



Bodyweight Workouts:  
The New Trend in Fitness

Home Gym on a Budget

5 Home Gym Gadgets  
That Really Work!

Fitness Gains Stalled?  
Change Up Your Routine

# Women's Guide To Fitness

5 Tips to Keep Your Diet  
on Track

Workout Partners: Why  
You Need One And Where  
To Find Her

10 Easy Tips to Burn More  
Calories During Your Day

5 Ways To Stay On Track  
At The Gym

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## **BODYWEIGHT WORKOUTS: THE NEW TREND IN FITNESS**

**GYM NOT REQUIRED**

*When you think of strength training, it's usually the bench press or some overpriced, oversized contraption that comes to mind. But with bodyweight training, all you need is a functioning body and a decent exercise floor. But does it really work? Read on to find out.*

If you've been faithfully hitting the gym but have yet to lose an inch, chances are you need more strength training. The point of working out is to build muscle, and if all you've been doing is run on the treadmill, you're entirely missing the point. Strength training—the use of weights or resistance to work individual muscle groups—is what does the actual fat-burning.

Traditionally, weights such as dumbbells and bench presses were the standard tools for strength training. Needless to say, it's not very encouraging: you'd have to sign up at a gym or get your own machine, which is expensive either way. But here's the good news—you don't need to all that iron to work your muscles. In fact, you can work a fair bit of strength training into your routine without spending a penny.

Bodyweight training, or the use of one's own weight to provide resistance, is based on some very basic exercises. Squats, pushups, and pull-ups are the core movements in using your body weight. If you can do these basic moves, then you'll have no problem picking up bodyweight training.

Of course, like any other exercise, bodyweight has its pros and cons. It's simple all right, but is it effective? Here are some of the pros and cons.

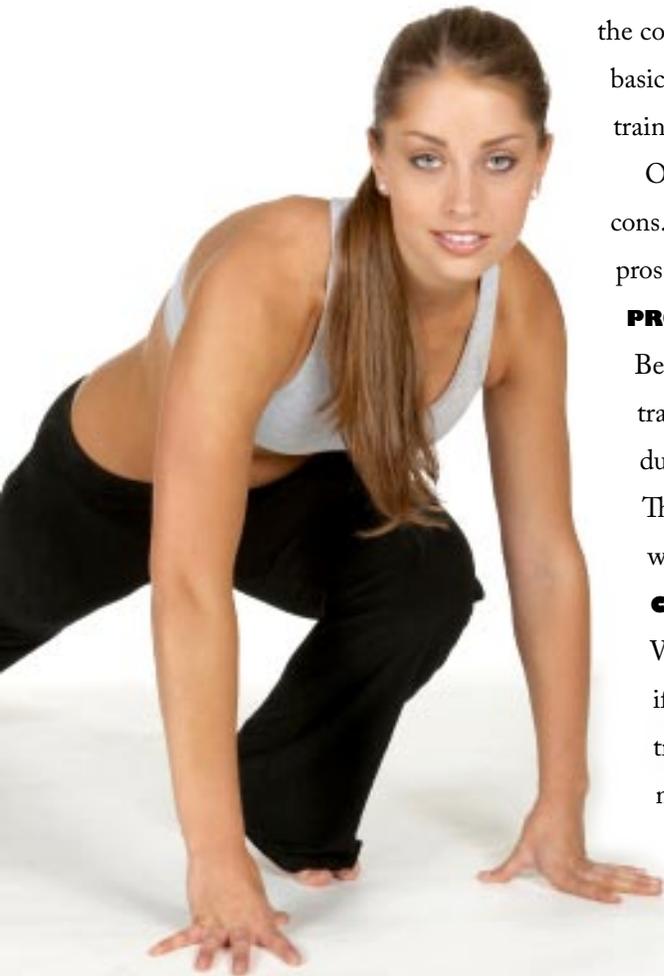
### **PRO: YOU CAN DO IT ANYWHERE.**

Because your body is your machine, you can do bodyweight training anywhere. You can use a mat for comfort or a pair of dumbbells for resistance, but in most cases all you need is a floor. There's no need to scout for gyms when you're out of town, which makes it perfect for people on the go.

