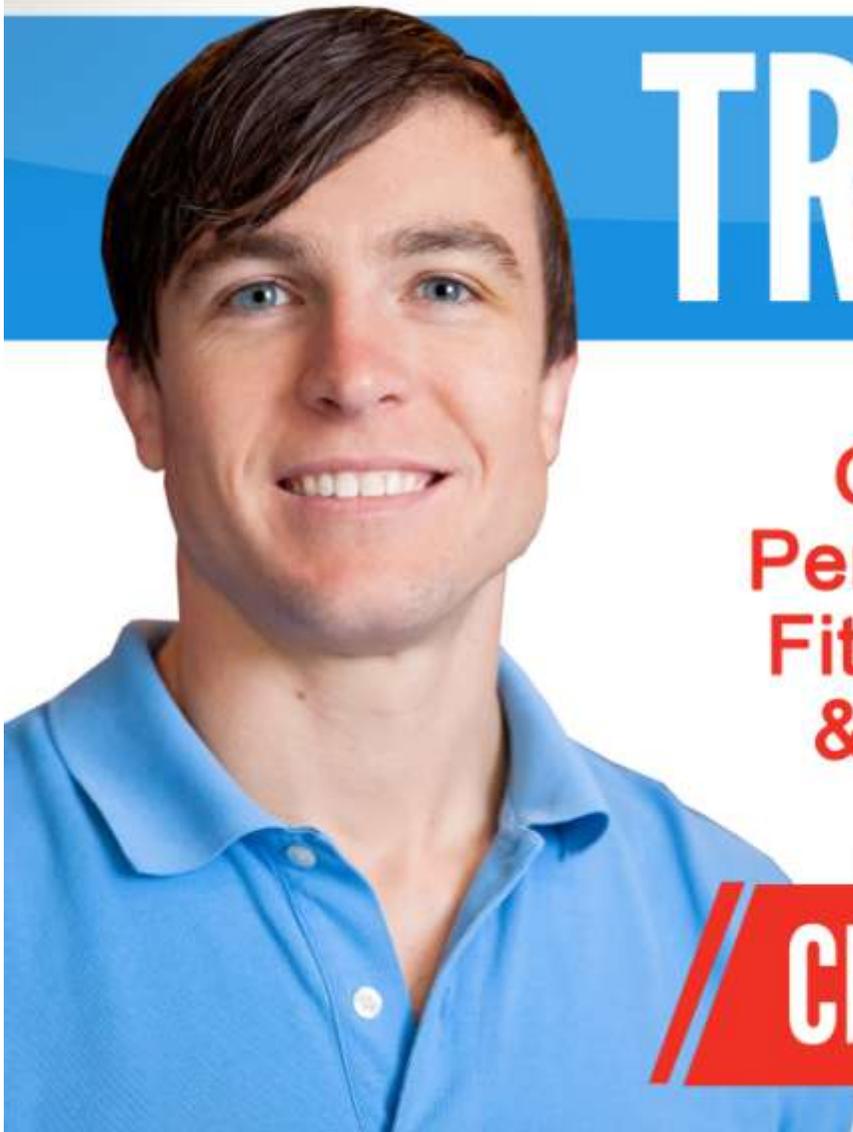




LESSONS FROM A
CHICAGO
TRAINER



**One Trainer's
Personal Guide to
Fitness, Nutrition
& Goal Setting**

CHRIS JAKUBIAK

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PERSONAL TRAINER CHRIS JAKUBIAK - Biography

Chris Jakubiak has been a personal trainer since 2006. He has a BS in Physical Education from Western Michigan University. He also has certifications from NASM Foundations, Partner assisted stretch, Swim instruction and Conditioning. Chris has coached and trained former Pro and College Athletes. His dedication and guidance helped a soccer team to become Michigan State Champions. Chris is an active member of the community by helping and coaching kids in the Special Olympics and youth soccer.



Chris is actively continuing his education in the Health and Wellness industry by regularly attending Seminars and Webinars. Chris had an opportunity of a lifetime when he was selected to be a consultant in the Oprah Winfrey Show with Dr. Oz. He participated in a segment with Dr. Oz and entertained the audience with his dynamic personality. Chris is also a motivational speaker and mentor to new trainers looking to learn Program Design and Motivational Strategies.

As a personal trainer and in his own life, Chris is a firm believer of the saying “practice what you preach.” He has a Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do and competed in the 2008 Chicago Golden Gloves. He is a competitive Triathlete and ½ Marathoner. He is currently pursuing his Blue Belt in Carlson Gracie Jiu Jitsu. He also plays in various soccer leagues throughout the city and loves to snowboard.

PERSONAL TRAINING

Become A Better Athlete & Trainer – Take Advantage Of Life’s Lessons

When I was a young athlete, years before I became a personal trainer, I started participating in individual sports like swimming and martial arts. As time passed, and I got older, I developed more of an interest in team sports and basketball, largely due to the U of M “fab five.” I soon realized, however that I was woefully unable to compete with other kids my age- most had already been playing for years, and the one thing that could equalize a lack of skill in Basketball was height, and I can tell you definitively, my lack of skills were not tempered by proximity to the basket.

With all this in mind (both mine and the coaching staff, I’m sure) upon entering high school, I decided to try my hand (or foot) at soccer. Soccer was only just gaining popularity in my area so I wasn’t too far behind at developing my skills. Not to mention, I was fast as hell, powerful, and my low center of gravity was finally an asset. I had success on the field and quickly learned to love the game. Still, when my body and schedule allow it, I participate today.

If you’re not excelling at a sport, pick one you can realistically find success with.

My story above illustrates many enjoy sports- especially those with which we have success. If we can achieve a positive result, like me becoming a better soccer player and being able to compete with peers, we tend to have fun doing it and tend to stick with it, which leads to more success and mastery. As human beings we are constantly looking for engagement—things that will engage our interest. In the book *Flow* by Csikszentmihalyi the author talks about how we are looking for “an Optimal Experience” to provide us with a feeling of satisfaction. It is important to note, however, that this all comes from our challenges. If the challenge is too difficult, clearly, it will result in frustration. If it is too easy, however, the result is boredom, regardless of success. If it is just the right amount of challenge, and it is overcome, it results in happiness and an improved quality of life.

Behind every great athlete, there’s a great coach

No matter what endeavor in which success and enjoyment are found, there is something that all athletes have in common. They all have great coaches. In the book *Outliers* Malcom Gladwell talks about how the majority of hockey players in Canada have birthdays in the same 3 months. When tryouts start, the kids who are a few months older have more success because they are bigger, and may have up to 9 months more developed hand-eye coordination. These players then get pooled together on the best teams, getting the best coaching, and keep moving up the ranks. By the time the other youth have caught up developmentally and physically, the kids who had the birthdays within those 3 early months have been with the best coaches and teammates, facing the stiffest competition, to becoming the best at their sport.

In my own adult life I chose activities that are fun, activities that are challenging, and activities in which I can achieve success. When I started martial arts as a child, I focused on the striking aspects and had

some success. But as I stated before, my body type is pretty stout and muscular, and most boxers and kick boxers have long lean frames. When I was a kid who got dominated by beanpoles on the basketball court, I switched to soccer, as an adult, after one boxing match with a 6'4" jab machine; I made the switch to jiu jitsu. For those who don't know much about it, jiu jitsu is a bit like wrestling, and both are under the umbrella of "grappling," wherein someone's physical "strengths" can just as easily be made their weaknesses. I didn't have any experience with wrestling or jiu jitsu but it seemed more natural to me. On top of that, I was lucky enough to have a good coach who put a system in place to help me succeed, and a good team around to support me.

Start with the basics

Just like any sport you have to crawl before you can walk. You can't walk on a basketball court and expect to do a cross over against Kobe if you can't dribble. My jiu jitsu coach Mack helped me learn and master (or at least become proficient in) the basics before teaching me harder or more advanced techniques. Mack also works with us to challenge us appropriately, so we can be humbled at times and feel like a champion at others. I've had good success with jiu jitsu and won medal at tournaments due to hard work and support from my teammates. Above all though I love jiu jitsu and have fun every time I step on the mat.

Cerebrally, I realize that I love the art and the sport of jui jujitsu because I feel both challenge and success. I realize, too, that I love being a personal trainer and running our own studio because I feel both challenge and success. It's important to be aware of these factors both as trainers/coaches AND as clients.

Personal trainers, don't make it so difficult that you turn clients off

Personal trainers- if you progress too quickly *or* too slowly, you will do a disservice to your clients- maybe putting them off of fitness entirely—if they think "it's too difficult," or "it's too boring." Just the way I'm not blocking out chunks of my week to dominate preschoolers at kickball, I'm also not going to make time to get punched in the face repeatedly by a golden glove.

If you ever feel your workouts are stagnant, too simple, or not challenging, it's ok to tell your personal trainer. And on the flipside, if you feel you're being pushed *too* hard, or something feels too challenging, don't think you're "wimping out" if you say something. Finding that right balance between challenge and success is as ingrained in us as our height, and in fitness, as with anything else, we will find it, and get both results and satisfaction.

Personal Training For The Brain

There are a variety of reasons someone may want to join a gym and/or work with a personal trainer. Each person may have several reasons why they walk into our doors. Most of these reasons while specific will fall into three categories:

They want to look better

They want to move without pain

Perform better for sport or daily activities

(Or they want to feel better)

Most people will not prioritize feeling better as a top priority. Many times in the fitness industry we focus on the aesthetic appeal of workouts and not enough emphasis is put on actually feeling better.

I recently read “The Better Brain Book” by David Perlmutter. As someone who has had a personal history of stroke and degenerative brain disease in his family this book was of particular interest to me. Here are a few bits of information I gathered from the book and from my own experience as a personal trainer.

Nutrition In Regards To Brain Health

What you consistently put on your plate day after day is the most important tool for maintaining mental clarity and sharpness. Many of the foods in the standard American diet are highly processed, packed with chemicals, and loaded with sugar and poor quality fats. These foods can be very harmful to your brain as they promote inflammation and cause the production of free radicals in the body. One huge step you can take to promote brain health, and overall health for that matter, is to replace some of these low nutrient (and high calorie) foods with natural whole food sources.



Get The Right Fats In Your Diet & Energize Your Brain

Our brains need a constant supply of energy. It is important to eat high nutrient foods to give our body what it needs to produce energy. The brain needs fat more than any other nutrient because the brain is made primarily of fat. Monounsaturated fats are found in cooking oils, nuts, and avocados. These fats are naturally high in antioxidants and help fight off inflammation in the body.

Polyunsaturated fats are essential fatty acids (omega 3 and omega 6) that must be obtained through the foods we eat. These are found in fatty fish such as salmon, deep green veggies, and seeds such as pumpkin seeds. When we digest these foods our body breaks down the omega 3 fatty acids into EPA and DHA. Since our body doesn't produce these fats on its own it can be a good idea to take a supplement such as fish oil containing DHA so the brain receives enough of these vital nutrients.

Saturated fats, found in fatty cuts of beef, pork, chicken, and whole dairy foods should be limited as these saturated fats can cause more inflammation in the body. When selecting meats try to buy lean, organic, grass-fed cuts as they will contain less saturated fat and will have fewer chemicals and pesticides. Your body still needs saturated fat but the chances are you are probably getting more than you need.

Trans-fatty acids are a fourth type of fat you have likely read about. These trans fats make our brain cell membranes rigid, tough, and slowwww, therefore making it harder for our brain cells to make energy. These trans fats undergo a chemical procedure to make them last longer for use in mass produced foods. These fats are also linked to diabetes and heart disease. Avoid foods that are fried and look for food labels containing trans-fat or partially hydrogenated oil.

These will wreck havoc on your body and brain.

We are all human and we eat food sometimes because it tastes good, not based on the nutrient content. If your diet is virtually free from bad fats we must still eat to protect our brain from free radical attack. The nutrients found in fruits and vegetables contain photochemical phytochemicals that act as natural antioxidants to help protect us against free radicals. Eating a wide assortment of fruits and veggies will help keep our bodies and minds healthy and fit.

Berries contain powerful antioxidants that help protect blood vessels and may improve blood flow in the brain. Spinach contains lutein, another powerful antioxidant and is rich in folic acid, a B vitamin. Seeds and Walnuts contain high amounts of omega 3 fatty acids that promote brain health.

What Supplements?

Supplementing your diet with vitamins and nutrients can help to recharge your brain and protect it against free radicals and inflammation. Supplements won't make up for a bad diet but they do allow compensation for nutrient deficiencies.

Vitamin B: Vitamin B is critical for brain health. Low levels of vitamin B have been associated with depression and memory loss. Low levels of vitamin B can lead to poor nutrient

Vitamins C and E: These two supplements assist each other in stopping the damage of free radical attack in the brain as well as protecting it from inflammation. In fact men who took c and e supplements were 88% less likely to develop dementia.

Fish Oil containing DHA: This is critical for brain health. About 25% of your brain is composed of DHA. Low levels of DHA have been linked to violent behavior, learning disorders, depression, and visual problems. DHA is needed to repair and regenerate brain cells. If it is not present the brain will use bad fats which make brain cell membranes rigid and less functional when transferring energy. In turn memory and reaction time are compromised.

Lifestyle Changes To Promote Brain Health

Give your brain more sleep

Get enough rest! Sleep is a chance for our body and mind to rest and refuel. Our cells repair themselves at this time. During sleep our body slows down and energy production slows down. This gives our brain cells a chance to clean out waste products. Chronically sleep deprived people often develop deficits in cognitive function such as a decline in reaction time and lower performance on standard mental function tests. If you are sleep deprived you will have a hard time multitasking and difficult to learn a new task all together.

Losing sleep can also weaken your immune system, leaving you more vulnerable to infection. Your body will release higher volume of stress hormones, which can raise blood sugar levels and increase insulin resistance leading to diabetes and other diseases that can increase the rate of brain aging.

In regard to sleep it is important to know how your body handles caffeine. Caffeine is a powerful stimulant. One many people are addicted too. Some of us are able to metabolize the stimulant quickly. Which make it beneficial to have a cup of coffee in the am because our enzymes can metabolize it quickly and reap the nutrient benefits from the coffee without the side effects of the caffeine? However some people do not possess the enzymes necessary to metabolize the caffeine quickly. Therefore even one cup of coffee early in the morning can leave sensitive people suffering from insomnia at night. If you are having trouble sleeping monitor your caffeine intake and find out if this is keeping you awake at night. I won't hurt to cut back or eliminate this all together.

