

MASTERY OF THE BASICS

# GETTING IN SHAPE: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE?

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7 Guaranteed Steps to Get and  
Stay in Shape, FOREVER.



VICTOR SIMZ



## **GETTING IN SHAPE: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE?**

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Victor Simz

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*Even the greatest oak, was once just a tiny acorn --  
Anonymous*

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## INTRODUCTION

A story is told of a man that went out to sow seed. As he scattered the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow, but when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seeds fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.

But a few seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

There're hundreds upon hundreds of books on fitness, workout routines and diet plans. There're also thousands of videos on YouTube, blogs, vlogs, and other websites, all dedicated to helping people live fit and healthy lives.

With so much information and literature (and I mean, so much!), one would think most of the world would be fit by now. But it's not!

Since 2016, global statistics tell a different story.

Roughly more than 1.9 billion adults (18 years and older) are overweight.

Over 650 million are described as obese.

That's not all. 38 million children under the age of 5, and 340 million adolescents between the ages of 5 and 19 were overweight or obese by 2019.

We're not dealing with something trifling here. This is a global pandemic that's affecting both the young and the old. Being out of shape and overweight (obese) comes with grievous health consequences – like I need to tell you that.

But just in case it might have slipped your mind. If perhaps I don't sound sufficiently eloquent for you. Here're a few medical complications to help you fathom more accurately the gravity of the situation and ponder prudently the prodigious proportion of this precarious predicament.

Cardiovascular disease, diabetes, musculoskeletal disorder, cancer (including endometrial, breast, ovarian, prostate, liver, gallbladder, kidney, and colon). These are only some of the risks that come with being overweight and out of shape.

Research also shows that people with the highest levels of cardiorespiratory



fitness have the lowest risk of dying. But this too is common knowledge. In other words, if you're out of shape --have lower levels of aerobic ability-- you have a mortality risk greater than people who smoke, have coronary artery disease or diabetes. And if you smoke and are out of shape, well, let's not even get into that.

It thus goes without saying that getting in shape should be one, if not your top-most priority. Indeed, a long and healthy life is the best gift you can give yourself and your loved ones. And if you're a parent, you're duty bound to show you kids how to live fit and healthy. And as you may know, kids learn by imitation. That means whether you do or don't, make correct or wrong choices, you're still teaching. That's what parenting means.

Getting in shape is simple, it's not easy, but very very simple. You don't need some grueling workout routine, or punitive diet plan based on a superfood. You don't need some expensive fitness equipment stashed in your basement, a special App, or some high-tech gadget you can strap to your waist while you do chores. It doesn't matter if you think you are 'big-boned', an Endomorph, or simply store too much fat in your adipose tissue. Hey, we all have our stories.

The bottom-line is getting and staying in shape is 100% your responsibility and the formula is simple:

*'Move more, eat less'*

How complicated is that?

Yes, *it is that* simple. But already, your mind is conjuring up reasons why it's not -- for you. You feel indignant, upset even maybe. You're saying;

*'It's easy for you to say, you don't know what I'm going through. You have no idea the challenges of my life.'*

You're right. I don't. We all must paddle our own canoes. Yes, our battles may be different but we're all fighting the same war. At the core, the fundamental reality behind the human condition is just the same, no matter who you are, where you're from, and what you're facing.

Jeff Goins summarizes it best:

*It's true; we'd all like to leave some kind of impact on this ball of dirt. But*

*most of us, tragically, won't. We're afraid of the cost. We're worried we don't have what it takes. We're anxious about the road it takes to get good enough. We're terrified we'll fail to live up to our idea of greatness. So, we play it safe and abide by the rules. Before we even start, we sabotage our work and subvert our genius.*

So, you think you're terrified at the thought of taking on the challenge and responsibility to take control of your own life? your own fitness? well guess what, we all are.

Everyone's fitness journey starts somewhere. Mine started at the age of 19. I remember the day very well, because it turned out to be one of my most humiliating moments and I'll share with you why. Yours can start or re-start today. Remember, starting early is important but it's also about how far you get. And as you'll learn in this book, getting far begins with mastery of the basics. Which includes the seven steps I'm about to share.

It's all about the basics. And that's what this book is all about. You'll probably not read anything you've never heard before. As they say, nothing you can't Google on your own if you had the time and patience. I doubt if you'll get an epiphany or some emotional enlightenment reading this book. But trust me, visions and sentimentality will not help you get in shape. Neither will positive affirmations and prayer without discipline. As Bishop TD Jakes once put it;

'prayer may be a great tool for developing spirituality but praying for weight loss just doesn't work'.

So, what value will you get from reading this book? In one word, '*fundamentals.*' My goal in writing this book is simple, it's to remind you of what you already know but may not be implementing. The small things that are easy to overlook but which make the biggest difference when it comes to getting and staying in shape.

What I share in this book are not ideas I was told or things I've simply read about. I'm not a qualified fitness instructor, and I should probably state that now as a disclaimer. But I have studied fitness for most of my life. And coupled with my military background, I do have practical personal knowledge of what it takes to be fit. I just don't talk fitness, I live it. Every. Single. Day.

So, yeah, you can say I do know a thing or two about fitness. And yes, I truly

believe what I have to share can help you get and stay in shape forever.

Now you might be saying, 'sure, we all know the *forever* part is just a marketing strategy', well it's not. Let me explain. You see, this book contains principles and insight that if followed will help you change (i.e., get in shape). But change is not an event, it is a process that must continue as a lifestyle through your habits. You'll repeat these habits regularly for the rest of your life (forever). And consequently, you will remain in shape forever. That's the sacrifice you must be ready to pay. That's the sacrifice everyone pays.

But if you're looking for a quick fix to a problem you've created over many years, some short-cut, or a trick you can try out over the weekend, this book is probably not for you. That being said, how helpful this book will be is largely dependent on which category you fall under in what I like to call the Fitness Archetypes. So, let's look at these before proceeding any further.

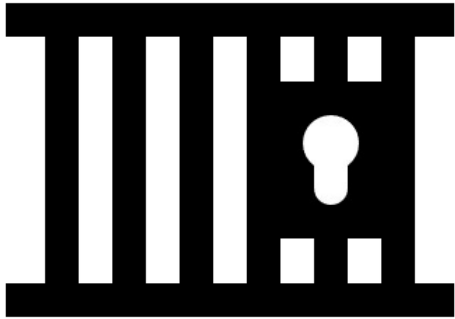
## **The Passive Bystander**

It may sound counterintuitive, but there're people that know enough about fitness to get in shape. But they simply choose not to act upon what they know. These are '*Passive bystanders*', the non-starters. The seed that fell along the path and the birds came and ate it up. Passive Bystanders are people that pretend or have convinced themselves (even subconsciously) that fitness is '*just not their thing*'. They believe even if they tried to get in shape, some external factor (such as their genes or body type) would prevent them from attaining their goal.

So, what do they do? Nothing. Such people, even after reading this book, will choose not to act and soon the birds come and destroy everything. Then they'll go back on Amazon and continue gathering more information. Another book on fitness. Perhaps this time they'll get lucky and find the one that contains the silver bullet.

There's always one more book to read. One more workout routine that looks promising. One more diet to try out. Another piece of equipment to add to the basement. To the point where going to the basement becomes a dread. Secretly longing for change, they sometimes stand and just stare at it. All the equipment they need to get in shape. It's all there, right in front of their eyes, taunting them. But each time they want to decide, the birds come, and take everything away.

The birds, there're so many of them. But by far the deadliest are fear and self-limiting beliefs. The Passive Bystander is a prisoner, held captive by their own mind. With keys around their neck, they hold willfully the very chains that keep them in captivity.



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*Do the uncomfortable. Become comfortable with these acts. Prove to yourself that your limiting beliefs die a quick death if you will simply do what you feel uncomfortable doing. —Darren Rowse*

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## **The Kick Addict**

When it comes to getting in shape, there're also those that are always 'chasing the new'. These are people you'll hear say;

'I've tried everything, but nothing seems to work.'

