

10 Steps to Get the Most from Your Exercise Program Part: 9

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This article is the last in the series, How to get the most out of your exercise program. These ten steps are designed as a guideline for you to rethink and fine tune whatever your current exercise regime might be. One of my main focuses has been on avoiding injury. Injuries can create both physical and emotional setbacks that can really undermine even the best of intentions. Frequently people will engage in a new activity at 120%, even though their body is in shape at about 33%. This is where those aches and pains will begin. Sustaining an injury at the beginning of an exercise plan can be a real “bummer”. It is hard enough to get yourself motivated to begin and then having a setback at the start can be incredibly un-motivating. The other concept I touched on frequently was learning to train not just for pretty muscles, but also for functional strength. It is great to look good, but it is even better to know that when you lift your child out of the car at that odd angle, your body will have the strength and muscle memory to perform that task with ease. I would like to review the first 9 steps.

Step#1: Create an exercise program and document your progress

Step#2: Never sacrifice proper form for the sake of heavier weight.

Step#3: Avoid back and knee pain by using proper form and appropriate modifications

Step# 4: To train the abs, start with the diet, and use a variety of core strengthening programs

Step#5: Train without artificial support.

Step#6: Set realistic long term goals

Step# 7: Train like an athlete

Step#8: Avoid overtraining and Pattern Overload Syndrome

Step#9: Get out of the gym

Step#10: Give your body the proper amount of fuel and water to perform at its maximum potential. There is a multitude of information out in the fitness world as to what constitutes proper hydration. Many of these studies are done on high-level athletes. Clearly a football player is going to have different nutritional and hydration needs than the average person at the gym. With so much information being tossed around, this can be a difficult subject to conquer. This is where common sense should be the rule. First lets address fueling the body, by reviewing the basic physiology of the digestion system. When food enters the

stomach, it takes approximately 1 to 2 hours for digestion to occur. At this time the body is sending blood and other resources to the muscle system of the digestive track. Therefore, it makes sense that if your body is sending fuel to the muscles of the digestive system, it cannot adequately supply the same degree of fuel to your bulging bicep. That is why it is best to wait those 1 to 2 hours after eating to exercise. Then your body can give its full attention to your exercising muscle. Secondly is the subject of hydration. It is very important to make sure you are properly hydrated before your workout. Muscles need water to function, so common sense dictates proper hydration before you start exercising. This is no different than putting gas in your car. If you are going on a long trip, you check the oil and fuel up your car before you begin driving. Drinking water throughout your exercise program will help counter-act against fluids lost, during your training session. Being aware of your thirst can be used as an indicator of how much water your body needs.

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