

30 DAYS OF WORKOUT MOTIVATION

Daily Inspiration for Achieving Your Goals



*STAYING
FOCUSED*

*BETTER
UNDERSTAND THE
BENEFITS OF
EXERCISE*

*MAKE WORKING
OUT A PILLAR OF
YOUR LIFE*

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Are You Looking To Improve Your Fitness?

Fitness is not just for gym junkies and the weight loss obsessed.

There is this stereotype that those who prioritize their fitness are people who are trying to lose weight or are at the gym every single day to practice their craft. In the end, the impression of fitness enthusiasts tends to be the same: This is a large cult that you can run into anywhere in the country who spend a lot of time, money, and effort as they achieve their perfect bodies, sipping on their protein shakes and spotting each other at the gym.

Well, the good news is instead of a cult, you can think of it as an all-inclusive club (a health club, if you will), where everyone is going to support you as an initiate and get you where you want to go. Whether you want to improve your fitness for health reasons or aesthetics, you can easily fit it into your day and make sure that your goals are where you want them to be.

Anybody can benefit from improved fitness. With improved fitness comes a longer lifespan, fewer health complications, a strong body that will perform daily tasks at an easier rate, a stronger, more alert mind...and of course, your clothes will look better on you, too. If you do not want to be that guy in the gym every day that feels wrong when he skips a day, chugging his protein drinks and spending multiple hours in a day just trying new things, or that girl who you see running down the sidewalks every morning in her sports bra and shorts with her music going, her stride never breaking despite the fact traffic has made you follow her for a half-mile now, you just simply don't have to get to that point, nor should you try to become that person in a single day if these are your role models.

What you should be focusing on, however, is constant self-improvement, because this is what drives these two fitness archetypes into this awe-inspiring (for better or worse is up for debate) level of self-discipline. In this report my goal to help you achieve better fitness by helping you dedicate some of the self-discipline that you practice every day for your own greater good.

Don't believe that it's that easy? Keep reading on.



What is stopping you from your current fitness goals is nothing more than a bad habit.

Just like smoking or biting your nails, not focusing on your fitness is nothing more than a bad habit you need to focus on breaking. You've trained your body to not crave the physical activity that it needs, and all you have to do is focus on trying to break this habit and get it back to its natural state.

Like any other habit, it takes only 30 days to build a habit and 30 days to break it. In this report, I am going to help you with the hard part. Breaking a habit is much harder than developing a new one. However, if you have enough self-discipline, you can overcome any bad habit that is holding you back.

Of course, there are setbacks that everyone can encounter, especially those of us with busier lives but what else is new? For every bad habit, there are a million reasons why you fall back to them. The goal is to work with what you've got and learn how to make your reasons work with you.

So, how do you go about breaking a habit that years of a sedentary lifestyle has developed? Well, that's not going to be easy, but the key here is to keep yourself active, when you feel like you are too busy. There are plenty of things that you can do in the name of exercise which fits into your everyday life, including playing with your kids and pets, spending an hour deep cleaning your house, or just dancing to your favorite song on the radio. If you don't think getting your body active could be that easy, then you, my friend, are going to be surprised when you are suddenly finding a variety of reasons to get yourself up and moving.

You can use personal inertia to make it easier to break your habit.

Anyone who is a fan of Bill Nye The Science Guy’s old TV show or is familiar with Sir Isaac Newton’s law of motion are already familiar with the fact that inertia is a property of matter and an object that is in motion stays in motion while an object at rest will stay rest unless they are acted upon by an outside force. The same is true when it comes to working out. Someone who is not used to exercising every day will not go out of their way to get themselves moving without anything motivating them to do so, and in contrast, people who are typically active are more likely to keep going with their exercise unless an injury or illness kicks them down, and then it becomes a bit harder for them to put themselves back in the saddle without forcing themselves to do so.

In the end, this can be worked to your advantage. Sure, you can use it as an excuse to go back to being sedentary, but you can also use it to push yourself to go harder. Just start out slow and watch yourself build momentum as you go. Start with a five-minute walk and then watch yourself as you get yourself moved up to a 30-minute run. Keep track of your progress is always a good motivator, and psychologically, it’s just because we are impressed by our own personal inertia.

So, are you ready to get your fitness on?

As you’re reading this report it tells me you have the willingness to do all it takes to get your physical fitness improved. You have demonstrated your interest in learning as well as the self-discipline that you will need to get yourself fit, and now all you need is the tools to get you where you want to be. I know that you’re going to be successful with your goals.

Some of the things that you can look forward to learning in this report include:

How to budget your time so that you don’t end up overcommitting

- When you should and shouldn’t be hitting the gym
- How to balance your current lifestyle and your fitness goals
- Busting the common “problem spot isolation workout” myth
- Some tried and true exercises to focus on a muscle group

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- Coaching yourself through the most common excuses to get out of exercising
- Explaining the runner's high and how to get it in any exercise that you want

So, what are you waiting for?

A whole new life is just around the corner for you. If you are one of the thousands who have the drive to work on your fitness and have no idea how to get to where you want to go, this report is your perfect companion.

Good luck! Gareth

Churchill Erudite

Lifestyle



30 Days of Motivation for Working Out

Day 1

It Takes 30 Days.

Welcome to the start of your fitness journey. It can be hard to make a big life change, because of something we like to call “defeating inertia”. Inertia is quite simply a lack of movement. And when we defeat it, we are starting moving. When we begin a fitness routine, we are defeating inertia literally, by moving our bodies and fitness equipment around, but also metaphorically, by getting ourselves moving towards progress after a long life of staying in the same place.

This change can be very difficult, so it would help to bear in mind that right now you have a habit. Your habit is “not working out”, aka inertia. And you need to form a new habit: “working out”, aka defeating inertia. And all new habits take 30 days to develop. So don't be afraid of the change, and no matter how hard it gets, just keep going. Keep telling yourself:

“It takes 30 days.”

Pro tip: Take a photo before you begin!

Day 2

Picking Your Workout.

When we start working out, sometimes it can feel impossible to pick some sort of workout to stick to. We are bombarded with messages from gyms telling us to use their services, writers telling us to buy their books, and friends asking us to join their club. But when it comes to picking our exercise we need to choose something that we can stick

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to. Firstly, we need to pick an exercise we find fun. But secondly we need to exercise in a way we find fun. What is important varies from person to person, but in principle we are three camps:

- Camp Social, who will do any exercise as long as they do it with other people
- Camp Solo, who prefer to workout alone,
- Camp Fun, who have to be doing something they truly love no matter who they do it with.

Finally, you need to remember to pick something that is accessible to you in terms of cost and location.

If you choose an exercise you like, in a way you like doing it, that you have the time and money to do, then you are more likely to stick to it.

Day 3

Sticking to a Schedule.

When you have chosen a type of exercise that suits you, the next thing to do is to workout a schedule that works for you too. No matter how good your intentions or how great the exercise, if your schedule is wrong you will end up quitting before you succeed. If you decide to workout in the morning and you're not a morning person, it won't turn you into a morning person, it will just make you hate them even more.

If you decide to workout six days a week but you never have time on one of the days, you will not be able to stick to it. If you have plenty of time but do not commit to working out enough, you will have trouble sticking to it too. It is vital that your workout is something you can actually make time for.

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You need to look at your schedule and workout how many hours you have for working out a week, and when is the best time. Make sure to account for leisure and leave spare time in case things go wrong. You might even need to change what exercise you are doing to fit it into your schedule, but this is better than choosing another exercise which you never have time to do!

Day 4

Proper Warmups.

Warming up is an essential part of working out. If you don't warm up properly, then you risk hurting yourself as you workout. But how you warm up is very important. Recent studies have found that warming up by stretching is not good enough. In fact, stretching too much before a workout can make you more likely to injure yourself!

What you actually need to do is to move every joint to make sure it is comfortable, but not to overstretch any of them.

Then you need to follow up with some cardio. The reason for this is that the most important part of warming up is just what the name suggests: the warming. When you do cardio two things happen. First of all, your breathing speeds up and becomes more efficient. This means that your lungs are taking in more oxygen from the air, to help fuel your body.

Secondly, your heart speeds up. This pumps more blood around your body, which helps carry the oxygen to the muscles that will need it for energy. This increased movement makes our bodies warmer, which helps improve our workouts too.

The amount of cardio and type of cardio you need varies from person to person, but

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generally five to fifteen minutes of light cardio before working out will have you ready for your main exercise. Even something as simple as pushups, or marching up and down the stairs, will get you ready for the gym.

Day 5

Toning, Or Building Muscle?

Very often when it comes to workouts we start asking ourselves this question. Do we want to tone, or to build muscle? There are special workout routines, diets, and even particular exercises for each. So the person who doesn't want to get too big chooses a toning routine, and the person who wants to be huge chooses a building routine. But I'll let you in on a little secret: they are, on a physical level, the same thing!

We know that being toned means having lean, hard, but smaller muscles, and being built means having lots of big, bulging muscles. But the way we achieve these two goals is almost identical! Toned muscles are just smaller versions of built muscles, and you develop them with the same exercises, the same motions, and the same plans. The only thing that changes is how much weight you lift, how fast you lift it, and the food you eat. A bodybuilder lifts lighter weights slower and more times, and eats more food. A toned athlete lifts the heaviest weight they can handle, faster, and fewer times, and eats less food.

So other than changing your workout pattern, don't fall for all these different tools, exercises, and special books teaching you how to get toned, or how to get built, or how to avoid being too big or too small. There is no secret trick, it's just about what you lift and what you eat.

Day 6

Will My Friends Support My Journey?

It is not a weird thing, or a bad thing, to want your friends by your side when you begin your journey. But if this is the first time you are working out consistently and you have no friends who also workout consistently, you could do well to beware, because there is research to suggest this is a bad idea.

First of all, studies have found that talking about doing big, important things releases the same number of feel-good hormones as actually doing them. This is because we get social validation from this sharing of information, which means we don't need any extra validation for completing it. So many people who talk a lot about what they intend on doing are actually less likely to do these things!

And secondly, studies have found that people who try and do some self-improvement when their friends are not doing self-improvement are more likely to fail, and that people, knowingly or unknowingly, will sabotage their friends' self-improvement efforts. It's probably because we like having things in common with our friends, and are made unhappy when they try and be less like us.

So beware sharing your journey with friends who are not part of it. Instead, focus on making new friends at the gym, online, or at the park, who you can share this journey with properly.

Day 7

Home Workouts.

Whether your main exercise routine is something you simply have to do in a gym, or your exercise of choice is flexible and can be done anywhere, it is important to develop a home workout routine. This is because some days you can't make it to the gym, for whatever reason. If we don't workout on these days, then we are risking getting in the habit of “missing” the gym and staying home, doing nothing, instead.

Besides that, if you genuinely can't make it to the gym, you could fall behind on your exercise routine and lose some of the strength, endurance, and speed you were working so hard to create. It doesn't take much time to lose all the muscle you grew, or regain body fat, so every missed day could be a serious setback to you.

So you need to think of a home workout which complements your main exercise. For example, if your main exercise is free weights, then you can do bodyweight exercises at home on the days when you miss the gym. Or if it is dance, then you can practice routines at home if your class is cancelled. Whatever you have chosen to do, find an exercise you can do at home which affects the same muscles. That way you never need to miss out.

Day 8

Home Workouts with Pets and/or Kids.

Many people object to the idea of home workouts, not because they seem difficult, or because the person prefers the gym, but because they feel their house is too busy for a home workout. They have dogs getting under their feet, or a baby to care for, and working out is just not realistic.