Control Your Stress Levels For You, And Your Brain

Chronic, unrelenting stress can be toxic to your brain and cause physiological changes that can profoundly affect mental performance and accelerate brain aging. When we are under stress our body produces corticosteroids that trigger a fight or flight response. Which is good if we are being mugged or trying to outrun a rabid dog.

Under normal circumstances our body shuts off production of these hormones and systematically eliminates them. As we get older our body has a harder time disposing of these chemicals. If you are under a great amount of stress these chemicals can damage your brain and cause inflammation.

The over production of these chemicals can disrupt the production of other hormones designed to improve mood such as serotonin and dopamine. It is important to find ways to regulate stress and take action. If you find it unable to manage stress it may be advised to seek professional help.

Exercise Your Body, Your Brain Will Join In

Exercise, particularly strength and or resistance training can be a great way to relieve stress. I often say after a bad day “take it out on the iron.” Exercise is more than just burning calories. Exercise burns up unwanted stress hormones and releases hormones like serotonin and dopamine to boost your mood. A proper exercise program not only reduces your risk of heart disease, diabetes, depression, and obesity it can put you in the right frame of mind.

Taking care of yourself through exercise means you are better equipped to handle what life throws at you as well as be a better person to friends and loved ones. In addition to making you a more fun person to be around regular exercise has been shown to reduce your risk of Alzheimer’s disease (a severe brain disease) by 30%.

Brain Games: Activities To Stay Sharp

Just as you would exercise to keep your waistline small and your chest big, or work longer on a project for work so that it will turn out better and you will make more money, we must also take time to develop our mental skills.

Every time we learn something new or take on a difficult task it creates the opportunity for neuron development in our brains. Skills like learning a new language or solving a Sudoku puzzle are great methods for exercising the brain. One skill to improve reaction time that is very easy to do involves only a deck of playing cards and a timer. simply start with the deck face up. hit the button on the timer and arrange the cards in four piles 1. even cards 2. odd 3. face cards 4. aces. as quickly as possible. This can help improve reaction time. Perform this 3 times each day and try to improve your time. When you are able to do this in 25 seconds it’s probably time to move on to a new activity.

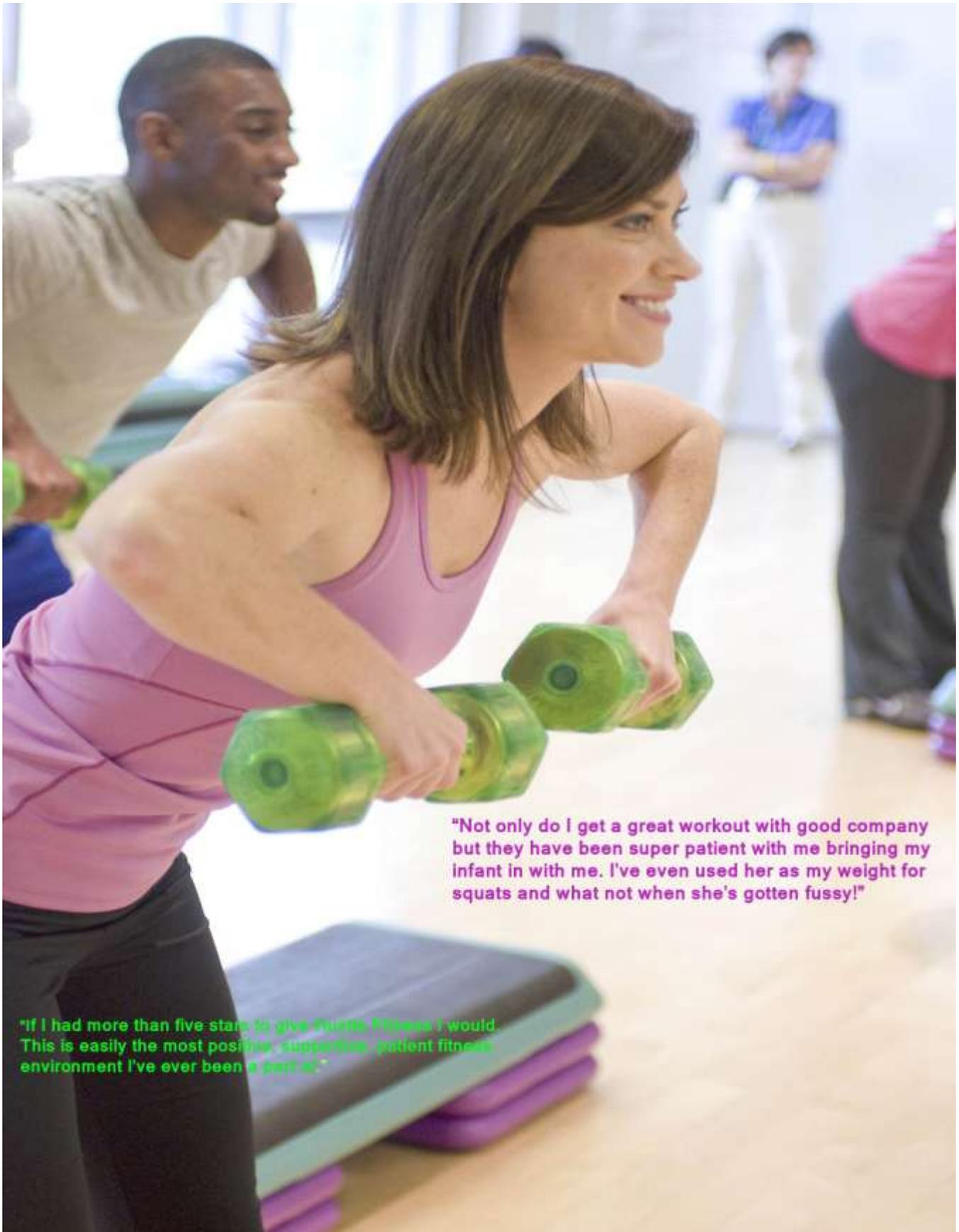
Tips to boost brain power:

- Increase omega 3 and 6 fatty acid intake: Buy fresh fish. Take a fish oil supplement. Snack on nuts (walnuts) and seeds (pumpkin). Buy omega 3 enhanced eggs
- Avoid bad fats: Limit fried food. Read labels for hydrogenated oils and trans fat. Reduce saturated fat. buy lean cuts of meat
- Increase the amount of vegetables and fruits you eat: Eat a salad every day. Eat a handful of veggies with each meal. Snack on berries, organic.
- Buy organic whole foods when possible
- Focus on getting enough sleep: Make it a priority. Have a bedtime routine.

LESSONS FROM A CHICAGO TRAINER

- Exercise regularly: Have a plan. Seek the advice of a trainer if you are unfamiliar.
- Manage stress: Seek the advice of a professional if you are unable to deal with stress.
- Sharpen the Saw: Learn new skills to keep your brain functioning at a high level.

The information in this blog was taken in large part from [“The Better Brain Book” by David Perlmutter](#). If you would like more info on the subject please check out his book to learn more.



"Not only do I get a great workout with good company but they have been super patient with me bringing my infant in with me. I've even used her as my weight for squats and what not when she's gotten fussy!"

"If I had more than five stars to give Fourth Fitness I would. This is easily the most positive, supportive, patient fitness environment I've ever been a part of."

LESSONS FROM A CHICAGO TRAINER

Should I Spend Money On Expensive Gym Equipment?

I often get asked the question: “What is the best fitness equipment I can buy to use at my home?” I usually say “Well, I’m a fitness trainer, and I have equipment at my own house that I never use, so the best equipment would be your own body.”

I know there are a lot of people who build home gyms and have the motivation, knowledge, and focus to use them daily. This is only a small fraction of the population. The majority who own home exercise equipment will admit they use it less than once a month. This comes as no surprise. I am sure many of you know a friend or relative that uses a treadmill to dry wet clothing or some multi-station home to fold laundry.

It’s hard for most of us to find the motivation to exercise on a consistent basis! Now add into the equation distractions like TV, refrigerator, DVD, screaming kids, a comfy couch, etc. This will equal to zero results because it’s hard to generate the intensity and focus with all these distractions. Now let’s be honest, the main reason we all exercise is to achieve a desired result, no matter what that might be.

It’s best to find a place free from distractions to generate the drive required to see results and focus on workout to set new PR or performing 10 squats with perfect form. The best option would be to join a training studio or gym where someone can coach you through the movements and where you will be surrounded by others with similar goals that are there to help motivate you... Not everyone can afford a gym membership or a personal trainer. But to really focus on yourself and your workout you need to find a place where you can be free from distractions. Chicago has tons of outdoor parks and recreation centers to provide an area for you to do your workout.

There are online resources to help you with technique and design programs that will help make progress and see results.

Remember you don’t need equipment. Your body is all you need to get a good workout. If you did want to invest some money you could purchase a TRX. These suspension trainers are easy to take anywhere and come with plenty of online support.

A few things I do suggest clients invest in for their home is a foam roller, stretch band(s), and 2 tennis balls to do Self Myofascial Release or SMR. Also called recovery or regeneration work to stay mobile and limber which will help you get the most out of your workouts. Foam rolling and stretching help increase your tissue quality and heal you faster so you can go hard on your workouts. These techniques usually feel good and are easy to do at work or while watching a movie.

The solution is simple don’t waste your money on expensive equipment you will use for a month and later use as a clothes line. Invest your time and money in learning proper form on body weight exercises and how to put them together in a workout program. You will gain knowledge that will last a lifetime and see better results.

Gym Anxiety

To some people it can be awkward to do almost anything when you are surrounded by a room full of strangers. When you combine that awkwardness with the embarrassment that many people feel about their bodies, it is easy to see why people would be nervous about working out in public. The good news is that there are ways to overcome your gym anxiety when taking group fitness classes.

Everyone Is As Nervous As You Are

The first thing that you need to remember is that almost everyone is as nervous as you are. If they say they're not, they're probably feeding you a white lie. For many people, the thought of working out in public is downright scary. Those who are going to a fitness class for the first time or for the first time in many years may feel as if they will lag behind while everyone else breezes through the workout. Fortunately, everyone else in the room is thinking the same thing that you are. And halfway through class, everyone will likely be so focused on the intense workout that they will hardly notice those around them anyway.

Who Takes Classes That Aren't Fun?

Unless you are a professional bodybuilder or athlete, it probably takes extra motivation to get to the gym on time after a long day at work or school. Therefore, most people prefer to go to classes that are fun and offer an enjoyable experience. This means that the vast majority of people who you are working out with are more interested in getting a quality workout as opposed to showing off. You will generally find that the instructors understand your needs and tailor their classes to ensure that everyone meets their fitness goals without feeling judged.

Get To Know Those Taking The Class With You.

Over time, you will discover that those taking the classes with you are just regular people looking for something to do besides watch TV at night. After a few conversations, you may discover that you went to the same college as someone else in your class or that you play in the same basketball league on Wednesday nights.

Once you discover that you have something in common with those around you, you will start to look forward to your classes instead of dread them. If you are truly worried that you won't hit it off with the people in your class, bring a friend or two along to ensure that you aren't isolated from everyone else in the room.

Everyone Has Body Issues That Can Lead To Gym Anxiety

You may feel as if you are the only person in the world who feels insecure about his or her body. However, the good news is that most everyone is insecure about their body. Whether you feel that you are 20 pounds overweight and need to get rid of belly fat, or think that your skin is too pale, there is something that everyone would change about their bodies if they could.

Trying new things and meeting new people can make anyone nervous. The trick is to understand that everyone feels just as anxious as you do at first. When you realize that everyone has body issues and different fitness goals to contend with, you will start to loosen up and develop relationships with the people around you. Slowly but surely, you will start to enjoy group fitness classes, and you will be glad that you did something to create a bond with others in the class. Also, if you find a great fitness center with individuals all striving towards the same fitness goals, then you will likely be in a non-judgemental supportive environment.

But Anxiety Makes Me Nervous

“Anxiety is fear of one’s self” – Wilhelm Stekel. When you stop fearing yourself it’s only a matter of time before you realize that you have nothing to fear from others. Group fitness classes are an awesome way to take advantage of a supportive, engaging fitness environment.



5 Reasons People Don’t Trust The Fitness Industry

1. Locking someone into a yearly contract for a cheap rate and banking on them not showing up.

A lot of the big gyms will “cut a deal” if you sign up for a longer period of time like a one or two year contract. Most gyms will offer you the deal because they figure you won’t show up, so why not sell a cheap membership and pack the place? They might offer a deal like 200 dollars for a year opposed to \$200 a month (what you might pay at a more specialized studio where there is a level of accountability). But where is the value if you are not showing up? Do not sign up for a long term contract if you do not have a solid plan in place to for attendance? If you find it difficult to find the motivation to go to the gym do not sign up at a place where they don’t care if you come in or not. Find a studio where the trainers and

staff will hold you accountable for your actions, don't settle for the cheapest, and demand the best service.

2. Hiring a personal trainer who is unqualified.

Hiring a trainer can change your life. Having a great coach to teach you how to design a program to maximize your results, make sure you are doing things correctly, and support and motivate you when you need it the most is priceless. However a lot of big gyms will hire trainers with lack of qualifications and experience, and give them minimal training, just to increase personal training sales. These practices are dangerous and absurd. If someone has a bad experience they may never want to hire a trainer again. Find out what the trainers qualifications are before hiring them and ask if they have worked with someone like you before. Also make sure they will set realistic expectations with you and are able to break down a plan of how they will get you the results you desire. Not all trainers are the same, don't let a bad experience steer you away from achieving your goals.

3. Buying a product on TV that doesn't do what it says it will.

Turn on any channel and you will see no shortage of trainers screaming at clients to go harder and faster. What they don't show is the amount of recovery time that needs to take place with this extra effort. People see these video products and assume this is a healthy way to workout all the time. No emphasis is placed on planning the entire workout scheme and what that entails. Worse even yet are these apparatus that claim to give you six pack abs. Don't waste money on these gimmicky products. Invest in your education. Hire a reputable trainer or seek education from a reputable source that focuses on safety.

