



**THE FUNDAMENTALS OF INCREASING
CARDIOVASCULAR AND MUSCULAR
ENDURANCE FOR OPTIMUM PERFORMANCE**

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION
TO EFFECTIVE
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Being healthy and fit means something different to everyone. Your personal health goals are contextualized by your environment, your genetic makeup, your family life, your job, your geography and countless other considerations. Welcome to Recruit Ready Fitness, where we work to create a fitness regimen that fits your individual, unique and specific needs, and tailor a system to your ambitions and goals.

We created Recruit Ready Fitness to assist individuals in pursuing their goals and set themselves up for their best chance at success. To that end, we have created this guide to help you understand what it takes to be successful and some of the paths you can take to achieve that success.


While many of our clients are military, police, fire and rescue personnel, anyone can benefit from our services. We aim to ensure anyone who wants to can feel confident and attractive around their friends, family and out in public. We can help anyone become physically and mentally stronger and capable of taking on any challenge without worrying that their energy levels or body weight will get in the way. We want you to wear the clothes you want, look the way you want, build the necessary stamina and endurance to keep up with your kids and do it all without prohibitive pain or exhaustion.

Some of the specific topics we are going to address in this e-Book include the fundamentals of increasing cardiovascular fitness and muscular endurance as well as taking a deep dive into other aspects of healthy living like identifying effective training methods, good nutrition, appropriate recovery and more. Good fitness is a holistic proposition and achieving it will take a complete effort on your part. Luckily, we are going to provide you all the resources you need to start this journey.

Many people incorrectly think they have to work out for hours a day or starve themselves in order to see meaningful results. This is not the case, though. We are going to look at ways to achieve all of your fitness goals without extreme diets, food weighing, giving up your favorite products, cooking all day or even having to go to a public gym. Recruit Ready Fitness is based on the premise that anyone can achieve progress no matter how much (or little) free time they have available.

So, let's begin at the top with cardiovascular endurance. This is an important core element for healthy living and something you will need to become intimately familiar with as you begin your fitness journey.





CHAPTER 2
CARDIOVASCULAR
ENDURANCE 101



A strong, healthy cardiovascular system is vital to one's overall wellness. Good blood circulation is foundational for the rest of the body's functionality and its benefits extend beyond any athletic or professional considerations. Building endurance here is an important part to improving your overall health and it is an absolutely critical component to any fitness regimen you are considering commencing.

Cardiovascular endurance is, naturally, a two-part proposition. Let's break down both of those ideas down before we go any farther. First, let's consider exactly what we mean by "endurance" before looking more specifically at the cardiovascular system itself. This is a word that gets used in a lot of contexts, but when it comes to working out it has a some very specific implications. Breaking Muscle offers a helpful description of the term in this context.

<https://bit.ly/33NS78L>

“Endurance is the result of being able to prolong fatigue from repeating a technique or skill over a long span of time,” reads information from the educational resource. “Be it running, swimming, biking, hiking, climbing, or any number of activities, when you have to repeat the activity consistently over a long span of time, your body and energy systems require a level of endurance to perform at the best level they can.”

Endurance, broadly speaking, is one of the many areas that we are going to work toward improving as we progress through this e-Book. Whatever it is that you are planning on doing, you are going to want to be able to do it for as long as required. This is true for both fitness purposes as well as other work-life contexts. Building stamina is, simply put, an extremely practical endeavor.



Even those individuals who are not elite athletes or physically competitive can benefit from improved cardiovascular endurance. Making gains here will not only lead you to feel better as you go about your day-to-day activities, but it may also lead you become motivated to try new activities and take on new challenges you might not have otherwise considered.

So, not that we’ve knocked out the back end of cardiovascular endurance, let’s hammer down the cardio portion. The cardiovascular system is a complex entity and understanding its fundamental function will allow you to better track your successes and gauge your progress.

THE CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM AT A GLANCE

According to information from Innerbody Research, the cardiovascular system includes the heart, blood vessels and the body’s blood—approximately 5 liters. (<https://bit.ly/2JznKfo>)

“Responsible for transporting oxygen, nutrients, hormones, and cellular waste products throughout the body, the cardiovascular system is powered by the body’s hardest-working organ — the heart, which is only about the size of a closed fist,” reads information from the online health resource. “Even at rest, the average heart easily pumps over 5 liters of blood throughout the body every minute.”

So, what can we do to strengthen and protect this important part of our body? Cardio workouts are an important part of our overall fitness plan and must be attended to just like our strength conditioning.

Verywell Fit notes a balanced cardiovascular workout equally addresses “frequency, intensity and duration” considerations. (<https://bit.ly/33KUyZy>). A proper cardio workout involves a warm-up leading into a “target intensity” segment and then closes with a cool down. It may also be helpful to stretch targeted muscles groups ahead of hitting your target intensity period.

Some examples of common cardio workouts, per the fitness resources include:

- > Brisk walking
- > Running
- > Cycling
- > Swimming
- > Rowing
- > Cross-country skiing
- > Using a treadmill
- > Using an elliptical
- > Using a stationary bike
- > Using a stepping machine



It’s important to note that cardiovascular exercise can be done nearly anywhere. You can very likely accomplish many of these exercises near your home or in a local park and you most certainly do not need a gym to work the cardiovascular system. Hiking and biking trails are a great way to get this type of exercise as they often have various degrees of difficulty and workouts can be tailored to skill level and available time of the individual working out.

While strength-centric workouts like lifting weights are not normally included in this exercise group, you can use them to improve cardiovascular health, too, reads information from Verywell Fit.

“You can structure certain weightlifting workouts to raise your heart rate and gain a cardio benefit,” reads information from Verwell Fit. “For example, a superset workout provides little rest in between exercises. As a result, your heart rate stays elevated throughout a series of complex exercises.”

According to information from the American College of Sports Medicine cited by Verywell Fit, cardiovascular exercise is recommended between three and five days a week. They recommend a five- to ten-minute, low-intensity warmup doing whatever it is you will be doing for your workout. For example, if you are planning to go for a run, start out jogging. Aim for 20 minutes to 60 minutes once you hit your “target heart rate zone” outside of any warm up and cool down time. At this pace, your body begins to burn stored fat and work through available glycogen energy.