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But actually, they are looking at home workouts the wrong way.

You see, when you have plenty of freedom it is definitely the better option to choose a home workout that mirrors your main exercise, so that you aren't missing out on anything. But if you have pets or kids, they can get between you and a full workout. And they need exercising as well. So actually, the better choice is to kill two birds with one stone: workout with your kids or pets.

Of course this means your home workout will not exactly mirror your main workout. Maybe your main exercise is jogging, but with your kids you play football, or your main exercise is free weights, but instead you walk your dog. You may even find when you go back to normal that your main exercise has experienced a setback.

But when it comes to forming a new habit, doing something is much better than doing nothing, and staying active is better than not being active. You have to work with what you've got.

Day 9

Why Exercise Makes Us Happy.

Joggers call it “runners' high”, but it actually happens to anyone who exercises for a long period of time. That moment when you go from hating the exercise to really loving it and feeling like you could keep going forever. And the more often you reach that point, the more you love exercise in general, and the happier you are with your life as a whole. But what is the runners' high, and why does it even happen?

Runners' high is a sudden release of hormones called dopamine, endorphins, and serotonin. These hormones are known as “happy hormones” because they lift our mood and make us feel excited, joyful, and connected to the world. Dopamine is the reward

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hormone. It is released when we do something good, to tell us to keep doing that thing. Other times it is released include when partying, gambling, eating, or having sex. Endorphins are the pain relief hormone. They are released when we are under pressure, to tell us that the reward beats the pain. Other times they are released include when working to a deadline, socializing, or doing some complex art. And serotonin is the satisfaction hormone. It is released when we are doing well, to encourage us to stay calm and to continue what we are doing. It is also released when we meditate or study, for example.

All of these hormones come crashing down on us when we workout for a long time, making us feel great about ourselves.

Day 10

Rewarding Yourself, Or Sabotaging Yourself?

When we have been working hard at the gym, it can sometimes feel very tempting to reward ourselves with a little treat. Which is great, if not for the fact that all too often this little treat is a snack of some description. And we tend to give ourselves these snacks frequently too. The problem with this is that it seriously undermines our fitness goals.

“Eat little and often” is a mantra created by studies funded by snack foods companies. When we snack often, we teach our body to expect a constant supply of energy, so it will demand it and as soon as we exercise, or miss a snack, our energy will crash, leaving us flat. What is more, the snacks we choose are typically small, but high in salt, sugar, and fat, with very little protein or micronutrients. Which means that we are eating loads of calories and no nutrition, without even knowing it!

It gets even worse when we reward ourselves with a junk food meal. Swimming an hour only burns a few hundred calories, whereas a junk food meal can be almost a thousand

calories and leave you hungry shortly after.

So if you really need to reward yourself for your efforts, don't choose food. Keep a sticker chart, or a box of fun trinkets, and use them as rewards instead.

Day 11

Not Feeling Confident at The Gym?

When we first start working out after many years, it is easy to feel a little self-conscious. Many of us, myself included, have felt that awkwardness at one point or another. What we are doing is new and strange to us, and it is easy to feel like a bit of a faker, or a fraud, and to worry that others can see that we do not belong.

This lack of confidence is especially strong in people who have unconventionally attractive bodies: larger people, disabled people, and older people, for instance, but also women in a heavy weights gym, men in a yoga class, and any person who is a minority in their area. Chances are this feeling of not belonging, this lack of confidence, has prevented you from going to the gym, the pool, or the park for your daily exercise at least once before.

But I'm here to tell you: It's OK to feel awkward and confused, feelings are wonderful things, but it's not OK to let that feeling drag you down. Most people are not paying any attention to you, they're too busy with their own workouts. And those people who are looking: are you going to let their unnecessary judgement dictate your life? You can't let them get the better of you. You need to fight back and put yourself out there. You deserve to exercise. You deserve to get out and do things. You deserve better.

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Day 12 Rest

Days.

You're almost two weeks into your fitness plan and the subject of rest days is becoming ever more important. Do you do rest days? How often? Do you schedule them, or take them as you need them?

Many of us have learned to fear rest days. Some of us because we feel that if we have even one day off we will go off track and never workout again. Others of us because we feel that we will get the most benefit from working out every day, come rain or shine. But both mentalities are wrong.

The fear of quitting is not completely wrong, admittedly, because many of us do quit when we take too many rest days. The key to avoiding this, though, isn't to take no rest days. Because if we take none, then we will burn out, need a week off, and definitely not workout again. What we need to do is schedule our rest days into our week, just like we schedule our workouts.

And why is it important to rest? Because the most fat we burn and the most muscle we grow happens during recovery, that's why. Our rest days are when our bodies catch up on all that muscle building they needed to do, so make sure to have some!

Day 13

When Plans Clash.

Sometimes we have the best intentions, but things really aren't going our way. We have

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a meeting that means we will miss our spinning class. We have a date on chest day. We have been asked out for drinks and there is no way we will be sober enough for exercise afterwards, or the next morning. So what do we do?

Well, it depends on how often these problems arise. If clashes between workouts and social events are rare, then it is important to attend the social event. One-day partying did not ruin your health, and it will not ruin your health this time either. Plus, it is healthy to do social things and unwind every once in a while.

But if it keeps happening? Then you need to do one of two things. Your first option is you can reschedule your workout to make it easier to do. For example, if you get invited out for drinks a lot, workout before drinks, not in the morning. And your second option is to attend fewer social events. You don't really need to go to three different places every night, so sometimes it is best to put your health first and cancel something.

Whatever your situation, there will always be a way of making things work. You just have to find out what that way is.

Day 14

Losing Fat from That One Spot...

Many of us begin our workout routines with the intention of losing weight. Maybe it is the main reason we are working out, maybe it is a secondary reason, but it can be a very powerful motivator for most of us. And there is nothing wrong with that, whatever your fitness motives, whatever your goals, it is a wonderful thing to start working out. The problem is that often we are sold ideas by diet and fitness gurus that are just not realistic. One of these ideas is “spot fat reduction”: the idea you can lose fat from specific areas by doing specific exercises, or using a tool, or eating a certain food.

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However, there are only two components to where you grow fat: your genetics and your hormones. That's it. No special diet, no new exercise, no machine will melt fat off that one little spot unless it's a liposuction machine. Unless you use medicine or diet to control your hormones, you will always have the same fat distribution. The key is just to get your fat levels down.

Does this mean you will have to be super lean to have abs? Yes. Does this mean you can't lose fat off your hips and waist without losing fat off your chest? Yes. Does this mean your weight loss goals are pointless? Absolutely not! If you get leaner and fitter you will look more attractive, no matter what your genetic fat layout looks like. So hang in there!

Day 15

Can I Workout If I'm Ill?

Many of us have faced this conundrum. We have a cough, or a fever, or we look in the mirror and wonder if the zombie apocalypse has hit us and we've just not noticed. The first question is "Does this mean I shouldn't go to work?" But often the second question is "Does this mean I should skip the gym?" There are reasons for answering yes and reasons for answering no.

Reasons for skipping the gym:

- You feel you can barely move.
- You are faint and your vision is distorted.
- You could be contagious.
- You are having trouble breathing.
- You are vomiting or suffering diarrhea.

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- The trip to the gym is very far.
- You usually exercise somewhere cool or cold.
- You have nobody to look after you if you get all worn out.

Reasons for going anyway:

- You are no longer contagious.
 - Exercising helps sweat out toxins, which heals us faster.
- Exercising warms our bodies, which heals us faster.
- Exercising releases endorphins, which heal us faster. Your gym is a place to find moral and emotional support. Sticking to your routine gives you a sense of purpose. Exercising makes you feel happy and confident.

The choice is still yours, though!

Day 16

Can I Workout If I'm Injured?

Another big question we sometimes ask ourselves is whether we can workout if we are injured. This one is harder to answer than the illness one, because the situation is very different. When we are ill it is easy to see how serious our illness is, and to workout how much rest we need. But when you are injured, it is not so simple. You will need a formal diagnosis before you decide whether to exercise or not. If you do not have the time or money for a formal diagnosis, it is better to take simple painkillers and to rest your injury until you feel better, than it is to try and exercise and make ourselves worse.

If you get an official diagnosis, normally your doctor will be able to tell you what to do. Ordinarily, for simple injuries you just need to support the injury during exercise. Light exercise may even help the injury heal. For example, after a trapped nerve many people feel better for lightly exercising the area every day.

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But for serious injuries you may be looking at a lot of rest time. Some people during this time choose to exercise differently, to stay active but still rest the injured body part. Talk to your doctor about suitable exercises for your injury. For example, if you break a leg bone you may need to stay off your feet, but you could do seated exercises still.

Day 17

Workout Timing.

Timing our workouts may seem simple, and if you don't have much time to play with it is better to exercise whenever you can, than not to exercise at all. But if you have more flexibility in your schedule, how do you know what is the best time to workout?

The first thing to consider is that even people who consider themselves night owls have more physical energy after waking up than at any other point in the day. This is because the process of waking releases all sorts of hormones designed to give us an energy boost.

The second thing to consider is that some people workout harder if they have had a meal to fuel them, whereas others workout harder if they are building an appetite for breakfast. You need to workout which of these people you are.

The third thing you need to consider is that exercise tires our body, but boosts mental functioning. So it's a great idea before work or school, but a terrible idea before commuting, sleep, or resting.

And finally, you need to ask yourself what times are normally free for exercise. Not just what time you are off work, but also what time you want to keep free. For example, if your sister often calls you after lunch, then that is a bad time for a workout.

Putting these four elements together you should be able to decide on a good time for

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working out.

Day 18

Exercises for Better Butts.

When it comes to specific exercises, we often want to target specific areas. So now we're going to look at areas we most commonly want to improve. And a big one in our image-conscious society is a better butt. More lifted, rounder, firmer butts are appreciated by both sexes, so most of us want to have this butt. And with exercise you can work towards the best butt your body can have!

Squats are the single most important exercise for a better butt. They engage the entire of the gluteus maximus muscle, the main butt muscle, and make it bigger and shapelier. They also engage a lot of our back and leg muscles, which are sort of like the frame around our butts. And a good frame definitely helps our butt look better. You can do squats with weights, or without them, but remember: more squats for size, heavier squats for firmness.

Other exercises that help develop our gluteus maximus muscles are lunges, wall sits, crunches, and hip thrusts. Usually these exercises are done unweighted and the idea is to do them for as long as possible so as to encourage size. But if you want there are also alternatives where you can do these exercises weighted or with resistance bands, to add a bit more challenge.

Happy butt-lift day!

Day 19

Exercises for a Stronger Core.

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A strong core is a great goal to have when working out. It will not give you the washboard stomach so many of us desire and love. Only losing body fat will make you ripped, and you need very low fat to show your abs. The smallest abs will be visible with low enough fat, and the biggest ones will not be visible if you have too much. And, as we have already discussed, you cannot lose fat from specific spots, so you have to just get low body fat if you want a washboard stomach.

But a strong core is vital for so much more. A strong core will prevent back pain, make other exercises easier, make your waist look smaller, improve upper body power, and even increase your endurance by supplying extra oxygenated blood. In short: You will not be ripped no matter how many crunches you do, but making your core stronger makes your whole body more efficient. Isn't that reason enough?

To cultivate a strong core, the best activities are actually bodyweight. Pushups, planks, pullups, belly dancing, crunches, and sit-ups are all amazing ways of strengthening and tightening your core. You also want to do a high volume of these, so aim for 30-200 a day. And rock on with that rock hard belly!

