

[IMAGE]

Five Common Fitness Mistakes That Can Slow Your Progress

By Emily Duval Ledger

Even when they have the best intentions, exercisers often make mistakes that keep them from getting the most out of their workouts, and in some cases, do them harm. Here are a few of the most common mistakes, and how you can avoid them yourself.

1. Walking with hand weights. Carrying dumbbells while you walk may seem like a smart way to add strength training to your cardio workout, but it compromises your posture and can lead to injury. Best to keep your cardio and strength training separate, so each can get your full attention.
 2. Focusing only on cardio. Though cardio workouts are great for you, we start losing muscle as early as 30, which can significantly slow your metabolism and leave you vulnerable to injury. Even a few days of strength training per week can increase bone density, and help you burn more calories, even while at rest!
 3. Skipping the stretch. Stretching at the end of your workout (when your body is nice and warm) can significantly decrease aches and pains, reduce delayed onset muscle soreness, and prevent overuse injuries. Plus, stretching is your body's reward for all that hard work!
 4. fitness - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Seeking a quick fix. We all want to see results fast, but don't let crash diets and overly-intense exercise programs lure you into false expectations: the best (and lasting) results come from making changes you can see yourself doing for life. Embracing an extreme program for a few weeks to lose weight fast only sets you up to gain the weight back (and then some later), and wreaks havoc on your thyroid. Instead, figure it will take at least as long to lose the weight as it took you to gain it.
 5. Letting social media be your trainer. It's one thing to collect inspirational quotes and healthy recipes on your social media pages, but don't mistake fitness memes for sound advice. 30-Day Push-up (or Squat) Challenges tend to overuse the same muscles day after day, and can lead to injuries and poor posture. Better to find a qualified trainer to help create a program that works best for you.
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