There are lots of ways to measure your heart rate, but if you can swing it, there are a number of devices that can fairly accurately measure it should you decide you want to purchase one.

SPOTLIGHT ON TECHNOLOGY

Healthline offers a few suggestions, including the highly rated Instant Heart Rate app. (<https://bit.ly/3gjVpWe>) According to information from Healthline, this app uses a smartphone’s camera lens to measure your heart rate and is a favorite among cardiologists and researchers. You can take the test sitting down to create a pulse graph or you can use its StandUp test to gauge fatigue. It will also record beats-per-minute and allow you to track your activities should you want a little more information about your workout.

As with any type of exercise, the more you engage in an activity the easier it will become. For this reason, it is helpful to challenge your limits and reject complacency. As noted above, frequency, intensity and duration must all be accounted for as you progress through your workouts, so you are going to want to test the limits of each of them. Be mindful, though, that you must periodically give yourself a breather in between these workouts.

“To give your body time to build and repair muscles, alternate intense or long cardio exercise sessions with a day of rest or easy exercise. An ‘easy day’ might mean a slower walk, stretching, or yoga,” notes Verywell Fit.

Also, remember, form is important. Whatever you are doing, be sure you are doing it properly before increasing duration or intensity. Runner’s World notes that, for example, proper running form requires each part of your body to be working in sync. Running is much more than just moving your legs and feet, they say. (<https://bit.ly/3gfbpj8>)

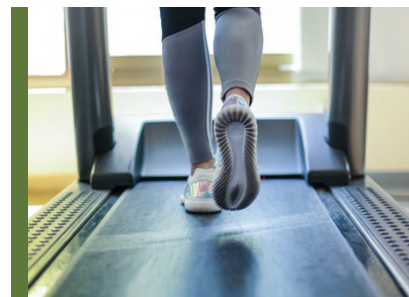
“You might think running is all about your lower body, but your run technique needs to be dialed in from the top down. That said, don’t look at your feet,” reads information from Runner’s World.


Your shoulders should be opened, arms should be at a 90-degree angle moving from your hip to chin, your hands relaxed, your torso generating torque and your hips leaning into your run, they state. Further, your knee should line up with the center of your foot, so when the foot hits ground it is directly underneath the knee. Your shin should be perpendicular, or as close to perpendicular as possible, when your foot strikes the ground.

“There’s no right or wrong way for your feet to hit the ground, as long as you’re actually using them to push off (instead of just lifting them). That said, the idea is to aim to hit the road with the ball of your foot,” adds the advice column.

Finally, Verywell Fit suggests adding duration—with proper form and posture, of course—before increasing workout intensity. For example, if you are walking, increase the time you walk each week until you get to 60 minutes of good posture and form. Then, once comfortable with that time, add hills and speed to increase intensity.

We will discuss some more specific cardiovascular workouts later in the e-Book. For now, let’s move on to some cursory muscular endurance considerations and how they factor into your overall wellness profile. In the next chapter, we will go over some of the basics of how this complementary system works alongside the above-mentioned system and touch upon some ways to synergize your progress.





CHAPTER 3
MUSCULAR
ENDURANCE
FUNDAMENTALS



Muscular endurance is the companion to cardiovascular endurance, and as we saw above, they can be improved upon, at times, in tandem. First, we are going to take a closer look into how muscular endurance works and its role in your overall fitness goals.

Muscular endurance gains are equally important as those with respect to oxygen usage and consumption. To that end, strength training, like cardiovascular training, has an important place in the larger wellness picture. Let's check back in with Breaking Muscle as they lay out the important benefits of strength training with respect to endurance. (<https://bit.ly/37DCNfX>)

"Strength training brings a plethora of benefits to the athlete, fortifying the joints and the connective tissue, increasing the capacity to generate power, and eliciting balance and equilibrium of the body's muscle structure," they state.

As such, effective endurance training generally involves using the “higher intensity, shorter intervals” approach, which is colloquially known as interval training or high-intensity interval training, reads information from Breaking Muscle. This type of training is especially useful to those who are competing physically.

Specifically, muscular endurance comes in handy when a competitor is faced with an unfamiliar venue, they note. Notably, exceptional muscular endurance comes in handy when an athlete or competitor is thrust into unfamiliar terrain. In these circumstances, competitors must be able to appropriately engage with challenges and activities that fall outside simply achieving consistent pacing over lengthy periods in a more controlled setting.

So, how can we do this? Naturally, the best thing to do is to ...

DO YOUR HOMEWORK AND MAKE A PLAN

You always need a plan. And, every good plan is predicated on good data. As such, let’s look at exactly what we mean when we say “muscular endurance” so we can start thinking about ways to improve upon it.

Muscular Endurance, according to fitness resource At Health, is the “ability of a muscle, or a group of muscles, to sustain repeated contractions or to continue applying force against a fixed object.” (<https://bit.ly/37Meeh4>)

For example, they point out pushups are frequently used as a cursory way to test shoulder and arm muscle endurance.

To that end, At Health recommends three 30-minute muscular endurance engagements per week, including doing exercises like pushups, in order to build that endurance. They also advocate for sit-ups and weight training for each major muscle group as a way to further enhance muscular endurance.

Strength sessions are most effective, though, by engaging in heavy lifting, notes Breaking Muscle. As such, they suggest compound movements like bench press, squats, overhead press and deadlift. These can be used as a way to prevent injury, too, they say, as the body undergoes the normal, continuous repetitive impacts associated with training in general.

Further, outside of the classic compound exercises mentioned above, there are a number of other lifts that can also be useful in this way.

“Incorporating weighted carries, single leg, single arm, and other movements requiring movement across all planes of motion (front to back, side to side, and twisting) will only benefit the athlete when it comes time to perform,” reads information from Breaking Muscle. “When the body is able to effectively reproduce technique at an optimum level through cadence, stride, or stroke rate, the athlete that is able to maintain that optimal technique with greater production of power per rep and will have the advantage.”