### **CON: IT'S NOT FOR EVERYONE.**

With free weights, you can always move up a couple of pounds if you want a more intense workout. But with bodyweight training, you can only go as far as your own body weight. That means a person with low muscle mass may not get the same benefits as one who's solidly built to begin with. If your own weight won't do, you can use a dumbbell or resis-

**BODYWEIGHT TRAINING  
DOESN'T JUST BUILD YOUR  
MUSCLES—IT ALSO KEEPS  
YOUR METABOLISM GOING**



tance band to provide the extra tension.

**PRO: IT'S VERSATILE.**

Bodyweight isn't just for strength training. With the right modifications, you can turn the core movements into a calisthenics drill, endurance training, and even a total body workout. If you know all the drills, you can have all the benefits of a home gym without buying a single machine!

**CON: YOU HAVE TO IMPROVISE.**

To get the most out of bodyweight training, you have to put a spin on the basic moves to target the right muscle groups. Sometimes you simply need more reps to up the intensity, other times you'll have to do a new position altogether. It takes a while to get the hang of it. If you don't know what you're doing, the whole workout can end up pointless.

**PRO: IT'S SAFE.**

A lot of workout injuries result from the misuse of heavy equipment. Come to think of it, the bench press—with its heavy iron bar and huge metal discs—is an accident waiting to happen. Bodyweight workouts give you the same kind of exercise, minus the risk. Beginners are often advised to start with simple pushups and pull-ups before trying out the bench.

**CON: YOU CAN ONLY GET SO FAR.**

Strength training should be progressive. If you're getting used to the usual 6-lb lift, it's time to move up and increase your tension. But with bodyweights, there's a limit to how far you can go, because your body weight provides the resistance. You can build a fair bit of muscle on bodyweight alone, but if you're planning to compete, free weights might be a better choice.

**PRO: IT WORKS OVERTIME.**

Bodyweight training doesn't just build your muscles—it also keeps your metabolism going. That means you keep burning calories long after your workout, and even while you sleep. And as you keep building muscle, your metabolic rate increases, so your workouts become more effective over time.

**YOU CAN DO BODYWEIGHT  
TRAINING ANYWHERE**

**HOME GYM ON A  
BUDGET**

**GETTING STARTED**

*Many people think setting up a home gym is too complicated, not to mention too expensive. But it's easier and cheaper than it seems.*

*With a bit of planning, you can build a home gym that perfectly suits your needs—without paying expensive membership fees!*

If your idea of getting fit is signing up for a gym, you're missing out on a lot—and probably spending much more than you should. Let's face it, gym memberships



can be expensive, and for your money, you can be getting a much better workout. If you're spending \$600 a year on your gym membership, you're much better off building your own.

That's right—you can build your own home gym for the same amount you spend at your local gym. True, you can't get same state-of-the-art equipment, but who said you needed them anyway? Add to that the money you save on transportation and trainer's fees, and you've got yourself a great deal!

tation and trainer's fees, and you've got yourself a great deal!

Here's a quick guide to help you get started.

### **1. KNOW YOUR GOALS.**

The first thing you should ask yourself is: do you really need a home gym? If you think you'll be into it for a long time, then a home gym would be a good investment. But if you're just trying to drop a few pounds, you may be better off with a temporary membership.

### **2. SET A BUDGET.**

When it comes to gym equipment, you get your money's worth. You can't expect a cheap treadmill to still be in top form after five years of regular use. Consider how often you plan on using each piece of equipment. Treadmills should be heavy-duty, as they tend to be used every day. Bench presses are used less often, so you can get them refurbished as long as you trust the dealer.

### **3. DESIGN YOUR PROGRAM.**

When you've made up your mind, it's time to choose your fitness activities. That's the main advantage of building a home gym: you get to design your own program and buy only the equipment you need. Remember that aerobic and strength training should be staples in any program. Keep in mind your intended progress—you should be able to increase resistance on your bike and adjust the incline on a treadmill.

### **4. PLAN OUT YOUR SPACE.**

Your home gym should be placed in an accessible, low-traffic area with good ventilation. Determine how much space each machine will take up, and don't forget to leave room for getting around. Don't rule out open space—your garage or backyard can be an option—but make sure they're in a sheltered area for when

it rains.

### 5. BUY WISELY.

When everything's down on paper, you can start shopping for equipment. Be sure to do your research beforehand, so you know the going rates for everything. You should also know what to look for in each piece. Here are some things to consider:

**Safety features:** Safety should always be first on your list. Look for protective features such as stack guards on barbells, emergency switch on treadmills, and motion checkers on strength equipment.

