

10 Tips for Getting in Great Shape

- 1. Take up weight training:** No single form of exercise can do more to improve every aspect of your health and the way you look than properly performed resistance training. The success of a resistance training program hinges on the balance of training demands and recovery time. As a rule of thumb these workouts should be brief, intense and infrequent.
- 2. Workout harder—not longer:** Do not confuse ‘how much’ exercise you perform with ‘how hard’ you are working. Contrary to popular belief you don’t need to be in the gym for an hour or more, 5-7 days a week to see results. The truth is, if you are training intensely enough you really do not need any more than 2-3, half-hour workouts a week to get in great shape! Always remember it is the quality of your workouts and not the quantity which determines their effectiveness.
- 3. Perform your resistance training exercises with low velocity, high tension, and high intensity:** Body position and form are crucial but pay special attention to your speed of movement and intensity of effort. Take no less than 4-6 seconds to lift the weight and 4-6 to lower it with a brief pause (1 second) at the top and bottom of the movement. This will help to reduce the force placed on the joints while increasing muscular tension and work. Perform each set to *momentary muscular fatigue*. This is when despite your greatest physical and mental effort (intensity) you can no longer complete a rep through its full range of motion with good form.
- 4. Be efficient:** Who ever said you needed to perform more than one set per exercise. Research has shown that 1 set of an exercise [performed as described above] can produce results equal to performing 3 or more sets of that same exercise. So why waste time and effort on sets which are not going to significantly impact your results. Instead put all your effort into performing just one set then move on to another exercise. This will help to get your workouts completed in a more timely fashion.
- 5. Steer clear of gimmicks and fads:** Balancing on balls, boards and other unstable apparatus while simultaneously performing exercises might be in vogue these days, but it is hardly a productive form of exercise. There is not a shred of research to back up any of the claims made by the fitness guru’s and trainers

who promote these types of exercise. Instead stick with those forms of exercise and training methods that are time tested and proven.

6. **Think long-term:** About 95% of those who make the resolution to 'get in shape' will quit after about 2 months. Why? Because most will try to make up for years of poor nutrition and/or lack of exercise by dieting hard and hitting the gym 5-6 days per week for hours at a time and will invariably get 'burnt-out' after 4-8 weeks. Understand that achieving any significant gains will require time and a long-term outlook. Rome wasn't built in a day and neither will your body...especially if you haven't been treating it well for years prior.
7. **Get leverage:** A goal, or resolution for that matter, is only useful if there is some tangible benefit at the end. If being in better health, looking better or feeling better are not enough to keep you committed to a healthy diet and exercise regimen then you better find something that does. A lever can only move a heavy object if it is long enough and strong enough. Similarly your reason(s) for getting in shape need to be very strong and have long-term implications.
8. **Push your limits:** No one ever got anywhere by standing still. If you are comfortable with your exercise regimen or diet then you can be sure that your body will be comfortable right where it is. Only when you push your limits and put your body in an uncomfortable or unfamiliar state, via diet and exercise, will it adapt by becoming stronger, healthier, more muscular or rid itself of body-fat. If you are new to exercise or have not exercised in a long time it is a good idea to ease into a program, but at some point you'll have to work outside your comfort zone if want to be successful.
9. **Do no more than 15-30 minutes of cardio at a time:** That's right, none of this slaving away with 45-60 minutes of cardio each session—unless you truly live for this of course. Get more from doing less, by doing it—*you guessed it*—harder! High Intensity Interval Training (H.I.I.T.) is a great way to burn more calories, more fat, as well as improve your cardiovascular conditioning while spending less time on the treadmill, bike, elliptical, cross-trainer or even running outside.
10. **Eat the right amount of protein, carbs, and fats:** No carb, low-carb, high-protein, low-protein, high-fat, low-fat, the combinations are endless. Which form of eating is right for you depends on...well...*you!* Your body-type, metabolism, activity level and goals dictate how much of each of these macronutrients you need. Eliminating or overindulging in any one of them can have a disastrous

effect. Take the time to experiment with different combinations and ratios of protein, carbs, and fat in conjunction with a sufficient caloric intake to find out what works best for you.