

THE INCREDIBLY SIMPLE GUIDE TO GET YOU FIT

EXERCISE AND
DIET
WISDOMS !

BY : PAUL FARMER



The Incredibly Simple Guide To Get You Fit

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Introduction

The benefits of regular exercise are almost too numerous to mention. The short term benefits of exercise include increased stamina, improved mood and sleep, fewer minor illnesses, and of course, exercise helps you maintain a healthy weight.

If you are trying to conceive, exercise helps you maintain optimum hormone levels for fertility. Exercise also encourages brain activity that can help you stay alert in the short term and help reduce your risk of Alzheimer's disease in the long term. Regular exercise can help reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Many people are aware of these benefits, but getting started can seem daunting.

You don't need to be “Mr. Olympia” to benefit from exercise. Even thirty minutes of exercise, a few times a week, has been shown to improve health outcomes. You can get a quick workout and return from a lunch hour refreshed and ready to beat the afternoon doldrums.

You don't need to worry about walking into a gym and not knowing where or how to start. As with all things, everyone starts at the beginning. It may be easiest to take a class where everyone starts on the same level. You may want to take

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advantage of any personal training sessions your gym offers. They can show you how to use the machines and plan a workout that meets your fitness needs; it doesn't matter how you choose to start, the important thing is to get started.

Chapter 1: Cardio

Cardio: Aerobic and Anaerobic Systems for Powering your Body

You may hear the word “cardio” tossed around in the gym; you may also be aware that it's important for weight loss. This term refers to types of workouts that raise the heart rate to levels that help you burn calories efficiently while strengthening the heart. Cardio exercise can increase lung capacity and stamina, helps maintain bone density as you get older, as well as to elevate and regulate your mood. In addition, when cardio is combined with resistance training, you're sure to shed pounds and improve overall health.

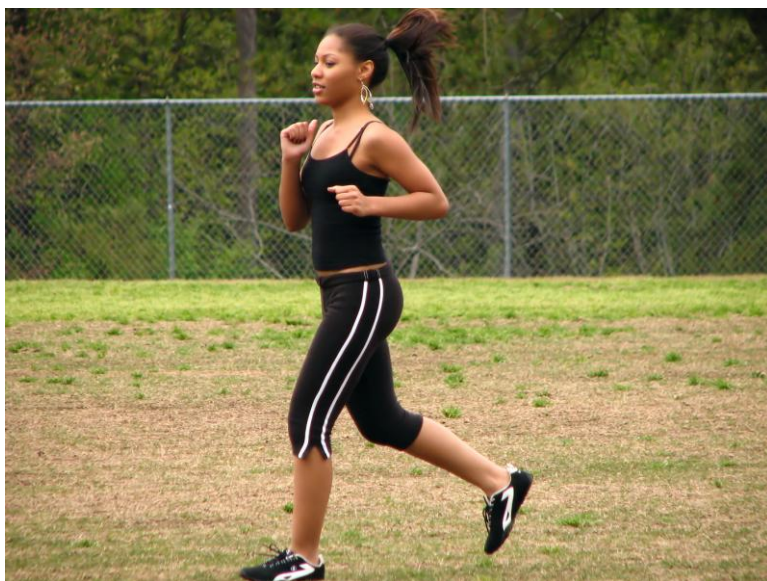
Even if your fitness goals are primarily focused on building strength, adding some cardio will improve flexibility and circulation, which will help you last until the end of difficult sets. Cardio includes two types of exercise that you are already familiar with.

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Cardio consists of aerobic and anaerobic exercises that are very common, such as jogging, and sports such as tennis and basketball.

Three Main Systems

The body uses three main systems for fueling it to work. One of these systems uses oxygen as a fuel for the muscles and to break down sugar



stored in the muscles; this is the aerobic system. Though the term ‘aerobic’ is more familiar, it's actually the third system to kick in after you start exercising (which happens after less than a minute of physical activity). Exercises that engage the aerobic system help you transition into the fat-burning phase.