"Day by day in every way I'm getting better and better."

4. Gyms that could double as circus arenas.

Have you ever walked into a gym with twenty people doing barbell snatches with one coach spotting and correcting form? It might sound ridiculous but they do exist. Some gyms pride themselves on that "elite" mentality and like to tout, "my workout is your warm-up" meanwhile half of them are tearing their ACL or rotator cuffs performing circus stunts. Steer clear from these types of places and find a place that focuses on building people up and not tearing them down. Great gyms and coaches will have a screening process to help select what exercises are right for you and progressions and regressions to keep you progressing toward your goal.

5. "Gymtimidation"

It can be intimidating walking into a studio where everyone looks uber fit and pumping out reps with perfect form. What you must realize is everyone has to start somewhere. I've trained former pro athletes and former coach potatoes. Each one of them is capable of working as hard as the other. The only difference could be the exercises each is able to perform. At the gym, or anywhere for that matter, most people are too concerned with their own business and appearance to take the time to make judgments about someone else. Most people in the fitness industry are pretty helpful to motivate someone or offer

advice to someone just starting out. Don't let the fear of being judged limit you from accomplishing your goal.

"Those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind."

Get Outside And Get Fit

Summer is finally here! After such a hard Chicago winter I'm sure a lot of people reading this are looking to drop a few lbs after spending so many nights curled up on the couch watching redbox during a polar vortex. Summertime in Chicago offers numerous ways to be outside and stay active. The abundance of activities can be good if your goal is weight loss but it can also seem overwhelming if you are setting a goal and implementing a strategy to reach it. It's easy to get wrapped up in extravagant brunches or lying out by the pool and neglect healthy activities. Having a plan can help you stick to ambitions and hold you accountable so you are able to reach your goal by the end of summer.

Start By Setting Attainable Goals

Setting a goal will give you a destination to reach for and help keep you on track. "I want to lose the 20lbs I put on this winter," or "I want to learn to surf," are examples of outcome goals. A process goal is a system set in place to help you reach your outcome goal such as "I will go to the gym 3X a week," or "I will take surf lessons once a week." In addition to goal setting it is important to know the difference between activity, exercise, and sport in regards to fitness. Activity is any general physical activity we perform throughout the day such as, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, or walking home with groceries instead of driving.

Boost Your Activity And Exercise Levels

Increasing daily activity levels will lead to burning more calories per day. Exercise is a system of bodily movement designed to enhance health and physician fitness and/or performance. Exercise differs from activity in the fact that exercise is programmed to produce a specific result and is progressively loaded to produce results. Sport on the other hand can be very intense depending on the sport and requires differing level of physical fitness in addition to sport specific skills. There is also the competition aspect of sports which depending on who you compete with adds to the intensity

Join One Of Chicago's Sporting Leagues

I had a coach who used to say "you don't play sports to get in shape; you get in shape to play sports." While wanting to pick up an old sport or wanting to try something new can be a good goal to plan workouts around it should never be a means to an end. You shouldn't think you will reach a desired goal, such as losing weight, by playing sport alone. Weight loss comes from making a lifestyle change. A lifestyle change could be "I love volleyball! I am going to start a workout program to help me stay injury free and get stronger so I can play on my volleyball team every Saturday." Planning workouts around a sport you want to participate in can be a great way to help you reach your goals.

There are various sport leagues in the city such as Sports Monster, Chicago Sport and Social, and the CMSA. You can also sign up as an independent if you just moved to the city (which is a great way to meet new people.) Whatever sport you are interested in it is important to ask yourself “what are the demands of the sport?” If it is a sport like soccer with quick change of direction you will need to strengthen your lateral movement and incorporate quickness and agility work.



Try Adding Supplemental Training Around Your Specific Sport

Each and every sport requires some level of strength training and strength needs to take a priority during training phases. Becoming a stronger athlete will help improve performance as well as bulletproof you from injury. Not to mention functional strength training will increase your muscle mass, which increases metabolism and helps burn body fat. While many people love to run by the lake during the summer they often neglect the spaces along the lakefront path that can be used for full body workouts. The path has various stations for pull-ups, step-ups, and dips. Not to mention the open space which can be used for body weight exercises like pushups and squats. Next time you run by the lake try this full body workout.

Fun, Fitness Forward Events We've Done With Our Members

Last summer we took our members on a Stand up paddleboard outing. For those of you not familiar with SUP think kayaking while trying to balance standing on a surfboard. This is a great activity because almost anyone can do it. At first it can be challenging enough just to balance on the board. As you become more accustomed to the way the board moves under your feet you can challenge yourself by trying harder turns or paddling in harsher conditions. You can also try yoga during a stand up session and challenge yourself to hold poses on the board. Paddle boarding is cool because you can make it as challenging as possible, or simply enjoy being on the water on a beautiful Chicago summer day.

Get out there Chicagoans, get involved, and get fit!

Living in Chicago forces us to make the most out of our summer, especially after the past winter. I would encourage everyone to take up an old or new sport this summer. It can be a great way to motivate you and help you stay active. Remember to plan workout routines and exercises around that sport. I'll say it again "You do not get in shape by playing sports, you get in shape so you can play sports." Another quote will end with because it needs to be said "Failing to plan is planning to fail." So enjoy your summer, work hard to reach your goals but have a plan to hold you accountable.

Three Tips To Stay Healthy And Fit On The Road

It can be a huge challenge to stay fit and active while traveling. As a personal trainer I work with members to help build routines to ensure success in the gym and on the scale. Travelers such as consultants, sales persons, and flight attendants (truck drivers, although I don't get many of these in my studio) are all routinely thrown out of their routines and cast out on the road and asked to make do and stay fit and healthy with limited resources and a hectic schedule.

Although these tips can help everyone and anyone looking for a more healthy and enjoyable lifestyle, more life out of your years, these tips are catered more directly to those with a busy travel schedule. One that does not allow for a routine or rather makes it harder to establish one. With this in mind I focused on the principles that would lead to success and embedded some tips in each one. If we can learn to focus on the principles it becomes easier to manage the tasks when they are at hand.

1. Build Habits

A great book to pick up is "The Power of Less" by Leo Babauta. This talks about how to build small habits one at a time to create big changes. In the past 7 months following the advice from the book I have been able to A. Start flossing daily B. Clean for 10 min a day (this really made my girlfriend happy) C. Start doing 5 more minutes of stretching daily D. Wake up earlier E. Start Reading daily F. Create a list of my 3 most important tasks to be finished each day (and do make sure they get done!) G. Train jiu jitsu 14X a month. The key is to start small and pick a habit that was almost guaranteed to be a success. My first was flossing.

Because traveling can be exhausting and offer limited free time, you need to follow this same rule when creating your exercise habits on the road. Who wants to spend an hour in the gym after a 4 hr flight? Not me and I am a trainer! I love working out. But I can work pretty hard in my hotel room for 15 min. Even 5 min is a good place to start. Each week you can add another minute, and after about 2 months you will be up to 15 min. Even starting with something simple like just walking for 15 min after dinner can be a productive way to spend your time. And it feels good. The key is to start small and stay focused on one habit at a time.

Healthy Habits for Travelers

- Walk 15 min before going back to your hotel room. Put your bags down and go for a walk. Resist the urge to nap or watch TV.
- Exercise for 15 min each morning. It doesn't have to be crazy intense. Just keep it simple and sweat a little.
- Journal food while you travel. This can keep you honest and will at least give you an idea of where you can improve your choices.
- Add one good healthy vegetable or protein to your meals on the road each day.
- Practice eating slowly. It takes 20-30 min for your brain to tell your stomach you are full.
- Read and write before you go to bed. If you can avoid sleep aids reading (I like fiction before bed because it lets me zone out) and writing are a great way to decompress.

2. Be Prepared

One great habit for travelers can be to prep food to take with on the road. Sometimes prep work can be a drag. It can seem monotonous but you can also make it pretty fun. Buying cool new tools like cutting boards, knives, blenders, pans, even Tupperware, can make cooking and prepping food kinda fun. Its fun to try out new recipes or experiment with new and interesting takes on old ones.

Start with the basics, maybe a simple grocery list with 2-3 easily preparable proteins like chicken and steak and 2-3 easily preparable veggies like broccoli and spinach for salad can be a good start. Fruits like oranges are great for travel as well as healthy fats like nuts and seeds. Eating a handful of nuts before dinner is a great way to curb your hunger and control your portion sizes – which is really helpful if you're eating at a restaurant while traveling.

Prepping food saves you time and money because you won't spend as much when you travel and you will have more time to do what you want because you don't have to wait for food. Portable coolers. But what if you really can't take food with you? Look up grocery stores in the area and also look up restaurant menus and healthy options. If eating with a group make some sacrifices. Nothing is free. No free lunch. Except shitty pizza. Get a drink but skip dessert. Or have dessert with everyone but eat a nutritional entrée like a steak and veggies.

Preparation Tips

- Buy all necessary equipment to make batching and prepping food a cinch. Blenders, cutting boards, good set of knives, travel containers, a good set of pots and pans.

- Schedule 1-2 prep days to set you up for the week. Or 15-30 min every day. Whichever works better. Once you get going you can really save yourself time and develop a system.
- When eating out check the menu before you go. Pick a healthy option unless it is a cheat meal ☺
- Google grocery stores and restaurants in the area of your hotel. Stop here and get some healthy options before going to the hotel.
- Buy a travel cooler. Its an easy way to keep food fresh on the road or even by plane.

3. Don't give up

There are two big reasons why people fail on the road. 1) They have nothing to train for. No goal in mind or skill to work on. 2) They have no support system. They have no one to turn to when times get tough and no one to hold them accountable.

If you are trying to lose unwanted body fat (and most of us are; movie stars, moms, and professional athletes included) It helps to have an event to train for. I cant count how many times I've seen brides in my studio become more dedicated to staying fit 6 months before their wedding, or when someone is training for a marathon or race, or if they are working up to squat their body weight. It gives them something to stay focused on even if the scale is not moving. Although even if the scale isn't moving you could still be dropping dress sizes and body fat. But that's a topic for another blog.

Having a support system keeps you on track when the going gets tough. Believe me when establishing any new habit the going will get tough. We humans are emotional beings and it can be hard to grab that stalk of broccoli instead of the piece of chocolate cake, or take a walk after dinner instead of taking a nap. Having someone there to empower you and say "You can do it!" or "I believe in you" can have a powerful impact on one's ego.

It can be easy to just say "screw it, I give up!" These are the times when it is most important to have a support system. Such as a co-worker in the same boat. Or having a trainer who will write a workout for you while you are on the road who wants to see a picture of you doing the workout he/she wrote for you. Reach out to these people when you need help. That's why they are there, to help support you and you support them when they need it. There is power in numbers. The greater your support system the greater your possibility for success. If you fall down. Who cares. Today is always a new day. Don't wait till tomorrow to start doing things. Take action today that will give you the greatest reward. Join a gym (and use it), buy a blender, start flossing, workout in your hotel room for 5 min.

How to never give up

- The past is the past. Don't look back with regret, only look forward to what can be done.
- Find a support system. Find a workout buddy. Join a gym with a vibrant and active community. Find a way to be held accountable for your actions.
- Plan an event or participate in a race of some sort. There are many opportunities for involvement in activities that will keep you active and fit. Training for a 5K is a great way to stay on track. Just make sure you are strength training with a professional so you are not getting injured.

NUTRITION



Ready for a lifestyle change? Follow these universal diet guidelines for success

I had a friend recently come to me with a few nutrition questions

She was starting a new nutrition plan and wanted some advice on type of diet. First let me say when I use the term diet I mean the actual foods a person is consuming. I am not implying someone limits their caloric intake by “going on a diet”. I don’t advocate “going on a diet” because it usually implies negative feelings and short term benefits that are usually not maintainable.

It's not a short term diet. It's a long term lifestyle change

I'm sure we have all had that friend or relative who has suffered through some crazy "diet" or juice "cleanse" so they can lose 10lbs before their reunion only to gain it all back and then some the week after. Are these people fun to be around when they are "dieting?" HELL NO! I'd rather watch an all-day marathon of "The Beautician and the Beast" than spend an hour with someone who has been eating twigs and berries and drinking kale juice for a week straight. The point we make with our members is eating clean and healthy is a lifestyle change. Eating clean doesn't have to be a struggle. Healthy food doesn't have to taste bad. Change can be hard but with support systems in place and attainable goals anyone can adopt new healthy habits.

One size does not fit all when it comes to nutrition

First you have to be kind to yourself. Accept the fact that fitness and clean eating are journeys and not destinations. Success is rarely a straight line. There will be setbacks along your journey so often you must forgive yourself and move on. Eating clean is a process, but one that needs to be individualized and experimented with to find what best suits you.

As a personal trainer and fitness coach I have to be flexible with the members of my studio. I can't be too ridged and group them all into the same nutritional plan. They all have different considerations I have to take into account such as; everyday environment, family and customs, budget, their unique body type and how it responds to nutrients, their personality and communication style.

I have several consultants who travel for work during the week. What works for them will be different than the married vegetarian couple with two kids. They all have different barriers they have to work through. The changes occur when we develop strategies to overcome these barriers and build habits that turn into lifestyle changes when applied overtime.

I don't diet. I just eat according to my goals

Regardless of what your overall individual goal is it is also important to have process goals to help keep you moving forward along the way. The goals should be challenging but also attainable. If my goal were set so high that I could never accomplish it (which is the case with most people who say they are "going on a diet") the result will likely end in frustration. It's important to look at your current situation and decide what is reasonably challenging and still able to maintain sanity. It usually takes 2-4 weeks to build a habit.

Take control of your habits, take control of your diet

Incremental changes are suitable for most people. It is hard to adapt even one new habit at a time and the chances of you successfully adopting two or more concurrently drastically decreases with the more habits you try to adopt. so try taking on one new healthy habit every couple of weeks. At the end of the period, re-evaluate and see where you stand. It is important to have an accurate way of measuring progress. If you are trying to lose body fat how will you track if the things you are doing will work? Tracking progress is not something to obsess over; it is just a way to measure how well the steps you are taking are working. Measurements, body fat analysis, and clothing fit are all great ways to measure if what you are doing is

working. The scale CAN be another way but it is not always the best. You can lose body fat go down 2 jeans sizes and gain 10 lbs on the scale. So remember it's not always about the scale!