**Controls:** Does it have controls for factors like speed, tension, and intensity? You can't stick to one program forever, so you need something that can adapt to your needs.

**Comfort:** You may think you're getting a great deal, but you can't really tell unless you've tried it yourself. Take a few minutes to get a feel of the machine and see if it feels right. A good dealer shouldn't have any problems letting you try their goods.

**Noise:** The less noise it makes, the smoother it runs and the longer it's likely to last. A little buzz shouldn't be much of a problem, but clanking and scratching usually mean trouble.

**Warranty:** Even secondhand equipment should come with a written warranty. There should be at least six months' replacement warranty on used or refurbished equipment, and at least a year on brand-new gear.

**YOU CAN BUILD YOUR  
OWN HOME GYM FOR  
ABOUT THE SAME  
AMOUNT YOU SPEND ON A  
GYM MEMBERSHIP**

### 5 HOME GYM GADGETS THAT REALLY WORK!

#### FOCUS ON FUNCTION

*Rowers, spinning bikes, stair steppers, elliptical machines: when it comes to gym equipment, you'll never run out of options. The problem is choosing the right one for your fitness needs without breaking the bank. These five gadgets definitely give you the best value for your money.*

Anyone who's tried to get in shape has faced one hard truth: gym equipment doesn't come cheap. A decent treadmill rarely costs under \$800, and an elliptical trainer will set you back over \$1000. If you aren't careful, a complete home gym can easily cost you thousands. How do you make sure you get your money's worth?

The key is to remember that more isn't necessarily better. True, there's no such thing as an all-in-one machine, but that doesn't mean you have to buy one of

everything. You just have to know which ones you need and which ones you can do without. Find something that will suit your fitness needs without costing you an arm and leg. It's easier than you think—here are five practical gadgets you can start with.

### 1. TREADMILL

There's a good reason why this remains the most popular fitness machine. It's hands down the best way to work up your cardio, whether you're a leisurely walker or a marathon runner. You can even work in some leg training by cranking up the tension. Look for one with a decent range of speeds, tensions, and inclines. You don't need a fully programmable machine, as long as it adjusts to your changing fitness needs.



### 2. DUMBBELL SET

Invest in a good set of weights for strength training and muscle toning. Dumbbells don't cost much per piece, but buying a range of weights can be expensive. To find the right set, start with the weight you're most comfortable with and get the next two pairs in two-pound increments.

If you're the DIY type, you can also build your own dumbbells at home. Take a pair of heavy-duty dowels and use concrete-filled containers (such as paint buckets or coffee cans) as the weights. You can also simply lift large water bottles or soup cans.

### 3. JUMP ROPE

These are probably one of the most versatile toys around. A good quality jump rope will take care of your cardio, work your leg muscles, and even tone up your core. A half hour on the rope can burn a whopping 650 calories! Plus you can easily stash them in your bag—perfect for sneaking in a quick workout on the go.

For a more intense workout, get a weighted rope. These ropes are made of solid rubber or leather, giving them more air resistance. Often, the handles are also weighted, so it works your arm muscles as well. Make sure it's the right

**INVEST IN A GOOD SET OF WEIGHTS  
FOR STRENGTH TRAINING AND MUSCLE  
TONING**

length for you: when folded in half, it should equal the distance from the floor to your armpits.

#### **4. RESISTANCE BANDS**

At the end of the day, resistance training is really just about resistance. That means anything that can create tension—say a big rubber band—can be turned into an exercise machine. Besides the changeable tension levels, there isn't much difference between a \$10 resistance band and a \$1000 rowing machine. Want to save even more? Look around your garage for a large elastic band, or use the inner tube of a bicycle tire. To increase resistance, simply add more bands.

#### **5. PUNCHING BAG**

Fitness boxing is a great way to relieve stress, improve your balance, and get in some muscle toning. Set up a body punching bag in a well-ventilated area (intense workout can leave you gasping for breath) and make sure there are no exposed metal parts. If you can't afford a professional quality bag, fill a heavy-duty canvas duffel with playground sand and hang it from your ceiling. If you have some extra room, set up a small speed bag too—it's great for upper arm toning.