Day 20

Exercises for a Sturdy Back.

A strong back does many good things for a person. It makes you better able to lift and carry things. It prevents osteoporosis, or at least reduces your risk of it. It gives you better posture, which naturally makes you more attractive. It fills out and tightens your skin, improving the appearance of skin loosened by age or weight loss. But there is a lot of muscle in the back and it will take some perseverance to develop this muscle to a point where you can make good use of it. To build your back up, you need to use the right exercises in the right amount.

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For size, nothing beats lifting weights. Deadlifts, rows, back press, and squats all put the weight through your back muscles, encouraging them to grow big and strong. Pick a light weight and do many repetitions to build up some good size and a basic amount of strength. Heavier weights may be more of a challenge, but they will not give you the size.

Once you have the size you can either increase the weight and reduce the repetitions to make the muscle stronger, or just use body weight exercises to maintain your back.

Climbing, belly dancing, pushups and pullups are all great weight-free ways of maintaining back muscle. Make sure to do your body weight exercises consistently for half an hour a day, most days, to keep the muscle strong.

If you keep a strong and healthy back, your whole body will thank you!

Day 21

Exercises for Big Arms.

This one is not so much for the average lady, or for men who prefer the lean and toned look, but for many men and some women, big arms are an important goal. The size of your arms doesn't matter for strength or health. Big arms don't equal strong arms and not all strong arms are big. And health-wise, big arms do very little. But a bit of vanity is a normal and healthy thing, and wanting bigger arms for your own pride, or to be attractive to others, is as good a reason as any.

When building any other body part, we tend to do better with what we call compound movements: exercises that involve many different muscles and muscle groups. For legs, the squat. For back, the deadlift. But for arms, we actually get more size doing what is called isolation movements: exercises that mostly involve one muscle.

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To build your arms, do bicep curls, tricep dips, tricep kickbacks, and lateral raises. This will make your arm grow in size, especially if you are doing lower weights for more repetitions. And to keep your muscles in balance, consider doing a farmer's walk, to activate all the muscles at once, albeit briefly, every arm day. The farmer's walk is where you pick up very heavy weights and just walk with them.

Follow this and your arms will grow in size very quickly.

Day 22

Exercising for Stress.

Far too many of us are stressed every single day, from when we get up until when we go to bed. We are stressed not just mentally, but physically. Getting up too early is stressful to our body, as are eating bad food, not getting enough sunlight, and not having healthy physical contact with other humans. Negative contact stresses us mentally, as do deadlines, money worries, and even too much time online. We experience so much stress every day that many of us no longer remember what it is like to not be stressed.

Exercise fights stress by helping relax our muscles, balance our hormones, and flush toxins out our bodies. Daily, or at least weekly, exercise will help our bodies set free most of the physical stress we build up. But the right exercise can also release our mental stress.

The key to exercising to fight stress is to do it in the mornings and evenings, even if just for five minutes. You need to focus on slow, deliberate movements which you can repeat over and over. For this reason, tai chi, yoga, and Pilates are great choices.

30 Day Metabolism Boosting Workouts

That is not to say that we can just exercise all our stress away. There is always a point where we need to tell ourselves that we have to eat less junk food, hang out with fewer toxic people, or have a day off work. But for that ordinary level of daily stress, exercise can do wonders.

Day 23

Seeing Changes.

You're over three weeks into your fitness journey, and by now you are probably finally experiencing some real changes. Find the photo of yourself from the start of your journey and compare it to how you look right now. You will notice you are probably slimmer at the waist, hips, and thighs. Your arms and legs may be a little bigger. Your muscles may be more defined. Your posture will be much improved because your body is pulled into position by your stronger muscles.

But there will also be internal changes. You are probably noticing that you get winded less often, that your heart rate stays lower at all times, and that you suffer from water retention and bloating much less. You are probably finding it easier to move around and do your daily activities. You could even be finding that chronic inflammation, pain, and illness are much reduced, or even gone.

And finally, you will be experiencing mental and emotional changes. Your confidence is going up the more you can do. You will probably be experiencing more happiness as a result of both your accomplishments, and more balanced hormones. And your stress levels will be crashing down thanks to your improved ability to handle both physical and emotional stressors.

All in all, if you have stuck to your plan, you will be noticing changes. Maybe the

30 Day Metabolism Boosting Workouts

changes are so huge you've already seen them. Or maybe they are so small, it is only now, after thinking about it, that you realize the progress you've made.

But however much or little you have moved towards your goal, take this time to be proud: you are doing it. You are taking something about yourself and making it better. It doesn't matter whether it takes a few months or a few years, you are on that path. Well done!

Day 24

No More Excuses!

Normally I don't like looking back. The past is over and done with, we can't change it, and once we have learned a lesson from it, there is not much more it can do for us. But today we are going to learn a lesson, and for that reason we need to look back. You are probably doing a lot more in terms of fitness than you were doing before you started.

You may be doing a lot more than you have ever done in your life. So I'd like you to look back on the you that existed before this plan. What was that person's excuse for not working out? Imagine that the you from today met the you from 24 days ago and asked them why they didn't workout. What would they say?

Whatever they say, there is one thing we know for certain: It wasn't true. If it was, we would not have succeeded. If you have managed to start working out, you have proven your past excuses wrong.

Now, looking at today, do you ever still use excuses when you don't want to workout? You need to be honest with yourself and identify them. You need to see your excuses so you can get rid of them. Excuses are what past you did, present and future you don't need them. No more excuses, only progress awaits!

Day 25

Adjusting Our Goals.

Finally, we are nearing the end of our journey. We only have five days left to go, and now is the time to give some serious thought about where we will go after we finish this plan. This plan can't be like every other plan and diet out there; it can't stop when the thirty days are over. But it can't stay forever the same either.

At some point or another, your goals are going to change. Maybe you have met your old goal and now it is time to look at what you want to do next. Maybe something in your life has changed and you will need a new goal. This might not be happening in the next five days, but a change of goals is a perfectly normal thing. Nobody stays the same forever. Our bodies change, our minds change, our purpose changes. What we want and need at eighteen in college is not the same as what we want and need at thirty-six, in employment, with a kid.

And, as your whole life changes around you, you need to adjust your fitness goals, or you will abandon them. In life you either adapt, or you lose. So if you don't adapt your workout, you will lose it. So it's better to think about these changes now, with a cool head, than in the heat of the moment. At least now you have time to plan.

Day 26

Looking After Your Joints.

Working out whilst respecting your joints can be difficult for some of us. Some people seem to be able to do all sorts of crazy things and their joints don't suffer at all, they just

30 Day Metabolism Boosting Workouts

keep on going. Whereas other people just need to look at some stairs, or a rain cloud, and their joints start locking or dislocating. Working out and keeping your joints healthy doesn't have to be an either-or situation, though! It is very much possible to do both.

The first step is to acknowledge your limits. Test the amount of strain and pressure your joints can comfortably take. You need to know what your limits are, because reaching your limit will encourage your body to strengthen your joints, but breaking your limit will injure your joints. Really learn to feel them.

Next, you need to strengthen the muscles around the joints. These muscles help hold your joints in place and help them work at their best. The better the muscles, the better the joints. For instance, to improve your elbow movement you need to have a strong bicep and tricep.

Finally: always cool down after exercise. Make sure to loosen your joints up after doing any activity, to get you back to normal.

Done right, your workout should be good for your joints, not bad for them!

Day 27

The Great Outdoors.

Earlier on we discussed how for some of us it is a challenge to exercise in public the first time. Now we will face another hurdle. For some, whether they prefer to exercise alone or in a social setting, whether they are confident or not at the gym, exercising outside is a challenge. It might be the weather, the lack of opportunities to workout outside, the people... anything.

But many of us approach outdoor activity with a sense of trepidation.

30 Day Metabolism Boosting Workouts

But the fact of the matter is humans, like all animals, are meant to be outdoors. You know how a dog that isn't taken for walks becomes neurotic, a bit depressed, and can even forget its house training? That is, you when you don't get out as well. We need fresh air, changing temperatures, and sunshine to thrive as human beings.

So make a point of giving yourself one day, just one day, outside. Try and find a place with some greenery and a path to walk on, or a lawn to do some bodyweight exercises on. Getting back in touch with nature is a very peaceful and rewarding experience for many of us. And, after the initial awkwardness, you will realize how comfortable you really are being a free human in nature. This outdoors time will bring new energy into your workouts, and your life!

Day 28

Dressing Your Changing Body.

We're almost at the end of our workout journey, and you have probably noticed some physical changes. Maybe they are slight, or maybe they are dramatic, but now you are so close to your first goal, it can be very tempting to show off this new body of yours.

A wardrobe overhaul is not an easy thing. It can be expensive, time consuming, and you may soon shrink or grow out of your clothes again soon anyway. But it is still important to dress in a way that helps you feel attractive and enjoy the body you have. You will need to find the best of both worlds, getting new clothes for your changing body, but not committing too much to any item or style until you feel you are ready to maintain your figure.

Choosing great colors for you is an important first step. If the colors are right, even if the fit is a little off, the clothes will still make you look good. Use the Seasons method to workout what colors suit you best.

30 Day Metabolism Boosting Workouts

And dress in a style that is not too fitted. This way the clothes will last you longer than if you bought tight ones. If you are getting bigger you can grow into them, and if you are getting slimmer they won't suddenly go from tight to baggy in all the wrong places.

Choosing a wardrobe that makes you feel confident will inspire you to workout more and better.

Day 29

Resisting Temptation.

We are almost at the end of our journey, and now is the time to remind you that temptations, sadly, are everywhere. Not just in the sense of poor diet choices, but also in the sense of idle entertainment, distractions, fad diets, and new gurus full of false hope. The idea of doing something a little easier, a little more immediately rewarding, can feel especially tempting after four weeks of hard work. Do not fall for temptation. What you are doing right now works, doesn't it? Well if it isn't broke, don't fix it!

It is normal to be seeking direction at this stage. In many ways, you are ending a time in your life. You are ending this thirty-day plan, yes, but you are also ending the period of your life that came before it, and this change is difficult, so we look for something to hold onto. We need stability, security, something we can count on and use. Maybe we need it to replace something we held onto before, such as comfort foods or bad habits.

Or maybe we never had something safe and reliable to hold onto, and this plan gave us some much needed order. So we need to hold onto something else from now onward, to keep giving our lives meaning. But the choice you make now, the choice about what you hold onto, will be the choice that shapes the next period of your life. So hold onto routine, hold onto self-improvement, hold onto fitness, and hold onto a healthier, happier you.

30 Day Metabolism Boosting Workouts

Day 30

A Life of Hard Work.

Welcome to the last day of your fitness journey with me, and the first day of the rest of your life.

It can be very daunting to be facing the end of a plan like this, especially if you followed your schedule rigidly and looked forward to meeting all your goals. You are at a place where, on the one hand all this activity is complete, and you can check “30-day plan” off your list, but on the other hand, it is not over at all.

You see, fitness is an ongoing thing. No animal ever stops being active until the day it dies. They run and jump and walk and sneak and play and fight and generally stay moving from our first to our last day. It is only humans who put a deadline, an end date, on our fitness. But our bodies aren't designed for this. We are animals too, and we need to stay moving.

So don't stop working out now that the thirty-day play is over. Look at your new goals, your new ideas, and start working towards them. This plan has been the trial mode for the habits you need to maintain for the rest of your life. And that life will be all the better for it.



