

PT Newsletter

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Find the 2 misspelled words and WIN !!!

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Breaking the Rules of Exercise

By Paige Waehner

When I first started personal training, I was hung up on following the rules I learned in my certification courses: A certain amount of cardio at a specific training zone along with the standard, recommended strength exercises. I quickly learned that human beings don't always conform to the rules of exercise and that trying to force them into it was like trying to get my cat to, well, do just about anything other than drape himself over the back of the couch for a nine-hour nap.

I'm reminded of one client who came to me because her doctor recommended a strength program to manage some bone loss. The problem? She hated everything we tried. After some trial and error, I created a workout for her was nothing close to the "rules" - it was a short, light workout that barely taxed her muscles. Maybe this seemed like a waste of time but guess what? Because the workouts felt good to her, she started doing them on her own and it wasn't long before she actually requested heavier weights and harder workouts.

Too often, we force ourselves to follow the "rules" for weight loss and exercise, even if they don't work in our lives. The truth is, rules don't matter if we aren't following them in the first place. If that's the case, we may be better off making our own rules.

Do We Know Too Much?

One reason it's so hard to figure out this weight loss/exercise thing is because of the wealth of information available. There's nothing wrong with searching for information, but it's possible to take things too far. Sometimes, searching for the perfect answer sometimes takes the place of actually doing something and we often take the word of experts over what our own bodies and minds are telling us.

With exercise, as with all things in life, knowing when to bend or break the rules is essential for finding success.

Breaking All the Rules

There are plenty of rules for exercise that we follow because they make sense and they keep us healthy and safe. We have heart rate zones to guide us so we don't hurt our hearts. We have strength training rules that keep us from lifting too frequently and that help us do the moves safely. But, there are other rules of exercise, more like guidelines, that can often keep us from following through with exercise if they don't fit in with our lives, needs and goals.

For example, I got an email recently from a woman desperate to lose weight. She mentioned she'd been trying for years to get up early and exercise and she'd never managed to do it. When I suggested that morning exercise wasn't right for her, she was surprised. She mentioned reading that people who exercise in the morning are more successful at weight loss. My question to her was: If you're not exercising in the morning now, how much weight are you losing anyway? She wrote back, thrilled to know that she could workout any time and still get results.

We're all influenced by what we read or hear. Think of how you approach exercise and what's worked for you in the past and what hasn't. If something isn't working, are you more likely to change what you're doing to make it work or give up because, if you can't follow the "rules," why should you even bother?

Sometimes, paying too much attention to what other people say, even experts, robs you of the satisfying experience of figuring out what works for you. And you may find that what works for you is nothing close to the "rules" of exercise.

New Rules for Exercise

By Paige Waehner

When it comes to weight loss, we want answers right now. But, it takes time to find a program that fits your needs. The following ideas may help you figure out what will work for you.

1. Everything counts. For many of us, exercise just isn't worth it unless it "counts." That often means that it has to last for a certain length of time, be at a certain intensity and we have to do it a certain number of times a week. The problem is that we don't always have the time or energy for workouts that "count," and, when that happens, we tend to skip exercise rather than "waste time" with shorter or easier workouts. Consistency is the real key to exercise success and that often means being flexible. If you don't have the time or energy for your usual workout, give yourself permission to do *something*, even if it's just a few minutes of walking or strength exercises. Expand your definition of what "counts" and you may find you move more than before.

2. Do what you can. I often get questions from people who wonder what to do if they can't handle the amount of exercise they're supposed to do to lose weight. My answer? Do what you can. Too often, people decide not to workout at all if they don't have the endurance or strength for challenging workouts. But, what we forget is that exercise is like anything else: It takes time and practice and we aren't going to be good at it the first time we do it. Make a new rule that you'll do what your body can handle and improve on that. If you can only walk for 5 minutes, do that and go for 6 minutes the next time. It doesn't matter if it doesn't conform with the "rules." What matters is that you start where you are and build slowly towards more intense exercise.

3. Do what you like. We aren't always going to like every aspect of exercise, but it's important to find things you enjoy. People often make themselves do things they don't like because they've heard that's what they should do to see results. Instead of going by what you should do, find out what feels good to you. If you hate the gym, you don't have to join one to get a good workout. If you hate running, there's no reason you have to do it. There are so many choices for exercise these days, we can all find something whether it's sports, group fitness, swimming, exercise videos or taking a walk after dinner.

4. Listen to your body. I believe that our bodies know a lot more than our minds do. The problem is, we often go by what we think we should do rather than what our bodies are telling us. For example, I had one client who hated her running because her heart rate soared whenever she ran past a certain pace, a pace she'd decided she was supposed to keep to burn the most calories. It took some convincing, but when she finally agreed to slow down, she actually started to enjoy running. In fact, she was eventually able to run even faster than before, simply because she took her time and went by how she felt rather than trying to force her body to do something it wasn't ready for. When you're exercising, pay attention to how your body feels. If you're miserable, that may mean you're working too hard. Keep in mind that every day is different.

Some days you'll have tons of energy and work at a higher level, while others you may need to back off. Listening to your body is one way to make exercise more enjoyable.

5. Use your common sense. I once got an email from a person trying to work within a heart rate zone calculated by her personal trainer. The problem was, the workouts felt too easy and she was reluctant to go faster because her trainer told her to stay in her fat burning zone. Aside from the fact that the fat burning zone is more myth than truth, the calculations she followed were only estimates. These formulas aren't exact and most of us find we have to adjust them according to how we feel. Not only that, this person relied on what her trainer told her instead of how she actually felt. I'm not saying you shouldn't listen to experts, but never be afraid to question advice if it doesn't feel right to you. Many of us try to follow formulas or calculations that don't match how we feel or what's happening with our bodies. Use those numbers as a starting point, but don't be afraid to adjust them when you need to. No one knows your body better than you. In the end, what you do is your choice. There really is no right way to do this. Guidelines are great for giving us a framework to follow, but testing the limits of those guidelines is something we all have to do to find out what will really work. Getting expert advice can be helpful, but remember: at some point you just have to get moving. The more you do it, the more you'll learn about yourself and the more confident you'll be about making your own rules for exercise.

Spelling Bee Contest

Find the 2 misspelled words in this month's PT Newsletter, then call Sylvia at (718) 729-5947 and be the first 5 callers to win our monthly prizes.

Congratulations!!! to the 2008 Memorial Day Raffle winners and to this month's winners. Last PT newsletter's misspelled words are **haelth (correct word = **health**) and **accomodate** (correct word = **accommodate**).**

Come visit us at www.excellentchoicept.com and give us a call. Back pain, neck pain, knee or hip pain, muscle weakness, etc. we are here to help.

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