### **FITNESS GAINS STALLED? CHANGE UP YOUR ROUTINE**

#### **KEEP IT FRESH**

*All too often, your diet tends to lose steam just as you're starting to make progress. Don't worry—it's a perfectly natural effect of losing weight. The key is to add variety to your routine and mix things up once in a while. Try these six simple tricks.*

So you've just started a fab new diet, and you stick to it faithfully. In a couple of weeks, you've lost three pounds; another week and you've dropped five. So you keep going—you might have actually found something that works! But after a while, your weight no longer seems to budge, even if you're as consistent as ever. It seems you've hit the wall, as you have with all your past diets.

This is called the weight loss plateau, and it happens to anyone who's trying to lose weight. It happens when your basal metabolic rate (BMR) drops as a result of lower energy consumption. As you lose weight, your body's BMR, or ability to burn calories, also decreases. So if you were burning 1,500 calories a day before your diet, by the time you lose your fifth pound, you'll probably be burning around 1,200.

So how do you get out of the rut? The best way, believe it or not, is to get out of your routine. A little break will give your body time to rest, so when you start back on track, it's ready to work again. Here are some ways to change up your

**AS YOU LOSE WEIGHT,  
YOUR BODY'S BMR,  
OR ABILITY TO BURN  
CALORIES, ALSO  
DECREASES**

weight loss routine and keep your weight loss consistent.

### **1. BREAK YOUR OWN RULES.**

Once a week, treat yourself to the occasional hamburger or pint of ice cream. The body tends to crave what it can't get, and if you keep depriving yourself, you'll become less efficient. Be careful not to overdo it, though.

### **2. CRANK IT UP.**

If indulging yourself doesn't seem to work, try doing the opposite: increase resistance. Jog an extra mile, lift heavier weights, increase the tension on your bike. This will push your muscles to work harder, and boost your metabolism so you burn even more calories when you get back to your routine.

### **3. EAT MORE MEAT.**

Studies suggest that trading fat calories for protein can help keep your BMR in place. Protein also helps build muscle, which increases metabolism. Meat, eggs, and legumes are all excellent sources. But don't go overboard; too much protein can be bad for you, too. Limit your consumption to about one-fourth your total calorie intake.

### **4. ALTERNATE.**

When you've been doing the same thing for a while, your body tends to adapt accordingly and become "immune" to your routine. You can prevent this by having an alternate form of exercise or switching between heavy and light eating days. A good combination would be aerobic exercise and weight training, or actual diet days and more lenient "maintenance" days.

### **5. CHANGE YOUR MEAL FREQUENCIES.**

Eating three large meals a day isn't exactly the best way to lose weight. If you're used to the usual breakfast, lunch and dinner, try snacking in between meals and reducing your meal sizes to compensate. Snacking lightly throughout the day will keep your metabolism up, and you'll even feel more motivated to exercise.

### **6. STOP WATCHING YOUR WEIGHT.**

Unless you're grossly overweight, measuring yourself pound for pound isn't the best way to monitor progress. Getting in shape means you're trading fat for muscle, not just losing fat. So if the scales won't budge, don't fret—as long as you're not cheating, you're still right on track.

**SNACKING LIGHTLY THROUGHOUT THE DAY WILL KEEP YOUR METABOLISM UP**

## 5 TIPS TO KEEP YOUR DIET ON TRACK

### AN EXPERT'S GUIDE



*Always losing track of your weight loss goals? You're not alone—everyone's had their share of failed diets. But staying on track is easier than you think. Here are five simple tricks you can try.*

Deciding to go on a diet is one thing, but staying on it is another. The story is all too familiar: you decide to lose a few pounds, you go on a diet, and two weeks into it, the only thing you've lost is your willpower. So you end up going overboard, or cheating your diet, or simply giving up. Why is it so hard to follow diets, and how can you make it easier?

The first thing to remember is that diets take time. If you're not seeing results within one week, that doesn't mean it's not working. In fact, if you drop even five pounds in that time, it's probably not a healthy diet. Also,

most diets have a "plateau" period, a time when progress seems to stop even if you're as consistent as ever. This is when most people lose motivation.

That's why it's important to understand how your diet works. If you know what it does for your body, following it will be a lot easier. Here are five more things you can do to help yourself stay on track.

#### 1. WRITE IT DOWN.

This sounds rather elementary, but it really works. Plan out all your meals on a chart and put it up where you can easily see it. Cross out items as you go along, giving yourself a "star" or some other form of merit for each meal you successfully follow. Putting it down on paper makes it look more serious, so you feel more compelled to see it through. Make sure there's a copy on your fridge door, too—it'll keep you from grabbing those little snacks in between meals.