Ready to change? Stick to these universal guidelines

I recently attended a speech by Dr John Berardi, founder of Precision Nutrition. The topic was: "What is the best diet?" During the lecture he pointed out how different types of people can be successful on very different diet plans and focused not on how the plans were different but on the similarities between them. When deciding to make changes in your diet there are universal guidelines to follow.

1. Care about the food you eat and focus on food quality: Pay attention to what you are putting in your body and how it affects you. Try to eat whole, minimally processed, nutrient rich foods.
2. Eliminate nutrient deficiencies: Instead of cutting out certain foods, look instead at what you are not getting. Am I drinking enough water? Do I eat enough protein and essential fatty acids? It's easier to take a fish oil in the morning (which helps absorb more nutrients and give you more energy from the foods you are eating) than it is to skip the froyo you eat after jiu jitsu class.
3. Control your appetite: This is kind of a combo of the first two. If you are eating whole nutrient rich foods and getting adequate amounts of nutrients you will have an easier time controlling appetite. This will help regulate insulin levels which in turn helps with energy and weight management.
4. Get regular exercise and activity: If you are starving yourself you won't have very much energy to workout and your arms and legs can turn into twigs while your gut stays the same size. When we exercise regularly we improve the ability to turn the food we eat into functional muscle instead of extra fat.

To recap, consider this:

Most people admit they feel better, move better, and look better when they are exercising and eating clean. It can be a challenge to change unhealthy habits, but by following these simple guidelines, you can get a leg up . The key is finding that balance of living a healthy lifestyle and enjoying your life. When's the last time you heard someone say, "I regret that workout and the nutritious meal I had afterward."

What Is Good Nutrition?

With the New Year approaching, you or someone you know will probably be starting some sort of "new diet" or trying to control their nutrition planning. It is important to do some research and find the right facts that will lead you to accomplish your goal. With all the various information circling in the media it's hard to pin down what exactly good nutrition entails. "What is the best diet? And, "What is your diet?" are questions I get asked quite often. There is no one best diet for everyone, rather the best diet is the one that works best for you. However all good "diets" or good nutrition programs will focus on four key principals.

Controlling energy balance.

Focusing on Nutrient Density vs Caloric Density

Equal focus on Health, Body Composition and Performance

Outcome based/measurable and sustainable

Precision Nutrition

All good nutrition programs focus on controlling energy balance. In order to lose weight you must be burning more calories than you are consuming, therefore putting yourself into a state of negative energy balance. If you are consuming more calories than you are burning then you are in a positive energy balance.

Sounds pretty simple right?

Well in some ways it is. Staying in a negative energy balance for a prolonged period of time will help you lose weight but it also causes your metabolism to slow and your body to go into starvation mode and hang on to all the energy (fat) it can hang on to. So when you skip a meal your body may be using fat for energy. If you stay in this negative energy balance for a prolonged period of time the less effective it can be for fat loss. A severe negative energy balance also deprives your body of vital nutrients and can lead to nutrient deficiencies.

Not to mention when your body is in starvation mode it focuses less on the non-survival functions like the nervous system (brain) and reproductive system (self-explanatory). So you are unable to concentrate and critically think and your libido goes down the drain. On the other side, being in a state of positive energy balance all of the time has its own drawbacks. Overfeeding can lead to insulin resistance, increased blood pressure, increased cholesterol levels and even some cancers. A good nutrition program focuses on a neutral energy balance, over the long run, for optimal health and performance.

What Nutrient Density Is Best?

Nutrient density focuses on the overall quality of the foods we eat. Foods that help us control body composition are generally very nutrient dense (providing a substantial amount of macro and/or micro nutrients) and not very calorically dense (ratio of energy to the weight of the food.)

The bonus: most foods that help us control our body composition are also good for our health!

Spinach, broccoli, salmon, and eggs are all examples of high nutrient and low calorie ratio foods. It's no wonder most of these are listed as power or super foods on most nutrition plans. Things like soda, Oreos, and doughnuts are all high caloric foods that offer little or no benefit in the way of nutrition. This doesn't make them necessarily bad for you but no one could make the argument that these foods are "good for you."

As I mentioned above, eating a diet composed primarily of high nutrient density foods will not only reduce your waistline but also provide many health benefits. Foods high in protein will help build muscle. Foods

containing good fats will help with improve brain health. Getting more nutrients from whole foods means the systems in your body will get what they need to function properly. Foods high in nutrients also leave you feeling full or satiated for longer periods of time. This makes it easier to not overeat and helps control appetite. Focusing on WHAT you eat can help eliminate calorie counting, because you are only eating foods high in nutrient value. Which can alleviate the psychological stress associated with the traditional form of “calorie counting” and “dieting.”

Health, Body Composition, & Performance

Good nutrition has an equal focus on health, body composition, and performance. This means each aspect is just as important as the other. Many people begin an exercise and nutrition program with the goal of getting a six-pack with little emphasis on the health and performance aspects. Some programs will improve body composition while sacrificing health and performance, but having a single minded focus can lead to negative long term consequences. Such is the case with the severe negative energy balance mentioned earlier.

Someone focused only on body composition may wish to take a “fat burning” supplement not knowing the long term repercussions of this decision. Many times these supplements cause liver or kidney damage as well as strain on the nervous system. More importantly even the supplement companies that sell these supplements recommend taking them in short doses and for a short duration. And once use is stopped the results gained while taking the product are lost.

Another side of the coin would be when someone who is focused solely on athletic performance takes performance enhancing drugs to give them a competitive edge. These drugs would probably also improve body composition but not to the detriment of one’s health, which in turn inhibits long term progress and may lead to health concerns. How you look influences how you feel and move. How you look can also be an indication about the physiological process that is going on inside your body. A good nutrition program should involve strategies to build lean muscle mass, lower body fat, lower blood lipid levels, increase good cholesterol, and reduce the risk of lifestyle disease. People should adopt healthy strategies at their own pace and not look for shortcuts.

Nutrition Program: Measuring Progress

The last principal involves measuring the progress of the nutrition program. A nutrition plan must be outcome based, honest, and sustainable for the individual. This means the program must be results based, and one that you should be able to follow for the long-term, and be able to track and have some form of accountability so you can be honest about what you are tracking.

Most people drastically underestimate the amount of calorie dense foods they eat and overestimate the amount of nutrient dense foods they eat. They only way to know what and how much you are eating is to track what you are putting in your mouth. What gets tracked gets measured, what gets measured gets managed and what gets managed gets improved. Keeping a journal will hold you accountable and keep you honest. It is important to be completely honest with what you are eating and putting in the journal. This honesty will tell if the plan is working. If your adherence to the plan is high but results are low then the plan needs to change because the plan is not working. Some adjustment must be made to produce

the desired outcome. If adherence is low... well then you have no clue if the plan is good and you are just not executing it properly or if the plan does need to be adjusted.

A Good Nutrition Program Will Produce Results

Results are everything. A good nutrition program will produce results. Food journaling doesn't have to be mandatory all the time. If someone has had unhealthy issues with food in the past they may consider avoiding journaling. However keeping a food journal is the most accurate way to see if your program is producing the results you desire. Lastly a good nutrition program needs to be sustainable. It must produce results consistently over time. The goal and dynamics may change therefore the plan must be adjusted accordingly but the results must be consistently measured and shown over time.

You can see how these principles fit into any successful nutrition program. If you don't know where to start check out our clean eating guidelines. We encourage our members to follow these guidelines and track their food with the My Fitness Pal App. Remember these are guidelines, not rules and the app is easy and fun. Remember it's less important to choose and stick to one diet exclusively. This has driven many people to a state of "hangry." Follow the principals listed above when planning a nutrition program. Start with small changes and build on these changes.



Commit to Be Fit

Program Guidelines

Process Goals

Eat clean 25 days this month.

25 workouts this month.

10 min smr/mobility work every day.

Turn in weekly/monthly plan or food journal each week/month if applicable.

FB post or clear with chris/josh at beginning of the month and again at end of the month to check progress.

My goal is to eat CLEAN for _____ days this month.

My goal is to get _____ workouts this month at Hustle Fitness.

Performance goal for first quarter of 2014. New performance goal every 3 months. (ex. Shamrock Shuffle)

Outcome Goals

Performance improvement: _____

Body Composition: _____

Day	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S
Training							
Meal 1							
Meal 2							
Meal 3							
Snack							
Snack							

-At end of month did you meet your goals? If not what stood in your way?

MEAL GUIDELINES

The following guidelines should be followed to each day as often as possible. Ask yourself before each meal if you are complying to these guidelines. The more strictly you adhere to these guidelines, the more likely you will be to reach your desired results.

1. A lean protein source should be included in each meal. **20-30g per meal**
2. A generous portion of vegetables should be included in each meal. **1-2 handfuls**
3. Starchy carbs should only be consumed during your first meal or post-workout (substitute extra veggies or fruit). **No More than 20g per meal.**
4. Get adequate servings of fats from animal fats, olive oil, mixed nuts, flax seed oil (these may not be a part of every meal, but should be eaten every day.) **10-20g per meal**
5. Drink 2 glasses of a 0 calorie beverage with each meal.
6. Meals should be made from whole foods. Processed foods should be avoided as often as possible.
7. Avoid eating meals that are not planned or you did not prepare.
8. If you find it hard to avoid binging during meals, try eating a handful of mixed nuts 20 minutes before any meal. The healthy fats will take the edge off your hunger. (Make sure you calculate for the calories from the nuts as they are calorically dense.)
9. Limit Alcohol consumption to 1 drink a day.
10. Whether it is due to aggravation or boredom, avoid emotional eating.

MEAL OPTIONS

2-3 breakfast options

3-5 lunch/dinner options

2-3 snack options

Use these choices to build your meal plan for the week.

The Atkins website listed below is a great guide for meal planning and has a convenient meal planning application

Online Resources

<http://www.atkins.com>

<http://www.precisionnutrition.com>

<http://www.mapmyfitness.com>

<http://www.myfitnesspal.com>

5 Refreshing Reasons To Drink More Water

One of the most important habits you can establish is to start drinking water on a regular basis. Whether your goal is to run a marathon or to lose 30lbs, drinking more water is a key habit you can develop to improve your health and get closer to your goals.

Water plays a part in most of the chemical reactions in your body. Every cell in your body needs water to work properly. Water aids in digestion, absorption, circulation, transportation of nutrients, and body temperature regulation. All vitamins and minerals are fat or water soluble, therefore water helps you get more energy from the foods you eat.

Benefits of Drinking More Water



Control Calories

Water helps control calories. Drinking water with each meal helps “fill you up” and control how much you consume.

Improve Performance

Water improves performance. Maintaining a proper fluid-electrolyte balance helps prevent dehydration and improves performance. Drinking the proper amount of water helps regulate your electrolyte level, which aids muscle action.

Look Younger

Water helps keep you looking young. Water makes up 64% of your skin and acts as a protective barrier. When we become dehydrated our skin can become flakey or cracked. So drink plenty of water if you want young glowing skin.

Cleanse Toxins

Water helps your kidneys cleanse your body. Water helps your kidneys flush toxins out of your body. So stop spending hundreds of dollars on sugary juice “cleanses” and start buying more bottled water.

Stay Regular

Water also prevents constipation. So if you are having trouble in the bathroom start drinking more water and you can save yourself some time and pain in the restroom.

How to get more water in your diet

So we know drinking water is important but how do we drink more of it? The goal should be to get three litres a day but you may need to adjust this based on activity level, where you live and/or season.

- Drink water with each meal. This can be an easy way to get more water. Every time you grab your plate grab a glass. (this also helps control how much you eat as mentioned above.)
- Set a timer on your phone. If you are trying to get 3 litres figure out how many hours you are awake and divide this so you are drinking the allotted amount every two hours.
- Eat more fruits and veggies. Oranges, cucumbers, leafy greens are all filled with water. Try snacking on these throughout the day to increase water intake.
- Buy a cool water bottle (or put a cool sticker on it) and keep it at your desk. This way you will always have it around and want to keep it near.

Win The Battle Of The Bulge... Proven Pro Strategies

The days between Halloween and New Years Day are when people report the most weight gain throughout the year. It can be hard to avoid the common pitfalls with so many holiday parties and get-togethers with friends after work. Here are some things to keep in mind to help you keep the weight off (or even lose a few lbs) this holiday season.

Have a Goal

Sure, you want to avoid the dreaded holiday season weight gain, but that is not a specific goal, in fact, it is a general goal that most people's share... and we see how that has not worked for most people in the past. Goals that are more specific are more likely to be achieved. What is your weight and waistline? Maintaining those throughout the holiday season is more specific. Dropping 5 pounds of body fat and dropping two jean sizes may seem ambitious, but they are specific goals and can be achieved with focus, planning and action.

Make a plan

Have a plan set up to remind you of what you will need to take place in order for you to reach your goal. Whether the goal is to maintain or lose a few pounds, have a plan in place to help guide you through the

next two months. Here are some things to consider when making your plan. How many parties are you attending? This can help you identify which days might present the biggest barriers to reaching your goals. We aren't saying you shouldn't enjoy yourself, but anticipating tougher moments will prepare you to make wiser decisions when you are trying to stick to your goals adjust your meals preceding those events. Adjusting your meals on those days can go a long way toward making sure you don't crash and burn.

What meals are you planning to make for yourself? Taking control of your diet by planning and preparing healthy meals for yourself will make it easier to be sure you are eating a well balanced diet that provides enough nutrition to sustain your will power during the moments of temptation.

Eat plenty of protein, vegetables and healthy fats. These foods will help keep you full and energized. It is important to give your body proper nutrients so you are able to maintain energy levels and keep our metabolism running like a fat burning machine.

Establish Easy & Healthy Habits

Along with this plan you will need to establish new habits to help you along the way. An easy habit to develop is taking a fish oil every day. The DHA in fish oil has been shown to provide multiple benefits to active individuals. From nutrient transport to improved memory and reaction times to improved mood and immune system, this small change in habit can help set you up for big success.