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Aerobic exercises include biking, swimming, and dancing. Aerobic exercises can be used alone or in conjunction with anaerobic exercises to help you burn fat, while you build muscle. A warm-up should involve a few minutes of light to moderate aerobic exercise, to let your body know that you are planning to be active for more than a minute; your muscles need oxygen for fuel.

When you begin aerobic exercises, the extra demand for oxygen may lead to breathing more heavily, but as your body gets more efficient at

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taking in and transporting oxygen to your muscles, you will literally breathe easier.

The two systems that kick in at the beginning are both anaerobic systems, which get their names because they don't use oxygen to fuel your muscles. Adenosine-5'-triphosphate, better known as ATP, is the first fuel source your body resorts to. For example, when you see that the bus you need to catch is about to leave, it's ATP that fuels your body during those first few seconds of running.

Anaerobic exercise involves short bursts of activity punctuated by periods of rest, such as weight lifting. While anaerobic exercise may involve powerful bursts of activity, these are brief. Anaerobic exercise helps build muscle and improves the muscle cell's ability to access fuel quickly, improving your speed, even when you are doing aerobic exercises.

If you have specific fitness goals, you may need a workout plan that emphasizes one type of exercise over the other. However, for general fitness or weight loss, combining the two will get you closer to your goal faster than either form of exercise alone. You may combine them in equal proportions during each workout or alternate forms of exercise on different days.

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Chapter 2: Flexibility- Stretch to Reach Your Full Fitness Potential

Stretching

In order to get the most benefit out of exercise, you need a full range of motion. Stretching helps you use the full range of motion available to each muscle and improve your circulation.



If you need a quick energy boost, a few minutes of stretching will help you stand taller and sit up straighter without breaking a sweat. Stretching can enhance your exercise experience whether you are performing high-intensity workout regimes or taking a quick jog around the block.

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While it's no longer believed that stretching will prevent muscle soreness after exercise, stretching should still be part of your workout routine. Working on your flexibility will help you do more types of exercises and improve your workout experience. Needless to say, not all types of stretching are alike--some are better when done before or after the main part of your exercise routine.

Dynamic Stretching

Dynamic stretching consists of a set of repeated movements where you work up to your maximum range of movement for that muscle. Arm or leg swings, torso twists and walking lunges are forms of dynamic stretching.

For this type of stretching, it's important to find the right balance between your control over the movement and the ease with which you move. Your movements need to be fluid, but not so much that you are flinging your body around.

Dynamic stretches are good before running, dancing, boxing, or other forms of exercise that are vigorous and require agility. Dynamic stretches can form part of your warm up or you can stretch after you've warmed up.

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The point of dynamic stretching is to move steadily toward the limit of your range of movement. Don't try to push past your current range of motion for the muscle. You could make it harder to control your movements and possibly injure yourself.

Static Stretching

Static stretching is what many people think of when they picture stretching. You will perform a move to the limit of your range of movement, then hold it for anywhere from 10 to 60 seconds, depending on the particular move. You may perform the same move once or possibly several times, as opposed to dynamic stretching, which relies on repetition to help you work up to the limit of your range of movement. Static stretching is best done either at the end of a workout, or at the very least, after a five-minute warm up.

Static stretching on “cold” muscles can result in a pulled muscle. Static stretching is good when you have a muscle on one side of your body that is stronger than the same muscle on the opposite side of your body, which is called muscle imbalance.

Don't try to use other body parts, objects or a partner to help you hold static stretches. This is called passive stretching, and while it can be

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useful, if a stretch is designed to be used for static stretching, using it for the wrong kind of stretch defeats the purpose of the move and may cause you to pull a muscle.

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Chapter 3: Weight Machines

Weight Training



Weight training is important for those pursuing general fitness goals, weight loss goals, and those who need to make lifestyle changes to help them manage chronic health conditions. Weight machines and

‘free’ weights each have their enthusiasts and their particular advantages.

Weight machines offer a good way to target a narrow range of muscles. Free weights make use of the muscles the body needs to stabilize itself while you perform the exercise, whereas weight

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machines often have parts to more or less hold you in place.