Yes, they've tried a lot of different things and therein lies the problem. Trying everything but achieving nothing. These we can call the 'Kick

*Addicts*, or seed that fell on rocky places where it sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.

Kick Addicts are known for their thirst for knowledge and enthusiasm to try out new things. They're usually the ones that begin operating equipment before they finish reading the manual.

'Let's get this show on the road!' that's their motto.

However, Kick Addicts lack the discipline to see things through. They'll jump at every workout routine, try out every diet but never stick to anything long enough to see it bear fruit.

These are people who will quickly pick some of the ideas in this book and immediately begin trying them out. But not being rooted (lacking resolve and discipline), when the sun comes up, having no root, they get scorched and quickly wither away.

The sun always comes up – Always. Your body will get sore, you'll spend weeks without the needle on the scale moving a single inch or seeing any physical change. You'll be hit by the vicissitudes of life. So, if you're not rooted and are simply chasing the new, if your commitment to getting in shape is superficial, you'll wither away.



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*We have become a nation of thoughtless rushers,*

*intent on doing before thinking, and hoping what we do magically works out. If it doesn't, we rush to do something else, something also not well thought-out, and then hope for more magic.*

*— Len Holman*

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## **The Spinning Go-getter**

Finally, we have what I like to call the ‘Spinning Go-getters’. These are people caught in the rat race. People who ‘*claim*’, they just can’t find time to work out and get in shape. Afterall, they’re successful executives climbing the corporate ladder. They’re self-employed, entrepreneurs, business owners who must always be on the go to prevent ‘their businesses’ from dying-- Isn’t it ironic.

Spinning Go-getters are the seed that fell among thorns. And the thorns grew up and choked the plants. The thorns are all the things that seem urgent but are not important. The things that take up so much time that no time is left for things that matter. Things like spending time with family, visiting loved ones, taking care of your health. Enjoying life.

The Spinning go-getter has misplaced priorities. They’re caught on a carousel. Hiding behind the facade of control, they spin in a whirlwind of the never-ending pursuit for possessions that makes for so short a life.



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*Stop chasing another busy self to become. Your real self is idle waiting to be lived... Go, take up your real self!*

— Israelmore Ayivor,

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## **Getting Down to the Basics**

But then there was seed that fell on good soil. This refers to someone that hears, understands, and applies what they learn, consistently. The irony is, despite the seriousness of being out of shape, as highlighted above, very few seed falls on good soil. And even fewer produce any crop.

Now I'm guessing you chose to read this book for one of two reasons: either you are *out* of shape wanting to get *in*, or you are *in* shape wanting *not* to get out. Or perhaps you're somewhere in the middle. Either way, you've made the right choice. This book is concise and straight to the point, and this is not a cop-out. I'll not meander around the issue, or as they say, fill up pages with marketing fluff. We'll get straight to the point. Down to the fundamentals, the basics, the brass tacks!

To help you get and stay in shape forever, this book has 7 steps divided into two parts.

Part I comprises steps 1 to 4 and these are mostly for those wanting to get in shape.

Part II contains steps 5 to 7 that will help you stay in shape.

Now I'd not advise those that consider themselves to be in reasonably good shape to skip straight to the maintenance part in steps 5 to 7. Reeducation can go a long way in reinforcing what we already know and reigniting the flame of our passion. I'd therefore encourage every reader to go through the entire book. Besides, it's a relatively small volume, so there's no excuse.

Let's get to it!

PART I  
HOW  
TO  
GET IN



# STEP 1

## CHANGE YOUR MINDSET

**[Recommended for the Passive Bystander]**

*Think of your mindset as your foundation. With a solid foundation, you can build something amazing and strong. --Dave Perotta.*

FITNESS IS A STATE OF MIND. Have you ever heard that before? What of the expression, ‘*Mens sana in corpore sano*’? This classical Latin phrase is usually translated as ‘*a healthy mind in a healthy body*’. It emphasizes the strong connection between the body and the mind. How the health of the body and the mind are inextricable. So here is a rhetorical question, ‘if your body is out of shape, what could possibly be the state of your mind?’

When most people hear fitness or getting in shape, the first thing they think of is the body and bodily exercise. They imagine (usually with some degree of disdain) the gym, grueling workouts and insipid diet plans that require you to eat like a hamster. But getting in shape doesn’t begin with the body, it begins with the mind.

So, before you put your body on a scale or a treadmill, start by weighing your mind. Look beyond the physical reflection in the mirror and see the kind of mindset staring back at you. Is it saying ‘yes’, or is it asking ‘why?’

Fitness success is as much a mental game as it’s a physical one. And perhaps more of the former than the latter. That’s what it all is -- a game. A game of numbers. Number on the scale, number of meals, number of calories, number of days, number of sets, number of reps. And the game is played out in the mind before it ever gets to the gym. As Robin Sharma puts it:

‘Everything is created twice, first in the mind, and then in reality.’

Who you are, your character, your lifestyle, and physical appearance are all an expression of your mind? Dr Myles Munroe once said, ‘*We all look like our minds.*’ Therefore, before we try to fix the body, we need to work on the mind. Some don’t even need much exercise to get in shape, they’d easily do so simply by changing the way they think. Now this might come out a bit crass, but sometimes you just need to bite the bullet and face reality.

## **Hook Up the Diagnostic Tool**

You’re driving down the road and suddenly hear a disturbing noise from your engine and the car starts shaking. You pull over, pop the hood, look around but see nothing. What next? Well, one option would be to reach for the torque wrench and begin hammering away till the problem is fixed. But this may only aggravate the problem. You’d agree the best thing to do is hook up a diagnostic tool to get a little bit more intel on what's going on.



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*When solving problems, dig at the roots instead of just hacking at the leaves. – Anthony J. D'Angelo*

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## **Getting to the Root**

To understand your current physical shape, you need to get to the heart of the

matter. Otherwise, we might recommend exercise when what you really need is counselling. So, answer the following three questions and be honest:

1. Do you think you're out of shape?
2. Are you responsible for the shape you're in right now?
3. Do you think you can do anything to significantly improve the shape you're in?

## **Denial, Ownership & Courage**

Now, if you hesitated in answering 'yes', to any of the three questions above, and I mean as in a 2 second delay, you might have a *fitness mindset problem*.

The three questions above are how we diagnose Passive Bystanders. They reveal that a person is either in denial, or not taking ownership of their fitness and/or lacking the courage to change their situation.

### *Denial: Do you think you're out of shape?*

They say the biggest and most dangerous lies are the ones that we tell ourselves. It may sound absurd, but there're people who just can't admit that they are out of shape. You'll hear such people make statements like:

*'I'm just big-boned.'*

*'That's how we are in my family.'*

*'I'm an Endomorph.'*

*'I can never look like that.'*

*'I'm Ok with the way I look.'*

*'Looks aren't everything.'*

Others go as far as denying poor eating habits and lack of physical activity

can cause severe health issues. They choose not to believe all the health reports and research data pointing to the connection between lack of exercise to obesity. To them, it's all lies, damned lies and statistics.

But the truth of the matter is, such people are in denial. Dr. Lavinia Rodriguez a psychologist and expert in weight management gives examples of typical Passive Bystanders.

On the one hand is Jim. Jim is overweight, has a large gut and always looks puffy and flushed. But Jim denies he's a heart attack waiting to happen. He never bothers about exercise, puts little thought into what he eats and doesn't care what the doctor says. For Jim, the important thing is being able to function.

On the other hand is Brenda. Brenda denies it's her own thinking that prevents her from getting in shape. She actively looks for negative things in her life to blame for her weight problems. Brenda is constantly telling why she can't get in shape;

*"Nothing ever works out for me. I have the worst luck."*

*"Things are always going wrong in my life."*

*"Something's always getting in the way so I can't be consistent with my diet and exercise,"*

Jim and Brenda are both in denial. The concept of "being in denial" refers to the notion that a person is avoiding or negating reality thereby dismissing the implications of their actions or lack thereof.

