**Things I Wish I Knew at the Beginning**

Embarking on a fitness journey is an exciting yet challenging endeavor. Looking back, there are several key lessons I wish I had known from the start. These insights would have saved me time, effort, and frustration, and helped me achieve my goals more efficiently. Here are some valuable pieces of advice for anyone starting their fitness journey: 1. **Compound Exercises are Fundamental** Compound exercises, which involve multiple joints and muscle groups, should be the base of any workout routine. Exercises like squats, deadlifts, bench presses, and pull-ups are incredibly effective for building strength and muscle mass. These movements engage several muscle groups simultaneously, leading to better overall development and efficiency in your workouts. My advice is to focus on multi-joint exercises , not isolation exercises. 2. **IIFYM (If It Fits Your Macros)** Understanding the concept of IIFYM can be a game-changer for your diet. This approach emphasizes the importance of macronutrients—proteins, carbohydrates, and fats—over simply counting calories. By focusing on the right balance of macros that fits your individual needs and goals, you can enjoy flexibility in your diet while still making progress. 3. **Cardio is Not Mandatory for Fat Loss** While cardio can be beneficial for cardiovascular health and increasing calorie expenditure, it is not essential for fat loss. Fat loss primarily comes down to creating a caloric deficit, which can be achieved through diet and resistance training. Focus on lifting weights and maintaining a healthy diet to shed fat effectively. 4. **Strength is Crucial for Muscle Preservation** Maintaining and building strength is vital for preserving muscle mass, especially when trying to lose weight. Ensure your training includes heavy lifting to keep your muscles engaged and prevent muscle loss during a calorie deficit. 5. **Track Every Rep and Set** Keeping detailed notes of your workouts, including every rep, set, and exercise, is crucial for monitoring progress and making informed adjustments. This practice helps you stay accountable, identify patterns, and set realistic goals. 6. **Full Range of Motion and No Ego Lifting** Performing exercises through a full range of motion is essential for proper muscle development and tracking progress. Avoid ego lifting, where you sacrifice form to lift heavier weights. Ensure you complete each movement from start to finish. For instance, if someone assists you during a bench press by holding the bar, it becomes difficult to gauge if you are lifting the weight yourself. 7. **Recovery is Key** Recovery is just as important as the workouts themselves. Prioritize quality sleep and tailor your workout volume to avoid overtraining. Proper recovery ensures your muscles repair and grow, leading to better performance and results. 8. **Monitor Your Weight and Progress** Regularly track your weight and overall progress. For example, record your weight every ten days to observe trends and make necessary adjustments. This habit keeps you motivated and informed about your journey. 9. **Train Each Muscle Group Twice a Week** Aim to train each muscle group twice a week for optimal growth and recovery. This frequency allows for sufficient stimulation and adaptation, leading to better muscle development and strength gains. 10. **Consistency Over Perfection** Never skip a workout, even if you don't feel your best or are not in the mood. It's better to have a subpar workout than to miss one entirely. If you're dealing with an injury, find ways to work around it. For example, if your elbow hurts, focus on training legs or core instead. 11. **Progressive Overload** Progressive overload is the cornerstone of strength and muscle gain. Continuously challenge your muscles by gradually increasing the weight, reps, or intensity of your exercises. This approach forces your muscles to adapt and grow over time. 12. **Supplements are Overrated** Supplements are not a magic solution. While some can be beneficial, they should not replace a balanced diet and proper training. Focus on whole foods and only consider supplements if there are specific gaps in your nutrition. 13. **It Takes Time** Patience is crucial in fitness. Building muscle, losing fat, and achieving your goals take time and consistent effort. Embrace the journey, stay committed, and trust the process.

Setting Yourself Up for Success

By incorporating these principles into your fitness routine, you can set yourself up for success and make your journey more effective оand enjoyable. Remember, fitness is a lifelong pursuit, and the knowledge you gain along the way is invaluable. My goal is not just to help you achieve your dream shape, but also to teach you how to maintain it once you reach it, and to understand why, what, and how things are done to achieve it.

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