Make sure you are getting enough protein. Not eating enough protein can lead to an inability to build and/or maintain lean muscle mass and/or increase body fat. At least 1-2 grams of protein for every kilogram of bodyweight is recommended for active individuals.

Make sure you make a large pile of vegetables on your plate with every meal. Vegetables contain vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals, which help with various bodily functions including, hormone release, antioxidant production, nutrient absorption. A diet high in fruits and vegetables will keep you full and give you the energy you need to accomplish daily tasks and stay strong.

Stay active

Emotional well being plays a large role in how you eat during the holiday season. Exercise and increased activity levels will not only boost your metabolism, but keep you mentally focused on succeeding during this challenging time of year. Try to get in at least three challenging workouts a week. They should be focused on resistance training to maintain muscle mass and increase caloric burn during and after your workouts. Adding 30 minutes of walking a day will also help maintain focus, relieve stress and burn a few extra calories. Wear a pedometer or Fit Bit to track your steps each day and monitor your activity level. Have a goal for how much energy you will expend (calories you will burn) on each given day. Walking 10,000 steps a good place to start.

Minimize the Damage

There are going to be times when you will indulge. Don't put too much pressure on yourself to be perfect, but try to avoid binging. Here are strategies to help prevent that from happening.

Avoid unhealthy snacking

Holiday treats, candies, starch filled side dishes, and chips and dips tend to get eaten simply because they are around. You may only nibble on small portions, but doing so repeatedly adds up and it can be easy to lose track of just how much you are actually eating. Most snacking is done out habit rather than hunger which makes it easier to indulge without limiting the total intake. A handful veggies and nuts can keep you nourished and satisfy your desire to snack without sabotaging your progress.

Get rid of the leftovers

Throwing away food may seem wasteful, but indulging in guilty pleasures, leads to excess caloric intake. Those foods offer little benefit, lead to feelings of regret and shame, which in turn, can lead to binging. The unhealthy leftovers can be huge barriers and should be thrown in the garbage as quickly as possible, because, let's face it, that is what they are. Sure, there may be people all over the world who are starving, but I wouldn't let them eat that crap either.

Keep Track of your Food Intake

Many people underestimate how many calories they consume on a daily basis. This is common during the holiday season when calorically dense foods are staples of many social gatherings. Halloween parties, Thanksgiving dinners and December holiday parties are notorious for sweets and comfort foods. The caloric impact of these foods combined with the large portions is a dangerous combination when trying to make it throughout the holiday season without gaining weight. Tracking your food intake can help limit the damage done, by keeping you aware of the implications of the foods you are eating. Using a food journal app like My Fitness Pal is an easy and fun way to monitor your calories and nutrient balance. Exercise will help burn some calories, but you can't outwork a bad diet. Food journaling can seem tedious, but our members at Hustle Fitness have found that doing so can yield great results when they done consistently. If you are not tracking what you are putting in your body it will be much harder to measure your caloric intake, which makes it that much harder to make adjustments along the way.

Get out of the House

Parties are minefields of temptation. If you are the type of person that will not be able to resist the urge to graze as you are sitting around with friends and family, go for a walk. Walking before and after meals will help you focus on your goals, avoid grazing, digest large meals and burn some extra calories. You can use that time to get away from the food and the people that you want to avoid. It is also an opportunity to catch up with family or friends that you have not seen for a while. Invite someone along and spend that time reconnecting.

Don't go it alone

Don't be afraid to reach out for help when you need it. We are all human and it is unrealistic to have success 100% of the time. The trick is to keep moving forward when we do experience failure. If we never quit, we never truly fail. Most people will give up before they reach their maximum potential. Don't be one of them. Make a commitment to see this till the end. If you fall short of your goal, take that as a lesson and learn from it so you can make a better effort next time.

Get a workout buddy

Find a friend who has this same mindset or hire a personal trainer or join a group focused on exercise and nutrition. Whatever you do find a result based way to help keep you motivated and hold you accountable. Finding that someone to help keep you on track can be the difference between achieving success and abandoning your goal.

Get Rid Of Lower Belly Fat And Bust These Belly Flab Myths

I have been a personal fitness trainer in Chicago for almost 8 years now. I can't begin to count the number of times I have been approached by someone in the gym asking how do I get six-pack abs? OR I just can't seem to lose this last bit of lower belly fat. My response is usually along the lines of that can be the hardest to lose and usually the last to go, but it's all about consistency with workouts and nutrition.

Occasionally someone will ask what is the best exercise to do to target that area? I tell them it doesn't work that way and you can't spot reduce body fat. This is a common myth people have about dealing with fat loss. It's not always easy to dispel these myths or "big fat lies" but if you can learn to adopt strategies that work and develop support systems you can easily pick up healthy habits to help you reach your goals.

Unfortunately there is an overwhelming supply of gimmicks out there promising to blast belly fat from your waist line. As I mentioned earlier you can't spot reduce, so avoid any "AB" training system like the plague. Having a strong core is important and plays a role in fat loss but most abs specific machines won't do anything to help strengthen your core, let alone give you a six pack.

Burning belly fat is less about abs work and more about movement. There are two problems with doing a ton of sit-ups. First they do not work a lot of muscle groups and do not burn a ton of calories. You are better off doing compound exercises like pushups and squats. Your core and abs are burning calories and building muscle while you are still working on your six pack. Full body routines are more effective than dedicating a whole workout to abs. Secondly crunch type exercises aren't good for your posture.

Most of us lean over a computer all day. We need to do exercise to pull our shoulders and hips back not push forward even more. When people do crunches or sit-ups they are overworking their hip flexors and tensor fasciae latae instead of engaging the abdominals. Try instead holding a plank while squeezing your glutes and walling up your abs. This will be a better way to strengthen your core and not leave you looking like Quasimodo.

Fat loss is more about resistance and intensity than it is about duration of exercise. A lot of people think doing an hour of cardio is best for fat loss. They could get more of a metabolic response from less time spent doing resistance training. For example a dead lift will use the large muscles in your legs and create more tension. This will create a stronger metabolic response just like doing multiple resistance exercises in a routine to have an effective fat loss. Try alternating between upper and lower body exercises like pushups and reverse lunges. This allows you to rest one muscle group while the other is working and pack harder work in a shorter period of time.

While it is important to put intensity into your workouts it is important to know where your current level of fitness falls. Just because you watch a trainer on TV “kick someone’s ass” or hear about a program that is the “hardest on the planet” does not mean it will be effective for you. A problem with some programs is the fact that if someone is not ready to perform the movements at the desired intensity the workout could do more harm than good. The harder the workout the more recovery time you will need. If it takes you a week to recover that means you are spending six days without working out hard. Your body won’t have recovered 100% so you won’t be able to train at 100%. If you are continuing to tear down your body and not spending time recovering you do more damage to your joints and body. This will put you even further away from seeing your six packs. The point I’m trying to make is you don’t have to work out hard every day. You don’t get stronger from work in the gym alone. You get stronger from training and recovery.

When we do resistance training we are tearing down muscle and trying to repair it through nutrition and rest. In one week I will do 3-4 hard workouts and spend time each day doing mobility, foam rolling, and stretching. It is important to move each and every day for tissue quality and recovery. But if you are working as hard as possible every day you’re never give yourself a chance to recover.

The best advice I could give on getting a six pack has nothing to do with exercise but with nutrition. Too many people start a workout program and do nothing to help reach their goals in terms of nutrition. The old adage is true, abs are made in the kitchen not in the gym. Healthy eating will supplement work done in the gym or personal training studio. Eating for fat loss is not as complicated as it seems. Come up with a plan that will work. Meals and snacks should consist of lean protein good fats and vegetables. It is best to keep things simple and find a few recipes that work and stick to them. When these become a staple in your daily routine you can find new appealing recipes. Think of this as a lifestyle change (long term) as opposed to a diet (short term). Diets don’t last. We are looking to be consistent with making healthy choices. Change isn’t easy but if you develop strategies that work and find support systems you can easily adopt healthy habits and stick to them.

PERSONAL GOALS AND SUCCESS

Set Goals..... An Outline For Life

I've been personal training and coaching athletes for over 10 years now. One of the most difficult parts of my job is eliciting the small lifestyle changes that need to take place in order to get someone the results they desire. Most people who walk in our doors are willing to put in the work in the gym, which is a big step all in itself. However, to see tangible results, significant changes to nutrition and activity levels may need to occur alongside work done inside the gym.

There are numerous methods out there to help you meet your goals – and it might seem overwhelming deciding which one is right for you – but they all have certain principles in common. There are many ways to get to Soldier Field, for example. You can take a cab, train, bus, car, walk... but you have to know where you are going, decide how you are getting there, find your route, and step out the door to get there.

What do you truly Desire?

The first thing you must do is decide what is important to YOU. What do you desire? What are your core values? How do you want to be remembered by the world? What do you want written on your tombstone? These questions may give you some insight to what is important to you and what you are willing to make sacrifices for.

I like to make the comparison of going on a blind date. What are your non-negotiable traits you're looking for? How do you specifically want to present yourself to this person and what deal breakers would prevent you from seeing this person again? The same would apply for a job interview. You wouldn't want to work for a company that doesn't treat you how you want to be treated or that doesn't align themselves with your own growth and development. Make a list of the things you desire and determine which of these is most important. Write down how you would spend your perfect day and what you would need to accomplish it.

Goal Setting. Stop wishing, start doing.

After you decide what it is you desire the next step is to set a goal. What is this goal and why is it important to you? How will it help you achieve your desire? This is where it is important to understand the difference between process and outcome goals. Outcome goals are specific results where process goals act as checkpoints to get to the result. An outcome goal would be: I want to gain 10lbs of muscle. The process goal would be: I will eat 5 meals a day which contain the adequate amount of calories.

Accomplishing your process goals will help you achieve the outcome goal.

On a side note it's important to have equal goals from different aspects of life such as family/relationships, (how do you want your personal relationships to develop), personal development (what are you doing to improve your quality of life), career (what goals do you have for your career), fitness (are there any events you would like to participate in and/or are you confident in your appearance)? Having goals from different areas of your life helps to keep you balanced and happy. You are only as strong as your weakest link. An

example of someone who doesn't practice this balance is the person who is obsessed with work and never makes time for their family and friends. Another example is the person who spends waaaaayyyy to much time at the gym. Is either of these an example of someone you would have a drink with? Consistency and hard work are important but remember to keep a balance. If someone is focused too much on one aspect of their life, it is usually to cover a problem in one or several areas.

Seek Expert Advice

Tiger Woods, along with most other pro golfers, has a swing coach. Tiger Woods was at one time the best golfer in the world, but he has a coach who is not a better golfer than him. He uses this person's advice because this other person is an expert who knows what to look for and can break down his swing and make him better. If Tiger had a relationship coach maybe his personal relationships would have turned out differently.

After you have established your goal it's important to seek the advice of an expert. This expert is usually someone who has been there before, in some facet and acts as a voice of support along your journey. This person can help you establish a timeline and set realistic goals while holding you accountable. It is important to have someone or something set in place to make sure you have a realistic timeline to reach your goals as well as keep you on track when the "shit hits the fan". This mentor or coach can also check your progress along the way so you can see if the plan you set in place is working as expected.

Failing to plan is planning to fail

The old adage couldn't be truer in relation to any aspect of success "Failing to plan is planning to fail." After you have sought the advice of an expert and have some means to hold yourself accountable it is time to set a plan in place. How far out can you plan? 1 yr? 3 months? 3 years? It may seem difficult to plan longer down the road but it's important to know that although distant plans may be vague, it is better to have a direction towards which to move than no direction whatsoever. The further out you are able to plan the more opportunity you will have to see what works. Things will come up that will stand in your way. Usually it is how you respond to these barriers that determine your success rather than your level of motivation during the preparation phase.

You have to stay committed for a long period of time and be willing to put in the work. Keep your desires in mind and always focus on the goal and accomplishing your process goals. Consistency is one key to success. There is no way to know if a plan is working if there is no consistency.

Take Action Now!

Don't hesitate! Take action now while motivation is high to accomplish your goal and get what you desire. Even if your plan is not yet fully perfected, take the necessary steps today! Ask yourself "What can I do today to EARN my results?" Ask yourself this out loud each day and make an honest effort to accomplish this. Start now! Remember it usually takes 2-4 weeks to build a habit and the chances of the habit sticking drastically decrease when you add more than one habit. So challenge yourself but be realistic.

“Don’t wait for the perfect time to start, start and maybe the time will be perfect.”

Story of Success

There is a story of a man 50 years old who was diagnosed with cancer. He decided what was important to him (being able to support his family if something happened to him) made a decision, sought expert advice, devised a plan, took action, and rolled with the punches (literally) when they came up, and stayed consistent in his approach to achieving his goal.

People who have seen the show *Breaking Bad* will know that I’m talking about Walter White the character from the hit FX show. Now most of us will not agree with the chemistry teacher turned crystal meth kingpin’s methods but his approach to getting what he desired can clearly be outlined in what I just wrote. After finding out he had cancer Walt sought the advice of his DEA agent brother in law, Hank, as well as his former student and meth dealer, Jesse. Walt faced many tough decisions while executing his plan but he stayed committed to his goal and in the end... I guess that’s up for debate, but he did make the money to leave behind for his loved ones.

There are many real life stories that follow these principles behind success. I’m sure everyone reading this had to apply these principles (maybe without knowing it) to finish school, or play an instrument, or learn a new skill. Whatever your goal or desire, use this outline to get what you deserve out of life!

Importance Of Focus In Physical Training And How To Improve It

Focus, the word gets tossed around so much in gyms that it’s almost become a cliché, but ***Focus is the most important tool you can apply to your workout routine.***

Focus and attention to detail during a workout is the key to getting better and making long term progress. The more intently you are able to focus, or be mindful on the small details of the exercises (as well as the details of the program), the more you will be able to build success. “The journey of 1000 miles starts with one step”— you want to make sure each step is purposeful so you stay on track.

Eliminate distractions during your workouts

One important element of Focus is the ability to stay in the present. ***Eliminate distractions*** like reading on the elliptical during your workout. (Better yet—eliminate the elliptical all together!) Focus on being in the now and what you are doing NOW. Focus on the task at hand and clear your mind from distractions.