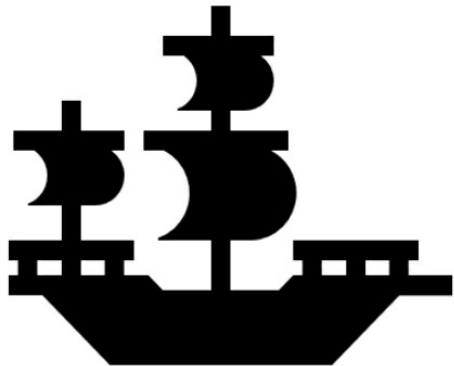
Denial is also described as a cognitive process, which implies it's an attempt to alter our experience of unwanted emotions. So, when in denial, what we're avoiding is not the action, but the negative emotions often attached to it. Emotions such as anger, guilt, or shame. It's thus crucial not only to recognize one is in denial, but also to accept the feelings behind it.

*Ownership: Are you responsible for the shape you're in right now?*

Your fitness is 100% your responsibility. Brenda in the example above actively looks for things in her life to blame for her weight problems. She's not only in denial but doesn't take ownership for her own weight problems and shifts the *Locus of Control*. Effectively rendering herself powerless.

*Locus of control* is the degree to which a person believes that they, as opposed to external forces, have control over the outcome of events in their lives. Why is this important? Well, your locus of control influences not only how you respond to issues and events in your life, but also your motivation to act. If you believe you hold the keys to your fate, you are more likely to take action to change your situation. If not, why bother, right?

Someone that believes they can change their circumstance has what is known as an *Internal Locus of Control*. Those who like Brenda blame external factors have an *External Locus of Control*.



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*It matters not how strait the gate, how charged with  
punishments the scroll; I am the master of my fate: I  
am the captain of my soul. -- William Ernest Henley*

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Let's compare the characteristics of people with dominant internal or external locus of control. See which describes you best.



## **INTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL**

- Are more likely to take responsibility for their actions.
- Tend to be less influenced by the opinions of others.
- Often do better at tasks when they can work at their own pace.
- Usually, have a strong sense of self-efficacy.
- Tend to work hard to achieve the things they want.
- Feel confident in the face of challenges.
- Report being happier and more independent.
- Often achieve greater success in the workplace.

## **EXTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL**



- Blame outside forces for their circumstances.
- Often credit luck or chance for any successes.
- Don't believe that they can change their situation through their own efforts.
- Frequently feel helpless or powerless in the face of difficult situations.
- Are more prone to experiencing learned helplessness.
- Think they have little control over their life and what happens.
- Think people rarely get what they deserve.
- Think it isn't worth setting goals or making plans because too many things can happen that are outside of their control.

## **Extreme Ownership**

The concept of locus of control is like the idea of '*Extreme Ownership*'. *Extreme ownership* was made popular by retired United States Navy SEAL Jocko Willink. Primarily meant for leaders, it involves a leader *owning* everything in their world and realizing there's no one else to blame. It means recognizing that every action, decision, and habit you have dictates your destiny. Therefore, instead of being a spectator or a victim, decide to actively engage and take ownership of your life. Learn from your mistakes and shortcomings and think about what you can do differently to avoid making the same mistakes in the future.

*Courage: Do you think you can do anything to significantly improve the shape you're in?*

Another thing that holds back the Passive Bystander is fear. Of course, they'll say, 'no, not me! I'm not afraid'. But this is just the denial talking. Fear comes in many forms but by far the two most common are: '*fear of failure*' and '*fear of success.*' Some translate F.E.A.R as an acronym that stands for



‘False Evidence Appearing Real’. Fear is created in the mind and that should be its only domain.

To be afraid is normal. It’s meant to keep us safe. But left unchecked, fear can become a powerful puppeteer. It’s ok to be afraid, but it’s not ok to make decisions based on your fears. It’s either you control your fears, or your fears control you. Controlling fear ultimately means leaving your comfort zone. Brené Brown puts it this way;

*‘You can choose courage, or you can choose comfort, but you cannot choose both.’*

Many people are afraid of failure and don’t even attempt to consciously improve their health and physique. But failure itself is not all that bad. I mean, we’ve all failed before and if you haven’t you probably haven’t been challenging yourself (aiming too low). Besides, we all know the story of one of America’s greatest inventors having failed more than 1000 times before he finally saw the light. How did he do it? He looked at each outcome not as failure but as feedback. If that’s not optimistic enough for you, you can learn the philosophy of Lewis Robinson, the protagonist of Disney's 2007 animated feature film, *Meet the Robinsons*.

*So why do people avoid failure?*

To start with, most people avoid failure due to the expectation of feeling ashamed should they fail. Failure creates a self-critical condition of mind wherein their intelligence and talent are assessed negatively. They believe success is the most important criterion others use to judge them. Thus, failure will result in loss of self-esteem and the respect of peers.

Research also indicates there’re differences in the degree of fear of failure based on sex, academic levels, and economic status. Generally, it is argued there’s a higher level for fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment among females, and people with lower academic levels and economic status. Guess that’s why there’re fewer female stand-up comedians -- doing foolhardy things for peoples’ amusement is kind of a guy thing (no offense).

While some fear failure, others fear success. Fear of success in my opinion is by far the most crippling and deceptive forms of fear. Failing is one thing. Like I said, we've all failed and many of us have a bunch of friends we can easily describe as failures. (I'm sure 1 or 2 faces have already popped in your head).

Yes, there is the risk of embarrassment and loss of self-esteem when you fail. But you can always tuck your tail between your legs and go home to lick your wounds. Success on the other hand is a different story.

Success means taking responsibility, cultivating discipline, living up to expectation, delivering. Many people think once you go up, the only other direction is down.

With regards to getting in shape, the fear of success is anxiety over what would happen should you succeed. What if you did decide to become serious about fitness? what if you did decide to put in the work, change your lifestyle, eat clean, workout often and finally get into the shape you want for everyone to see? What's next? I think you already know what's next. Responsibility, cultivating discipline, living up to expectation, delivering. You see, failure is relatively easy, success is not.



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*Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all, love of what you are doing or learning to do. There are no secrets to success. – Pele*

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## **The Process of Mindset Change**

If your mindset is what's holding you back, how then can you alter your own thinking to rig yourself up for success when it comes to getting in shape? How can you make sure you have the right mindset to get and stay in shape forever? Here are some basic tips I find useful:

### *1. Watch the Movements of Your Thoughts*

We all know the mind is powerful. And that the thoughts that pass through it determine nearly every outcome in our life – success and failure. Thoughts are equally like seeds, they take root, germinate, and grow. But like any seed, the only way they germinate, and grow is when you water them with attention and reinforcing self-talk. Yes, it's not what others say to you that takes root in your mind. It's how you translate it and start telling it to yourself.

Now I'm sure you know you can't control all the thoughts that come to your mind -- I don't care if you're a *Taoist Master*. But you can become more aware of what you're thinking and why you're thinking that way. This is critical. You need to purge bad thoughts before they take root and lead you down the road of self-doubt, worry and depression.

Someone once said,

*'bad thoughts are like birds, let them fly over your head, but never let them nest in your hair.'*

## 2. *Change Your Self-Talk*

How do you talk to yourself? Some people are nicer to others than themselves. What conversations do you have in your own mind? To change your mindset, you need to change all negative self-talk to empowerment speech. Changing self-talk also means changing certain negative words for more positive ones. For instance:

DON'T SAY: 'I'm overweight and can never get into shape'.

SAY: 'I'm not in the best shape right now, but I can work hard to change it.'

DON'T SAY: 'I'm not strong enough to do that exercise'.

SAY: 'I can't do that exercise now but I can get stronger and do my best.'

DON'T SAY: 'I can't do it'.

SAY: 'I can do this' or 'I got this.'

DON'T SAY: 'It's too hard'

SAY: 'It's intense.'

Let this be your mantra when it comes to working out. Workouts are;

'sweaty, painful and fun.'

