness success. To avoid hitting a workout plateau, follow these recommendations.

To begin with, every workout routine should be changed about every 4–6 weeks. The modification doesn't have to be dramatic. A totally new exercise is a possible option, but alteration of a current exercise can be just as effective.

## How To Overcome Workout Plateaus

A simple way to determine how to transform your current workout is using the F.I.T.T principle. F.I.T.T. stands for frequency, intensity, time and type. This strategy can be adopted for both cardio and resistance training.

Frequency - increase or decrease how often you workout

Intensity - increase or decrease the difficulty or level at which you workout.

Time - increase or decrease how long your workout sessions last.

Type - change the type of exercises you perform.

Frequency and Time are limited by an individual's schedule as well as appropriate rest time to ensure maximum efficiency and safety. But Intensity and Type are really only limited by creativity and planning.

Cardio exercise intensity can easily be varied through speed, incline, distance, height, etc. And of course the types of exercises are practically endless, so exercisers should never have the excuse that they've exhausted their exercise options. Good cardio examples include: walking, jogging, swimming, biking, hiking, and more. In addition, combining several of these exercises into one workout session can be very effective. Try 10 minutes each of 3–4 unique exercises.

Strength training intensity can also easily be altered with changes in resistance size, number of reps, rest time, number of sets and more. Even simply switching the sequence of the exercises can prove effective. There are also numerous strength training exercise options. Unfortunately, most exercisers are unaware of the plethora of training techniques and equipment options. They often get stuck performing the same 10 exercises over and over. Yet, there are hundreds of unique options. Simply utilizing new types of training equipment every 4–6 weeks can result in big improvements because each type of equipment will work the muscle groups in a slightly different manner. Gear options include: free weights, body bars, selectorized machines, resistance bands, and fitness balls - just to name a few.

So, to reduce your chances of hitting a plateau remember the F.I.T.T. principle. And approximately every 4–6 weeks choose one element of the principle to change (or even all four components). Incorporating this strategy will enable you to progress further and attain even higher fitness levels. It's just that easy!

Written by Lynn Bode, founder of

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### **Get Up~Get Out~ Get Going**

**By Natalie Freund**

Get Up~Get Out~ Get Going ... when it is best for you.

We all want to "do it right," and maximize our efforts to get the most out of whatever we do. For our diet, we're concerned about the best time to eat. Maybe it's 6:00, maybe it's 8:00.

But what about Fitness? Is there a best time to workout? Does the metabolism respond better in the morning? Maybe fat burns best if you workout in the middle of the day?

As a fitness trainer I get asked some version of these questions at least once a day. I respond: What time do you like to move?

One of my goals is to get clients moving and doing something they enjoy. The time of day you move is not as important as the fact that you are moving.

If you tried to force-fit someone else's idea about the best time for everyone to workout, you'll either get lucky (if that time happens to work for you) or you'll get frustrated. You don't have to take that risk.

Just try this:

Take a week or two and try a few different times during the day to move. When you have a feeling of which time feels the best, make a note of that time. Consistency breeds results - and we all want results!

After you settle on your own best time for your workout, try to do it the same time each day (consistency is key). We are working on creating a good habit. And good habits are hard to break.

Be kind to yourself. Making a lifestyle change does take time and consistency. Take your time and begin to enjoy your new healthy habit. Get up~Get Out~Get Going! When it is best for you.

Your fitness host on The PATH,

Natalie Freund

Natalie Freund is the webhost for Fitness on The PATH website and can be reached at

. A skilled fitness programmer with over 10 years of personal training

## How To Overcome Workout Plateaus

experience, Natalie holds personal training certifications with ACE, Madd Dog Athletics, as well as specialty certifications in Senior Fitness, CPR and The Path—A Curriculum for Living.

Her clientele range from novice to advanced fitness enthusiasts with diverse needs and goals.

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