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Seven Simple Steps to get into a Fitness Routine

By Renee Kennedy

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1. See Your Doctor: Before you start any exercise program or begin any sport or hobby that involves physical exertion, get a check up.
2. Sleep: Get enough sleep every night. This is especially important if you decide to exercise in the morning. If you aren't getting enough sleep, you might just keep hitting the snooze button in favor of getting up and exercising.
3. Set Goals: What are you trying to achieve out of your exercise program? Just like when you are trying to lose weight, you must set a goal weight, the same thing applies to fitness. Do you need to work on your abs or your thighs or maybe your doctor is recommending a cardio workout? You need to figure out what it is that you want to accomplish and set out to find exercises that will help you reach your goals.
4. Select: Find exercises that you like. This is very important, if you choose exercises that bore you to tears... well, how long do you think you will be able to do it? (This has always been my problem with tummy crunches and video tapes... they are so darn boring... I've found that a daily walk will keep me relatively fit and it's not boring to me at all.)
5. Schedule: Set aside 30 minutes, 3 times a week for exercise.
6. Slow and Steady wins the race: don't try to do every exercise you know on the first day, too much too fast and you will crack under the pressure. Start slowly and build up to an exercise routine that fits your lifestyle.

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7. Stick to it: NOTHING is more important than your health!

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How To Overcome Workout Plateaus

By Lynn Bode

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.

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

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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

. Workouts For You provides affordable online

exercise programs to help even the busiest of Moms lose weight, tone–up, build muscles, increase stamina and more via the Internet. Get fit either at or away from home. Let our certified trainer guide you one–on–one through your fitness journey. Visit:

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