## 3. *Determine Your Own Mindset*

A philosopher once asked (as philosophers often do);

*'we may act as we please, but do we always please as we please?'*

Here's another less philosophical question; 'Is your current mindset really yours?' 'Are all your fears and self-limiting beliefs based on facts and your own rational experiences?' Or did they come from unkind remarks from other people. A teacher or other kids in the playground at school calling you fat. Verbally abusive parents who called you worthless, or a toxic friend who envies your life and is always putting you down?

Ask yourself, 'which mindset do most people who are fit and in shape have?

If you're serious about getting in shape, act as if you already HAVE the mindset of a healthy & fit person. This way, you're basically rigging your mind to adopt a new mindset and reinforcing it with action.

#### 4. *Learn*

Knowledge is power. Many people think getting in shape starts with motivation. Being pumped and fired up for exercise. On the contrary, it starts with education. You need to immerse yourself in the world of fitness and get knowledge about different topics in the industry. Now a word of caution, don't just pick up one theory about something and immediately start implementing. Otherwise you'll join the kick addicts. Rather, gather information about a topic from different sources and test it out. As Jim Rohn said; Let every decision be the product of your own conclusion.

Once you're convinced the information you have is reliable, then try it out. You can also share your thoughts and plan on fitness foras and read what other fitness enthusiasts have written. Learn all you can about the fitness industry, the science of fitness and bodybuilding and the importance of good nutrition. Remember, the more knowledge you acquire and more support you give and receive from others, the stronger and more positive your mindset will become. Once the mind is strengthened you can easily get and stay in shape forever.

Let's end this chapter with the worlds of Charles Bukowski, from *'Pleasures of the Damned.'*

*“Invent yourself and then reinvent yourself, don't swim in the same slough.*

*Invent yourself and then reinvent yourself and stay out of the clutches of mediocrity.*

*Invent yourself and then reinvent yourself, change your tone*

*and shape so often that they can never categorize you.*

*Reinvigorate yourself and accept what is but only on the terms that you have invented and reinvented.*

*Be self-taught. and reinvent your life because you must;*

*It is your life and its history, and the present belong only to you.*

## STEP 2

### TAKE ACTION

**[Recommended for the Passive Bystander and Spinning Go-getters]**

*“Knowing is not enough, we must apply. Willing is not enough we must do.” – Bruce Lee.*

In physics there’s a concept known as Inertia from the Latin word, *iners*, meaning; *idle, sluggish*. This concept is best explained by Isaac Newton’s

First Law of Motion. The Law states that, ‘Every object will remain at rest or move in a straight line unless compelled to change by the action of an external force.’ In other words, a body at rest tends to stay at rest—it’s a Law.

## **My Humiliating Start to Physical Fitness**

I first walked in a gym as a student back at college in 2006 at the age of 19. Back then I weighed less than 120 pounds, had a crooked posture and muscle tone that looked like I had just been unplugged from the matrix. Like most beginners, I was overdressed for the occasion.

Baggy sweatpants, gym gloves, a timer around my neck, and a headband—Yes! I thought it looked cool back then. Besides, I meant business!

I awkwardly entered the gym and immediately began peering around like someone looking for a person that owed them money. But of course, I was looking for where to start. There seemed to be so many torturous contraptions and strange apparatus. I was surprised they didn’t have a rack! I quickly noticed that all the buff looking guys were lifting the heavier weights. So, naturally, I wanted to start with what they were doing, after all, there was no time to waste! Alas, what followed turned out to be one of the most embarrassing days of my life.

Seeing that I clearly had no idea what I was doing, one of the gym instructors came over and politely offered to help. Before I could finish pointing to the squat machine, this guy had put me in a corner, back against the wall, doing barbell curls—with just a bar and no weights!

Standing there curling an unloaded bar was so humiliating. I had to make up faces just to show as if the bar was giving me some resistance (which I must admit at the time it did after a couple of reps). Whilst my indignation was bubbling, a voice inside me said, ‘get over yourself, you’re not all that. And you’re just here for the first time’. So that day, I swallowed my pride and

finished my light weight (no weights) workout. All the time under the watchful eye and smiles of the annoyingly polite physical trainer.

Looking back, as awkward as I felt at the time, that corner was probably the right place for me to start. Trying to lift weights with only a buffed-up ego would have only led to injury and probably early retirement from the world of physical fitness. But starting as I did, I quickly mastered form and technique, and other important aspects which later helped me advance quicker in my workouts. The cheerful gym instructor called all these, *the basics*.

## **My Inertia**

Now before I finally entered the gym on that embarrassing day I just described, I must have walked past it on my way to the library a thousand times. I always had an interest in getting in shape and told myself ‘someday I’ll start’ (yes, I was a Passive Bystander).

But among other things, personally I was stereotyped about fitness and the kind of people that worked out. Back in those days, I wasn’t really what you’d call a nerd, but I was an introvert, loved books, and got good grades. Thus, by default, I found myself in the category of male students described as ‘monks’. Monks were guys who spent most of their time in the library and didn’t socialize much. They were also notorious for shunning girls —either because they were too busy, or simply had no game (for me I was honestly just too busy).

Stereotypes are the devil! Isn’t it ironic that even in movies and kid’s fairy tales, the ‘bad guy’, is usually the handsome looking well-built jerk with half a brain and a bad attitude? But somehow, it’s always the street rat Aladdin that ends up with the princess and they live happily ever after. Guess that’s why they call them ‘fairy tales’, but this doesn’t make them any less damaging.

Sorry, where was I? yeah, college. So, at college, before I started working out, I always looked at the guys who worked hard on their physique and were



generally in good shape as ‘the others’. I assumed they had bad attitudes and even worse grades. I myself on the other hand wasn’t really in bad shape. In fact, I wasn’t in any kind of shape at all, and that’s what bothered me.

But because I was stereotyped, what did I do? Nothing. For years I stayed in my lane, or rather, the lane I was put in, largely by the opinions and perceptions of others. I stayed at rest, idle, sluggish, waiting to discover my magic lamp.



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*‘Now’, is the magic word of success. –Anonymous*

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## Why Taking Immediate Action is Important

You're probably familiar with the idea of compound interest. In business and banking, compounding occurs when interest gets added to the principal amount invested which over time leads to exponential growth (simply put). The same is true for other activities including working out. Holly Scherer puts it this way:

*'...If you decide that this [is] the year you'll get in shape, you might start with a ten-minute walk. Within a month, you could be walking a mile. And in less than a year, you'll be running 5Ks.'*

Compounding works to your advantage as the gains of both the past and present lead to exponential growth in the future. The compound interest formula looks something like this:

$$A = P(1+r/n)^{nt}$$

Now guess what, the tiny  $n$  and  $t$  at the top, which do all the magic are:

- $n$  – the number of times the interest compounds each year (think of it as how many times you work out); and

·  $t$  – is the time, or total number of years (this is self-explanatory).

You don't need to have graduated from business school or be a Math whiz to realize that the higher the  $n$  and the  $t$  (the number of times and years) the higher the interest. When it comes to fitness, what this means is that the sooner you begin working out (act), the greater the payoff will be in the long run.

## **The Ripple Effect**

Psychologists say that 40% of our actions are not conscious decisions. They're habits created over time. Habits are so powerful they can be formed unconsciously and most of them are. 66 days, apparently that's how long it takes for a new habit to take root in the brain. After that, you can't get rid of it, but can only suppress it with other habits.

A habit practiced long enough becomes second nature. At this point you'll hear people say things like, 'I'm a smoker' or 'I'm an emotional eater'. But what they're really trying to say is that their smoking or eating habits have become second nature. The same is true for people who work out. After a while, working out becomes second nature. We will cover habits later. But for now, it can suffice to say, the sooner you begin an action, the sooner it can develop into a habit.

## **A Body at Rest Tends to Stay at Rest—It's a Law**

So, can you guess the one mistake both Passive Bystanders and Spinning Go-getters make that can't be undone? Yes, you guessed it, it's not acting soon enough and giving in to Inertia and stereotypes. There's a Chinese proverb, which says;

*'The best time to start working out was 20 years ago, the second-best time is today.'*

Well actually, the Chinese proverb is about planting a tree, but the principle is the same.