How Lifting Weights Helps You Lose Weight

Losing weight by diet alone is perfectly possible. If you eat less than your body uses, you will lose weight. The problem is that most of us live sedentary lives, and therefore our calorific requirements are rock-bottom low to begin with. You may need as little as 1500 calories a day to maintain your weight, so to lose even a little weight, you could be eating 1200 calories or less. Shorter people and older people are especially vulnerable because of this. It is simply unreasonable to try and lose weight under these conditions.

What is more, the less food you eat, the less nutrients you get. So on that 1200 calorie diet you may not be getting enough vitamin C, calcium, magnesium, vitamin E, etc, to keep your body healthy. This will leave you tired and ill tempered.

Finally, when we stop eating as much our body tends to burn what it can to survive. And when it's burning fat, it has to combine it with protein to make ketones, otherwise it cannot use it. And where will it get that protein from? The muscles we aren't using, of course. Which, if we are particularly inactive, includes our heart muscles.

For those reasons, many of us turn to the traditional cardio routines when we need to lose weight. The idea is that this sort of exercise will keep us moving, keep burning calories, and help us lose weight whilst maintaining muscle. However, it has been found that cardio is not the most efficient way of burning calories for weight loss, nor is it the best way to maintain muscle. Instead, more and more people are turning to weight lifting for their weight loss plans.

There are many ways that lifting weights can help us lose weight. First of all, it burns calories. Cardio burns calories too, but not a lot. It only burns calories based on how many times you move each limb, and burns very little after the activity. On the other hand, weight lifting burns more calories each time you add more weight to your exercises, and will continue to burn a large number of calories by repairing your body as you rest and sleep.

Secondly, it will improve your metabolism over all. Muscle burns more calories than fat, even when resting. This may only add up to a few hundred calories per week, but every bit counts. And what is more, muscle burns calories every time you move it, so if you have more muscle, every time you move you will burn more calories.

Thirdly, it is a great way of shaping your body. After losing weight many of us will suffer from loose skin. This can look unsightly and make us feel unattractive. However, we can't lose all that fat and just have our skin ping back to normal. If you're lucky, or had little to lose, you may get off lightly, but for the rest of us, we need to fill the skin up with something else. Muscle will fill the skin and draw the skin back against the body, reducing sag.

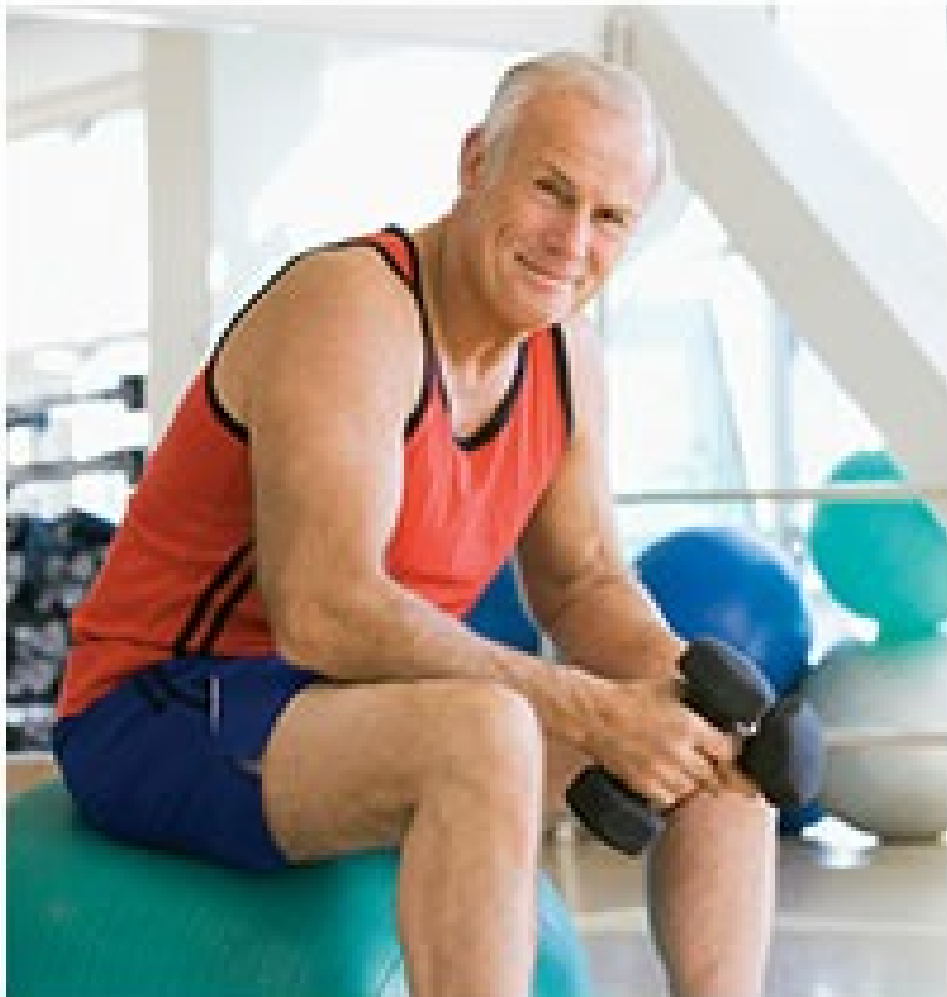
Of course, you need to start lifting weights gently and easily if you want to do it right. Most people could do well to start with cardio and bodyweight exercises, until they have

30 Day Metabolism Boosting Workouts

the stamina and the basic muscle mass for real weights. Once you are confident you can move onto free weights or weights machines.

Many women are scared of getting too bulky if they lift weights, especially heavy weights, but this just isn't true. Women do not have the same capacity to put on muscle as men. And, even if we did, any bodybuilder can tell you that it is hard to gain muscle. You can stop long before you get “bulky”, because it would not happen overnight!

This isn't to say that no other type of activity is good for weight loss, or that you shouldn't do anything else. A well-rounded exercise routine is not based on weights alone. A bit of cardio does your heart and lungs a lot of good, and high intensity exercises will improve your stamina and reflexes. But for weight loss, nothing beats weight lifting.



Setting Effective Weight Loss Goals

When it comes to weight loss, we often pay a lot of attention to the hows and not much attention to the whys, or the where-tos. And this is a problem, because if your goals aren't right, you won't be able to make them come true. Imagine if you were studying for a test, or working for a promotion, or trying to get a date. You wouldn't just leave your goal at that and hope for the best, would you? You would probably define a line of attack towards an end goal that you have clearly defined, so that you know how much work you're putting in and what you're getting. And weight loss is no different.

Be realistic.

If your goals are not realistic, this will be your biggest downfall. Some of us get very hyped about size and weight and decide we will drop three sizes in a month, lose 100lbs in a few months, or get a 24" waist overnight. But these goals are literally impossible.

And even people who set possible goals do not always consider how realistic they are in the given circumstances. For instance, it is possible to lose three dress sizes in three months, but depending on your age, weight loss methods, and free time, it could still not be realistic.

When we set goals which aren't realistic we are setting ourselves up for failure, literally. If you cannot succeed, then you will definitely fail. And if you will fail no matter what, you may find yourself so demoralized that you stop trying altogether.

Be specific.

Another thing that makes us stop trying is when our goal is vague. "Get hot for Summer," "lose some weight," and "be skinny" are all examples of vague weight loss goals. We may think we are being moderate when we set these goals, because we aren't restraining ourselves or pushing ourselves too hard. But when we put too little pressure on ourselves we are doomed to fail too.

This is because humans are designed to be rational, and our brains are therefore wired to rewrite our pasts to make ourselves feel good about ourselves. The end result of so much intelligence is that if we fall short of our goals we convince ourselves that we still succeeded. And vague goals just give us an excuse to do this.

Instead, choose specific goals, such as a certain size, weight, or set of measurements you want to attain. Again, these must be realistic. But having some hard numbers can really help keep you focused and motivated.

Set mini-goals.

Long term goals are great because they give us something to work towards consistently, with a huge payout at the end. But we are not designed to work in the long term. Research has shown that we think of our future selves using the parts of our brain we use for other people, and that short term rewards are usually preferred to long term ones, even if the short term rewards are smaller.

For this reason, setting yourself mini-goals can be really useful in guiding you towards your main goal. These mini-goals, even without rewards, will give you a sense of

30 Day Metabolism Boosting Workouts

progress and accomplishment. And if you follow them up with mini-rewards, such as a new makeup item, a day off the gym to watch your team, or a new book, you will be even more motivated to work hard.

Set a maintenance goal.

Finally, when you reach your final goal, you don't want to go through all this hard work again. But 95% of dieters go back to their original weight within five years. This is because after their weight loss plan they go back to doing whatever they were doing before, either immediately, or slowly building up to it over the years. For this reason, you need to have a maintenance goal, so you can keep watching your weight and making sure it is where it needs to be for the foreseeable future. This way you can prevent regaining the weight and be able to avoid another weight loss plan.



Making Time for Weight Loss

A common refrain among people seeking to lose weight is that they truly would love to, but they just do not have the time. This idea holds many people back from even attempting weight loss, as they fear that their efforts will be in vain due to their lack of time. However, it is a common misconception that weight loss takes a lot of time. It is perfectly possible to lose weight as a busy parent, full time or shift worker, or even running multiple jobs, or whilst in school. You will not be able to do it the same way as an Instagram celebrity or a home maker, but there are ways for you to get the same results as them.

1: Set your goals.

Your weight loss will not be successful if you don't define what success is going to be. Decide how much weight you want to lose and by when. You need to choose concise measurements for each. As a rule of thumb, there are different ways of measuring weight loss depending on how you are losing it.

If you're focusing on diet and cardio, check the scales. If you're focusing on athletics, swimming, etc., measure yourself. And if you're lifting weights, or doing anything else which will increase muscle, then go by body shape and clothing sizes, especially tops.

When you have your main goal, set yourself little daily and weekly goals to keep you on track and give you a feeling for the changes and successes you experience.

2: Plan your meals.

Meal planning is essential for weight loss. You need to know what foods you are eating, how many calories, how much protein, how much fat, how many carbs, and what types of protein, fat, and carbs are in your meals. Regardless of which diet you have chosen, setting yourself meal goals and keeping a record of whether or not you stick to your goals is vital to losing weight.

3: The freezer and cupboards are your friends.

A lot of people assume that diet foods are either salads or meal replacement shakes. And although both these things can be amazing for different people, if you don't like the sound of them, you may feel a bit stuck. But the good news is: you can totally plan yourself a range of healthy cooked meals and freeze them in advance. Just find a recipe that fits your diet, cook 7-30 days of it at the start of the week or month, and freeze it in single portions so all you need to do is defrost and eat.

Similarly, you can get not only meal replacement foods, but tins, tubs, and bags of healthy food for your diet. A cupboard full of pasta, low carb snacks, nuts and seeds, beef jerky, or whatever fits your diet will keep your cravings at bay quickly and easily.

4: Multitask your exercise.

Finding time to exercise can be very hard when you are a busy person. Attending a gym is completely out of the question, and even staying home and doing a workout routine could be eating into valuable time working, with your family, or catching up on some rest. But just because you can't devote yourself to exercise doesn't mean you can't do it.

30 Day Metabolism Boosting Workouts

I'm sure at some point in the day you check your emails, do a phone call, or watch TV. If during this time you are active, you can save time and lose weight.

At work, you can take calls and read emails standing up or pacing around the room. At home you can do squats, wall sits, or hold yoga poses as you watch TV or talk on the phone. You can even take your calls outside for a walk, or get a stepping machine to use in front of the TV.

5: Make sure to unwind from time to time.