#### 2. CHOOSE A MANAGEABLE DIET.

The reason a lot of diets fail is that they're hard to maintain in the first place. Choose a diet you know you can stick to, taking your activity level, work schedule, and other lifestyle factors into account. Remember, not all diets work for everyone. Just because someone lost 10 pounds on one diet doesn't mean it'll work on you too. Take the time to find one that fits your needs. If you can, visit your doctor and have him or her recommend one for you.

**LOOK FOR HIGH-FIBER  
FOODS SUCH AS FRUITS,  
VEGETABLES, AND  
WHOLEGRAIN CRACKERS**

### 3. FIND A COMPANION.

When you're dieting alone, who's to tell when you break your own rules? That's what makes it so easy to quit or cheat, especially if everyone around you is eating what they want. Join a local group or community, or find a friend or family member you can do it with. That way, you'll have someone to keep you on track and vice versa. You can also try joining online communities such as Weight Watchers or Calorie Count, post your diet plans, and tell everyone about your progress.

### 4. WATCH YOUR COMFORT FOODS.

Are you the type who "eats your feelings"? That's what could be ruining your diet. Comfort foods tend to be loaded with fat, sugar and calories. Your emotions are no excuse for grabbing that cookie or candy bar. You don't have to give up comfort food entirely—you just need to find healthier ones. Look for high-fiber foods such as fruits, vegetables, and wholegrain crackers. These foods fill you up fast, so you'll feel full before you eat the caloric equivalent of one meal.

### 5. EXERCISE.

You've probably heard it a thousand times: diet alone isn't enough. While you will lose weight on a diet, you'll easily gain it back once you start eating normally. Get some exercise into your lifestyle, even if it's just a 20-minute walk a day. This will keep up your metabolism, which tends to drop as you deprive yourself of your usual intake. Exercise can even keep you from overeating—studies show that a moderate workout releases brain chemicals that can suppress appetite.

## **WORKOUT PARTNERS: WHY YOU NEED ONE AND WHERE TO FIND HER**

### **STEPS TO SUCCESS**

*Having a reliable workout partner means you have someone who can motivate you to keep up with your exercise regimen especially if you're feeling lazy or uninspired. When looking for a reliable workout partner, you can check out online communities, local community boards, or join gym clubs.*

Motivation is the basic reason why looking for a reliable workout partner is all worth it. If you have a workout buddy, there will always be someone who can really motivate you to reach your fitness goals. Many experience a sudden lost of interest in their exercise regimen after trying it out for a few weeks. Having an exercise buddy means there's someone to inspire or motivate you when you're feeling the workout blues. If you don't feel like going to the gym because you would rather stay in your couch all

**YOUR HAVE A BETTER  
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day and watch reruns of your favorite TV series, a workout buddy can remind you of your fitness goals and of the benefits only an active lifestyle can offer.

Having an exercise buddy or a workout partner is very important when staying in track with your exercise regimen and schedule. Your chances of keeping up with your fitness goals can be increased if you have an exercise buddy. If you think it's silly to move your arms up and down during a workout session, a workout buddy can help lessen the awkwardness of the situation since there's someone you know who's also doing the same thing. Here are some tips on where and how to find the perfect workout partner:

#### **CHECK OUT ONLINE COMMUNITIES**

There are many online communities that offer listings of people who are also looking for workout partners. Some of these communities can even let you sign up for free, making the hunt for the perfect workout partner affordable and easy. When using the services of these online communities, you may be asked in some instances to create an account where you could post your picture, fitness goals, and location. You can also include in your profile the aspects or characteristics you want your exercise partner to have. These online workout communities are basically similar to dating sites. The only difference is that you're looking for someone who can motivate you to work up a sweat and not for someone who's willing to have a romantic relationship with you.



**WHEN LOOKING FOR A WORKOUT PARTNER, FIND SOMEONE WHO HAS SIMILAR FITNESS GOALS**

#### **JOIN GYM CLUBS**

Joining local gym clubs is one good way of looking for that workout buddy who's willing to pull you up if you don't feel like moving or running. It's also one way of making new friends who can serve as your support system when trying to reach your fitness goals.