Starting the habit of working out sooner has a compounding effect that will see you reaping benefits well into the future. But if the benefits of

compounding are so obvious, why do so many people take so long to finally commit and start working out? The answer is simple -- inertia. A body at rest tends to stay at rest—it's a Law.

Inertia equally comes in the form of stereotypes, self-limiting beliefs, and/or fear. The birds we discussed in the previous chapter that destroy the seed before it can yield crops. Stereotypes and self-limiting beliefs are all the reasons our subconscious mind conjures up to justify our inaction.

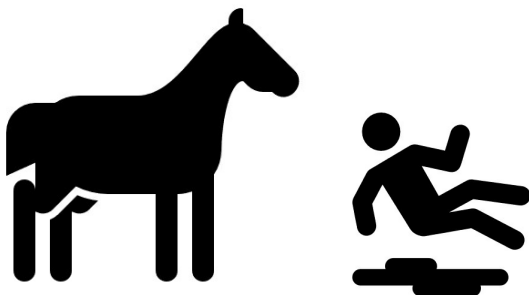
These beliefs are convincing because they come from within us. They come in the form of logical fallacies—meaning they make sense and their claim isn't inherently untrue.

But here is a simple test to determine the validity of a belief; ask yourself;

*'Is there anyone, anywhere with my problem or limitation who has succeeded in spite of it?'*

If the answer is yes, then your limitations are only in your mind.

Now when you do decide to act, chances are you'll make a fool of yourself from time to time. Like I did. But each mistake you make will be part of the learning process and you must appreciate and enjoy the process. Besides, humiliation is the price of admission. To achieve anything great, to get and stay in shape forever, you must be ready to take the hits and leave your



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*“You can't become a decent horseman until you fall off and get up again, a good number of times. There's life in a nutshell.”*  
— Bear Grylls

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## **Plan Your Execution, Execute Your Plan**

Planning in life is one of the most powerful and effective tools to achieve any goal. But the truth of the matter is, many of us don't really plan. Yes, we plan our trips and vacations, we plan parties and other social events, but how many of us have a solid plan for our health and fitness? When it comes to getting and staying in shape, no one plans to fail; people simply fail to plan. So, once you decide to act, the next thing you need is a plan. When someone tells me they want to do something, my first question is always, 'what's the plan?' A plan speaks louder than words -- if you know what I mean.

Think about it for a minute, when going to a place you've never visited before, what is the one thing that you'll need to ensure that you get to where you want to go? Would you just begin the journey with no clue and just drive around randomly? Hoping to somehow end up at your destination? Of course not! You'd need a map.

How about if you were building a house. Would you hire an architect who said?

'hey, don't sweat it! we don't need drawings or a building plan, just wait and see, the house will look really cool. It'll be a bit like the one next door but not like the one across the street!'

Surely, you'd not leave your dream house to chance and would insist on seeing some plans. But what if you insisted and the following day the architect returned and said he had the plans. But when you asked where, he answered they were all in his head. Would you hire him confidently then?

Despite the obvious importance of planning, people fail to get and stay in shape simply because they fail to plan. Instead, they try things randomly hoping somehow to achieve their objective. They ‘hope’ that somehow things will just work out and they’ll get to their destination. But hope is not a strategy, so if you don’t have a solid plan, you don’t even stand a chance.

So, if you want to get and stay in shape, after you change your mindset, the actions you take must be supported by a solid plan. Now by ‘plan’ I don’t mean as in a workout routine or diet. Of course, these are part of the plan. But the planning I’m referring to here is the plan, the grand scheme on your fitness goals, and how you intend to achieve them.

## **Fitness and Strategic planning**

Strategic planning has five key components that you should equally consider if you wish to succeed at getting in shape. And don’t be lazy! If you can create strategic plans for your business or even that of someone else, why should planning strategically for your own health and fitness seem like a hustle.

Coming from a military background, I’m naturally obsessed with strategic planning. The word “strategy” originates from the literal battlefield. It derives from an ancient Greek word referring to the art of setting up military resources in preparation for war. Away from the military, strategic planning has been applied in business and in other fields. Some business experts in explaining what strategic planning is, have compared it to the game of chess.

In a game of chess, there’s usually a need for great concentration. Not only on the field of play before you, but on numerous moves ahead. If you follow the game of chess, you may know about the Deep Blue versus Garry Kasparov story. In a series of six-game chess matches between world chess champion Garry Kasparov and an IBM supercomputer called Deep Blue, Deep Blue finally won a match in 1997 played in New York City. It was the first time a computer had beaten a chess grandmaster under tournament conditions.

Without taking anything away from chess grandmaster Kasparov, it can be argued that Deep Blue had strategic advantage in the matches especially after

an upgrade in May 1997. After 1997, Deep Blue became a specialized, purpose-built computer using AI (Artificial Intelligence). And the fastest to face a chess world champion. The computer was fast, and by fast, I mean capable of examining 200 million moves per second, or 50 billion positions, in the three minutes allocated for a single move in a chess game. How's that for strategic planning?

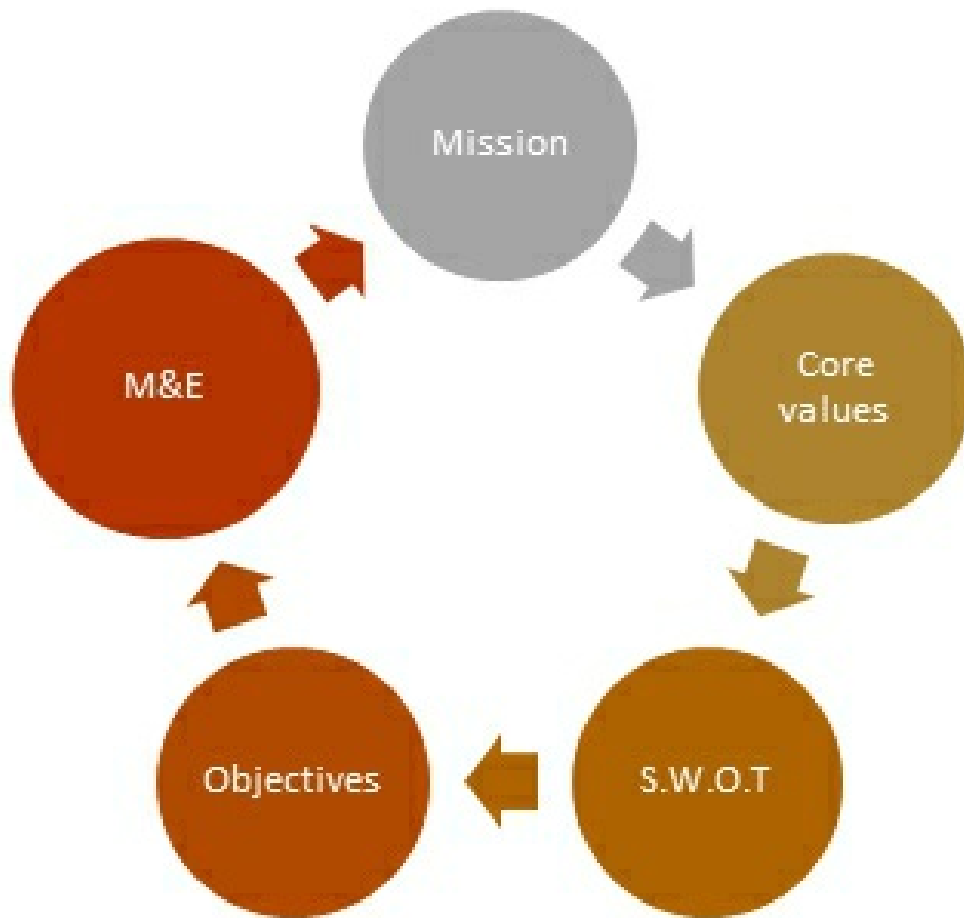
Now you don't need to be a supercomputer or a grandmaster to come up with a winning strategy. But you do need a strategic plan if you're serious about getting and staying in shape. In this sense, the strategic plan will be a guide that will shape the specific activities you'll undertake. It'll also show you how to overcome the challenges you're likely to face along the way. So, let's look at some of the components you must include in your fitness strategic plan.