Because you are so busy, it will be easy for you to burn out. If you ever get the feeling that you never have enough time to yourself, make a point of dedicating an hour to three hours a week, just to yourself. Do your nails, watch a show, meet friends, have a nap, read a book... whatever makes you happy. Just make sure to recharge your batteries.



Why Consistency Is Key for Losing Weight

For many of us, yo-yo dieting is the bane of our existence. We lose weight. We gain it back. We start losing weight again and fall off the bandwagon. We lose weight. It creeps back up. It's a constant battle between our minds and our bodies. And it is all too common for us to turn to obsessive diet switching during these times. The logic is pretty sound: if the last diet did not work, then we need to try something new until something does work.

But there is a problem with that way of thinking. Ever wondered why the people who try the most diets tend to be the ones who struggle the most with their weight? It is easy to assume that this is because if you struggle with your weight you are more likely to be desperate enough to try every new diet there is. But in fact, it may be the other way around: You could be struggling with your weight because you keep changing your diet.

There is a reason that lifestyle changes are so popular lately, and that's because changing your habits forever is the only thing which will work forever. You can't go on a diet, lose all the weight you want to, then go right back to eating and exercising the way you did before and expect to keep the weight off. If you eat and live like you did before, you will soon look the way you did before.

And so long as you stick to it, any lifestyle change could result in keeping your weight down. People around the world are successfully managing to keep their weight down eating a crazy range of diets: vegan, Paleo, wholefoods, calorie restricted, junk food, vegetarian, ketogenic, low fat, etc. The fact that so many people, in so many places, on so many different diets are all equally successful shows that it is not the diet which is helping them, but the consistency.

On the other hand, continually changing your diet can make you more likely to regain weight. First of all, this is because different diets operate under different principles. If you follow a ketogenic diet, you are relying on the fat-burning properties of your diet, even to the point of ignoring calories. On the other hand, on a vegetarian diet you need to be careful with your calories to succeed. Changing diets too often stops your metabolism and mentality from adapting to your diet, making it less effective.

Consistency is incredibly important in our workouts too. If you do not work out the same muscles regularly you can lose the muscle you have been building up, undoing all your hard work. What is more, when you work out you raise your metabolism, which helps you burn more calories, sleep deeper, which is vital for healthy weight loss, and regulate your hormones and appetite. If you do not work out consistently you may find you are hungry all the time, lose your stamina, or suffer insomnia.

Finally, consistency is the only way you can truly rewrite your habits. You didn't get to the weight you are overnight, you did not develop your habits overnight, and you're not going to undo either of those things overnight either. It takes at least thirty and up to ninety days to create new habits. This is because a habit is made by the wiring in our brains writing and rewriting itself, and it takes thirty days for the brain to disconnect the old pathways and make the new pathways our automatic processes. If your diet and lifestyle is consistent for one to three months, then your brain could make dieting as simple and automatic as walking.

Developing The Right Mindset for Weight Loss

When it comes to losing weight, or accomplishing any goal, having the right mindset is essential. We need to be thinking about what we are doing, rather than just acting on autopilot. This is actually where a lot of conventional dieting advice and fad diets alike fail us. We are told that all we have to do is follow this one magic formula and we will lose weight. But it is not like that at all. You need to be fully focused, fully committed, and fully aware of what you are doing for a diet to succeed in the long term. Because when it comes to your health, you have to be the expert.

1: Respect your body.

For a lot of people, the desire to lose weight comes from a place of self-loathing. They feel they cannot bear to look in the mirror one more day, and want to change what they see. They are disgusted by themselves and regularly talk down to and about themselves. But you will never love yourself if you don't make love and respect your priority. If you lose weight but don't change your attitude towards your body, you will just find something else to hate about it. Instead, this journey must begin from a place of self-love, from wanting to do better for yourself.

2: Stop comparing yourself to others.

For the very reason you have just read, you need to stop comparing yourself and your body to other people. You are not them. They have a different body, a different mindset, and a different life to you. And you will never look the way they look, not exactly, because you are your own person. Instead, compare yourself to where you were a few weeks, months, or years ago.

3: Understand your diet.

When starting a new diet many of us just pick up the paperwork and don't bother with the science. Instead, this time make a point of reading into the science behind the diet. Find out why it works. Because you will need to understand it if you want to apply those principles to a long term weight maintenance plan. Same goes for your workout.

4: Plan for the future.

And yes, you need a long term weight maintenance plan. You need to consider what will happen when your diet is over. Because if you go back to eating and exercising like you used to, you will go back to looking like you used to. You have to ask yourself whether you could keep this diet up forever, and how you can transfer the scientific principles behind it into a plan to keep you at a healthy weight forever.

5: Don't reward or punish yourself.

Many of us fall into the traps of rewarding and punishing ourselves during weight loss.

30 Day Metabolism Boosting Workouts

But the problem with rewards is that they often undermine the core principles that our diet and workout are based on. Skipping weights for a day or eating a sugary dessert is not a pat on the back, it's undoing your work. But punishing yourself is not acceptable either. Everyone slips up and makes mistakes, and you must not base your worth on how well your diet is going. What both these habits do is reinforce this idea that food is a dangerous thing, or a luxurious thing, an emotional thing, something to use on ourselves like treats for a dog. And this habit will make you think of your diet as a chore as well.

6: Make time for you.

Always make a point of making time for yourself. When you are dieting a lot of your life becomes about the diet. You may find you can't eat out at certain places, or eat out at all. You may find hanging out with friends becomes awkward, or that you can't drink so parties become dull. Or maybe your workouts are eating into your hobby time. Whatever the situation, if you have given a lot up on your weight loss journey, make a point of indulging it sometimes, or of finding a healthy replacement. This way you can make some time for yourself without worrying about ruining your diet.

Developing A Positive Body Image for Weight Loss Success

Weight loss is a big concern for many modern people, especially with two thirds of the population in most first world countries being overweight or obese. And, if we are among those numbers, it is vitally important to lose weight for our physical and mental wellbeing. Being a little overweight does no long term harm, but the heavier you get, the more at risk you are for all kinds of ailments. Diabetes, high blood pressure, depression, strokes, heart failure, anxiety... All these conditions are more likely when you are seriously overweight or obese. What is more, recent studies have found that even healthy obese people inevitably develop these conditions if they stay obese. Which means that even if you are healthy, the one way you can avoid these conditions is to not be obese.

However, for many of us our desire to lose weight does not come from a cold, calculated decision based on our medical history and desire to improve our health. For many of us, the primary motivator, I am sorry to say, is self-loathing. The biggest push for many people to lose weight is looking in the mirror and feeling disappointed they do not look like their favorites celeb. And whilst wanting to look better is a valid reason for losing weight, hating your body is not.

Weight loss plans based on self-loathing will rarely succeed. First of all because, sorry to say, but there will always be something you don't like about your body. Many obese people who lose weight then have to contend with loose skin. You may never stop being apple or pear shaped. You could find your cellulite doesn't go away. Or you might just focus on something else once the weight is gone. And the second reason is that low self-esteem leads to all sorts of mental complaints which increase your risk of overeating or undereating, which can lead to eating disorders. If you do not respect your body, it is easy to choose an unhealthy or dangerous diet plan, to comfort eat, or to punish yourself with food.

Quite simply: Weight loss is not a replacement for self-respect.

You can love your body for what it is and still want to lose weight. You can work on losing weight whilst marveling at how your body hosts you. You can dress your body for what it is and feel sexy and confident at any size. Likewise, you can hate your body, disregard its intricate beauty, dress poorly and feel unsexy and worthless even if you get super skinny. And whatever mindset you have now is the mindset you will have in three months' time, whatever your weight, unless you actively work on that mindset.

It is important to develop a positive body image before, during, and after weight loss. You will not change your mind about your body no matter what it looks like, but if you change your mind first, then your body will follow. And if your weight loss comes from a place of self-love, then it will be easier to work for and easier to maintain.

Your body is a beautiful, wonderful piece of machinery. It is keeping you alive as we speak, giving you the ability to move and speak and think and do all sorts of things. It is the only body you will ever have, and it deserves to be loved, by you at the very least. Weight loss isn't fixing your body. It is looking after it. You would not say you were fixing a broken dog if said dog needed to go on a diet, you would say you are healing it, or

30 Day Metabolism Boosting Workouts

caring for it. Thus, you must treat your body the same way, like a beloved pet.

Sometimes what your body craves is not good for it, and what it refuses to do is what it needs. But we can nudge it in the right direction, not because we are disgusted by it, but because we truly, deeply love it and want it to do well. You have to show yourself that level of love and respect if you want to succeed at weight loss and be happy.

Learning To Enjoy Your Weight Loss Workouts

For many people, their daily workout is nothing more than a chore. It is not pleasant, or fun, or interesting in any way. It's just something they have to do to shed the pounds, and they can't wait until they have lost the weight so that they can go back to their preferred hobbies and forget all about working out. But, as most of us already know, you can't just diet and work out to lose weight and then go back to doing what you did before. If you do that, the weight will pile back on. So if a workout is part of your weight loss routine, then it will need to be part of your maintenance routine. Which means you need to learn to enjoy it.

The first step to enjoying your weight loss workout is to find out what really motivates you. "Weight loss" is a great motivator for our conscious brain, but our unconscious brain is much simpler than that. Some people are motivated to work out just by the endorphins that it releases, but if that were you, you probably would not be reading this. However, there are many other things which appeal to our primitive brains where workouts are concerned.

If you love working out in groups, doing dance, martial arts, etc., then the thing that motivates you is being a social person and connecting deeply with others. If all you can think about when working out is your food afterwards, then you are a material person motivated by good food. And if after your workout you are eager to record the times for your exercise, check the calories, and weigh yourself, then you are motivated by tangible results.

Next, you need to make sure that you are choosing a workout you will enjoy in and of itself. It doesn't matter if you're socializing, having a great meal afterwards, or keeping score, if the activity you have chosen is boring, frustrating, or awkward for you. Consider all your options and make sure your workout engages you. Some people find they prefer cardio, others prefer working out to music, others need time in nature. Find out what the essential components are to your ideal workout.

Finally, make the workout easy for yourself. We all have ways of making time fly. If you are a very social person you may find time passes faster when you are in a class, a group, or working out with a friend. If you are very solitary, you may feel awkward at a public gym and enjoy your workouts more at home. If you like being caught up in your own head a lot, then listening to music through your earbuds is a great way of making time pass fast. Usually this is the easiest part of learning to enjoy your weight loss workouts, because it will involve something you already love, which you may already be doing during workouts.

Once you know what motivates you, you need to set up incentives to make sure that you always have a reason to go for your workout. You can't just count on your friend always showing up for workouts, for example. Because if one day they aren't there you may not feel confident or excited enough to go. Or if you rely on music to get you through, and your phone or mp3 player breaks, then you could feel as though you can't make it through the workout.

30 Day Metabolism Boosting Workouts

You need to have more than one thing in place, more than one reason to be doing your workout. Many of us will find we have a few things we can use to motivate ourselves to do our workouts. This way we know that we will always have something that makes our workout worthwhile, even if one of our sources of motivation goes away briefly. However, if you only have one thing that inspires you to work out, you will need to create a secondary motivation source. Take something you truly love and use it to reward yourself after workouts. Maybe it's a massage, or a nice drink, or an hour painting. Whatever it is, make sure it is something that will make you push yourself hard in the gym, even if there is nothing else motivating you.