Don’t get stuck worrying about what happened at work or what you need to do when you get home. Letting your mind drift is a sure fire way to get a shitty workout. Dedicate this time to yourself and put all your effort into the workout.

Focus on yourself and what you’re accomplishing

This is a big part of why many people they feel better after a workout: they are able to put all the crap that happened during the day aside for a time and ***Do Work***. Focusing on your body and intentionally working on a skill will not only improve the quality of movement and exercise, but it will also help you let go of all

the shit you might be dealing with during the day. If your boss yelled at you or your wife got mad or you feel like your kids don't appreciate you or *whatever*, let go of it all and focus your energy on the workout. You are becoming stronger, physically and mentally, and moving better than the day before if you focus on getting better. You put all the other distractions aside and clear your mind for an hour. It's time to focus on yourself—to focus on feeling good about what you have done.

Treat your workout like a practice

On a recent [Tim Ferris' podcast](#), he spoke with world famous instructor, [Pavel Tsatsouline](#). What stuck with me most about the conversation was Pavel saying “**Treat your workout like a practice.**” This is great advice that ties into focus. People should view each workout as a practice session and each exercise as a skill. Skills require attention and development. “Shutting off” and going through the motions may still increase heart rate, but without *focus*, you will never see improvement. Additionally, getting better at a skill is a great way to stay motivated. Lack of motivation (which is always coupled with the failure to see results) is most often the reason people quit before they reach their goals. The *focus* required to treat a workout as practice will help you see the tangible results of a developing body (whether in form or ability) that fuels the feedback loop of motivation and results.

Keep your eye on the prize

Lastly, the workout should be a means to an end not an end all unto itself. There should be a reason why you are doing what you are doing. Yes, it is important as described above, to stay focused on the workout itself, but not without the framework of an end goal. In open water swimming, athletes **focus** on a landmark on the horizon to keep from getting pulled off course. This holds true with your workouts as well—make sure you **focus** on your long term goal to keep from getting sidetracked by the ebb and flow of daily pressures, and to ensure that you are doing the appropriate work to reach your destination.

For example: a boxing class taught by a legitimate instructor focused on skill development will not only give a “great workout” but will also develop some sport specific boxing skills, which will be tangible, even if you never plan on stepping in a ring. Compare this to one of those cardio boxing classes taught at one of those big box gyms where the instructor is yelling at everyone and just making people with sloppy form do a bunch of burpees for the sake of doing them. Which class would you stick with for 6 months or a year?

If you are not **focusing** on developing *skills*, you will likely plateau and or lose interest in whatever your initial goal might have been.

Start by improving with progressions

Getting better at exercises like the plank and push up help you do more work in less time; becoming more efficient, burning more body fat, and building more muscle. The goal should be to turn your body into a more efficient machine. No one gets better from sloppy form. In the long run sloppy form can hurt your progress. If you need help getting started here are some plank and push up progressions to help you get stronger and improve your push up:

These progressions will help you improve in a multitude of areas, and they will make your body stronger and more efficient. I like them because, if done with *mindfulness* and **focus**, they will let you practice practicing, by **focusing on focus**.

- 1.) **Work** on getting better at something with each workout.
- 2.) **Remove Distractions!**
- 2.) **Set an intention** for your workout and maintain focus to accomplish it.
- 3.) **Don't lose sight of where you want to be**—check that point on the horizon and keep pushing toward it!

Keeping this focus will get you so much closer to your fitness goals and enhance other aspects of your life!

Ride The Elephant To Success

A few weeks ago I ran into a friend at a bar here in Chicago. This particular friend had for a very, very, brief time trained at my studio. She joined last summer, came inconsistently for about 2-3 weeks and then told me she didn't have the time to commit to working out and couldn't afford the gym membership. This happens, not everyone is in a place where they can commit to a workout program so I didn't take it personally. But here she was telling me how she wanted to come back to train at my studio and how she couldn't afford the membership right now but it was her new year's resolution to get in shape and run a marathon this year.

While we were talking she pointed out how she was embarrassed to be eating a plate of cheese sticks in front of me (I would have never noticed) and expressed shame about being in this bar for the last 5 hrs. Now let me say I am not judging this woman. I was in this bar drinking beer and having a good time with other friends watching some playoff football. I'm not a big cheese stick eater but I indulge like everyone else, much less when I have a goal in place or something to work towards (I am taking a vacation to the Dominican in a couple months.)

Maybe this was a cheat day for this woman; maybe she is starting her program the day after we spoke. These are all reasonable explanations. For all I know she could be very dedicated at this point. I haven't seen her since so I have no idea if she is still pursuing this goal or not. The sad fact is that many people each year set resolutions and never follow-through, or become frustrated and give up. This led me to think about the challenge of motivation. Why some people fall short of their goals and lose sight of what they thought was important while others stick with it and experience success.

7 main reasons why goals fail

I don't really like the term resolution. I prefer to talk in the term of goals. I have identified several main reasons why goals fail. Pretty much every reason someone sets out to make a positive change and then fails can be grouped into one of these three categories.

Your goal is unclear and/or unfocused: Someone might say I want to feel better about myself. But what does that mean to them? They may actually be comfortable if they lost 50lbs but if we don't set a clear goal (I want to lose 50lbs) it is hard to establish a plan to accomplish this. On the other hand if someone comes in one week and wants to lose 20lbs, and then say they want to get bigger arms the next week, the issue is focus. This person has two different goals and will need a different plan to accomplish each. It is imperative to success to have a clear plan and to remain focused.

You lack the knowledge to accomplish the goal: Every successful man or woman has people around him or her who are, in some way, greater than themselves. The best businessmen have great advisors. The best athletes have great coaches. If you are trying to lose weight you should seek the advice of an expert who has done the same or has helped others do the same.

You lack a support system to see things through till the end: Times get tough. Change is hard. If you want to be successful in any endeavor you will need to be committed for a long period of time. Can you do it alone? Possibly. Would surrounding yourself with positive, like-minded people increase your chance of success? Absolutely!

Riding an elephant as a metaphor for change

In the book "Swith" Dan and Chip Heath explore how change is made when change is hard. In their research they discover people have two separate systems in their brains, a rational system and an emotional system. The brothers use a metaphor of an elephant carrying a rider along a path to describe the systems and how they apply to change. The rider is our rational side, the elephant is the emotional or instinctive side, and the path is the environment in which change will occur. The elephant can be stubborn and will often fight with the rider on which direction to go. Which is why we eat that doughnut for breakfast when we know we shouldn't or why we wake up with a hangover after staying out all night drinking. The rider is telling us we should go home so we can be productive the next day, the elephant is saying "No man, I want to partayyyyyy!"

The rational side of our brain (rider) is responsible for our self control. The problem is the rider is small and he's trying to control our emotions, which can be hard to control (elephant). This self control has a

limit just like your muscles when you are lifting a heavy weight. The rider can control the elephant for only so long and only if the path is clear. The key is to direct the rider. Have a clear path to follow and acquire the knowledge and support to keep on the path. The elephant needs motivation to want to stay on the path. Motivation can come in waves so it is important to find ways to keep going when things get tough. So we must find direction for our rational brain and find ways to keep our emotional brain motivated along the journey.

The key to taking control and setting new fitness habits

The key to directing your rider is to establish new habits to help you move in the right direction. Habits are what will separate the person who can accomplish anything from the person who keeps repeating the same cycle over and over again and never gets results. Creating habits will lead to productivity. But creating these habits and sticking with them can be hard. In the book “the power of less” Leo Babauta lists a step by step approach to establish new habits.

Start small and set limits: Set a limit on what you will do each day. Setting limits can help you be more effective and productive with your time. If your goal is to lose weight and you want to start working out you may try to commit to a workout program that is unrealistic. Instead try spending 15 min every morning going for a walk. This is easy to accomplish because it’s a small commitment (15 min.) Will this help you lose weight? Of course. Will you have to do more eventually to keep losing weight? Yes. But you can always build upon this habit.

Eliminate what stands in the way of your goal: If you are trying to lose weight and you have a fridge full of ice cream and beer get rid of it. Fill it with healthy foods. If you can’t work out because you have pain in your knee, get it checked out and start working out. If you have friends that are toxic find new friends. Some of these may take time and patience to fully eliminate, and they may not need to be entirely eliminated, but start by setting limits as above and make progress each day to eliminate what is holding you back and replace it with something that will build you up.

Focus: This is the most important aspect. Stay focused on your goal. Whatever it is make time each day to focus only on this one goal. It is best to focus on 1 goal at a time for 1 month at a time. If you want to focus on eating better focus on building one habit. Eat 1 vegetable with each meal. And focus on only this aspect for one month. Focus also relates to what is in front of you. Focusing on one thing at a time allows you to be more productive and get more done. While writing this blog I eliminated the distractions around me so I can focus solely on this writing. If I was watching Game of Thrones while typing you probably wouldn’t be reading this.

Write it down: Post on an online forum, blog, social media, somewhere where people will see it. This not only holds you accountable it helps reinforce the commitment to yourself. Be honest about your struggles and successes. There is someone out there who can relate and encourage you. When people respond positively to your posts this can help reinforce your desire for achievement. These interactions help keep you motivated.

The secret behind staying motivated

The elephant, our emotional side, needs to stay motivated along the path for us to experience success. The best motivators are things we can be really passionate about. The things we look forward to. The things that make us get out of bed in the morning. Ask yourself why this goal is important to you? If your goal is to lose weight why does that matter to you? Wedding? Vacation? Are you sick of what you see when you look in the mirror? Did someone you love die from a lifestyle related disease and you don't want that for yourself? It's important to explore what really motivates you and understand it. If you can't maintain the same level of passion throughout the process you will fall off track. It's important to really know your true motivations and go back to it when the going gets tough. Sometimes things get in the way and you find it hard to get back on track. Shit happens! How do you ignite the passion again?

Leo Babauta has a few helpful tips:

- Stay accountable to a group of people who can help you find motivation when the going gets tough.
- Replace negative thoughts with positive. Recognize when you are going into negative self-talk and replace it with positive vibes. "You can do it!"
- Focus on the benefits. If your goal is working out focus on how good you feel after the workout and how much better your day is when you complete it.
- Remember what made you passionate about change in the first place.
- Set small goals along the way. They are less intimidating and more manageable than one big goal.
- Increase your knowledge base. If you want to lose weight read about weight loss. It will help you focus and inspire you.
- Find like-minded friends. You will encourage each other to success.
- Celebrate success! Every little milestone is a success! Reward yourself. If the goal is to lose weight, take a cruise when you reach your weight loss goal.
- Get through the low points. Remember motivation comes like a wave. There will be highs and lows. Stay committed.
- Get help from a professional. We all know people who are experts. Find someone who can help you see the goal through till the end.

- Do not let yourself fall off the wagon for more than one day. One day off is understandable. Everyone slips up from time to time. Don't let it happen two days in a row.
- Visualize success. Visualize a clear picture of what you want and how you will get it and how good it will feel. Do this every day.
- Be aware of the urges to quit and have a plan to overcome them. What will you focus on when you want to quit? What will you do? Instead of having that desert go for a walk, or play a game of cards with a friend.
- Find the fun. Find the fun in the things that are good for you, the things that will help you accomplish your goal.

HIIT TRAINING

Work Smarter Not Harder: Total Body Workouts

It is pretty common knowledge that there are countless positive benefits gained from regular physical activity. For the busy professional trying to maintain a proper work and life balance, finding extra time and motivation to work out is not only difficult—it often seems impossible. The fitness and health industry has responded by dedicating more time and research into developing fun, total body workouts that maximize the benefits of physical activity while minimizing the amount of time required to reap those benefits. This way, busy professionals can get healthy and fit, without taking too much time away from work, or the family.

Why total body workouts are becoming so popular

This revolutionary training style is seen everywhere from home programs like P90X and Insanity, to gyms that offer Cross Fit or High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT). Total body workout routines revolve around a concept very familiar to a working professional. Work smarter, not harder. These workout routines emphasize more effective exercises that utilize multiple major muscle groups, offering a total body workout in a shorter time. The shorter workout means the busy professional does not have to spend hours at the gym to see results. Workouts are easy to schedule around. They are a great way to start the day or can also easily fit in during a lunch break, or the kids' piano lessons.

Effective workouts for busy professionals

For professionals trying to combat the monotony of the traditional 9 to 5, boredom is a major obstacle to staying motivated to getting or staying fit. The most effective total body workout routines are designed to continually offer new challenges to the participant. Routines incorporate exercises from different modalities of strength training such as body weight, kettle bells, barbell, and often finishing with metabolic work such as traditional cardio or kick boxing. In a single day, participants may do bodyweight exercises, traditional weight lifting, cardio, yoga, Pilates, even martial arts moves. This means total body workout routines are more likely to stay fun, fresh, and invigorating.

The most effective total body workout routines have multiple difficulty levels to make sure a participant is always making progress. Because they are designed to challenge participants of all fitness levels, from beginners to professional athletes, each exercise typically offers variations to ensure every workout is safe and effective.

This does not mean the routines are a walk in the park. The increased intensity requires participants to continually dig deeper to find the strength to do their best. For many, this is an empowering experience that not only increases confidence at the gym, but in other areas of their lives as well. Participants learn how to motivate themselves from within and tap into their full potential as they push themselves beyond their physical limitations every workout.

Why include total body workouts in your fitness regimen?

The effectiveness of a total body workout is the most compelling reason to include it into the work week. These routines are shown to boost metabolism for hours after the initial workout, while also increasing concentration and energy. This means a participant will burn more calories for the entire workday and feel much more focused and efficient in and out of the office. Moreover, participants who regularly utilize higher intensity total body workouts often see significant increases in muscle mass, and a decrease in body fat, all with a minimum investment of valuable time.

There are many different total body workout routines out there, but the science is simple: the harder your work, the less time it takes, and the more results you will see (as long as you are making time for adequate recovery). For the busy professional trying to do it all, the positive benefits are endless, and impossible to ignore.

HIIT Training Demystified

High intensity interval training or HIIT training methods have been used for many years. As with many fitness trends, what is old often becomes new again, and the current generation is likely to believe that they were the first to discover the methods that are most effective. It's almost impossible nowadays to pick up a health magazine or read a fitness blog without a mention of HIIT training or an example of a new interval training workout.