## **Components of a Strategic plan**

The five key components of strategic planning we'll discuss here include:

1. Mission.
2. Core values.
3. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
4. Objectives; and
5. Monitoring & Evaluation.

## **The Five Key Components of Strategic Planning**



## **Mission**

As you begin to act towards getting in shape by coming up with a strategic plan, the first thing you need to be clear about is your overall mission. So, let's look at what you must include. Your mission should have the 5 Ws:

Who?

What?

Where?

When? and



Why?

When you figure these out you can write out a mission statement for your fitness strategic plan.

### *The Who*

The ‘Who’ is the subject, which in this case is yourself. But it also includes what in the military is referred to as ‘attached elements’. In this case, these are people that will help you achieve the mission. It might be your personal trainer, your spouse, a friend, or anyone you can rely on to help you on your mission to get in shape. Having an accountability partner is a great way to ensure you stay on track. Some go as far as calling accountability partners, ‘the secret weapon for quick growth’. And a way to prevent shooting in the dark if you are a beginner.

### *The What*

The ‘What’ is the overall vision. What you want to achieve. This must be clear otherwise the whole plan falls apart. The ‘What’ must be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. Your ‘what’ can’t be something like, ‘to lose weight, to get in shape, or to look and feel good’. You must be specific, and like I said, fitness is a game of numbers. So, for your ‘what’ to be powerful, you need to add some dates and figures. You must also visualize the end-state even before it’s achieved. Why is visualization so important? It’s through visualization that you reprogram your mind to help you reach your goals. You’ve heard the statement, ‘fake it, till you make it?’ Yes, I know it sounds a bit cheesy and has often been misused by people trying to be disingenuous. But there’s a lot of truth to it. You must start thinking and behaving like the person you want to become. Each time asking yourself;

‘What would fit me do in this situation?’

Spend a few minutes each day (when you wake up or before going to bed) seeing yourself as strong and healthy. See yourself lifting a challenging weight with confidence. See yourself having the physique you want. Then focus on what you need to do—and be SMART—to get what you want.

## *The Where*

The 'Where' of course is the location. The theatre of operation. The Battlefield. Will your activities be at a certain gym, if so, which gym and how ideal is it for what you want to achieve? Or will you be doing much from home? In which case you also assess the suitability of your home as the primary location. To avoid wasting time and effort, the location should be assessed and prepared well in advance. Issues of safety and accessibility should also be top priority in this regard.

Another thing to consider is also what kind of environment you're comfortable working out in. While we said having people to hold you accountable can be a great help, starting your journey in a crowded gym might not be so helpful. You might feel a bit self-conscious and can easily get distracted by what others are doing. So, before you hit Planet Fitness, you may want to first master the basics in the privacy of your own home. You can also pick hours when the gym is not very crowded or schedule private sessions with your trainer or accountability partner(s).

## *The When*

'When' is the time, the schedule. What time will you dedicate to your fitness goal? Notice I said 'dedicate'. To dedicate is to devote (something) to a particular subject or purpose. The word 'devotion' also relates to religious worship or observance. And that's what it's going to take -- a religious commitment to your goal of getting in shape.

When you're devoted to working out, you don't hope to find time in your 'busy' schedule, you make time. You find a block of time in your daily routine that's consistently free of commitment or is taken up by urgent but not important things. It might be before or after work, during your lunch hour, or after dropping the kids off at school.

You probably know this already, but 'I'm too busy' is one of the most overused excuses when it comes to avoiding work out. We'll discuss this in a bit. Suffice to say, you must make working out a 'non-negotiable' and find time to get it done.

## *The Why*

Why get in shape?

Why wake up early?

Why put yourself through the arduous workouts?

Why subject yourself to tedious diets?

Why push yourself to stay disciplined?

The ‘why’ is the most critical part of the mission. I’ve discovered that a lot of people work out for the wrong reasons. Their ‘why’ might even have nothing to do with being healthy or getting in shape.

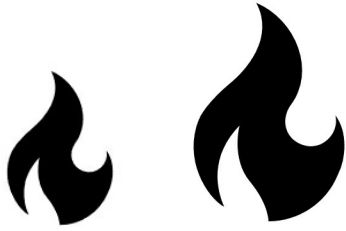
Some work out simply to look sophisticated to others. Donning designer gym outfits and moving around with a blender bottle to keep up an image of fitness on social media they’re not truly committed to. These are folks that drive to the gym to walk on the treadmill and take selfies. But when the gym is closed, they can’t even walk around the house. (I’m so polite ain’t I?)

Others work out to impress their friends or to be in the company of a certain person or people. You can always tell when someone was coerced or convinced to come to the gym. Their movements are usually mechanical, with no heart or soul behind what they’re doing. They’re just going through the motions (these are also the ones most prone to injury). Their ‘why’ is not strong enough to motivate them and keep them on track. To help them persevere, persist, and bounce back when times get hard.

So, before you get very far, you must first establish your ‘Why’. As Jim Rohn said, ‘If the why is clear, the how is easy’. Where there’s a will, there’s a way. Before you come up with a list of things you’re going to do to get in shape, come up with a list of reasons why you need to get in shape. It’s your reasons that will fuel your decision, fan the flames of your desire, and keep you on track when the birds come. The stronger your why, the greater your resolve. Each time you want to quit, each time you feel too discouraged to start or too weary to continue, in the middle of that last rep, when you want to give up, remember your ‘why’.

Here is an example of a Mission Statement as suggested in the book:

..... (your name) with the help of instructor Mike will work out three days a week (Mon-Wed) at Mike’s Gym from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. in order to lose/run/lift .....(unit measure- e.g., Lbs/Ks) by .....(date).



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*“Now you have a new life. A new dawn. A new flower in your basket. A new ray of hope. A new chapter in your book. A new gust of breeze. A new fire in your stomach. A new reason to live.”*

*— Girdhar Joshi*

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## **Core Values**

Core values are also critical to strategic planning. Having crafted a Mission Statement, your next step will be to decide on some core values. Put simply, your core values state your central ‘musts’ and ‘must nots’.

Decision making is a time and energy consuming process. Making the right decision also requires a lot of self-discipline. Further, like a muscle, the more you exercise self-discipline the more it gets weaker and needs to recover.

Musts	Must Nots
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3l of water each day</li> <li>• Plan routine</li> <li>• Plan meal</li> <li>• Rest</li> <li>• .....</li> <li>• .....</li> <li>• .....</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Miss Monday</li> <li>• Smoking</li> <li>• Alcohol during the week</li> <li>• Snack after 10 p.m.</li> <li>• Give up</li> <li>• .....</li> <li>• .....</li> </ul>

So, to save yourself the

trouble of having to exercise self-discipline time and time again, decide on some core values. These will guide you on your day-to-day activities. In and out of the gym. Here too there's a need for realism and to begin with gradual changes. Your list of values can be something like the table below:

Keep your core values where you can easily see them and remember (like your bathroom mirror or your fridge). You can also share them with your friends or family members so that they hold you accountable.

You must also design or redesign your environment. Add or remove things that'll make it easier or harder to stick to your core values. For instance, if you want to drink more water and less alcohol during the week, stock your fridge with lots of water and remove any alcoholic drinks that might tempt you. Sounds like common sense, right? Well nowadays common sense is a superpower. Be assured, your success at sticking to your core value will not depend on your will power (I'm strong, I can resist). It will depend largely on how well you design your environment and rig it for success.

## **S.W.O.T**

SWOT Analysis is a technique for assessing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. It can be used by a person or organization. By carrying out a SWOT analysis, you can separate yourself from others and leverage your own abilities and resources to achieve your fitness goals. To perform a personal SWOT analysis, consider the chart below and answer the questions in each area.

