

10 STEPS TO DEVELOPING A WORKOUT HABIT

It's not breaking news that exercise is crucial to success in a weight loss program. We all know what has to be done, but why do so few of us do it? There are several reasons, but we won't focus on why we DON'T— instead let's make a plan to ensure that we DO! Remember FIT – Frequency, Intensity and Time? With that in mind here are 10 easy steps to success in jump starting an exercise program:

Step 1 – Take a small, realistic amount of time to set aside for exercise, specifically cardio type exercise. We'll say 2 days a week for 20 minutes. There are very few, if any, people who can honestly say they don't have that much time to devote!!

Step 2 - After 1-2 weeks of step 1, add 15 minutes of strength training to the cardio you're already doing. (Trainers can show you what to be doing during these workouts)

Step 3 - Add one more day, and slightly increase your intensity.

Step 4 - Now is about the time I use the old commercial – JUST DO IT. You need to do it in order to create a habit. Add 5 minutes to your cardio.

Step 5 - Add time to your cardio, whatever you can realistically handle, in 5 minute increments.

Step 6 - More strength training is in order now – increase sets to 2 per exercise.

Step 7 - We're almost there! Increase strength sets to 3, and cardio should be at about 40 minutes by now.

Step 8 - Take your pick – increase your cardio F I or T, any or all.

Step 9 - Keep it up – again – JUST DO IT.

Step 10 – Congratulations, you're there. Keep a positive attitude and look at exercise as something you “get” to do, not something you “have to do”. The more you do it the more you'll want to, and you'll actually feel physically off if you don't.

Now that you have made it a habit, the big challenge is to keep doing it! The general rule for cardio is 5 times per week to lose weight, 3 times per week to maintain and/or for general cardio-vascular health. Weight training should be done three times per week, optimally. One way to ensure that you do it is to find a workout buddy. It's easy to make excuses for yourself, but if someone else is relying on you, you will be more apt to show up. Look back to step 10, the more you do it the more you want to. In turn, if you're consistent you will get the results you're looking for, which makes all the effort even more worth it.