TOP COMPOUND EXERCISES FROM OPENFIT

Assuming no major injuries or restrictions, “compound exercises should form the foundation [of] your strength training workouts,” says Open fit. Here is a list of some of their favorite exercises that will help you “maximize muscle growth from head-to-toe.” (<https://bit.ly/36SPQLv>) They call for employing:

- > Dumbbell Bench Press Workouts
- > Chin-ups
- > Dumbbell Deadlifts
- > Dips
- > Dumbbell Overhead Presses
- > Loaded Carry Workouts
- > Lunges



Remember, the importance of muscle endurance, strength training and compound lifting doesn’t only apply to the athlete, though. Anyone who is planning to engage in a prolonged fitness program should be sure to work toward progress in these areas as success here will reduce the risk of injury—especially in those individuals who are looking to make substantial, aggressive gains as part of their fitness routine.

Simply put, you don’t want your body parts succumbing to the detriments of repetition. As your cardiovascular health improves, and workouts become longer and more intensive, your muscle groups and their affiliated biological infrastructure must be conditioned on pace with that progress. Again, we will dig deeper into this area later in the e-Book as well. For now, though, we are going to switch gears a little bit and explore some of the ways your diet plays into your holistic fitness approach. Everything you consume is going to impact how you feel and how your workouts go. Do not take this area for granted.



CHAPTER 4
WINNING
APPROACH TO
NUTRITION



Nutrition and exercise are inherently complementary. Your diet will inform your body chemistry, energy levels and composition, while exercise leverages those factors and uses them to accomplish the physical and mental tasks required to stay healthy and productive. Good eating habits without exercise, or loads of physical activity paired with an imbalanced diet will, ultimately, have you spinning your wheels toward nowhere. Ignoring either one will be a major disservice to you and your efforts.

Cardiovascular exercise, strength conditioning and a healthy diet are the triumvirate of well-being. You must attend to each of them equally as you work toward your fitness goals. So, what does a good diet entail? This is a question that often gets a lot of different answers depending on when you ask the question, where you ask the question and who you ask the question to. There is certainly no shortage of science and opinion with respect to what constitutes good eating.

However, while diet fads come and go and competing schools of thought will endlessly debate the nuances on the perfect diet, there are still lots of areas of agreement and overlap. Let's look at some of the areas where industry experts have found some consensus and overlap.

One of the things we believe at Recruit Ready Fitness is that diet, nutrition and exercise should be, and are, accessible to anyone and everyone. You don't need a huge budget, hours and hours of prep time or to force down foods you do not enjoy in order to have a healthy diet. All you need is some discipline, common sense and a willingness to make small, consistent sacrifices toward a greater good.

In this chapter, we are going to go over some simple ways to pair a good diet with the above mentioned exercise regimen. Let's start first with some basics from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (CDC) A good nutritional diet, they say, consists of weight management with a broad variety of healthy meals. (<https://bit.ly/3qBspXN>)

"An eating plan that helps manage your weight includes a variety of healthy foods. Add an array of colors to your plate and think of it as eating the rainbow. Dark, leafy greens, oranges, and tomatoes—even fresh herbs—are loaded with vitamins, fiber, and minerals," reads information from the U.S. agency.

They suggest adding things like broccoli, frozen peppers, or onions into meals like breakfast omelets in order to infuse some extra nutritional value.

According to information from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015–2020, as per the CDC, a well-balanced diet includes a diverse selection of foods. They say, emphasize vegetables, fruits, whole grains and reduced fat milks. Lean meat, fish, poultry and nuts are also advisable. Generally, stick to foods low in trans-fat, saturated fat, salt, sugar and cholesterol.

Similar to the CDC in the U.S., the Australian government has developed its own eating guidelines. They published the fundamentals of their suggested diet as they are facing an obesity epidemic that is on par with that of their allies across the Pacific, reads information from WebMD. (<https://wb.md/3n1X84Q>)

According to information from the online health resources, the Total WellBeing Diet was developed by the Commonwealth Scientific Research Organization (CSIRO) in Australia. At its core, it calls for high protein intake, exercise and well-rounded meals. Per the diet's promotional materials, CSIRO also adds that foods low on the Glycemic Index are desirable when on the Total WellBeing Diet. (<https://bit.ly/36Ot07J>)

“The plan offers options for fast and sustainable weight loss and good gut health. The food is delicious. The portions are generous. The unique higher protein, low GI formula keeps you satisfied,” reads information from CSIRO.

What Foods are High on the GI?

Per information from NHS, the foods to avoid if you are looking to avoid GI are: (<https://bit.ly/37J9tET>)

- > Sugar/sugary foods
- > Soft drinks high in sugar content
- > White Bread
- > Potatoes
- > White Rice



EATING TO GAIN MUSCLES MASS

Everyone's body and health needs are different. Our genetics, metabolism, habits, allergies and body chemistry all shape how we look and feel. On top of that, we all have our own individual goals. Some of us want to achieve weight loss, while others might want to tone. Still more will be looking to build body mass.

For each person and each set of goals there is a specific diet that can help achieve those goals. Yes, much of what we already discussed is broadly applicable, but if your personal workout goal is to build muscle, you are going to need to do things slightly differently. Healthline Media has some helpful dietary tips for individuals whose primary goal is to gain mass. (<https://bit.ly/37DI3Br>)

“In order to maximize your results from the gym, you must focus on your diet, as eating the wrong foods can be detrimental to your bodybuilding goals,” reads information from Healthline.

For example, bodybuilders looking to create a particular aesthetic will actually need to increase the number of calories they take in if they are going to successfully compete.

“To do this, many bodybuilders start with an off-season followed by an in-season way of eating — referred to as a bulking and cutting phase, respectively,” reads information from Healthline. “During the bulking phase, which can last months to years, bodybuilders eat a high-calorie, protein-rich diet and lift weights intensely with the goal of building as much muscle as possible.”