Weight machines provide an easy way to fine tune how much resistance you are creating for each group of muscles. Free weights allow you to switch quickly between exercise moves and allow for a greater range of motion.

Free Weights

Free weights also allow you to mimic the types of movement you do daily, allowing you to check your posture and form to avoid straining muscles while doing daily tasks. Free weights also promote greater strength gains; weight machines can be easier for beginners, as they limit you to one or two types of movements. If you are looking to build strength, both types of resistance can be part of your exercise program.

Weight training is important for building muscle mass, of course, but weight training also helps you strengthen your bones--so if you are in a high risk group for osteoporosis, it's doubly important for you to add resistance to your workouts. In this case, weight machines are a great way for you to focus resistance. There are several ways to begin a satisfying weight training workout.

Your Gym's Trainer

Your gym's trainers are your first resource in learning to use weight machines. If your gym membership comes with a personal trainer session, use it to learn proper form. Even if you need to pay for the session, the injuries and overuse of muscles you will avoid is well worth the price.

If you haven't signed up for a formal session, some trainers may be willing to get you started on a machine or two. Just don't expect them to provide a full training session that you haven't signed up for.

If there's a machine that you have your eye on trying at your gym, but can't get anyone to show you how to use it in person, make a note of the name of the machine (they often have signs listing the name and proper use of the machine). Then look for online videos showing trainers or bodybuilders using the machine; several trainers and bodybuilders have short instructional videos you can watch. Look at several videos because the differing camera angles may help you see the full usage potential of said machine. Additionally, if one trainer or bodybuilder has bad form, others will be able to show the contrast between good and bad form.

Look for the instructions

Weight machines also have signs with illustrated instructions showing you how to use the machine. Some are better than others, but most are enough to help you get the hang of it. Don't attempt to lift the maximum weight you can manage on a machine you're unfamiliar with, especially if you only have those signs to go by. While the illustrations can give you a basic idea of what the move is supposed to look like, any errors in form will be compounded by the strain you are putting on your muscles.

Warm Up First

As with all weight training, your work on weight machines will be even more enjoyable if you warm up your muscles first. You will want to focus on large muscle groups, followed by smaller muscles, then a cool down. For those who aren't experienced with weight machines, they can seem a bit intimidating. Consider, though, that once you get to know them, they aren't any more challenging to operate than a treadmill.

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Chapter 4: Free Weights

Free Weights

If you have been working with weight machines, but would like to experiment with a greater range of movement, free weights will set you free. Weight machines often restrict you to one or two movements, but with free weights, if you can safely manage the move, the sky's the limit.

With dumbbells, barbells, kettle bells and homemade weights, you can create a routine that will not just target certain muscles, but work the muscles that stabilize your body as you move, which is especially important for dancers and athletes—or anyone who needs to keep steady most of the time.

Barbells

Free weights come in several styles. Barbells have weight plates that you can stack to customize resistance. They come in different lengths, and are the type used by competitive bodybuilders for events. One doesn't need to be "Mr. Olympia" to use barbells. With their adjustable weight, you can start with the least amount of weight needed, working your way up from there. With barbells, it's important to make

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sure that the weight is secured before lifting, especially if you're lifting over your head or directly over your foot.

Dumbbells



Dumbbells are usually a fixed weight, anywhere from one pound to 100 pounds. Adjustable weight dumbbells are available, but they are more commonly sold in fixed weight pairs or sets.

They may be made of plastic or metal, and be coated to increase friction so that you don't drop them accidentally. Kettle bells can be considered a type of dumbbell, in the shape of a tea kettle

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without a spout. They are meant to be used with either one hand or two.

Different Types of Exercises

You can perform several types of exercises with free weights. You can do simple lifting or lowering exercises or moves involving swinging, stepping, or jumping. By doing it this way, you can combine strength training into your cardio workout without changing your cardio routine much.

