

The Fitness Assistant

Tips & tools to help you succeed

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five keys to an effective fitness program

We all know we should be “working out”, or following some sort of fitness program. Whether you are new to fitness, your doctor has asked you to begin exercising more but has given you little guidance, or you just want to make sure you have a well balanced plan of attack for maintaining (or improving) your fitness level, here is a check list of 5 factors required for an effective fitness program.

Compare your current plan, in the context of a week, to the ideas below, and maybe you will discover why you are not seeing results. Failing to plan is planning to fail. Using these ideas, we hope you can develop a weekly and daily routine of specific exercises to keep your time and your effort on track.

5 Keys to an Effective Fitness Program:

1. Purpose - A key to remaining motivated with exercise is to understand exactly why we are doing this stuff in the first place. “Functional fitness” is the idea that both our fitness plan and the specific exercises within the plan serve a purpose, or a function. Consider each exercise you perform, are they specific to improving your posture, helping you get up off a low chair, improve your golf game, allowing you to pick up your children, or manage your weight?

2. Frequency - this is the number of days per week you are physically

active. Whether walking the dog, (at a decent pace), or coming to the fitness center, you want to find activity you enjoy, one that keeps your heart rate elevated, and do this activity more than 3 times per week.

3. Duration - are you spending enough time exercising? You want to keep your heart rate elevated for 30+ minutes per exercise session. This can include cardiovascular exercise as well as strength training exercises, as long as the rest periods between those movements do not allow your heart rate to drop significantly, (to near resting heart rate levels).

5 Keys to An Effective Fitness Program Check List:

1. Purpose - does each exercise serve a purpose, helping you towards your goals or your overall quality of life?
2. Duration - is your heart rate elevated for 30+ minutes per exercise bout
3. Intensity - are you reaching an appropriate “intensity threshold” during exercise, and/or doing intervals of increased intensity?
4. Frequency - are you physically active 4-7 days per week
5. Balance - Are you strength training as much as you are doing cardiovascular exercise? Are you strengthening your upper and lower body muscles the same amount?

4. Intensity - discovering and reaching your appropriate “intensity threshold” is often the missing link with many people who are not experiencing desired results. Whether on a treadmill or strength training, we must safely reach a point where we are somewhat out of breath, or experience a burning sensation in our muscles. It is only when we leave our physical “comfort zone”, if only for a few seconds, that are body feels challenged, and must therefore improve physically to handle these challenges.

5. Balance - Too many of us are only doing “cardio” workouts, and are placing too little emphasis on strength training. The key to weight management is muscle preservation. Mother Nature is only trying to take bone density and muscle mass away from us, we must fight this with strength training. Also, muscle is the only tissue in your body efficiently burning calories, the more we stimulate muscle through strength training, the more efficiently we burn calories all day long.

Contact us today if you feel your program may not satisfy these 5 ideas. We can help customize your program so you are getting the most health and fitness returns on your time, effort, and money invested.

Thank You,

*the Webster Groves
Personal Trainers*