Meats, dairy, seeds, nuts, legumes, beans and grains are among some of the foods specifically useful for those looking to add muscle.

During the trimming phase, the bodybuilder will then be expected to drastically alter their diet and begin strategically trimming fat while maintaining the muscle mass they gained while they were undertaking the bulking portion of their plan.

Healthline notes it is important to frequently check in on your weight and diligently track your calories. When it comes to competitive considerations, data is critical. Each measurement must be accurate, recorded and accessible.

“The easiest way to determine how many calories you need is to weigh yourself at least three times a week and record what you eat using a calorie tracking app,” reads information from Healthline. “If your weight stays the same, the daily number of calories you eat is your maintenance calories — in other words, you’re not losing or gaining weight, but maintaining it.”



SPOTLIGHT ON TECHNOLOGY

Again, Healthline offers a few suggestions for useful tech. For calorie counting, consider using the MyFitnessPal app they urge. (<https://bit.ly/2lj2BoU>)

“MyFitnessPal is one of the most popular calorie counters right now,” they note. “It tracks your weight and calculates a recommended daily calorie intake. It also contains a well-designed food diary and an exercise log.”

According to information from Healthline, the homepage of the app gives users a clear picture of the total calories they consumed for the day and how far they are from their target goal after each meal. It can also keep track of how many calories you have burned from exercising.

“If you’re using a fitness tracking device, MyFitnessPal can likely sync with it to include its data in the exercise log,” they add. “The app tracks your progress towards your goals and offers chat forums with fellow users. The forums include conversations, recipes, tips and personal success stories.”

The app also has an extensive nutritional database of more than 5 million foods. Further, you can use the app to scan the barcode of a food product and instantly input that product’s nutritional value.

Specifically, bodybuilders looking to develop the ideal physique will usually need to increase their normal calorie intake by approximately 15% during the bulking phase. As you transition from the bulking segment of your journey into the cutting portion, you should invert the 15% gain, suggests Healthline, and cut 15% from your maintenance intake. During this process, it is likely you will have to make adjustments each month as your weight fluctuates.

“Increase your calories as you gain weight in the bulking phase and decrease your calories as you lose weight in the cutting phase for continued progression,” they add.

It is important to remember that it is inadvisable to go more than 1% in either direction in a given week. Much like non-competitive trainees, you never want to go too fast with any workout program or dietary changes. Moderation and pacing are the principle allies of any trainee.

- > “30–35% of your calories from protein”
- > “55–60% of your calories from carbs”
- > “15–20% of your calories from fat”

For those looking solely at competitive strengthening, consider asking about how our pro trainers can help you develop a dietary and workout program specifically tailored to your needs at <https://bit.ly/2JUZjIW>

Good Health Doesn't Mean Giving Up What You Love-As we mentioned earlier, eating well does not mean giving up the foods you love so long as they are consumed in moderation. In fact, some foods that fall outside traditional diet guidelines can be great rewards for your hard work and can be useful motivators for someone looking to lose weight or improve their overall health.

The CDC offers some tips for individuals looking to indulge from time to time. One simple tip is to take the types of “comfort foods” outside the list of traditionally healthy meals and continue to eat them; just do it less frequently.

“If you normally eat these foods every day, cut back to once a week or once a month,” they suggest. “Eat smaller amounts. If your favorite higher-calorie food is a chocolate bar, have a smaller size or only half a bar.”


There are also low-calorie versions of many foods that can be adequate substitutes for your favorite meals and treats. And, for those cooking up their own guilty pleasures, consider using healthier ingredients during meal prep.

“For example, if your macaroni and cheese recipe includes whole milk, butter, and full-fat cheese, try remaking it with non-fat milk, less butter, low-fat cheese, fresh spinach and tomatoes. Just remember to not increase your portion size,” they note.

Again, there are tons of theories about eating right and we cannot possibly cover all the different nutritional theories circulating out there. It is highly encouraged you do a little exploring and experimenting yourself as you land on a personal diet. A lot of these dietary considerations are similar, and many of these theories are rooted in common sense. You know what makes you feel good to eat and what's going to do damage. When in doubt, stick to your gut!

Now that we have discussed the triangle of holistic health and well-being—cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance and diet—let’s dive a little deeper into how we can nurture those considerations with targeted training techniques. Even the best made plans fall apart without the proper execution.





CHAPTER 5
EFFECTIVE
TRAINING
METHODS



We packed a lot of information into the first half of this e-Book with respect to the fundamental information you need to know about developing a fitness regimen. The top half of this guide is meant to provide the building blocks needed to create and sustain a healthy lifestyle. Now, we are going to look a little closer at some of the ways you can efficiently and effectively accomplish this new, healthier way to live.

As we noted throughout the e-Book, no two trainees are the same. So, it stands to reason that everyone's training methods will be a little different. What works for one person might not work for another. One person's schedule might allow for two or three days of working out a week while another's schedule might call for four or five days of training. And, if you do choose to go to the gym to exercise, the distance, equipment limitations and capacity requirements of your particular gym will all come into play.

One of the things we believe here at Recruit Ready Fitness is that anyone can leverage their available time and resources into a fitness program. The truth is you don't need all that much to improve your health. In fact, you very likely already have everything you need. Most things, yourself included, are potential weights. Weather permitting, the entirety of the world outside your home is a track. Even a small space in your living room can be enough to get in a good burn if you so desire.

So, as we go down the list of some common training methods, keep in mind that much of what we are going to discuss can be modified to fit whatever your schedule and budget might be. Wellness is accessible; you need only to want to do it!

FOUR COMMON CARDIOVASCULAR TRAINING METHODS FROM UPPER HAND

- In this section we will touch upon a number of training methods aimed primarily at improving cardiovascular health. These methods are:

- > Aerobic Training
- > Circuit Training
- > Interval Training
- > Flexibility Training



According to information from Upper Hand, **aerobic training** methods are among some of the most commonly known and utilized when it comes to crushing calories. (<https://bit.ly/37lzFzd>) Typically, people refer to this type of training simply as generic "cardio." The aim of this type of training program is, generally, to build endurance and burn calories. Biking, swimming and running are among the many ways this can be accomplished, they note.