However, if you are going to be moving fast and raising your heart rate with weights in your hands, use gloves or coated weights to prevent sweat from weakening your grip on the weight; it is a good idea to **not** select the heaviest weight you can heave off the rack for combining free weights with cardio.

Free weights can make up the whole of your strength training, or be combined with using weight machines to add variety. Just keep challenging yourself with new ways to keep fit, and your body will return the favor.

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Chapter 4: Circuit Training

Your Fitness Goals

The shortest distance between two points is a straight line, but the shortest distance between you and your fitness goals may be a circle.

Circuit training uses resistance training of several muscle groups in short bursts, and may include short bursts of cardio. You get the benefits of both in a workout that goes too fast for you to get bored.



You don't need to add rest periods to your resistance training while on the circuit, as you

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switch between different muscle groups, thereby providing rest for the muscle group you just worked. The regimen can be tailored to meet the needs and abilities of exercise novices or supped-up for fitness experts. It is perfect for those who are busy or don't feel comfortable planning their own exercise program, as you get a full body workout in as little as thirty minutes.

Circuit Training Gyms

For gyms that offer circuit training, you may be told where to begin, or you may choose a station. You spend between 15 seconds to a few minutes on each station before you receive the signal to switch.

Resistance Training

Resistance training on a circuit may involve calisthenics, machines that use hydraulics for resistance or free weights. Stations involving aerobics may include a step platform, a bike or treadmill.

You may be signaled to check your heart rate about 10 minutes after starting. Adapt the intensity of your exercise if your heart rate is outside the target range indicated. If your circuit

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training is part of a scheduled class, you work the circuit until your instructor indicates it's time to stop. If you are using a fitness facility designed to offer circuit training without instruction, you can keep going around the circuit until you want to stop, but 30 minutes is considered standard.

Gym Etiquette

Circuit training brings gym etiquette to the forefront. You may not leave machines sweaty at the beginning of the workout, but toward the end of a long circuit, you don't want to leave a trail of sweat marking your progress. Circuits may be set up in a small space; keep that in mind before you swing or stretch in the wrong direction.

If given the choice of where to start, pick a station at least one station away from your exercising neighbor when possible. If you cannot master the move required by a station, skip it until you can get help from an instructor. Put all equipment back in its original position when possible when switching stations. This may seem like a lot to remember, but circuit training stations are set up so that there is sufficient time to do this before you need to switch.

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Chapter 5: Body Weight Exercises

Include Resistance

For optimal fitness results, you must include some sort of resistance into your routine. While weight machines and free weights can help you build muscle, if you are not near a gym and don't have weights with you, exercises that use your own body weight are simple, easily adaptable, and are ideal for those who travel frequently or are on tight budgets.

You Already Know How to Do It

Another advantage of body weight exercises is that if you had physical education in school, you already know several body weight exercises. Most body weight exercises are the same calisthenics you learned in primary school: jumping jacks, pushups and crunches are body weight exercises. Some body weight exercises, such as jumping jacks, combine resistance with cardio for an exercise that's good for a warm-up or in the main part of your workout.



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Body weight exercises may have you lifting a portion of your body, or have you lift most of your body's weight with a part of your body that isn't used to supporting the weight. You lift your upper body off the floor with crunches and flutter kicks involve lifting your lower body off the floor while your upper body remains on the floor. Other body weight exercises challenge a muscle group in a way that forces it to work harder to do its normal task. Standing on one leg is one example of a group of muscles working harder to do the same task.

You can add body weight resistance to cardio workouts. Adding a few jumps or lunges to a dance routine can boost the number of calories you burn. Shadow boxing also combines cardio with body weight training; working with just your own body weight does not mean that you cannot put excessive strain on a muscle, though. Talk with a trainer or physical therapist before attempting new moves.

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Chapter 6: Nutrition for Fitness

Regular Diet

Your body needs energy to do work, and won't work to burn fat and build muscle unless well supplied with nutrients. What you need to eat when adding regular exercise to your lifestyle depends on your exercise goals. A regular diet that includes whole grains, lean protein and fruits and vegetables is an excellent place to start for better overall health and promoting your fitness goals.