But what exactly constitutes a HIIT workout session?

What exercises should be incorporated? What are the advantages to training in this mode and what are the drawbacks associated with incorporating HIIT training in your workout routine? You would be wise to understand the answers to these questions before starting any intense training program.

You likely already have some experience with HIIT training

Most people who participated in track or cross-country running in their formative years can recall jogging and sprinting sessions that many coaches referred to as “fartlecks” or maybe having to run “wind sprints” in gym class or sports training. The goal was to improve cardiovascular capacity by using short bouts of all out effort followed by recovery periods or lower intensity work. These methods put a high demand on the body's aerobic and anaerobic systems. These methods can be very effective not only for sports conditioning, but for fat loss as well. After a quick history of HIIT training, we'll delve more into how HIIT is used for fat loss and very efficient total body workouts.

From the Olympics to the fitness studio, a brief history of HIIT training

HIIT Training is based on a 1996 study by Professor Izumi Tabata. (Yes the “tabata” workout protocol came from the professor who did the initial research) The study involved Olympic speed skaters using cycle ergometers and used a 2:1 work to rest ratio. During the work period, which lasted 20 seconds the athletes pedaled as hard as they possibly could and rested for 10 seconds. They performed this 4 times a week for 4 minutes at a time. This study showed the athletes training under these conditions exhibited a greater work capacity when compared to a similar group who trained for 30 minutes maintaining a steady state heart rate. Today this study is referenced many proponents of high intensity interval training. But coaches and trainers have moved these work and rest intervals to other methods and apparatus. Now work and rest intervals are applied to everything from cycling and running to plyometrics and traditional strength training exercises like squats and pushups.

Benefits of and physiology behind HIIT training (for the biology, and anatomy and physiology nerds in the room)

There are many benefits to HIIT training. Probably the most important benefit for athletes is the fact that the interval training has been shown to improve sports performance when practiced within the sports’ specific demands. The central nervous system as well as the cardiovascular system have also shown improved function and capacity the power generated during high intensity training stimulates muscle recruitment, builds muscle capacity and improves aerobic capacity (citation). The intensity of the exercises quickly overloads the muscles, which elevates the heart rate and relies on cardiovascular support . These short intense intervals can be valuable to an athlete who is trying to develop the bursts of strength and speed needed to excel in competition. Unfortunately for specific sports performance using cross-training exercise for interval purposes does not correlate to equal improvement in the athletes sport specific performance. For example, the cyclist used in the Tabata study showed improvement in cycling capacity, but that improvement does not correlate equally to their improvement in soccer or basketball, but capacity will still be improved to some degree.

Why is HIIT so effective for fat loss?

As the Tabatha study shows HIIT training is superior to steady state HR training when it comes to fat loss as well. Not only can you burn more calories in a shorter period of time using HIIT but these workouts have been shown to stimulate the metabolism for a longer period of time after the workout has ended. So your body will still be using energy more efficiently long after your workout has ended.

Some of the best aspects of HIIT training are what make it a good choice for a busy professional. If you are pressed for time you only need a few minutes to reap the benefits of a HIIT workout. They are also fun to do which helps keep you motivated and you can do these workouts anywhere with little or no equipment. At our Chicago gym, we use a variety of fitness equipment to conduct HIIT training in our personal training sessions. However, no equipment is necessary. So if you are traveling on a business trip for example, and you don’t have access to fitness equipment, you only need your own body weight to start a workout.

Drawbacks and contraindications to HIIT training

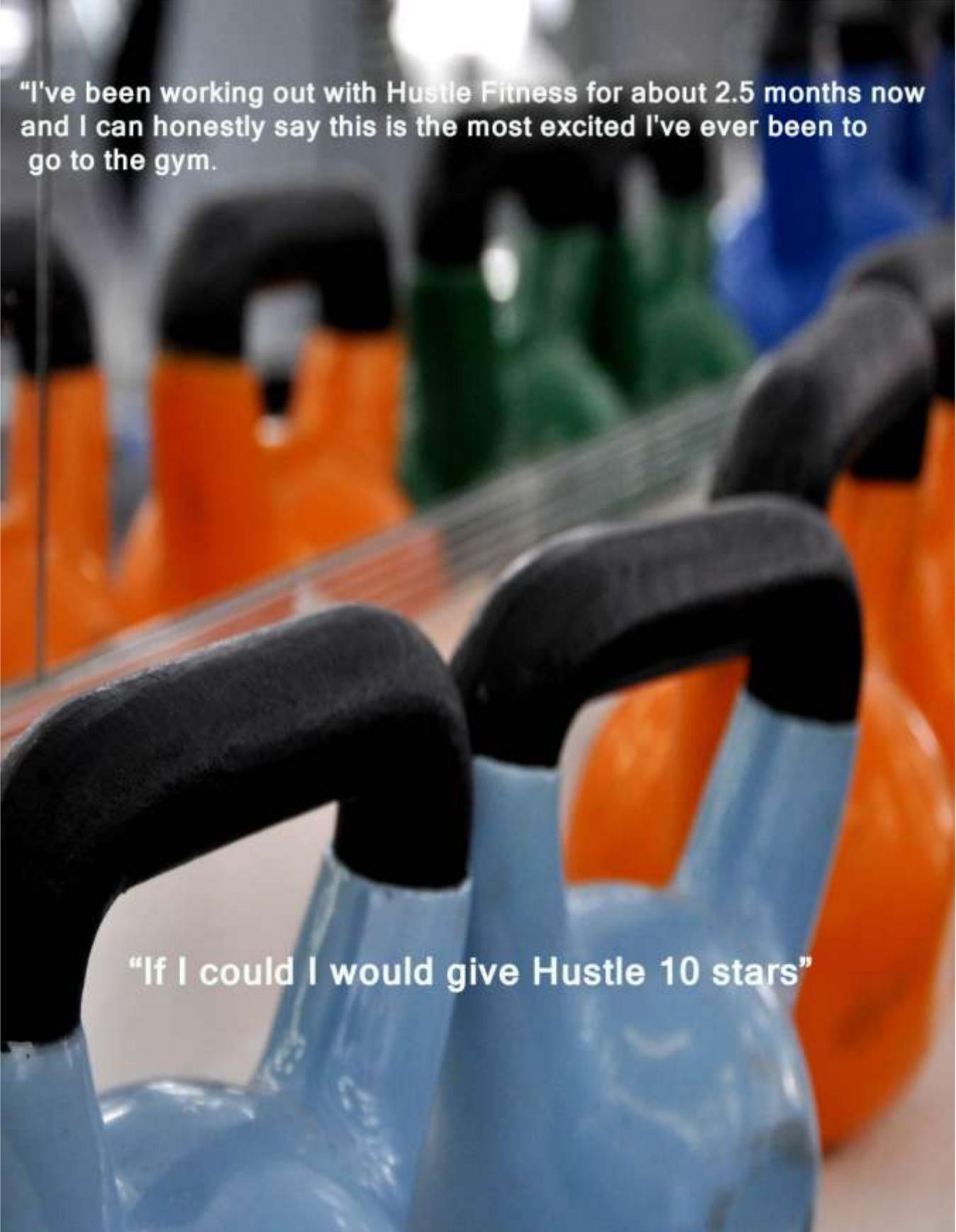
While it is hard to debate how effective HIIT training can be for fat loss there are drawbacks to this particular training style. Most of the HIIT workouts I see on TV infomercials and in magazines are not for beginners. There are contraindications you must consider before starting any program. With HIIT, overtraining is a huge concern. These workouts are intense in nature and adequate recovery time is needed. When intensity increases recovery time must increase as well. There is also the increased risk of injury. Many of the exercises commonly associated with HIIT training are advanced movements. If you are a beginner or are have taken a significant break from training I would suggest working on perfecting movement patterns first before incorporating HIIT training. The wrong movement or the right movement done the wrong way can prove detrimental for the untrained athlete.

How often HIIT training is suggested

While HIIT training can efficiently improve work capacity it can just as quickly lead to a plateau if it is done too much too often. HIIT training is an efficient and effective way to decrease body fat, but it can be taxing on the body. This is troublesome for someone who is trying to build muscle or “tone” (toning is building muscle). You become stronger after a weight training session while you are recovering. Lots of hit training means lots of recovery time and if you are trying to go both ways at the same time you will most likely go nowhere. However the right amount of HIIT can help you stay lean, while working in a program to maximize strength gains. Five to ten minutes of Interval training at the end of a strength training workout can have a huge effect, not only on your physique, but you health as well.

How we do HIIT training at our Chicago studio

At hustle fitness helping people move better and feel better comes first. We focus on getting our clients stronger and keeping them injury free. If you are not getting stronger you are getting weaker. on HIIT training and not on strength development will lead to a plateau or an injury. Interval training requires proper stretching and movement warm-ups before every session to ensure that our members are prepared and focused. We typically focus the first part of our personal training sessions on correcting movement patterns and increasing stability and mobility. The majority of each session is devoted to strength development and we generally finish each session with some form of HIIT training to end with a metabolic effect. These metabolic finishers typically last no more than 10 minutes. As a result the member benefits from building muscle mass and getting stronger and still reaps the benefits of interval training without zapping their energy and increasing recovery time.



"I've been working out with Hustle Fitness for about 2.5 months now and I can honestly say this is the most excited I've ever been to go to the gym."

"If I could I would give Hustle 10 stars"

Kettlebell Workouts, Back To The Basics

Over the last few years kettlebell training has grown in popularity. This is partly responsible due to the public affirmation by several celebrity trainers confirming the array of benefits and the versatility of the workouts. In some ways kettlebells are comparable to dumbbells; however, kettlebells offer increased movement and the use of momentum. Dumbbells are used for controlled movements, whereas the design of the kettlebell provides an open method to hold and move weight. Kettlebell workouts are become more popular largely due to their efficacy in their effectiveness in increasing power while burning fat.

For anyone unfamiliar with the shape of a kettlebell, imagine a small cannonball with a handle placed on top. This design offers significant advantages over the dumbbell. A dumbbell requires the center-of-gravity to rest in the hand in one specific point. In most cases, the hand has to remain balanced and move in a straight line to focus the weight on the working muscles. The kettlebell, on the other hand, distributes the weight equally throughout several different areas of motion. This provides an engaging workout that uses multi-directional motion and a wider spectrum of movement. For many users, the kettlebell offers unique exercises and training programs. The kettlebell offers a unique opportunity to perform certain highly effective exercises that would otherwise be impossible to perform with a dumbbell.

Kettlebell workout routines provide many exercises that are used to increase endurance and enhance cardiovascular benefits. An exercise that offers a total body workout is known as The Turkish Get Up. The TGU starts in a supine position, which is a position that requires the user to lie on the back. The exercise finishes with the user in an upright position with the arm locked overhead. The TGU exercise is an effective full body workout that is used for strengthening and stabilizing the shoulders as well as other muscles. The TGU helps keep the shoulders healthy and less vulnerable to injury.

One of the most popular ways to use the kettlebell is known as “the swing”. This exercise offers full body movement and is effective in many different workout programs. The swing is ideal for metabolic work that improves muscular strength while burning fat. This exercise is popular for working the ignored muscles on the back of the body. However, the swing also works the abs and stabilizes the core. The swing is different from other types of chain developers. This exercise allows users to train using a higher amount of reps and efficiently moves the hips to provide a higher training volume. The swing is ideal for opening the hips and strengthening the glutes. Although this exercise can be completed using a dumbbell, the kettlebell makes this exercise significantly more comfortable and safe.

Overall, kettlebell training has grown in popularity because it offers an effective yet fun workout. This form of training is a useful way for users to reach workout goals in a refreshing way. Kettlebell workout routines offer many unique exercises that make training programs more exciting. Although the kettlebell has been available for years, it has become more popular because it is a cool tool that offers a more efficient way to work.

RUNNING

Hit Your Stride – Personal Trainers Guide To Barefoot Running.

I've been living and working as a personal trainer in the Lakeview/Lincoln park area of Chicago for almost 8 years. One of the things I love most about the neighborhood is how close I live to the lakefront running path. It's easy to get a quick run by the lake if I have limited time.

This luxury was briefly taken from me 4 years ago during a soccer game.

I was playing midfield on an unusually hot day when all of sudden the bottom of both my feet started burning. It felt as if both arches were cramping up. The pain went away after the game but returned each time I attempted a training run. After dealing with this for a few days, I sought the advice of a chiropractor. The chiro told me I was suffering from plantar fasciitis. With his advice and treatment, I began a program to reduce the pain and inflammation in my feet and stretch and strengthen my ankle joint. The pain went away after a few weeks and with regular maintenance I was able to control the pain, but it would always return after long, grueling soccer games. This is when I started doing more research on plantar fascia issues and discovered barefoot training or minimal running.

What I learned changed my approach to running training.

In the book *Born to Run*, Christopher MacDougall reveals an increase in running related injuries with the creation of fancy running shoes and orthotics. The reasoning behind this is the fact that shoes are perpetuating a dysfunctional learned movement pattern. Natural running form dictates we land on the midfoot, right under our body, but modern running shoe modifications taught us we could lengthen our stride by kicking out further and landing on our heel. The shoes have a thicker heel to absorb shock from a heel strike which encourages more heel striking. Any running coach or soccer coach would teach the proper way to run by striking the ball of the foot directly under your body with an upright posture. Things change a bit while sprinting but if you watch a child run that's how they do it, following the path of least resistance. But cushy running shoes, lack of knowledge and poor technique training lead people to run hunched over striking with their heels.

What I learned from my running coach and how it can help you.

Switching to a more minimal shoe (less drop, less cushion) helped me to run with good form at all times (not getting sloppy when I was tired). If you are a heel striker, and try to run barefoot, then you know what I mean. I had good coaches who showed me correct running technique, but as with all fitness activities, form goes as fatigue sets in. If you start to get lazy with a minimal shoe your body will let you know.

When I first started wearing minimal shoes I walked in them for an hour a day the first week, 2 hrs the second and started running in them for only 10% of my total mileage in my 3rd week. This is what the research suggests, which is similar to increasing mileage in a marathon training program. I could tell the difference after running. I had to spend more time stretching and foam rolling my calves and Achilles at first but, stronger and more stable lower legs became the long term payoff.