"This training method is good for weight loss and athlete training," reads information from Upper Hand. "Also, many find it more relaxing than other forms of training, with lots of aerobic training done outdoors."

According to Upper Hand, aerobic training can be further divided into two subcategories. The first is called “continuous training.” This method calls for low-intensity activities spread over long periods of time with little rest. For example, running a consistent speed over long distances is a simple form of this strategy.

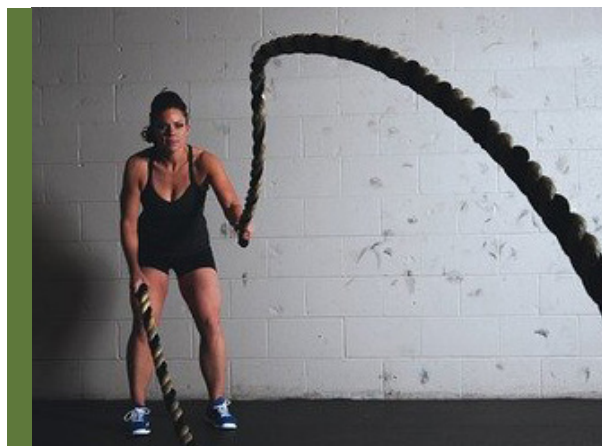
The other method is called “fartlek training.” With this type of training, intensity and speed are varied in order to target anaerobic and aerobic areas, reads information from the training method guide.

“A person using the fartlek method would mix sprinting, jogging, and walking, or they could alter terrain and elevation during runs to work different muscle groups,” reads information from Upper Hand. “People like fartlek training because it’s engaging and mimics the flow of athletic competitions.”

On the other hand, **circuit training** calls for even more variation in activities. This method calls for the alternation of a number of different exercises that target multiple muscle groups. In this method, there is less rest, too.

The circuit training strategy requires a single muscle group to be worked out while the others are permitted to rest. “Circuit training is beneficial for those looking for full body workouts that waste little time,” adds Upper Hand.

Interval training has grown in popularity recently as “High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)” shops have cropped up to promote them. This type of training is less about “what you’re doing,” and more about the “intensity of what you’re doing.”



One example Upper Hand cites is engaging for an interval period of 45 seconds that includes 30 seconds of doing burpees—those are basically push-ups followed by a jump—and then taking a 15-second rest period.

“The main benefits of interval training are weight loss, muscle definition, and increased metabolism,” they say.

The last type of training exercise covered by Upper Hand is **flexibility training**. This type of training is important, they say, for every active individual. As such, it should be incorporated into whatever fitness plan you decide to use, they suggest.

Upper Hand notes that for athletes, this type of training is important for injury prevention. And, an added benefit of flexibility training is that many of its forms can also be peaceful and relaxing.

“Structured practices like yoga and pilates are increasingly popular. Stretching and flexibility training help increase mobility and range of motion, as well as improving balance and posture,” reads information from Upper Hand.

Flexibility training is often overlooked and underutilized. Perhaps, this is because losing weight and gaining muscle have obvious aesthetic appeal; you can’t really “see” flexibility in most contexts. Moreover, you don’t really hear too much about people showing off how far down their leg they can touch, either. As such, it’s basically invisible. However, that doesn’t mean it is not important.

While you might not see the benefits of flexibility immediately, they will resonate throughout your entire workout regimen and, quite frankly, the rest of your day-to-day activities will be easier as well. Be sure to work in flexibility training no matter what your personal fitness goals might be and you will notice a substantial difference in how you feel.

As you can see, each of the above stated methods will help you make progress in different ways. In many instances, you might find that they are different paths to the same place. Burning calories one way or another is still, ultimately, burning calories. However, you might find one path more effective or efficient. You might find one more enjoyable. It is much easier to stay motivated when you like what you are doing. At the end of the day, don’t fall prey to pressure, fad or fear of judgement; do what works for you.

GREATIST TIPS FOR TRAINING TO BUILD MUSCLE

Next, let's look at some training methods geared more toward strength and muscle building. This type of training calls for a significantly different approach than cardiovascular training and, in some cases, may be more reliant on equipment and accessories.

Weightlifting is by no means the only way to build strength and muscular endurance, however, there are a lot of advantages to using moderate and heavy weights to when it comes to building muscle. If you do plan on using a gym, or have a set of free weights, consider some of these pro tips as you develop your lifting plan. Greatist has some excellent takes on how to make the most of your strength training and how to push yourself outside of your comfort zone in order to achieve better results. (<https://bit.ly/3mQihPA>)

Greatist says **training to failure**, which admittedly sounds like a bad a thing, can often to be extremely useful when done properly. This technique calls for lifting beyond your comfort zone and pushing yourself to struggle with a weight you cannot lift. In essence, you are pushing yourself towards failure.

"While training to failure — lifting until the body can't do a single more rep — recruits more muscle and triggers the body to release more strength-building hormones, it's most effective if a very high percentage of a one rep max can be performed," reads information from Greatist.

It is also important to note that these sets can be more dangerous if they are done too frequently or without the benefit of a spotter to assist you once you hit your limit. As such, be especially careful when training to failure, they urge.

They also recommend engaging in **asupersetin** order to take your workout to the next level. The idea behind the superset is to push your muscles by pairing exercise with another activity that focuses on a different part of your body. Some examples they cite are chest and back and triceps and biceps.

"Research suggests lifting in supersets can be just as effective as normal sets at building strength while adding an additional cardio component," reads information from the workout site. "Or for added punch, do similar body parts — shoulders and shoulders, legs and legs — for a serious burn."

Another lifting strategy they recommend is the **drop set**. These sets work best when doing exercises like bench press or squats. Basically, any exercise that involves moving around weights can work for utilizing the drop set technique.

