

MARK'S CORNER

TIPS FOR IMPROVING FITNESS ROUTINES



If you're looking for an easy way to get (and stay!) in shape, it's essential to create a realistic and low-stress fitness plan. All too often, people fall into the trap of embarking on overly-ambitious diets and workout plans, but then the stressors of daily life get in the way. However, with some clever planning, you can create a long-term routine that works for you.



MAKE YOUR MEALS IN ADVANCE

Even if you spend all of your free time exercising, you might not see the results you want without proper nutrition management. Since healthy eating often proves difficult on weekdays, consider prepping your weekly meals on Sunday. This way you can grab-and-go, ready to choose your meals from throughout the workweek.



PLAN YOUR WORK

Making a concrete workout schedule helps people avoid becoming confused or indecisive during workout sessions. If you like being super organized, perhaps you could create a checklist of specific exercises, sets, and reps to complete for each day of the week.



TAKE A FLEXIBLE APPROACH

That being said, this degree of structure doesn't work for everybody—and that's okay. Perhaps a more spontaneous and casual approach would be better for you. It can be as simple as having at least one leg day, an arm day, and three cardio days a week without setting specific exercises or days.



CREATE WEEKLY CHECKPOINTS

By checking in with yourself every week, you'll be able to evaluate your successes and shortcomings. Reading over your plan and identifying the areas you've made progress in is an excellent motivator to keep going. You can even create a spreadsheet or line graph to visualize your progress every week or two if you're into data.



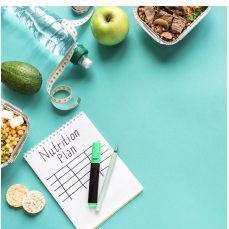
HAVE FUN & BE CREATIVE

Perhaps the most important tip of all is to fill your exercise routine with activities you actually enjoy. Getting in shape doesn't necessarily require running laps or lifting weights. Feel free to think outside the box—cycling, hiking, swimming, yoga, and Zumba are just a few examples of recreational activities that can double as a workout.



RECRUIT A WORKOUT PARTNER

If you have a friend or partner who is interested in improving their diet and exercise habits, ask them if they'd like to join you. That way, you can work out together, encourage one another, and hold each other accountable for sticking to the routine.



KEEP WITH YOUR NUTRITIONAL GOALS

Instead of focusing on what you "can't" eat, try to focus on meeting your macro targets every day by eating enough protein, complex carbohydrates, and unsaturated fats. (Think eggs, fish, protein shakes, brown rice, oats, and avocados—yum!) Also, be sure to eat lots of whole grains, vegetables, and fruits to get enough vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Chances are, you'll feel so full that you won't be able to binge on junk food.