

Become
Your Own
PT!

Personal Trainer Challenge



Are you ready to take on a personal trainer challenge and become your own PT? If so, here's the perfect opportunity for you: the ultimate journey of self-discovery toward mastering yourself and unleashing your fitness potential.

With this guide, you'll be well on your way to becoming an expert in spotting weaknesses, setting goals for improvement, and committing to a plan.

A plan that yields real results - all without having to break the bank for trainers or rely excessively on external motivation.

Get ready because this is gonna be one heck of a ride!

Let's learn.



THE FITNESS QUEST

With more and more people around the world looking to get fit, improve their health, and reach their fitness goals, there has been a veritable explosion of interest in physical training.

But if you are starting a fitness journey, it is important to invest in yourself first.

Before turning to a personal trainer for advice and guidance, learning the basics about exercise training and nutrition can be helpful.

By doing some independent research on workout regimes, nutrition plans, healthy eating habits, and other things related to your fitness quest, you will be better prepared to make educated decisions when working with a personal trainer or enrolling in an exercise program.

In addition to saving money on hiring services, taking this initiative demonstrates your commitment to achieving your goals - and that is the true mark of success when transforming into a healthier version of yourself.

So here's the first checkpoint - the true sign that you are ready to transform is not to go on a diet with a set time frame, but make a choice to learn and commit to it.



THE PROMISE OF MAGIC

Because many people are on the quest for a better body and health, the fitness industry is booming and many people have been turning to products that promise to get them in shape quickly.

But it's important for consumers to be aware that these kinds of products are often not what they appear to be.

With claims of overnight success and sensationalized results, these products typically fail to deliver on their promises, leading to disappointment and wasted resources.

The reality is that getting fit usually requires effort and dedication, but those who make an informed, conscientious choice of product can feel more confident about the process and have better outcomes.

And this, friends, is our second checkpoint - there isn't magic in fitness, it's only hard work and consistency, and no pill or powder can make up for the lack of those.



BASICS ALWAYS STICK

For anyone looking to train and reach their goals, the most important thing to remember is that sticking to the basics of training, nutrition, and recovery is always effective.

It can be tempting to jump on the latest trends or try out extreme techniques in search of a shortcut to success, but consistency with tried and true methods will always pay off in the long run.

That's not to say there isn't room for innovation and exploring new solutions.

However, it's best to start by building fundamental habits first and then build upon them with new knowledge as you feel comfortable.

TRAINING FUNDAMENTALS

Every trainer knows that there are certain training fundamentals that always remain useful for any lesson.

These basics provide foundational knowledge for participants to build on, allowing them to comprehend more complex topics and principles.

Understanding these fundamentals will allow a trainer to ensure their program is geared toward participant development, preparing them with the right skills and attributes for their future endeavors.

In this case, though, you are both the trainer and the client, so let's have a look at the 5 most fundamental things you should know and apply in your training by first starting from rock bottom and discussing the 2 main types of training.

Resistance Training

Resistance training, otherwise known as strength or weight training, is one of the best ways to build muscle and strength.

As opposed to other forms of exercise, resistance training helps increase both your overall muscle mass together with your muscular strength.

This type of training involves high-exertion bouts that last 5-20 seconds per set, followed by a 2-3 minute rest.

Not only can this make doing everyday tasks such as carrying groceries more manageable, but it can also boost metabolism and help prevent certain diseases.

It is also an incredibly effective form of exercise that can be done in a small space with minimal equipment needed.

For those looking to build their muscularity and strength quickly and safely, resistance training is the perfect workout from which to benefit.

Cardio Training

The second type of training to discuss is cardio training.

Now, cardio training and resistance training are two distinct forms of exercise with their own benefits.

Cardio training relies on low-intensity, long-in-duration exercises like running, jogging and swimming.

These utilize the body's cardiovascular system to become more efficient at delivering oxygen to muscles.

On the other hand, as you learned, resistance training develops strength by lifting weights or using resistance bands to create tension in the muscles.



Both forms of exercise produce significant physical health benefits such as improved endurance, increased muscle definition and coordination, as well as enhanced metabolism.

As part of an overall healthy lifestyle, regular exercise regimens that combine both cardio and resistance components can produce optimal results.

For the average trainee with a goal of looking and feeling better as well as optimizing health, we would recommend that the focus is on resistance training, with a few cardio sessions weekly.

RESISTANCE TRAINING FUNDAMENTALS

As you learned, resistance training is a great way to get in shape and build strength, but it's important to have a plan.

Working with a qualified professional can assist in developing an effective program that incorporates the four main considerations, but for most people, it is the more expensive option.

This is why we are going to lay out the 4 most fundamental considerations for you to build an effective training plan before hopping in the gym with a PT.

Let's have a look.



Compound Movements

The most fundamental thing in resistance training, before anything else, is exercise choice.

Compound movements such as the squat, bench, and deadlift are favored among many athletes due to their ability to lift heavier weights.