“You have performed ten bench presses and couldn’t possibly do eleven. Re-rack the weight and have a partner take off ten pounds or so, then perform as many reps as possible at that new weight,” reads information from Greatist. “It’s even easier to use dumbbells and simply move to smaller and smaller bells, set to set. Three total drop sets is the norm, do this to infinity and beyond and you may be way too sore the next day.”

Another interesting tactic promulgated by Greatist is to weight train by leveraging resistance both from the weight you are lifting and against gravity. Working out in this manner is known as employing **negative sets**. For example, if you are doing a pull up, the motion you make toward the bar is known as “concentric movement.” This is naturally difficult. In contrast, as you return to the ground, you then make an “eccentric movement.” Under normal circumstances, this should be much easier. Adding resistance during this downward motion is what constitutes the negative element of the exercise.

“Resisting the pull of gravity during the negative porting of the movement taxes the muscles in a different way,” reads the tip guide. “At the end of a long set, switch to just performing negatives (with a partner’s help on the way up) or work towards getting those difficult bodyweight movements (like a pull up or dip) by only performing the negative of the movement.”

These negative sets can be difficult, but they are valuable as you work complementary muscles and exercise areas of your body that do not normally get worked out. Work underutilized muscles groups regularly and you will notice the impacts in short order. These workouts have lasting impacts and mixing them into your normal workout activities can help support the holistic health and wellness we are aiming for.

Lastly, consider the **rest-pause set** workout technique. Rest in an important part of working out. As Greatist notes, “the body is an amazing machine, with the right amount of rest it can surprise us with its tenacity.”

This strategy involves taking weight close to your three-to-five rep max and doing as many reps with that weight as you can. Then, rerack the weight and take a break. Rest for anywhere between ten seconds and 15 seconds and as soon as you are ready, hit it again.

“Make sure to keep correct form, and go/rest until you can’t budge the bar. Make sure to only do this once,” they advise.

These are but a sliver of the numerous workout techniques available for individuals looking to make cardiovascular and muscular improvements. However, these techniques represent a broad swatch of industry-approved strategies that can help you kick your workouts up a notch. Try some of these and see how it feels. Mix it up. There’s nothing wrong with trial and error. If something isn’t working, move on to something else. There is no shortage of strategies available and you never want to saddle yourself with a workout that is not right for you.

The next chapter we are going to touch upon falls nicely in line with the concept of doing what is best for you. It’s all about your mindset as you grind out your fitness regimen day in and day out. Mindset plays an extremely important role in maintaining your health. Without discipline, will power and a willingness to meet challenges head on, your workout program is going to be limited and your progress capped. So, let’s discuss some ways to stay motivated and push through the soreness when things start getting tough.





CHAPTER 6
MINDSET FOR
PUSHING PAST
THRESHOLDS



YOUR
MINDSET
MATTERS

Working out is meant to be fulfilling and, as much as possible, enjoyable. However, it is not supposed to be easy. In fact, if it isn't a challenge, you are very likely capping your progress and preventing yourself from achieving your potential. In order to make the most of your workouts, you are going to need to push through discomfort and pain. This is normal, natural and, quite frankly, necessary.

In this chapter, we are going to talk about some strategies you can use to put yourself in the proper mindset and push yourself to achieve your goals. First, though, we will discuss the difference between “feeling the burn” and legitimate pain. The former is healthy while the latter means you could be at risk for injury.

ChoosePT offers a helpful explanation about how to differentiate productive soreness from dangerous pain, and what to do when you may have pushed yourself too far. (<https://bit.ly/36OkWDT>)

Generally, you will be sore after working out. This is a good thing, and it means you are challenging and stressing the body in a healthy and productive way. But, what about when temporary soreness turns to something lingering? When should you be concerned?

According to information from ChoosePT, soreness from working out generally means your muscles will be tender to the touch, you will be tired and you will likely be experiencing a burning sensation while exercising. You can also expect a “minimal dull, tight and achy feeling at rest.”

In contrast, aches and sharp pain while at rest or while exercising could be cause for alarm. Soreness usually dissipates in two or three days, notes the fitness resource, however, pain will linger if not properly addressed. It is also important to recognize that muscle soreness, generally, should be isolated to the muscles themselves. If you are experiencing pain in your joints, this too might be cause for alarm.

Soreness should also dissipate with stretching and movement. In some cases, it may actually worsen while inactive. More serious pain may require icing and tends to flare up when activities are resumed. Extreme pain for a week or more may require medical attention, they add.

“After activity, muscular soreness typically peaks 24-72 hours after activity. This is the result of small, safe damage to muscle fibers and is called Delayed Onset Muscular Soreness (DOMS),” explains ChoosePT. “During this time, your muscles may be tender to touch and feel tight and achy. Movement may initially be uncomfortable but moving and gently stretching your muscles will help to decrease soreness.”

IDENTIFYING YOUR LIMITS

Pain, discomfort, soreness and fatigue are all very personal considerations. Everyone has different tolerances and, moreover, not every injury is commensurate to the pain you might experience from that injury, adds ChoosePT.

“In order to make physical improvements, your body needs to be pushed to an appropriate level where gains can occur,” they add. “Each person’s body has a different activity threshold dependent upon many factors, including age, baseline strength, and participation level.

Remaining on the safe side of your threshold will result in muscular soreness. Exceeding your threshold will result in pain.”

Identifying and respecting your threshold is vital. Understanding the line between pushing past productive soreness and causing injury is critical for any trainee. Be honest about your limits and realistic in your goal setting, they suggest. Constantly self-audit, too.

It’s also important to note that as you work out, your threshold is likely to change, reads information from ChoosePT. For example, runners at a “safe threshold” of five minutes of activity might expect to get to a half hour of activity after several weeks of running.

Once you become comfortable with you limits, you can begin to push them. This is where your mental fortitude, will and work ethic will come into play. There are lots of motivational strategies people use to push themselves to keep going when things begin getting harder. Finding ones that work for you might mean the difference between success and failure.

Many trainers and trainees try to personalize and individualize their motivations. For example, some might endeavor to set a good example for others. Exemplifying hard work and sacrifice for those who might look up to you is a powerful motivator. Become a role model to others, and you will reap the benefits yourself.