Staying Motivated When Losing Weight

When losing weight it can be hard to stay motivated and focused. This is because dieting goes against our instincts, we can find it boring and stressful, it interferes with our social lives, and the results take a long time to show. So we can't just rely on the intrinsic goodness of weight loss to motivate us. Instead, we need to create our own motivation to keep us going through the hard times. Enter gamification.

Gamification is the principle that by turning something into a game we make it fun for its own sake, and forget that what we are doing goes against our instincts or interests. Think, for example, of little mobile games that you can download or play on social media. Creating a new pixelated pumpkin will not better your life in any way, but you will work towards it, desire it, and feel disappointed if you do not succeed. This is because the right game strategies override the instinctive and rational parts of our brains and focus us on weird little details like...

1: Small, frequent rewards.

In gamification, small, frequent rewards work as motivation because humans do not think well in the long term. When we think of our future selves, we use the parts of our brains reserved for other people. Which means we cannot think about all the rewards our future selves will get for an action, because they're not us. Instead, we offer ourselves small, frequent rewards for staying on track and meeting mini-goals, which motivates our present selves to work hard.

We can apply this to weight loss by making a list of assorted non-diet-related rewards and giving one to ourselves for meeting a goal. Jogging for 30 minutes? 30 minutes of your favorite show. Lost 2lbs? Time to get some new nail polish.

2: Intermittent rewards.

Another key to successful rewarding in gamification is not to give too much, too little, or too consistently. You know how some games will give you random amounts of points, rather than a set volume? This is designed to keep you playing. By being rewarded inconsistently we learn that there are variables at play which we do not understand, and our natural curiosity will keep us playing.

We can apply this to weight loss by writing our rewards on little strips of paper, folding them, and drawing them from a hat or a jar when we need a reward. This way the payout of rewards will be random, making us more likely to “gamble” with our fitness and diet, until we get the reward we want.

3: Working for it.

In gamification we are never allowed something without working for it, however simple and menial the work is. This gives us a sense that the thing we have attained must be valuable, simply due to the hours of work we have invested. It also teaches us that the activity we performed to get our reward is good, because after it we get rewarded.

Naturally, we are working for our bodies when we diet. But we can up the ante by not allowing ourselves anything without completing a fitness task. It has to be something simple, repetitive, and menial, such as doing a pushup before getting a snack, or only

30 Day Metabolism Boosting Workouts

being allowed to eat healthy foods whilst watching TV. This habit will slowly rewire our brain into liking our weight loss activities.

4: Validation.

Finally, in gamification we see a constant stream of validation. Other characters and pop up chat boxes will tell us that we have done our jobs well. We will get awards for completing many of the same type of task, and badges, medals, or stickers to show what we have achieved in the game. This sense of approval and validation will motivate us to keep returning to the game.

We apply this to weight loss by keeping a support group and a star chart. Our support group, whether it is friends, classmates, or a forum, will tell us how well we are doing and make us feel good. And our star chart will work as a sort of medal collection to let us know we are succeeding. By ensuring we receive praise for what we are doing, we make ourselves more likely to stick to it, not to avoid disappointing others, but to make them proud.

How to Make Weight Loss Workouts a Habit

When it comes to losing weight we need to make sure that we are covering all our bases by eating well and working out. But when it comes to weight loss workouts, it can be difficult to make them into a habit we can sustain until we are at our goal weight. In fact, the workout is often the first part of any weight loss plan that fails, and as soon as one thing fails we are more likely to give up on the rest. So how can we stay motivated to keep working out and make our workouts a regular habit?

First of all, we need a realistic workout schedule. We can't commit to making it some Saturdays, or to a series of classes which we can never attend. We have to pick something which we can do every day, or at least consistently several days a week. It can't be at a time when we are usually working or commuting. If our mornings are busy, or our afternoon commute is often delayed, then we can't work out immediately before or after work. And if there are days where unplanned things often seem to happen, we also need to account for this and make sure to avoid those days.

Secondly, we need to choose a workout which we enjoy enough to do every single week, if not every single day. Knowing what days we can work out, we now know what classes we could potentially make, whether we can make it to the gym or pool, etc. So we can lay out our options and seriously consider what we have available before choosing something we can truly be passionate about. If you really aren't sure, then you can always try a few different things until you find something you truly enjoy doing. When your workout is fun for its own sake, then you will be able to keep doing it much more easily than if it's a chore.

Thirdly, we need to stick to our schedule. This sounds simple, but many things can get in the way of it. For example, if you are invited out for drinks once on a Friday night, you may want to go. And cancelling your workout for this event is fine. But if you are invited every Friday, then you might want to reconsider either when you work out, or how often you agree to go out for drinks. There has to be a compromise somewhere, because you should not sacrifice your health or your social life. Find the balance so your schedule can be maintained.

Fourthly, we need to make sure we are eating right for our workout. A big mistake we can make when working out for weight loss is to eat a diet that is too low in calories, protein, salts, or micronutrients. Too few calories and you will not have the energy to keep going, which will kill your motivation. Too little protein and you will feel starving all the time, risking ruining your diet. Too little salt and you can actually dehydrate and get ill, suffering brain fog, cramps, etc. Too few of any micronutrient and you can suffer a whole array of symptoms and conditions, which could make you seriously ill in the long run.

Finally, even after we have lost the weight we need to seriously think about a maintenance workout. Just as with diet, we can't put in all the hard work to lose weight and then turn around and go back to what we were doing before, we will go back to the

30 Day Metabolism Boosting Workouts

body we had before. So we need to think about the sort of workout we are going to use to maintain our weight. Many people find that they are able to maintain their weight by still doing the same workout but eating more food. But it depends on you as well. You may choose a new workout routine, a new exercise, or to do the same thing a little less and make time for your other hobbies. Just make sure that your new routine is something you can keep up for the next few years or decades.



How Short Term Thinking Can Sabotage Your Weight Loss Success

Weight loss is an important goal for many of us. We feel more attractive, our health is improved, and our opportunities in life are greater as a result of both these things. But 95% of diets fail, in that within five years of losing weight most people have regained it. So why is something so important so hard to achieve? It is a matter of mindset. When we aim to lose weight we often approach it from the perspective of a one-off event. But this is not conducive to success.

Single events are things we do once, which we complete and check off our lists. A single event has a deadline, or a set amount we need to accomplish. When we have done that, it is over and done with. Examples of single event goals are running a marathon, handing in a presentation, or completing an audition. These events are great because they give us perspective and allow us to work towards a set ending that we can focus on, motivating us to finish. They are defective in that after the goal is met we are done, and in some cases all our hard work can be undone in minutes or years.

Progressive events are not the opposite of single events, but are very different. A progressive event is one with no set goal. You do not have a deadline, or a set amount, you just keep doing it until you either no longer need to, or forever. Examples of progressive event goals are learning a language, reading more books, or, indeed, losing weight. These events are great because they put us in a position where we need to hold ourselves accountable for something long term, and look after ourselves for the future. They are defective in that they are hard to adhere to, and therefore need flexibility, which makes them vulnerable to degrading over time.

Weight loss is a single event, but weight maintenance is a progressive event. Therefore, losing weight is a combination of both: first a single event where you lose weight, followed by a progressive event of keeping your weight in check. This is what people mean when they say that lifestyle changes matter more than diets for weight loss.

But how do we put them together to reach our goal? Simple, for goals like weight loss we need to set ourselves continual single event goals to support our progress in the progressive event.

Losing weight is the easy part, and no matter what way you choose to lose weight, chances are you will succeed so long as you stick to it. But if you want to develop the right mindset not just for losing weight, but for keeping it off, you need to start early.

You need to plan out your long term goals as best you can. You will have your first goal, of course. It will probably be something like “lose 20lbs” or “fit into a size 10 by Summer” or “get out of the obese category”. But you can't just work to get there and then go back to eating what you did before and exercising like you did before. Because eating and exercising like you used to will make you gain weight like you used to. And you can't keep following the same diet forever, because then you will carry on losing weight even after reaching your goal.

What you need to do is set a series of goals, both throughout your weight loss, and some afterwards. The best way to do this is to set daily goals, weekly goals, and monthly or quarterly goals.

For example, your quarterly goal may be to fit into a size 10 by Summer, but your weekly goal is to exercise for four hours total, and your daily goal is to eat no more than 1600 calories and no fewer than 1300 calories, and to avoid snacking. Then, when you reach that size 10, your quarterly goal may be to stabilize at that size, your weekly goal to try some new exercises, and your daily goals to eat 1800 calories, no more no less, of clean foods. Following this structure, you will succeed not just at your single event goal of weight loss, but at your progressive event goal of long term health.

Dealing with Weight Loss Setbacks

When we are working on losing weight, there are many ways and reasons it can go wrong. Weight loss is a long journey for most of us, and this journey is always at risk of hurdles. And the longer it is taking us, the more likely we are to encounter a hurdle. Which means we need to be prepared for them.

A weight loss setback is the most common reason why someone will give up on a diet, workout routine, or a goal. We just cannot bear it when we see that our weight loss has stopped, or that we have gained weight instead. It can make us feel as though all the hard work we put in was for nothing. And then we get hit by a wave of hopelessness where we are unsure whether we can carry on, knowing that our results could be set back so easily.

But a weight loss setback is not necessarily a sign that our diet or exercise routine is set up to fail, or bad for us. Sometimes it happens because of something we did wrong, sometimes it happens for emotional reasons, and sometimes it just happens, for no reason at all. It is important, before throwing in the towel, to assess why it is we suffered a setback, and see what we can do about it. Because otherwise how will we get back on track, and prevent future setbacks?

The first step to analyzing a setback is to prepare yourself emotionally. Very often, whatever we uncover about setbacks makes us feel guilty or ashamed, because we place a high level of blame on ourselves. It is important to remember that everyone experiences setbacks and that you cannot prepare for something you did not know about.

Working out why we suffered a setback isn't as easy as it sounds. You really need to get to the core of your problem. Ask yourself what caused the setback, whether it was breaking your diet, reducing activity, or a mystery. Ask yourself what made you change your habits. Ask yourself why you did not start dieting or exercising again as soon as the

problem passed. Usually we will find an emotional, social, mental, or personal inhibition which affected our ability to look after ourselves as we wanted to.

No matter what the initial reason for your setback was, usually there are confusing elements. For instance, you may have eaten too much because of depression, rebounded by being extra strict with your diet, then been unable to keep control over your diet, resulting in a continual yoyo between too much and too little food. This is normal, and it can be stopped, but it can make it harder to work out what the original problem was. You really need to dig deep to discover what made the problems begin.

When we have found out what the main and secondary reasons for our setback are, we can look to correct them. If you are still stalling, or gaining weight, you can stop this by addressing the problem which caused them. This may be through emotional therapy, or it may be through hiding a new and exciting food. It could even just be making a bit more time for exercise. You just have to do whatever it takes to begin losing weight again.

Once we are back on track, we need to ask ourselves what we would do if we experienced a problem like this again. This can be a very challenging question to answer. Sometimes the trigger for our setback really was beyond our control. But just because the trigger is beyond our control doesn't mean we can't put things in place to make uncontrollable problems easier. You can't prevent getting stuck in traffic, or know when it will happen, but you can make plans in case you are home late and can't find time to cook or work out. Looking ahead like this is vitally important, as it will help us to make sure we are always prepared for potential trouble.

It is only when we seize control of our diets and lives, including our setbacks, that we can truly succeed.

Getting A Weight Loss Accountability Partner

Losing weight can be a very challenging time in your life. You are making big changes, changing habits that took years or even decades to develop, and going against your body's instinct to save energy and eat as much as possible. It is now more than ever that you need the support of your loved ones, either emotionally or physically.