That is not the only reason why they are so desirable - compound movements are known for working several muscles at once, leading to greater efficiency and faster results.

Think of compound movements as movements that engage multiple muscle groups but have one main target - for instance, squats engage the thighs primarily, but the glutes & hamstrings also come into play.

Or, the wide-grip bench press primarily engages the chest, but the triceps and shoulders also work.

Summary: Multi-joint exercises should be your main focus during resistance training due to the fact they allow you to lift heavier weights for more reps and therefore provide supreme stimulus.

Progressive Overload

Progressive overload is an essential concept when it comes to weight training.

It refers to the practice of increasing the amount of work you do in your workout over time in order to expose the body to a previously unknown stimulus.

Rep Ranges

Effective fitness training involves finding the right rep range for your goals.

Rep ranges for fitness training may vary depending on if you're looking to build strength or muscle mass.

Your chosen rep range should keep you in a certain intensity range in order to produce results safely without putting your body at undue risk. Generally, lower rep ranges are used in strength training, and higher rep ranges are for strength endurance and building muscle mass.

However, it is important to note that the biggest driver for muscle growth is total volume.

Think of volume as the total amount of work done. Your Training Volume = weight * sets * reps.

For instance, 100 kg lifted for 1 set of 10 reps = 1000 kg of volume.

But that same volume can be achieved with 50 kg for 2 sets of 10 reps.

In terms of muscle growth, theoretically, there will be no difference, but the heavier weights will likely produce a greater strength stimulus.

This is why we ultimately advise experimenting with rep ranges and including the entire spectrum in your training sessions.

Nevertheless, you should still focus on 1-5 reps for building strength while occasionally dipping in the 6-15 rep range to stack volume.

And vice versa - if you're looking to build as much muscle as possible, stick to the 6-15 rep range and occasionally dip in the 1-5 rep range to stimulate strength gains.

Summary: Low reps (1-5) stimulate strength gains, while higher reps (6-15) make muscle gaining easier. Utilize both rep ranges but focus on the one that is better suited for your goals

Rest Times

Most people who frequently hit the gym take a rest period between sets of around 60-90 seconds.

Although this is sufficient for some situations, taking a longer rest of 2.5 to 3 minutes can allow individuals to maximize their performance while delaying fatigue during the course of their workout.

This extended break allows muscles more time to recuperate, resulting in a better workout experience overall.

As such, it may be beneficial for athletes looking to maximize their workouts' effectiveness to adopt this longer break structure during their sessions.



After all, remember - you're doing 10-20+ seconds of high-intensity work, and that is quite strenuous for the nervous system!

Likely, 60 seconds of rest won't be enough to sustain performance from set to set.

Summary: Resting 2.5 to 3 minutes between heavy sets will allow you to sustain performance from set to set, delay fatigue and, therefore, create a greater total volume, as opposed to resting 60-90 seconds.

Recovery Windows

Resting between resistance training workouts is incredibly important for muscle growth and continued progress.

Utilizing rest times of 72 to 96 hours between strength training sessions will give your muscles enough time to regenerate and repair themselves, as well as improve overall performance.

Using this timeline also allows your body's nervous system to optimize activity, allowing for stronger motor unit recruitment within the same fibers, resulting in enhanced gains in strength and size over time.

Knowing when to rest between gym visits is essential for any athlete wanting to maximize their health benefits from resistance training.

After all, as they say - gains happen during rest, not at the gym!

Summary: Training only creates stimulus/damage, and the real gains happen when you're out of the gym, recovering - for each muscle group, take 72 to 96 hours of rest before training it again.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Now let's take a brief moment to summarize the entirety of this short guide into distilled advice!

- For the goal of better looks, mood and health, focus on resistance training and do a couple of cardio sessions per week
- In your resistance training workouts, opt for compound movements, such as the squat, bench press, deadlift, pull-ups, rows, and lunges
- Master these movements and focus on progressively overloading them by increasing the weights used, or the numbers of reps, sets, training frequency, or even decreasing rest times
- If you want to build strength, focus on the 1-5 rep range and occasionally dip in the 6-15 rep range. And vice versa, if you want to build mass, focus on the 6-15 rep range and dip in the 1-5 rep range every now and then.
- To delay fatigue and maximize training volume, opt for 2.5-3 minutes of rest between sets, instead of 60-90 seconds
- To allow for maximum recovery, train each muscle group once every 72-96 hours

By now, you should have an idea of your own physical abilities and know how to get started with training yourself

Remember that everyone's body is different – there is no “one size fits all” approach when it comes to working out.

But there are fundamental guidelines to follow.

And as your own personal trainer, it's up to you to find what works best for you.

So get out there and start putting some of these tips into practice!

You (and your body) will thank yourself for it later.

Oh, and stay tuned for next month when we'll give you our thorough guidelines for nutrition so that you can become your own nutritionist!