



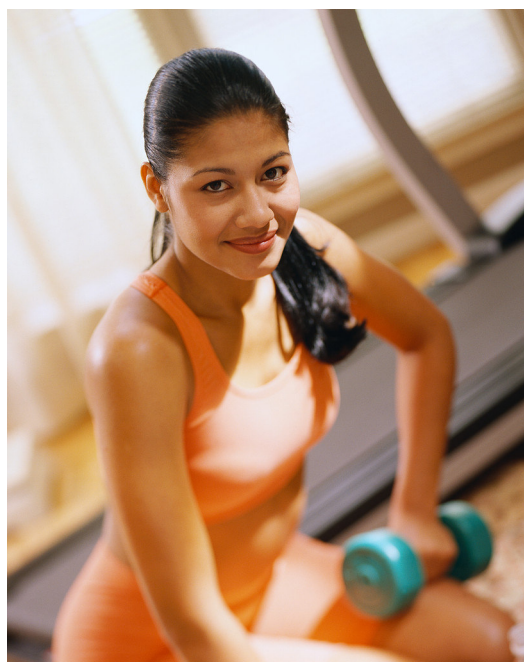
Fitness Goals



Starting a fitness program doesn't have to be overwhelming when you are armed with the proper tools to get things rolling. Once you've committed to getting in shape, there are several things you can do to ensure you'll exceed your short and long term fitness goals. There are also some things you should avoid at all costs to ensure you stay on the path to fitness and wellness. What exactly are the rules when it comes to fitness?

Do's

- Write down your fitness goals. You're more likely to stick with a program once you have set some specific goals.
- Always strive to eat a well balanced diet that includes ample servings of vegetables and fruit.
- Break down your meals so you are eating several mini meals per day.
- Assess your current fitness level before starting an exercise program. By doing so, you'll be able to establish goals that meet your specific fitness needs.
- Consider talking with your health care provider before embarking on a fitness program, particularly if you are struggling with a health condition such as diabetes or obesity.
- Supplement your diet with essential fatty acids. You can do this by eating two servings of fish per week.
- Choose alternatives to satisfy your cravings when possible. Consider frozen fruit over ice cream or opt for a mini chocolate instead of the whole candy bar.
- Always stretch before and after your exercise routine.
- Don't over do it! Try doing too much at once and you'll burn out swiftly. Slowly increase the intensity of your workouts.
- Diversify your workout routine. If you do the same exercises day after day, you'll quickly tire and are more likely to skip workouts.



- Work out with a friend. You'll help motivate each other.
- Keep healthy snacks available at all times. You're less likely to grab junk food if something good for you is readily available.

Don'ts

- Over-train. Your body needs time to recover in between workouts.
 - Skip breakfast. Eating breakfast will jump start your metabolism and provide you with the energy you need to get through the day.
 - Skip stretching.
 - Skimp on sleep.
 - Set unrealistic goals. A healthy rate of weight loss is 1-2 pounds per week. If you have 50 pounds to lose, don't expect it to come off overnight, you'll set yourself up for disappointment.
 - Compare your successes and failures to others. Everyone is unique, and what works for some may not work for others.
 - Work out randomly. Work out regularly to maximize the benefits you'll reap from a consistent fitness routine.
 - Give up. Consider talking with a friend in times of discouragement.
- Forget to reward yourself on occasion.

Always remember to keep an open mind and remain flexible when starting a new exercise routine. At times you may find it necessary to change your routine slightly. Life is a dynamic ride and you'll find your fitness journey is too. If you're willing to try new things and set reasonable expectations, you'll reap the rewards of your fitness program and successfully achieve your fitness goals.



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