For others, setting realistic, objective goals and consistently, unwaveringly hitting those goals is a helpful tactic. Set goals above what you can comfortably do but before your injury threshold. Then, work savagely toward those goals no matter how difficult. You are playing a game against yourself. Every time you set a goal and do not meet that goal, you lose. You know what you can handle. Get there every workout.

Also, think about making a mantra. Or, find a mantra that works for others and adopt it for yourself. Even simple phrases or concepts can be powerful if you buy into them. Believe in what you are doing and it will make all the difference.

Daily Burn has a great list of effective mantras and some accompanying explanations for how they have worked for others. For example, consider this one from Milan Costich, founder of PREVAIL boxing. “How we do anything is how we do everything,” (<https://bit.ly/3IOHWHc>)

It's a simple sentiment, yet it is profoundly true. Another good one comes from Jason Walsh, owner and founder of Rise Nation. He uses: "This is when change happens."

Reads his rationale: "Change lies just on the other side of feeling uncomfortable. True change really begins when things get a little bit tough and you're able to work through that. [When you push] through a final 2 to 5 reps or 10 to 20 seconds past that uncomfortable point — keep in mind, during that time your body is adapting," he told Daily Burn.

How about another simple one? Even something as apparently genetic as, "I can do this" can go a long way if you focus on it and believe in it. Take ownership of your mantra, your workout and your effort.

Ultimately, you will need to figure out what works best for you. Find a motivation that drives you and lean hard into it. Like much of what we have discussed in this e-Book, there are many ways to achieve the same results. We are all about personalization here, so finding what is best for you and homing in on what truly motivates you with laser focus is going to be the best way to achieve the results you want.

With that said, let's now explore some other ways to help stay on track and ensure you are getting the most out of your workouts. Proper motivation is a natural bridge to the next consideration in our guide: consistency.





CHAPTER 7
CONSISTENCY
IS KEY



Healthy living and fitness do not always require huge time commitments, expensive equipment and extreme diets. They do, however, rely upon consistent, regular work. You do not need to max out every day, and you do not need to disrupt the other segments of your life that also require your attention in order to stay in shape. You must simply make progress, in one form or another, every day, every week and every month. The key is to keep going.

How many stories have you heard where an individual promises to start working out for the new year only to give up on their “resolution” after a few weeks? By April, they are right back where they started. Gyms across the world love these people, and they are the reason why year-long contracts are so popular. Don’t be responsible for that free gym income! You’re better than that!

Consistency is key to healthy living. But, what's the key to consistency? Well, some of it is mindset, which we talked about above. What else can help you stay motivated, though? If you want to ensure you make consistent progress, you are going to need to set hard, objective goals. Making goals like, "I want to get stronger" are fine, but they lack the measurability of more specific goals. You want to set goals that will provide concrete targets you can work toward.

Why is this important? For one, when you begin with vague, broad goals it is harder to reward yourself for hitting key milestones. Each week, make a list of what you want to accomplish in your workout regimen and aim to check off each item as you knock them out. This will keep you motivated and it will give you something concrete to point to in your self-evaluation.

No matter what areas you are looking to improve; weight loss, strength, speed, cardio endurance or athletic performance, aim for small chunk improvements and reward each success. Even if your goal is to maintain your progress, write it down and be sure not to slip backwards. Every week you maintain your success is a week you've earned a special dinner or those new sneakers you were eyeing. Make it habit. Make it routine.

The Path elaborates on the concept of making habits (<https://bit.ly/2likR1E>). After all, habits are hard to break, even good ones.

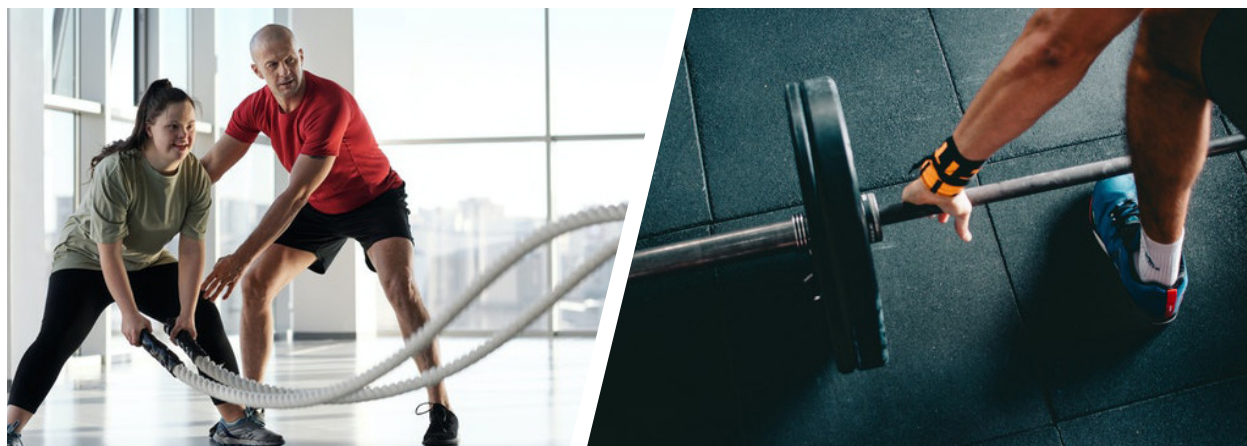
"Small habits like drinking 2 liters of water a day or eating an apple every day will remind you of the bigger habits like exercising and tracking meals," reads information from the fitness resource. "Not only that, but small healthy habits make a difference in the long run."

Another suggestion from The Path is to, quite simply, "be accountable." Accountability can be difficult when you are the one holding yourself responsible. It's all too easy to slip and cheat on yourself. Consider, they say, finding a partner to push you when you aren't pushing yourself.