## SWOT Analysis Table



I'm sure by now you must be thinking, 'this guy is a lunatic! SWOT analysis just to get in shape!' Well, yes! Remember the title of this book is how to get and stay in shape forever! Not till next Christmas. So yeah, you **MUST** put in some elbow grease if you're serious about getting and staying in shape. Besides, it can't take you more than an hour to do it, so what are you

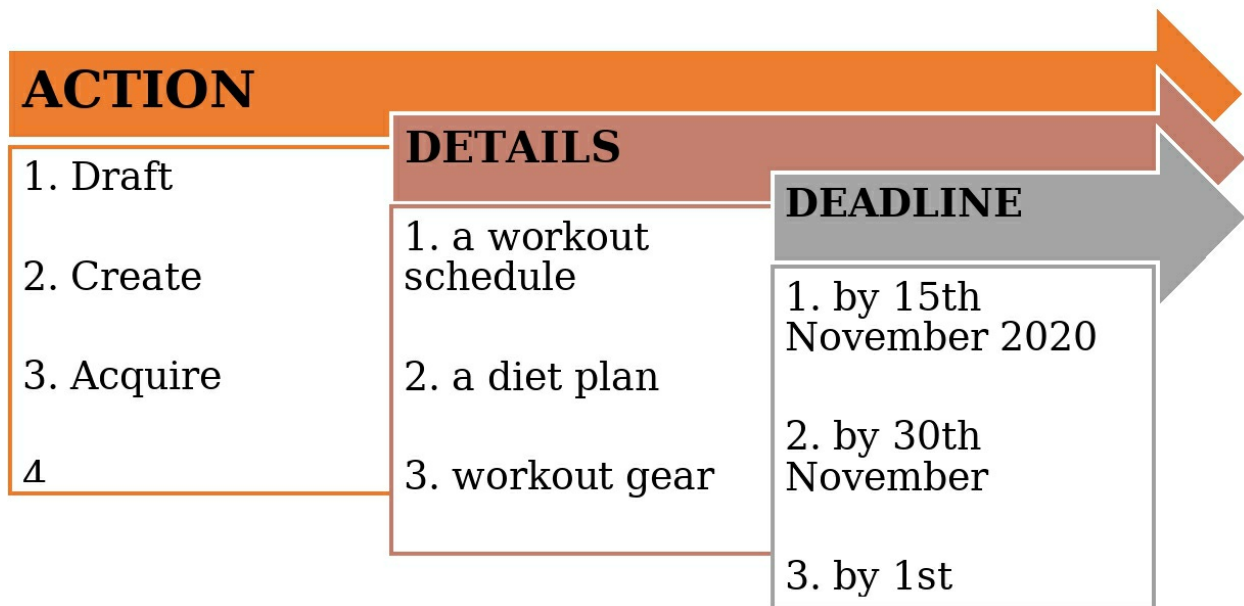
complaining about, just do it!

## **Objectives**

The other important component of your strategic plan is writing your strategic objectives. This is the fun and exciting part as you get to clearly outline your desired end state in specifics. A Strategic objective outlines what exactly you want to achieve, with clearly stated deadlines. The objectives breakdown the mission (vision) into measurable activities.

Now you must be careful when coming up with your objectives. Have too few and you'll not stretch yourself enough. But have too many and you're unlikely to achieve them all. The SWOT analysis should help you when it comes to defining your objectives. Also, try to keep things simple and start off with a verb that forces you to be specific. Then add a few details and a deadline as shown below:

## **Parts of a Strategic Objective**



## M & E

The final part of our second step of acting and the strategic planning process is M & E. Monitoring is used to assess performance and make improvements. It's a continuous assessment of progress being made, and challenges being faced.



On the other hand, an evaluation is an examination concerning the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of activities in the light of strategic objectives. Once you act and put your strategic plan in motion, it's crucial that you monitor and evaluate the whole process. Take note of what's working for you and what's not. And see where you need to concentrate more and make improvements.

## STEP 3

### STOP MAKING EXCUSES

**[Recommended for the Passive Bystander, the Kick Addict and Spinning Go-getters]**

*“Ninety-nine percent of the failures come from people who have the habit of making excuses.”*

*—George Washington Carver*

We've all made them before, 'excuses'. Some like to call them, 'causes' or 'explanations', or even 'justification'—reasons for not doing, what had, or must be done. For others still, it's more like a disease, Brian Tracy called it, 'excusitis' —the inflammation of the excuse-making gland— a condition invariably fatal to any form of success. So, you might have already guessed it, but one of the fundamental steps you need to take, if you wish to get and

stay in shape forever, is to stop making excuses.

According to neuroscientist and mind-body expert, Dr. Claudia Aguirre;

*‘We humans are fantastic at picking from the plethora of ready-to-use excuses to limit our own capabilities – be they physical (going to the gym), mental (studying for the test) or even emotional (being nicer).*

The fact is, getting and staying in shape is not easy for anyone. And it'll not get any easier soon. Yes, we all have our 'reasons'. But chances are, you have no unique problem that makes it any harder for you to work out more and eat better. If you take a closer look, you'll see that all your reasons are just well disguised excuses. Now I don't mean to make light of your own personal challenges. But there are times when we need to face reality and stop telling stories.

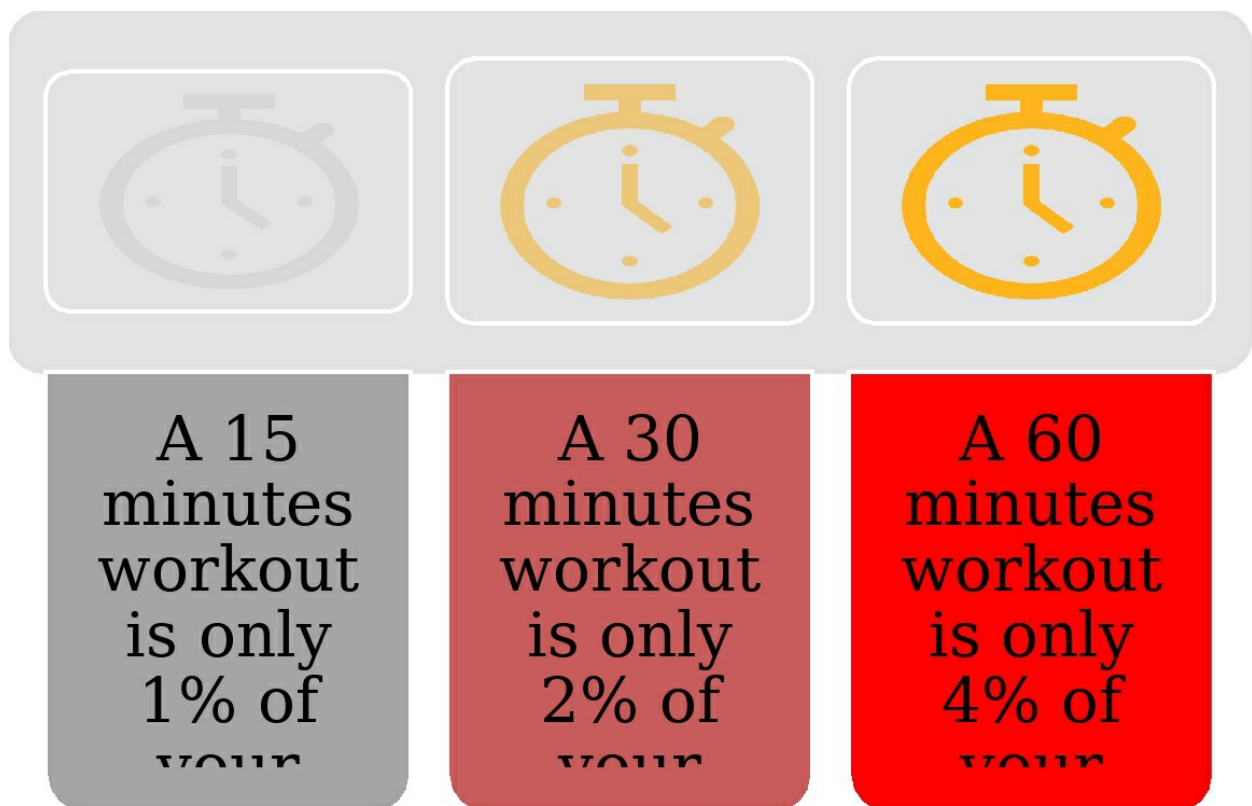
## **Top 5 Excuses and Some Solutions**

### **Excuse # 1: I'm too busy**

At the beginning of this book, I shared medical proof and statistics on the gravity of being overweight and out of shape. But did you know that even with facts and information on the benefits of being fit, people still make the excuse that they are 'too busy' to work out? How can you be too busy to save your own life? Let us look at this excuse a bit closer and see just how valid it is.

