

Seven ways to achieve results

Number 1 - Understand what it means to eat sensibly

Educate yourself on sensible nutritional practices. A correct understanding of the importance of all nutrients - protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals - in your diet cannot be understated. To fully take control of your diet you must also be aware of the affects of certain foods on your metabolism, hormones, blood sugar and other vital bodily processes.

There is a lot of literature out there and not all of it is helpful. Often taking a commonsense approach is best. You will often instinctively know which foods are healthy and which are not. In the same way, you will often be able to weed out the fad diet books from those that make sense, are scientifically proven and can help you.

Don't get caught up with fad diets. They don't work! That said, be aware that some books with 'diet' in the title actually provide the kind of information you need. Take a look at ["Enter The Zone"](#) by Barry Sears, PhD. and ["The Paleo Diet"](#) by Loren Cordain, PhD., these are two of the best nutrition books around. Keep an open mind and learn as much as you can.

Number 2 - Set yourself some goals

Set yourself some sensible goals with regard to your health and fitness. The key word here is *sensible*. We strongly advise that you do not use body weight as your primary goal. Consider goals such as: fitting into your old jeans, running a certain distance, playing your favourite sport again, or eating less of a particular unhealthy food. There are heaps of choices, choose ones that are right for you.

By setting yourself goals you will stay motivated and you can feel a sense of accomplishment when you reach them. It's even worthwhile to reward yourself when you reach your goals - but no chocolate cake!

Number 3 - Find a training partner

A training partner is a great asset on any training day. Whether you are training in the gym or outdoors, a partner will benefit you. Humans are inherently competitive creatures. The presence of another person often challenges us to put in our best performances. Sometimes having an external stimulus like a competitor can give you the boost you need to go that extra step. Beyond this level of competition your training partner can also provide invaluable and ongoing encouragement throughout your training session.

Another important consideration in physical activity is safety. Training with another person provides you with an extra level of safety. For example, they can assist you when you are lifting heavy weights by spotting you. This has the added benefit of allowing you to attempt new personal best lifts, which in turn improves your gains.

Number 4 - Forget the scales

The scales are only one measure among a multitude of others that we use to indicate our level of health and fitness. The truth is that they are often not the best method of measurement. Sure, they show current body weight and can be used to determine progress in a health and fitness program but they do not allow for our individual situation. Our weight can fluctuate throughout the day depending upon our eating patterns, our health and - for females - the menstrual cycle. So, don't focus on the numbers on the scales.

Some great ways to measure your success in controlling your health and fitness are how you feel in your clothes, the way you see yourself in the mirror, your increased energy levels, and your improved physical abilities.

If you stay focused and continue to exercise regularly and eat properly, the weight will take care of itself. The human body knows what its healthy size is and if you allow it to, it will return to its correct weight and stay there.

Number 5 - Challenge your habits

Throughout our lives we manage to weave a complex web of habits; some good, some bad. It's habits that ensure we continue to behave in the same manner. If you feel stuck in a rut or you are having trouble controlling your weight, chances are that your habits are controlling you. In order to make significant lifestyle changes, it is your habits that must be challenged. It might be as simple as not having your favourite drink for a day, or skipping the TV for 24 hours, or something a little more dramatic.

Take some time to consider your habits and how they are affecting the way you live your life. Do you always eat the same foods? Do you always exercise on the same day? Do you always perform the same exercises?

Number 6 - Mix it up

Don't get caught in the trap of performing the same movements and the same workouts over and over and over again. Your body craves variety. To develop your fitness in a more complete sense you must perform activities that activate particular responses in your body. It's no good just lifting heavy weights and forgoing training that benefits your flexibility (as one example). You should be aiming to participate in many varied forms of physical activity. The more the better as long as you don't over-train. Perhaps you could try a new sport, join a running group, take up dancing; anything to provide your body with a variety of movements and challenges.

Can't think of new things to do? How about these:

- jump
- swim
- ride
- lift
- throw
- run
- row
- surf
- ski
- climb
- race
- play

Number 7 - Push it

If you are after results you must push yourself to the limit. You must test your boundaries and surpass them. You must force your body to adapt to greater and greater stresses. It is simply not enough to participate in some random form of physical activity with no intent.

One word that should be in your mind during every training session is intensity. You should always be aiming for the most intense workout that you are capable of at that particular time. If you are thinking in this manner then you will always push yourself as far as possible.

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