#### **CHECK OUT LOCAL COMMUNITY BOARDS**

If you are already a member of a local gym or exercise community, you can always check out local community boards for postings of people who are looking for the same thing. You can even ask your trainer for names and contact information of other people who might be willing to be your exercise buddy.

### **LOOK FOR SOMEONE WITH SIMILAR GOALS AND SCHEDULE**

When looking for a workout partner, it's best to opt for someone who has similar fitness goals. In this way, you can really inspire or motivate each other to stick to the exercise regimen. If you're not into sports, having a workout partner who shares your passion for yoga or belly dancing and has a pleasing personality is definitely a good thing.

Aside from having similar goals, you and your workout buddy should both have flexible schedules that can accommodate the workout sessions. Fighting over the exercise schedule is always a waste of time aside from the fact that conflicts between you and your workout buddy won't motivate anyone to work up a sweat.

### **OPT FOR SOMEONE WHO'S EASY TO GET ALONG WITH**

When looking for a workout partner, it's always best to go for someone you can have lots of fun with while running down the treadmill. Your workout partner doesn't have to be your clone; as long as that person can help bring out the best in you while working out, then that person is the perfect workout buddy. Your workout partner doesn't have to be a stranger; you can always look for a friend, a relative, or a co-worker who shares your passion for a healthier lifestyle. Someone who has the same exercise habits is also a reliable workout partner since she can push you to really give your all when meeting your fitness goals.

## **10 EASY TIPS TO BURN MORE CALORIES DURING YOUR DAY**

### **HEALTHY LIVING**

*Let's face it, not all of us have the time to exercise on a regular basis.*

*But who said hitting the gym three times a week was the only way to lose weight? With just a few simple changes, you can burn calories right in your office chair!*

So you want to hit the gym and get in shape, but there's just one little problem: you don't have time. You're certainly not alone—a lot of us are confined to office desks all day, slumped in our seats, the occasional dash to the water station being our only form of exercise. Well, here's the good news: you can burn calories while at work. In fact, if you know how, you can burn calories sitting on your couch. Here's how.

#### **1. TRY SOMETHING NEW.**

Learn a new sport, sign up for dance class, or simply do something you haven't done in a while. A change in routine will "surprise" your body, so that it uses more energy adapting to your new moves. As you get used to it, your body learns to spend energy more efficiently, so the effects are consistent.

**2. WALK MORE.**

Don't have time for a thirty-minute power walk? Try sneaking exercise time into your daily activities. Park your car a couple of blocks from the office and walk the rest of the way. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Ditch the remote and walk across the room to change the channel. It'll all add up and give you the equivalent of a walk around the block.

**3. KEEP MOVING.**

All movement burns calories, no matter how small. That's why fidgety people are more likely to lose weight than idle ones. So take every opportunity you can to move those muscles. Squeezing a ball, bouncing your knees, and even drumming your fingers throughout the day can burn an easy 500 calories!

**4. EXERCISE IN THE MORNING.**

A walk is a walk, right? Not necessarily, although you don't necessarily burn more calories either. However, a morning workout will boost your metabolism throughout the day, giving you a jumpstart on calorie-burning. That way, your body's at work even during your afternoon nap.

**5. WORK OUT OUTDOORS.**

Once in a while, ditch the treadmill and take a real walk outdoors. No one's sure why, but people tend to move more vigorously and burn more calories when they exercise outdoors. Try a walk or run on the beach—the soft sand adds some resistance, so you burn up to 50% more calories than you would on pavement.

**6. START FAST.**

To get the most out of your workout, start with a warm-up, then burst into full power for the first few minutes. Gradually slow down to a comfortable pace, stay there for a few minutes, and then crank up the gears again. This is called the surge technique. Each "surge" forces your body to work overtime adjusting to the new pace, so you burn more calories in the same amount of time.

**7. EAT SMALLER MEALS.**

Instead of the usual three meals, snack lightly throughout the day. Large meals will give you an energy boost, but when it dies down, you'll feel tired and sluggish until your next meal. By spreading your meals out, you keep your metabolism up, and you'll be more active during the lazy hours.

**A MORNING WORKOUT WILL BOOST  
YOUR METABOLISM THROUGHOUT THE  
ENTIRE DAY**

**8. BUILD YOUR MUSCLES.**

The more muscles you have, the faster you will lose weight. Why? Muscles are made of active tissues; that is, unlike fat, they burn calories whenever you move. Strength and weight training help you trade the fat for muscle, thereby boosting your metabolism and calorie-burning potential.