A weight loss accountability partner is a great thing. The two of you will be losing weight together and will help each other keep on track. You will talk about your goals, your successes, your setbacks, and your emotions. You will also be there to provide moral and emotional support whenever the other needs it, such as offering forgiveness for a setback, offering an alternative to a party, and generally giving you what you need to keep on going.

30 Day Metabolism Boosting Workouts

But for many it is a rude awakening to discover that many people do not support their friends' and family's weight loss journeys. In fact, there has been a lot of research into whether or not your friends will support your weight loss goal, and the conclusion is almost always that even those nearest and dearest to you will sabotage you. They don't do this to be mean, because they hate you, or to see you fail. They do it almost completely unknowingly, and for a variety of reasons:

1. They are not going on this journey with you, so they do not understand your struggles or needs. They don't realize that when they bring doughnuts to work, or eat something tempting around you, you are suffering.
2. They are used to doing certain things with you and do not like losing your shared rituals. You probably bonded over many things, food, drinks, and afternoon activities included. If you are now eating differently, skipping the bar, and going jogging instead of shopping, they may feel abandoned.
3. They feel hurt that you are trying to be less like them. If your friends are around your size, they may feel hurt that you no longer want to look that way they do. They may try and distract you or “win you back”.

For all these reasons, it is unwise to share your weight loss journey with friends who are not going to be joining you. But if you want the support of an accountability partner, then you need to find someone to help. Sometimes you can compromise. Perhaps you have a friend who has an equally challenging but different goal, such as quitting smoking, running a marathon, or passing a test. You can still offer each other the necessary support without sharing the exact same goals. It may even make it easier to be understanding and kind to each other if you do so.

If there is nobody in your life who is going through any sort of challenging self-improvement, then you may need to look further for someone to be your accountability partner. A great place to look is your local gym or exercise classes, if you are taking them. This way you know that you are sharing the same sort of experience. Just try and make friends, and see if anyone wants to support you. A huge advantage to this is that you can meet in person, and you probably live near to each other, which is a strong incentive against cheating.

If you are not in group fitness classes, then another place to look is online forums and support groups. Again, these are great places to share your success and setbacks, and to find someone who is on a similar path to you. That is the biggest advantage to this: you will be able, almost certainly, to find someone whose goals, interests, and personality match up very closely with your own. This closeness is a great way of challenging and supporting each other. The downside is you probably cannot meet each other in person, so you will not have the same level of accountability.

Whichever path you choose, an accountability partner is a great way of staying on track with your weight loss.

Simple Workouts You Can Do in Under 30 Minutes

responsibilities, children, and a full agenda thirty minutes may even seem like an impossible time frame to get a decent workout in. Before you toss it all and say there is no way you can do it, consider these simple workouts you can do in under 30 minutes while still achieving your fitness goals.

Kettlebell

Kettlebell workouts can be focused on specific body areas. This means that a one hour kettlebell workout can be reduced to less than 30 minutes. You can focus on your back one day, arms the next, legs the following day, and so on. This can give you a full body workout option for the week that also uses limited equipment. If you are looking for simple workout option on a limited budget with limited space, then this may be the ideal option.

Tabata

Tabata workouts can be short or long depending on your needs. The key point to keep in mind is that this workout is HITT based. This means that you are working on a specific area of the body, like your arms, then taking a quick rest, and going to the next body area. You can do shorter reps and shorter rests with Tabata workouts. This can shorten the entire workout while still giving you a full body, or partial body, option that works in under 30 minutes. This workout is also one that requires limited to no equipment, which makes it easier to start and finish since you don't have clean-up time or set-up time to consider.

Sectional Body Challenges

You can take on 30 day challenges that are done in less than 30 minutes. Each challenge is designed to help you focus on a particular issue with your body or a particular goal. For example, you can focus on squats or HITT training. The key idea is that you only do the challenge for 30 days and you keep it under 30 minutes. What is ideal about this type of workout plan is the ability to pick challenges that work with your needs, time constraints, goals, and budget.

Spinning

Spinning classes do require one major piece of equipment, a spinning bike. However, this type of workout is high intensity and can get your cardio in while burning the maximum amount of calories available. The key point with this workout is to remember you can do it at home if you have the equipment or you can do it in a gym. It all depends on which one works best for you.

One way you can maximize these workouts is to swap them out or revolve them. Use a different workout each day to keep your body active and to keep yourself from getting into a rut with your exercise. After a few weeks or a few months, change up the intensity or the workout plan to give yourself even more benefit in under 30 minutes.

Workouts You Can Do From the Couch

If you have had a surgery or you are immobile due to weight issues or health issues, then you may think working out is outside of your reach. The truth is, there are a number of workouts you can do from the couch that can get your cardio up, help with physical therapy, and that can even help you drop weight so you can become mobile again. Here are a few of those workouts, what you need to know about each one, and how they can benefit you.

Arm Weight Lifting

One of the easiest workouts you can do from the couch is an arm weight lifting workout. This workout uses small weights and has you doing arm lifts, crunches, and a variety of other arm workouts. Though this won't work your legs, it will give you assistance with upper body and arm strength that you may not normally have. This is ideal if you are bed or couch bound and your focus needs to be on upper body and arm strength. It also uses very little equipment which can be kept by the couch easily.

Couch Dips

If you are able to move around enough, you can do couch dips. This is great if you are confined to the sofa because of a sick child or because you have to stay in the room for whatever reason. It is also something that is ideal for movie night. Just slide off the couch a bit and use the edge of the couch as your weight bench. Do your arm dips slowly while keeping your ankles crossed. You can do these alongside of other workouts

to workout your core and your upper body.

Crunches

You may not think of crunches when you think of couch bound workouts. The truth is you can get in a great core workout with your couch easily. Just move your body to the edge of the couch, but stay safe, Lean back and begin bringing your legs up and hold it at your core. You can then do crunches without relaxing and keeping your core active. This can be immensely beneficial if you are trying to work your core and you combine it with your arm lifting and couch dips.

You can also combine these workouts, make slight adjustments, and change the workouts when you start to see a decline in results. As you become more mobile from either weight loss or healing you will find that these workouts can be a gateway into other options you may not have considered. Try to view this as a stepping stone instead of a sole option.

Body Awareness

Yoga provides you with the ability to have increased body awareness. This increased body awareness lets you notice if you have strains in parts of your body you would not have normally noticed. You can also notice if you have increased inflammation in areas or if you just simply are having pain that you should not have. Body awareness is an ideal reason to add yoga and pilates to your workout plan and routine.

Meditation

Yoga and pilates also brings in mediation to your daily workout and workout plan. This can help you handle stress easily and help you work through problems and issues that you normally would not think of during your normal workout. Overall, this can be a huge benefit if you are overly stressed and concerned about your stress levels during your day.

By keeping these benefits in mind, you can begin to look through the large number of yoga and pilates styles to find the ones that work best for you and your lifestyle. Remember, there are many styles like Barre that combine yoga and pilates to maximize your time and efforts.

The Importance of Stretching at Home

You may have a tough time figuring out what workout may work best for you. This is a problem many people have. With busy schedules and limited time, you may not know what options will help. One thing you can do is stretching at home. If you aren't sure how this would benefit your health or health goals, consider these important key points about stretching at home.

Increased Flexibility

One of the key benefits of stretching at home is to increase your flexibility. This is vital if you are doing other workouts or fitness plans. For example, if you are working towards a 5k as a goal then the increased flexibility will help with your running. It can help increase your strides and you may find that it helps your muscles feel more energized and less

stiff. This benefit also helps with yoga and other health and fitness aspects.

Reduced Injuries

Stretching at home is important for reducing injuries as well. If your muscles are tight and not used to flexing then you may have issues of them locking up or being in pain during workouts. This can lead to strains and pulls or even tears in your muscles. The stretching, especially on a routine, can help you reduce these injuries and keep things running smoothly. This is an ideal important benefit for yoga practitioners or runners.

Increased Preparedness

If you plan on doing short workouts during your day then you may want to keep this in mind. Stretching at home can help you take those workouts during your work day a little easier. For example, you will prepare your muscles for lunchtime walks, runs, or stair climbing. Though you should be stretching before you do the workouts as well, you may not be able to get a full stretch in. This means you will have the full stretch and increased preparedness for the workout ahead.

Reduced Inflammation

Inflammation is a huge issue for most people who are starting a workout plan or getting ready to workout. If you want to reduce inflammation changes then you want to stretch at home. Stretching works the muscles and helps reduce the chance of swelling and inflammation due to tight muscles and related issues. It also increases circulation which helps with reducing inflammation as well.

By keeping these points in mind you can make a stretching routine work for you throughout your day and help with any workouts you may add into your day. Keep in mind that you can add more stretches, change the stretching into yoga workouts, or work your stretching around the benefits it offers.

The Power of Kettlebell Workouts

You are facing a health issue. You have a large amount of weight to drop, limited time, and limited money to spend on equipment. You need something that will work for an at-home workout and give you the results you need in all aspects. One way to consider is using kettlebell workouts. There are many benefits to consider and the results may surprise you.

Flexibility of Change

One of the reasons that people turn to kettlebell workouts is for the flexibility of change in the workouts. Let's face it. After a few weeks or months of the same old workout, you get bored. This may mean that you ditch the workout all together and try to find something else to fill that void. With kettlebell workouts you can change the workout, the intensity, do interval training, and change the weight and focus. The possibilities are literally endless with this option.

Circuit Options

For some people, circuit training is the ideal. It allows you to focus on several areas of the body without focusing too much on one area or causing injury to one area. You may be avoiding kettlebell because of the lack of circuit options you think it has. The truth is, you can create a circuit training workout with kettlebells on your entire body and get the same intensity as other circuit training options at your gym or at home.

Full Body Workouts

Kettlebell offers full body workout capability. Yes, you can focus on one area like your arms. But you can also do longer workouts and focus on your entire body. This is ideal for someone that only has a few days a week they can workout and needs to get the most out of those days and time as they possibly can.

Shorter Time Frames

Shorter time frames are another key benefit that makes kettlebell workouts full of power and an ideal option for you. You can take a one hour kettlebell workout and break it up into each part of the body. That means you can make 20 minute body focused workouts using one piece of equipment. You can fit the workout into your busy days and at the end of the week still have the benefits that the full workout would have given you.

There is a misconception that kettlebell workouts need to be combined with other workouts. The truth is, you can locate kettlebell workouts that focus on specific body areas. You can then take these workouts and rotate them throughout the week to give you what you need and to reach your goals.

What Are Tabata Workouts?

When you are looking through workout options, you may see a long list of styles you have never heard of. This may lead you to overlook some and stick with the ones you already know. Though this can be an easy option, it may have you overlooking options that would benefit you and your lifestyle. One of these options is Tabata. Tabata workouts are HITT based and can give you a full body workout in less time than other options. So, if you are limited on time, and equipment, consider these key points about Tabata workouts and why they may work best for you.

Revolving Workout and Rest

The key to Tabata workouts is the revolving workout and rest technique, sometimes called HITT intervals. The specific idea with Tabata is to workout hard for 20 seconds, rest for 10 seconds, and do this in rounds or reps. For example, you may start off with 8 or 10 rounds of workout and rest intervals. You can increase this or decrease this depending on your time constraints and the intensity level you need. This makes it ideal if you are trying to fit it into a small amount of time and need to get the maximum results from your workout.