"It's easy to skip workouts or eat unhealthy foods if you're not accountable to anyone. But nobody wants to disappoint their fitness partner by skipping workouts or eating unhealthy foods," reads information from The Path. "When picking a partner, make sure they're as committed as you are, you're both on the same fitness level, and you have the same schedule." Another great piece of advice from The Path is to "set rules and stick to them." Treat rules

like, well, rules. No matter how hard or how inconvenient, it is important you follow your own plan. Being consistent is entirely a matter of will. If you make a regimen and commit to it, you will be successful. If you treat it like a suggestion, the results will reflect as much.

The best part of commitment and consistency is that eventually it will become so ingrained into your day-to-day activities you won't even notice when you are executing these productive habits. It only gets easier the more you do it. This reality leads to our next and final chapter; fitness is a lifestyle choice.





CHAPTER 8
FITNESS IS
A LIFESTYLE



Perhaps you have heard this idea before. Or, perhaps you have heard it in other contexts. Lots of things can be described as a “lifestyle,” like sailing or collecting art. Too often, though, this concept is misused or misconstrued. When we talk about a lifestyle we aren’t talking about a hobby or even something you are passionate about. When we say lifestyle, we mean something that integrates into every element of your life, from sleep to diet and exercise to the choices you make as you go about your business.

Being fit doesn’t equate to merely lifting weights. Running isn’t fitness. Eating a lot of salad isn’t fitness. Fitness is holistic. It is an attitude. If you want to be healthier, you must immerse yourself in the idea of improving not one, but all the elements of fitness simultaneously.

At first, this might be difficult. There are lots of things you are going to do that are ultimately going to be out of the ordinary, especially if you have never been on this trajectory before. The good news is, though, as we pointed out above, it gets easier the more you do it.

The National Academy of Sports Fitness offers some suggestions on how you can approach health and fitness and turn seemingly disparate activities and habits into a lifestyle. (<https://bit.ly/37MeX1M>)

One important consideration, they note, is that the scope of fitness is larger than the way you look and act. Your outward appearance is a function of your overall health, not the measure of it. Yes, we all want to look great, but a healthy lifestyle involves much more than aesthetics, they argue.

“Health and fitness are about more than the way you look, the food you eat, or the weight you lift at the gym,” reads information from the academy. “When you’re truly healthy, you are in a better mood and can physically do more. You can do things like walking your dog, going hiking, or paddle boarding. Not being able to do these things can drastically impact your experiences and limit your quality of life.”

To that end, how you feel, the quality of your life, your professional focus, flexibility, agility and even your psychological state all must be accounted for as well. All of these elements stand to benefit from making healthier lifestyle choices. If you truly buy into the idea that healthiness is larger than appearance, you will find those nasty superficial thoughts and impulses that creep into our mind all too often will actually begin to fade away. In turn, you won’t feel as pressured to meet some third-party, outside ideal of what it means to be “fit.” Essentially, appearance won’t feel so important once you start doing fitness right. You will simply be taking care of you.

Another tip the academy offers is to be adaptable. Your healthy lifestyle isn’t some theoretical concept. It is rooted in reality. It must account for changing schedules, kids, jobs, stresses, vacations and much more. If things get wonky, that’s okay.

Once you build a strong foundation, you will be in better position to mitigate challenges when you get thrown off your regimen. Choosing the fitness lifestyle has lasting benefits. Moderation and balance become commonplace. You eventually learn to indulge without going too far.

“It is unrealistic to be going at 100 MPH all the time. We are all human. Life happens, stress comes and goes, and schedules can get thrown off,” reads information from the National

Academy of Sports Fitness. "You learn to enjoy life when you are on vacation and away from your gym and kitchen because you have developed the habits and skills to live a healthy lifestyle no matter where you are ...You learn to adapt instead of self-destructing when your routine gets thrown off."





CONCLUSION

This e-Book takes into consideration a large spectrum of health and wellness concepts and lays the foundation for making life-changing improvements to your exercise and diet. At its core, it is meant to highlight the variety and accessibility of exercise programs and illustrate that anyone can make changes to their health and wellness if they so choose.

There is no right way to work out. Cardiovascular and muscular endurance can be gained through a seemingly endless list of exercises and techniques. And, there are so many different types of foods that can support these workout regimes. One of the greatest challenges we face as trainees is not simply learning the myriad strategies for self-improvement available, it's picking one that works for us.

The good news is, though, if you want to get healthier, you will get healthier. Improving your health is what we are here to do, and that is why we compiled the information in this guide. It is our goal to ensure that anyone and everyone has the information, tools and resources to look and feel better.

Briefly, lets review some of the key points we touched upon in this guide.

CARDIOVASCULAR ENDURANCE:

One of the three corners of the triangle of health. Building stamina here allows us to do more for longer.

MUSCULAR ENDURANCE:

Another corner, this lets us sustain the continued application of force on an object. It is complementary to the above stated item.

NUTRITION:

The final corner in the triangle of health. Here, balance and common sense win the day. Lean meat, fruits and vegetables and lots of color will get the job done.

TRAINING METHODS:

Vary what you do, work the different parts of your body and be sure to understand how different muscle groups interact. Rest is important.

Mind your Mindset:

There is a difference between soreness and pain. Be certain to push past one and not past the other. Find a motivation that works for you, grab hold of it and do not let go.

CONSISTENCY IS KEY:

This one speaks for itself. Dedication, repetition and practice matter. Don't give up and the best parts of working out will soon become habit.

FITNESS IS A LIFESTYLE:

Good health isn't a hobby. Being fit doesn't equate to merely lifting weights. Running isn't fitness. Eating a lot of salad isn't fitness. Fitness is holistic and it is something that should permeate into every aspect of what you do.

Well, there you have it. Thanks for taking the time to work through this e-Book. We hope you enjoyed reading it as much as we enjoyed putting it together. However, the information provided here is just the beginning of your new lifestyle. It is our sincere hope that the information provided here gives you the motivation and information needed to get started on your new health journey, but don't stop here!

Whatever you want is there for the taking. Get out there and start making a plan! And, please be sure to visit <https://www.recruitreadyfitness.com/> for tons more helpful information and links to our many offerings and services. There is much to do and learn!

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