**9. FUEL UP.**

Exercising on an empty stomach is like driving without gas. It's useless, not to mention bad for the car. Before your workout, munch on a healthy, low-calorie snack, such as a fruit or a granola bar. Remember to keep it light, though. Go for 100 to 200 calories: just enough to give you an energy boost and help you work out harder.

**10. DRINK MORE WATER.**

A study by German scientists showed that one's metabolism can spike up by 30% only minutes after drinking a bottle of water, and will stay up for about half an hour afterward. Try drinking five 16-ounce bottles of water a day. If possible, drink them ice-cold—you'll burn an extra calorie or two warming it up.

**5 WAYS TO STAY  
ON TRACK AT THE  
GYM**

**MAKE IT EASY**

*Staying on track at the gym is no easy feat. Here are some tips on how to make sure that you stick to your exercise schedule no matter what – think positive, make exercise fun, set realistic expectations, look for a gym buddy, and treat yourself once you've accomplished your goals.*

Hitting the gym is a tried and tested strategy against unwanted flab. Unfortunately, following an exercise regimen at the gym may seem like a challenging task. If you've ever started working out at the gym but then stopped even before you could really reap the benefits of an active lifestyle, then don't fret because you are certainly not alone. Many people experience this situation. You feel so energized to start working out that you enroll in a program immediately but after a few weeks, you feel that you can't keep up with the regimen anymore and you lose interest in the end. You go back to your old lifestyle where exercise means getting up from the couch to have your second scoop of ice cream while watching your favorite TV show. However, if you're willing to lose excess fat the old way, here are five tips on how to stay on track at the gym:

**IT'S ALL IN THE MIND**

One way to overcome the gym blues is to think of all the many benefits an active lifestyle can offer. Aside from the fact that regular exercise can help you cope with stress positively, it can also help you maintain a healthy weight. Regular

work out sessions can also strengthen your muscles, bones, and joints, making you feel young and full of life. Positive thinking is one key to staying on



track with your regular workout sessions. If, after working out for a few weeks you still think that you have better things to do instead of working up a sweat, think of how members of the opposite sex would react once you strut your well-toned, sun-kissed abs and legs during the summer.

### **MAKE EXERCISE FUN**

When choosing an exercise regimen, opt for something that you'll certainly enjoy. If you love dancing, then go for belly dancing classes. If you are quite competitive, you can join a taekwondo or volleyball team – you get to work up a sweat while bringing out the athlete in you. If you're not into sports, you can stick to regular gym workout sessions and lose that flab by running down the treadmill. A workout session at the gym doesn't have to strictly revolve around exercise equipment – many gyms and community centers offer alternative classes and sessions for the young and old. Depending on your fitness goals and schedule, you can also mix and match regular workout sessions with jazz or hip-hop classes to avoid getting bored with your regimen.

Never opt for an exercise regimen just because everybody's doing it. You have to find a regimen that'll make you feel happy and fulfilled at the end of the session.

### **BE REALISTIC**

When setting out workout goals, it's best to be realistic and take small steps at a time. It's impossible to lose 20 pounds after working out for a couple of days. Moreover, it's risky to over-exercise especially if it's your first time to work out or you are suffering from an illness such as hypertension or diabetes. Always remember that losing excess weight the old-fashioned way takes a

lot of effort and time. There is really no quick scheme if you plan to lose those extra pounds by working up a sweat.

### **LOOK FOR A GYM BUDDY**

A gym buddy can be your loved one, sister, brother, mom, dad, co-worker, neighbor, or any friend who's also willing to shed some excess pounds the old way. Moreover, a gym buddy is someone who can bring you out of your blues and inspire you to really stay on track. Having a workout buddy also means you have someone to remind you in case you forgot to drop by the gym.

**TREAT YOURSELF - YOU'VE DONE  
SOMETHING THAT REQUIRES A LOT OF  
DISCIPLINE AND DETERMINATION - YOU  
DESERVE IT!**

**TREAT YOURSELF**

Staying on track at the gym is no easy feat so when you're able to accomplish a goal, treat yourself to something you've always wanted. It can be a whole day at the spa or a shopping trip with your exercise buddy. You don't have to go for expensive treats; it can be a new book if you love to read or a movie date with a long lost friend. The key here is to treat yourself because you've actually done something that requires a lot of discipline and determination.