General Fitness Goals

For general fitness goals, most of what you eat should be available in the produce section. Fruits and non-starchy vegetables should comprise half of what you eat. For those with busy lifestyles, blend frozen fruit into smoothies, steam frozen veggies, and consider pre-made bagged salads.



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Whole grains and lean protein should make up the other half of your diet. Broiled salmon with brown rice, white meat chicken in a whole wheat tortilla or turkey meatballs over whole wheat noodles all satisfy these requirements and are either quick to prepare or made ahead. Limit dairy to no more than two servings a day, and fruit juice to no more than one serving a day.

Consume Fewer Calories

If your exercise goals include weight loss, you will need to consume fewer calories than you use. As your body is working hard, you can't cut back on nutrients. Make your food choices nutrient-dense ones. Snack on fruit, vegetables or nuts. Switch to reduced fat milk or low calorie sweeteners for your morning coffee. Reduce your consumption of empty calories, and substitute foods that pack a nutritious punch.

Bulking Up Options

For those looking to build muscle, you may need at least as many calories as you're currently consuming, and perhaps more. You should realize that empty calories won't help you nearly as much as nutrient-dense, high calorie foods. Avocado, coconut and salmon all pack calories

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and nutrients that your body needs for muscle building. If you are looking to lose fat and gain muscle, you will need to balance these two contradicting needs. Eliminating empty calories should be a top priority if you need to lose fat and gain muscle.

There's no consensus on exactly how many meals per day you should eat to maintain your fitness goals. Some studies show improved fitness with smaller, more frequent meals, while more recent studies suggest that three meals is fine. As your body's needs will change as you reach your goals, don't be afraid to switch things up if you are hungry between meals or feel too full after a meal to get moving.

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Resources

http://bodybuilding.about.com/od/cardioexercisebasics/Cardiovascular_Workout_Basics.htm

<http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/guide/kick-up-with-cardio-exercise>

<http://physicaltherapy.about.com/od/flexibilityexercises/a/stretchbasics.htm>

<http://sportsmedicine.about.com/od/flexibilityandstretching/a/Flexibility.htm>

<http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/getting-started-with-flexibility-and-stretching-topic-overview>

<http://sportsmedicine.about.com/od/tipsandtricks/a/basictraining.htm>

<http://www.livestrong.com/article/132716-body-weight-training-exercises/>

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About The Author



Paul has discovered the importance and joys of living a healthy lifestyle throughout his life. Beginning in elementary school, he has

been involved in some type of physical activity. In high school he played basketball, volleyball and also enjoyed working out with weights. During college he played tennis, volleyball, basketball, and lifted weights on a recreational level. He attained a Bachelors of Science in Kinesiology from Cal State Fullerton in 2005. He is also a Nationally Certified Performance Enhancement Specialist and a Corrective Exercise Specialist through NASM and a Certified Personal Trainer through ACT.

Paul has spent many hours working as a Personal Trainer. He also earned his Teaching Credential in Physical Education. As a Physical Education Teacher, he has taught students in grades K-12. Over the years he has designed many fitness programs, has provided

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professional development to elementary school teachers--instructing them on how to design and implement a quality Physical Education program.

Paul enjoys almost any type of physical activity. He really likes finding new ways to challenge himself and continues to add to his education.

To stay in shape he plays beach volleyball, rides his bike, hikes, and enjoys doing various strength training routines.

Paul is passionate about helping others become physically active and healthy. He has worked with people of all ages from 5 to 75. He enjoys helping people reach the goals they have set for themselves. Paul's preferred method of approach is that of a teacher as opposed to a drill sergeant because he is most excited about getting you to succeed in being active and healthy for life. Paul believes becoming healthy and fit is a process; it is not something that is going to just happen overnight--it takes desire, commitment and consistency to be successful.

Also, one needs to have a basic understanding of what consists of an effective workout program. Paul is here to be your guide through this new journey to lifelong physical activity and health.