Full Body

Tabata offers a full body workout option. You can work through your entire body and repeat the circuit several times to give you a full body workout option with no equipment. Keep in mind, though this is a benefit of the Tabata workout plan, you do need to consider your downtime from the workout if you take the full body option. You will need to take at least two days off to give you muscles a rest so you do not have injuries or strain. This can be ideal if you only have three or four days a week that you can workout or if you need something to fit in along with yoga or light workouts you are already doing.

No Equipment Necessary

One of the key things to keep in mind about Tabata workouts is the lack of equipment. You don't need special equipment to do these workouts. Your weights come from your own body weight and resistance. Your workout is all you. This makes it ideal as an at home workout option if you have limited space and a tight budget. It is also ideal for traveling since you don't have to carry equipment with you and could use only a yoga mat or exercise mat for comfort.

30 Day Metabolism Boosting Workouts

If you are interested in the Tabata workout, consider trying it for a few weeks and seeing what effect it has on your workout routine and body goals. Remember, you can change the intervals to increase intensity as well.

Why You Should Consider At-Home Barre Fitness

Barre fitness is something you may see advertised in local papers, online, or at the local gym. It is a workout that combines ballet poses with yoga and pilates. The goal of barre is to give you flexibility, range of movement, and weight based calorie burning. If you are new to barre fitness, you may also be surprised to find out that you can do it at home. Here are some things to consider about at home barre fitness and why it may work for you.

Multiple Benefits

One of the reasons to consider barre fitness as your at-home workout solution is based on the multiple health benefits the workout offers. It is a true all-in-one workout, so you aren't having to switch up workouts and have different equipment for each one. The results of ongoing barre fitness are better posture, increased weight loss, cardio, flexibility, and core workouts. This means that you can get a full body workout. Think of barre as a way to mix weight training workouts, intense cardio workouts, core workouts, and yoga all in one option. This helps reduce the time you are working out while still giving you maximum benefits.

Portable Equipment

The equipment for barre workouts can be portable. There is a misconception that barre means you have to put a ballet bar in your home, find a space for it, and leave it up all the time. The truth is there are companies that create barre equipment that can be folded, put up, and kept hidden away. This makes it ideal for at-home workouts in small spaces or in rental properties where you can't drill holes in the walls or add more permanent equipment options.

Small Space Requirements

If you are looking for a workout that requires a small amount of space, then barre may be ideal. You only need enough room to use the bar and stretch. You do not need a full workout room, an entirely devoted room, or even a large living room. In fact, there are some people with small apartments and kitchens that use their kitchen space and their

30 Day Metabolism Boosting Workouts

sink as the barre. Even bathrooms can be used if they are set up properly.

By keeping these key points in mind, you can start your own barre fitness home gym. You can also adjust the workout to your needs and get the workout that works best for you.

How Cardio Could Be Sabotaging Your Weight Loss Efforts

Jogging is the most traditional exercise for people intending to lose weight. But there are many other choices in the same vein: swimming, football, cycling, Zumba... A whole host of aerobic cardio exercises to help you shed the pounds. And every year there are new ones, new brands and types of exercise. The principle is simple: just get moving, and stay moving, for half an hour to two hours, five to seven days a week, and you will burn enough calories to lose weight.

However, this approach is seriously flawed. For starters, cardio is not the best way of burning calories. Cardio only burns a certain number of calories per step or arm movement. Which means that the only way you can burn more calories per hour is by moving faster. And new exercise will burn more calories than exercise you are used to, because for new exercise you are growing new muscles, stronger tendons, and more nerve endings. Once you are used to it, you will only burn the bare minimum.

Secondly, burning fat is only part of the journey. To have a well-rounded figure and level of fitness, you need to grow muscle too. Muscle tightens your skin, making your figure better rounded, lifting your butt and arms to prevent sag, and generally making you firmer. And muscle gives shape to the body by plumping out the butt and legs, and shaping the back. This balances your figure and makes you look more youthful by adding shape and athleticism. Many women fear growing too bulky if they grow muscle, but in reality we all need some muscle to look and feel good, and for women it is so hard to grow muscle, you can stop long before you get too strong.

Finally, if you want to ensure that your weight loss is sustainable and that you can avoid setbacks even if you are stopped from exercising, and eat a balanced diet later on without gaining weight, your metabolism has to increase. Muscle burns twice as many calories per pound as fat, and if you have more muscle, every time you move you will burn more calories because more muscle fibers are moving. This means that the number of calories you burn without even exercising goes up, so you can eat more food whatever you do.

In essence, it is vital that you add something which provides resistance training to help build your muscles up. A good start is always bodyweight exercises. This is especially the case if you have never done any muscle building exercises before, as you will need practice. Situps, squats, lunges, pushups, planks, and other common bodyweight exercises are all you need, no need to worry about doing anything new or special yet. Just add in half an hour of bodyweight exercises twice a week at first and build yourself up enough to start using weights or another form of resistance.

After bodyweight exercises you need to progress onto something else, such as resistance band training, free weights, or exercise machines, to add an extra level of challenge. This is because, as mentioned earlier, when we get used to exercise it burns fewer calories. And you will get used to bodyweight exercises very fast, so it is essential to start adding some resistance training in as soon as you can. Weights of all kinds are

30 Day Metabolism Boosting Workouts

a great choice for this because they allow you to increase your resistance every time you get used to it, which will keep your calorie burning high. Maybe once you have lost the weight you want to you can stop increasing the weights you lift and focus on staying active, but until then you want to increase the amount of weight you are lifting. Some women just lift light weights more often in an effort to avoid getting big, but that is actually what bodybuilders do! If you want lean, strong muscles, without bulk, it is best to lift heavier weights fewer times.

Finally, please bear in mind that if you are growing muscle you will need more fuel to grow it with. You will need a few more calories and protein, especially if you're losing weight too fast. And you may need to supplement glucosamine and other micronutrients to keep your body strong and able to take the strain.



Lose Weight with Walking

When we work on losing weight we can often focus too much on the big things we are doing. Cutting back calories, hitting the gym a few times a week, choosing the healthy option, skipping drinks... All these things are, of course, very important. But the little things we can do around the side really do add up, and often they are easier than the big changes.

Take for example walking. Walking is something we don't really think of as an activity because we do it every day. Even if you are a wheelchair user, you probably manually roll and move yourself a lot of the day. Getting from A to B just doesn't usually come to mind when we think about of activity to do. But, in reality, everyday activity is the best sort of activity for weight loss. Anything you do every day will become a part of your routine much more easily than things which you only do a few times a week. And by increasing your everyday activity you increase your everyday calories burned, with very little effort.

Walking, or using your manual wheelchair, doesn't have to be something you start as exercise, it can just be small changes. Take the stairs or ramp instead of the elevator. Skip the car when going to work or school. If you live too far, try and take public transport, as getting to and from train stations and bus stops will add some extra walking to your day. You can also go shopping more locally with a backpack, to increase the amount of time you spend walking or in a manual wheelchair.

You can also increase your walking time by doing something you might have learned not to do: dawdling. Spending more time browsing in the grocery store, taking the longer route home, and going window shopping are all things people do for a bit of leisure, but they will add to the amount of time you spend walking every day with minimal effort.

If you have a dog or kids you have an amazing reason to go walking: to exercise them. Your kids or dog will not complain if you go to the park more often, or walk to the shops to get a nice little treat. They may learn to relish and expect the ritual, which means that you will have extra motivation to go out. But don't adopt a dog just so you have someone to walk with. Your life is going through enough changes as it is without adding a creature which needs all sorts of new things to integrate them into your life. When you already have a dog it is not much effort to walk them longer or more often. But if you don't have a dog it will be a lot of effort to fit them into your schedule.

Walking for the sake of walking is the final step in using walking for exercise. Many people feel they could do better with the time by jogging or lifting weights, and it is true that these activities burn more calories per minute, as they are more intense. But sometimes we cannot do them. Perhaps we are injured and recovering. Perhaps we have a chronic illness that is interfering with our ability to go to the gym. Perhaps it's our rest day but we're feeling the itch to move. At these times a long walk is ideal. Pick somewhere nice and full of greenery if you can, as being out in the open improves your mental health and immune system.

30 Day Metabolism Boosting Workouts

Finally, if you have a hard time walking outdoors, you could always consider a treadmill, elliptical, spinning, or rowing machine. And if all these are too big and expensive, a simple stepper would do the trick too. This way you can stay in motion whilst watching TV, checking emails, or chatting on the phone, keeping you fit and healthy without needing to change your schedule or leave the house.

As you can see, there are many reasons to pick up walking, or its alternatives, for weight loss, and many different ways to do it. All you need to do is find the one that works for you.



Why Sleep Is Essential For Weight Loss Success

It is a little discussed fact in today's fast-paced, do it all world, but lack of sleep can make us put on weight. When we feel tired during the day, we normally have something we need to do, so we will turn to caffeine and sugar to keep us powered through our day of work, studies, or chores. Of course, this boost will wear off quickly, resulting in us crashing and needing more caffeine or sugar to get us through the day. We're then too weak and tired to do well with our exercises, but too buzzed to rest or sleep properly at night. The cycle keeps on going and we start suffering from sleep deprivation.

Sleep deprivation builds up as something we call sleep debt. Sleep debt means that the first night you have less sleep, you don't feel too bad. The second night it gets worse. And the third night it gets worse again. And from then onwards, every night of bad sleep or restricted sleep results in even more damage to the fast growing parts of our brains. So after a few weeks you may feel as though you haven't slept in days, even though you've had the same amount of sleep you had a week ago.

When you are sleep deprived three things happen which conspire against your weight loss efforts: you eat more, you exercise less, and your metabolism crashes.

You eat more because running on limited sleep is very demanding in terms of energy. We start relying on a continual stream of quick fixes to keep us awake and focused. Caffeine and sugar are important go-tos, but people can have just as much trouble with any conventional comfort food, or even some strange foods. Whatever your craving, you are guaranteed to eat too much of it.

You exercise less because you are tired. You don't have the motivation or the alertness to go and work out. But even if you push through and hit the gym anyway, there will not be enough glucose or ketones in your blood to power you, and you will feel weak and tired as you work out. What is more, forcing yourself to exercise when you are tired makes you more likely to get injured, which will stop you exercising for even longer.

Finally, your metabolism will crash because your hormones are regulated by your sleep cycle. Ghrelin is the hormone that makes us feel hungry, and leptin is the hormone that tells us we have had enough food. But leptin is made mostly as we sleep, and ghrelin is made whenever we are struggling for quick energy. So when we are sleep deprived we have too little of our fullness hormone and too much of our hunger hormone.

Thankfully, the solution is as obvious as you would think: Just get more sleep. It may be as simple as getting an early night, or putting down that book, in many people's cases. But others among us suffer mild insomnia. For this, you first need to rule out that it is anything you are doing.

Do not drink caffeine or exercise less than five hours before bedtime, to make sure your hormones have returned to normal and you are ready to sleep. But make sure to get your exercise, as exercise encourages a hormonal balance which helps us settle into deep sleep. And don't neglect your protein intake. More protein equals more sleep, and more protein also helps you recover from your exercise, so it's win-win to have plenty of protein before bed.

Just don't eat it immediately before bed. Ideally you want to stop eating an hour before

30 Day Metabolism Boosting Workouts

going to bed, and to avoid sugary foods, junk foods, and alcohol three hours before going to bed, as these things can increase your risk of night sweats, a need to urinate, or heartburn, all of which interfere with sleep.

If you have corrected all this and you still have a hard time falling asleep, or if you are sleeping fine, but waking up feeling tired, then you need to see your doctor. You may be suffering one of many forms of insomnia, and it could be that you need help with your condition.