

+YOUR WORKOUT ROUTINE... KEEP IT SIMPLE

PART 3 OF 3-PART SERIES

By Tom Wilson, Fitness Coach

DURATION... HOW LONG SHOULD MY WORKOUTS LAST?

As a general rule, if you're workouts last longer than an hour, you're not training with enough intensity. 60 minutes is enough time for your warm-up, cardio, strength training (including core work) and flexibility. If you're unable to get all this done in an hour, reduce the rest time between each exercise and cut out exercises of less importance. For example, you could spend an entire hour just stretching, but there are only a few stretches that you really need to do. Spend the majority of time in the area that best suits your goal for training.

If you want to lose weight, spend more time on cardio training. If you want to tone up, spend the majority of your time working with weights. Cross-training workouts generally give the best overall results. This means combine all the components. For example, perform a circuit where you do an exercise for strength, followed by an abdominal exercise followed by a two minute burst of cardio. If you take minimal rest between each component, your heart rate will stay elevated for the entire workout.

BE PATIENT

Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains.

James 5:7 (New International Version)

There is always a period of time between sowing and reaping that requires patience. Expecting immediate results is one of the main reasons so many people start and stop exercise routines. Remember, getting fit does not happen overnight. It's a lifestyle commitment. Don't expect immediate dramatic changes in your body shape or weight loss. Although changes are happening internally, most external benefits won't become visible for the first four to six weeks.

The easiest way to explain how the body works is to compare the process to a game of chess. Every time you make a move, such as changing your exercise habits or eating better, your body will study the change for awhile before it makes a counter move. It's trying to figure out what you're doing and how to adapt accordingly!

If you increase the intensity of your workouts, your body will figure out that it needs to supply more cardiovascular and muscular endurance to help you perform the activity. If you're not drinking enough water, your body will hold on to what it has rather than use it for all the chemical reactions that are occurring every second. If you don't eat, your body will slow down its metabolism to conserve the food it has to survive on. So not eating is one of the biggest mistakes people make when trying to lose weight. You're working against the way the body is designed. The point is, for every move you make, both positive and negative, the body will make a counter move; it just takes time. The body's reactions aren't as impulsive as our emotional reactions!

Stay focused on your new lifestyle choices and look forward to the harvest of all the positive benefits proper exercise and nutrition bring. In the meantime, celebrate the internal benefits you're experiencing such as increased energy, less stress and anxiety, higher self-esteem, and an increased feeling of well-being.

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REST

There are three main factors that contribute to the success of your quest for health:

1. Exercise
2. Nutrition
3. Rest

Rest isn't just the amount of sleep you get at night, although that's important. It's also about the amount of rest you give your body between workouts. Everyone is different, so everyone's rest time will vary. The intensity of your exercise routine will also determine how much time you need to recover between workouts. The more intense the workout is, the more you overload the system and the more rest your body will require.

Walking is a moderate workout so you should be able to walk everyday. Weight training, on the other hand, breaks down the muscle tissues and generally requires 48 hours of rest between workouts. You can train with weights everyday, just not the same muscle groups. The process to training beyond your body's ability to recover is called over-training. Over-training is another example of working against the way God designed our bodies to work rather than with it. The most common signs of over-training include chronic fatigue and soreness, insomnia, headaches and moodiness. But, with proper rest and nutrition, your body will recover from the workouts and respond by providing you with all the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.