Minimal running shoes can reinforce proper running technique.

What makes a shoe “minimal,” is a lower level of cushioning and a smaller heel to toe elevation ratio, or drop. Minimal shoes have less sole so less foam between your foot and the ground. You might think this means more shock when you land, but think of a gymnast landing on a mat... when the mat is thin, the gymnast has to land more softly to brace for landing. When the mat has more cushion, or is thicker, the gymnast has to land with more force to create stability within their body, because it will be dissipated through more cushion. The same is true with a shoe.

The drop of a traditional running shoe is generally a 2:1 heel to toe difference. With a minimal shoe the ratio is closer to 1:1 which makes it easier to strike with the midfoot. The 1:1 ratio allows your Achilles to stretch through a greater range of motion. If you were running in high heels you wouldn't be able to flex your foot toward your shin, so less shock absorption happens within your body. In this way, a more minimal shoe reinforces proper running technique.

Slow and steady wins the race when it comes to starting barefoot running training.

Athletes come into trouble if they try to jump into barefoot training too fast. The Achilles isn't used to being stretched to the lengths running barefoot after wearing high heel running shoes for so long. This is why a 10% increase each week is important. Your foot needs time and rest, the fascia and joints need time to adapt and strengthen, and the foot's support system of the lower (and even upper) leg need to build new strength to work up to your current mileage. Just as you wouldn't go into a gym your 1st day and bench press 300 lbs, you need to build up to the new forces placed on your body through minimal running.

Knowledge and proper form and technique trump fancy foam padding and technology any day.

Studies seem to indicate that for pace, muscle recruitment and impact reduction, runners should strike with the fore foot or midfoot directly under the hip, using the glutei to drive the foot to the ground, propelling them forward with an upright posture. Taking the time and focus to perfect these details will help prevent injury and ultimately create an efficient and ultimately faster running style.

Take the time to perfect your barefoot running form, it will pay off.

Making the switch to a minimal and natural running style can help you become a better runner, but there are hurdles (please excuse the track pun) along the way for which you will need to prepare. Should you choose to progress to a minimal shoe, take time early to perfect your form and technique, and make sure you feel confident before increasing speed or mileage. Time spent working out kinks early on will save you time and energy, and maybe injury, down the road. For more information on better running training, and barefoot running

Run Stronger, Not Longer

Improving your personal best at any distance may not be an issue of running more frequently, but rather taking the time to improve strength and technique.

Running is easily the most popular form of exercise around the world. It makes sense because it is one of the most primal expressions of muscular endurance and power, and is a major aspect of many of the world's most popular sports. It can be a healthy way to engage your body and your mind. The high that can come from a good run is exhilarating. Here in Lincoln Park and throughout Chicago, endurance running or "distance" running, for many people, is a staple of their active lifestyles. The gorgeous lakefront path and abundance of parks seem to entice many people like a siren's call. Participating in charity 5Ks, half marathons, and running groups is just as popular as the Chicago Marathon, which sells out in record time each year. The dedication of many of these runners is inspiring and requires a lot of hard work. Whether you are a competitive endurance runner or a casual endurance runner, if you want to improve your pace and stay healthy, you must be just as dedicated to improving technique, maintaining adequate strength, and maximizing recovery.

Too much of a good thing...

There are numerous physiological benefits to running, but there is a limit to the amount of time and energy that should be spent training in any mode of exercise and running is no exception. It may seem logical to run more often, constantly trying to go harder, move faster, and run longer distances. However, doing so without devoting attention to strength training, muscle tissue quality and adequate recovery can lead to chronic and acute injuries. Increasing the number of training runs requires a larger time commitment, while increasing recovery demands, and offering limited benefits. Becoming a better runner is not a matter of running more often; it is a matter of becoming a stronger, more efficient runner.

Different needs for different speeds...

In the context of most sports, sprinting is a more accurate term for the act of getting from point A to point B as fast as possible, by foot. The energy needed by the muscles to produce power in this mode is provided by adenosine triphosphate (ATP) through the body's phosphogenic pathway. Our bodies can only produce a limited amount ATP and therefore the duration of all out sprinting is also limited. Fatigue sets in quickly during extended periods of sprinting, which is why this type of running requires the most recovery time to refill ATP reserves.

Endurance running is performed at a lower intensity, but for a longer period of time. This mode of running requires less power and utilizes the body's glycolytic pathway to access the energy of ATP. Once the body has used up its reserve of ATP, Glucose (carbs/sugars) can be used to re-synthesize ATP through Glycolysis for a longer period of time. Any running performed continuously for more than three minutes is, by nature, endurance running. The pace of this mode of running can still be challenging, but the muscles will not be able to produce maximum power. While fatigue may not set in as quickly during endurance training, the highly repetitive nature of endurance running requires essential recovery not only for muscular energy, but bones and joints as well. rely on the body's anaerobic metabolism. The anaerobic metabolism functions without the need of oxygen for energy production. Glycolysis can support running for extended durations (≥ 3 minutes), but the body will eventually resort to its oxidative energy system when necessary. In this mode oxygen and fatty acids become essential for energy support and utilizes your body's aerobic metabolism to maintain continuous muscular output.

Running at less challenging paces is typically referred to as jogging. This long, slow running offers few benefits. It offers a low caloric expenditure and requires longer training sessions, which means more repetitions and more stress on the body. The popularity of jogging as a method for fat loss stems from

the misconception that using fatty acids as an energy substrate will equate to more fat loss relative to higher intensity exercise. Unfortunately, fat loss is ultimately about burning more calories than you consume. For this reason jogging is the least efficient mode of running, not only for fat loss, but for improving conditioning.

Energy systems are activated when needed, but aerobic metabolism efficiency allows for higher energy output before anaerobic activation occurs. The body's ability to produce and utilize enough energy to support the muscular output of the pace directly impacts performance and well being. Metabolic efficiency can be improved and manipulated to meet the demands of any mode of running, and increasing the number of training runs is not necessary to do so.

Quality over quantity...

If your goal is to complete a race or improve performance times, these goals can easily be achieved through consistent practice and systematic progression. This does not mean running more often and harder, it means addressing all aspects of training to run well, stay healthy, and enjoy your experience. In fact, if you are running more than three times a week, you might want to consider running less often. This may be considered running heresy by some, but I have had personal and professional success with distance training that never called for more than 3 training runs per week and sometimes only 2 runs a week. Aerobic and anaerobic conditioning is a matter of using the body's energy systems to support the levels of intensity and duration of each run. Tempo runs and interval runs designed to improve energy system recruitment in order to increase running capacity and performance. By focusing on technique and varying intensities, you can get more out of each run, minimize the stress put upon the body, and minimize amount of time spent running. That extra time could be invested in strength training and recovery to enjoy your efforts and maintain an active lifestyle.

Stay Focused...

Many running enthusiasts tell me they use endurance running as a way to “zone out” because they don't have to think much while training, but this lack of focus allows the body to take the path of least resistance. When energy is low, inefficient running patterns develop because muscles lack the necessary strength to produce power and form suffers. Heel striking, hunched shoulders, and knees and ankles wobbling like hula-hoops are common when muscles lack the strength and tissue quality is ignored. Next time you are out, just take notice of many runners' form and you will surely see many of these issues. These inefficient movement patterns put excessive stress on ligaments and tendons, compromise joint integrity, and increase spinal compression. Considering how common it is for people perform the exercise poorly and still perform the exercise for many repetitions and miles, many days a week, it should come as no surprise that many casual runners experience chronic or nagging pain that can be avoided. Our bodies are incredibly durable, rechargeable, and capable of taking a beating, but there is a limit to the abuse they will take. Making a consistent effort to improve mobility and paying attention to proper form during every training run will help prevent injuries.

Take a few minutes to stretch...

If you are not addressing your stretching and mobility needs every day, you are doing yourself a great disservice and you should stretch right now. When most runners show poor form or exhibit distorted movement patterns it is due, in part, to poor muscle tissue quality. This is typical in a culture where many people sit, stand and move in the same patterns for long periods of time without addressing the need to

stretch and reenergize. Tight muscles that constantly pull and over-extended muscles that can't work optimally result in poor form and possible injury, simply because stretching and mobility work are too often disregarded.

Mobility routines can be very efficient when you want to get in a quick stretch between long bouts of repetitive or sedentary activity. This simple habit will help maintain muscle tissue quality and help avoid injuries. Focus on intentional breathing patterns, gentle stretching without bouncing, and maintaining tension to stabilize joints. Pain is typically an indication that you have stretched too far or too long. Whenever pain is experienced, stop stretching and assess the pain.

If you haven't stretched today, stretch right now...

Or do any of your favorites...

Go ahead...

I'll wait...

... a few minutes later

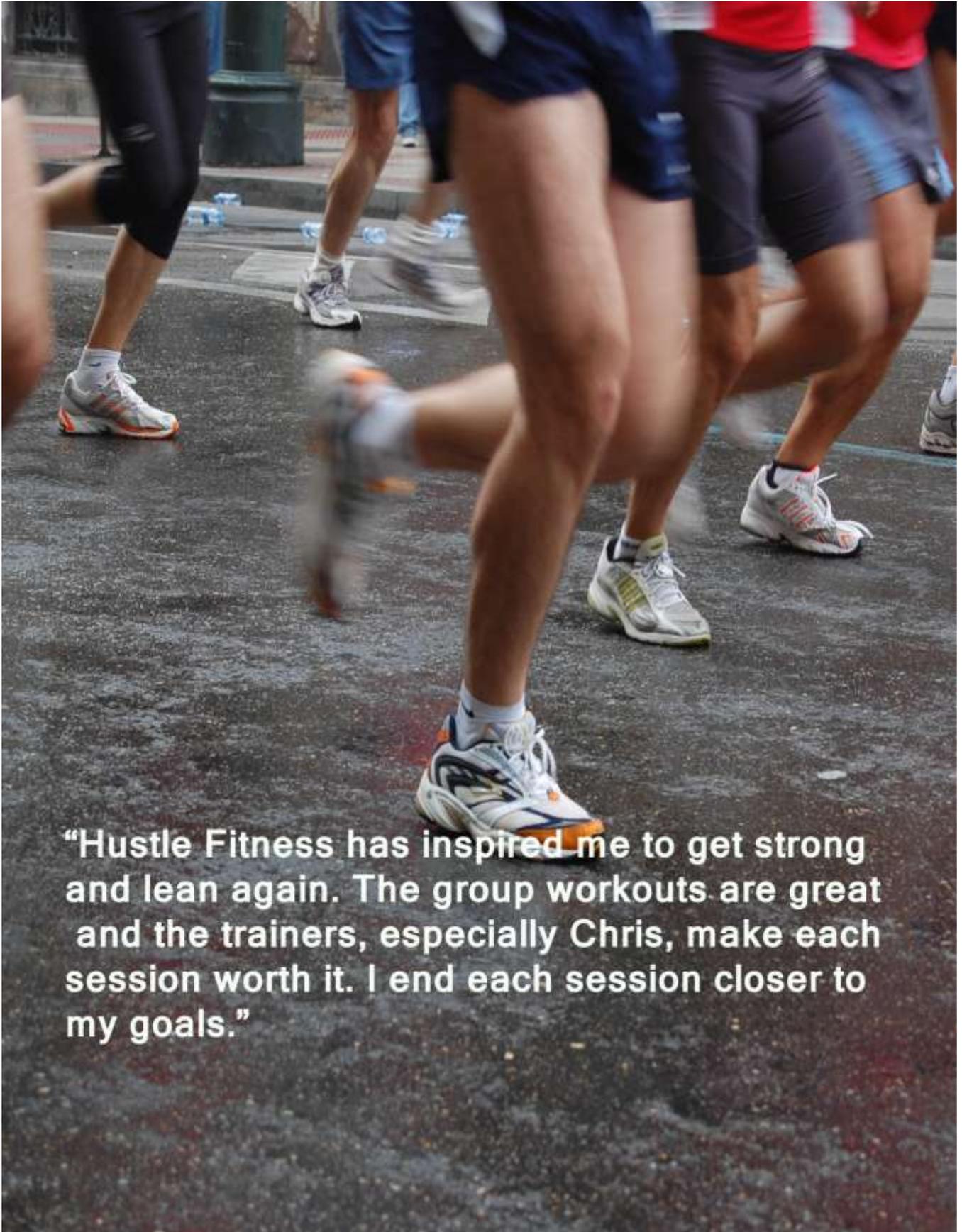
Do you feel better? Of course you do. Do that for yourself at least twice a day!

Get Stronger...

Strength Training is a crucial element of fitness for every runner, but is often the last need a runner addresses when looking to improve. Running is simply jumping from one leg to the other (if you always have at least one foot on the ground you are walking.) Jumping from leg to leg for the thousands of repetitions needed to run even a single mile requires muscular endurance, not only to run faster, but to maintain proper form to minimize damage to joints and bones. Strength training increases muscular capacity and muscular endurance, which in turn, improves the quality of each training run.

A comprehensive training program for every runner should include: soft tissue work, preparatory stretching and mobility exercises, dynamic warm-ups, resistance training, and anaerobic conditioning when suitable. Systematic progression of both strength training and distances of training runs should be done with consideration to individual needs and an emphasis on optimal recovery. If you are strength training less than two hours a week, you should adjust your training to meet that goal. This does not mean that each strength training session should be exhausting or done in some "Boot camp" or "Cross Fit" manner. In fact, each strength training session should be challenging enough to improve performance without experiencing exhaustion. Exhaustion through strength training or cross-training will only hinder running quality and performance. Body weight exercises are always a great place to start. Training focused on mastering pushups, pull-ups, squats, and lunges will have a profound effect not only on your running, but your general fitness.

Running can be a healthy activity enjoyed alone, with friends, or in competition. To get the most out of your experience, stay healthy and improve your personal bests, focus on technique and intensities during your runs and prioritize time to increase strength, improve mobility, and build anaerobic capacity.



“Hustle Fitness has inspired me to get strong and lean again. The group workouts are great and the trainers, especially Chris, make each session worth it. I end each session closer to my goals.”