The average Joe (which thankfully doesn't include you), spends on average 238 minutes (3h 58min) daily, watching TV and another 144 minutes (2h 24min) on social media. They also sleep a healthy average of about 8 hours a day, which adds up to 229,961 hours in a lifetime or one third of their life if they lived to be 70. So, tell me again, how is it that most people don't have time to work out but are willing to spend 33 years of their entire life in bed?

## How Much of Your Day Does Workout Take



So, the truth is, it's not that you don't have time, you simply have different priorities (like sleeping). The excuse of not having time is simply a defense mechanism. A desperate and often unconscious attempt by your ego to 'save face', maintain some self-respect and/or avoid guilt—that's the bottom line.

Moreover, if busy billionaires like Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk, and Jack Dorsey

find time in their busy schedule to work out, what's your excuse?

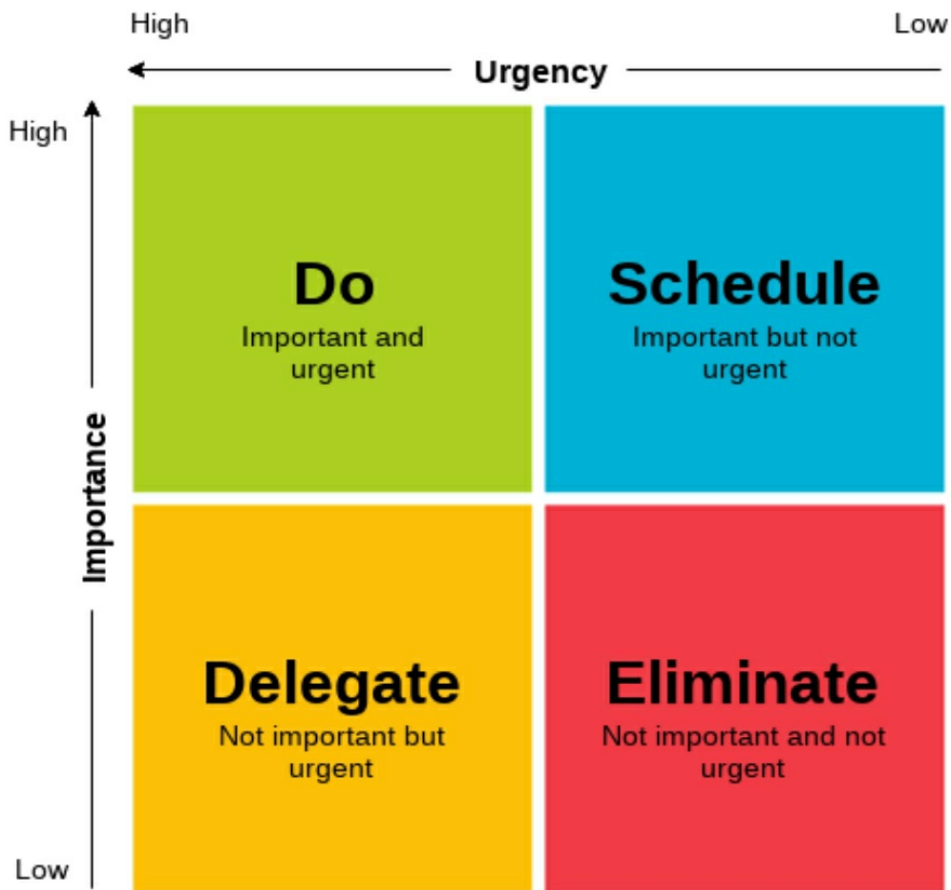
It's simple, most of us fail to manage our time properly. We also commit ourselves to doing things that seem urgent but are not important. Therefore, working out becomes a low priority task in our already crammed schedules. The issue is not time or being too busy. Yes, we claim we are busy busy busy, but the question is, 'doing what?'

## **Solutions to the 'Busy' Excuse**

There are few things you can do that can help you make time for your workouts and stop making the busy excuse. To begin with, use a time log and try to find out how you're spending your time. See how much time you are spending on social media, watching TV, or chatting with friends (physically or otherwise). You'll be surprised just how much of your time is unaccounted for.

Once you know where your time is going, find a block of time in your daily routine being misused. Then see how you can shuffle things around to include your workouts. You can start with even 10 minutes and increase gradually as you free up more time. You can also use a priority matrix to determine how best to use your time.

## **A Priority Matrix**



A Priority Matrix helps you maximize your effectiveness by categorizing

tasks and activities. Prioritization is based on a variety of factors: time sensitivity, importance, monetary or energetic cost, necessity to a subsequent task, etc.

### *Learn to Say NO!*

You can also save yourself much needed time if you just learnt how to say NO! You're getting ready to hit the gym or start your home workout routine, suddenly a friend calls and says, 'Hey man, what's happening, let's meet at the corner of nowhere and do nothing with some nobodies', and what do you say? I'm on my way! Here is a little secret, just because you are invited somewhere, doesn't mean you must go.

But if I say no people will think I'm not fun or nice and will not like me. So what! Life's not a popularity contest. The most valuable commodity we all have is time. You can waste other things including your money, but never waste your time. Don't do unscheduled nonsense with nonentities --Hello! Remember, for every 'yes' you say to one thing, you simultaneously say 'No' to another (that's probably more important). So to make more time for workouts simply learn to say NO.

You may still insist that you don't have time to hit the gym. But I'm guessing you do have time to spend home, right? Great! that's all you need. Nobody said you can only work out at the gym. Any home can be made into a fun fitness center. But when I say work out from home, I don't mean the half-committed kind of exercising. Where you pull on a resistance band or march in place while eating a doughnut and watching your favorite TV show. This is what I like to call 'passive training'.

Like passive income, passive training can get you some gains, but it can never take you where you want to go and keep you there. You either do or you don't. Either you are going to exercise or watch TV, make up your mind. Dan Lok says the word "passive" has a dangerous meaning behind it. It implies that you can get something for nothing, and that's not how the world works. And that's a very dangerous mindset.

Passive training doesn't work because working out isn't just fatiguing the muscles. There's a mind-body connection that you need to maintain to achieve maximum results. So working out from home means you designate a

time and place to do your workouts at a time convenient for you and your family. If you can even make it a family affair, great! That would mean even more motivation to get things done. You can also exercise with the kids, go bike riding, swimming, or explore the neighborhood on foot. Be creative but be serious.



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*“Someone busier than you is working out right now.”—Anonymous*

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## **EXCUSE #2: I'm too tired**

Are you always feeling tired? Do you seem to always be lacking energy and feeling fatigued? Do you feel even worse when it's almost time to start your workout or when you think about exercising in general? Well you're in good company. That lingering tiredness that is constant and limiting is called fatigue.

When you are fatigued, you have persistent and unexplained relapsing of exhaustion that tends to feel as though you have the flu or didn't get enough sleep. Here is the worst thing you can do when you're feeling fatigued -- try to get more sleep. Let me explain.

There are many reasons why people feel fatigued. Some of the reasons include allergic rhinitis, anemia, depression, fibromyalgia, chronic kidney disease, liver disease, lung disease (COPD), or some other health condition. No, I'm not a qualified physician and had to look most of these up. So if you suspect it's due to a medical condition, I'd suggest seeing a doctor.

But for many, feelings of fatigue have nothing to do with a medical condition. They are often the result of being depressed. (which viewed aright is a medical condition -- told you I'm not a doctor).

Sadness, feeling hopeless, worthless, helpless, and fatigued are just some of the symptoms of depression. Depression affects twice as many women as men and often runs in families. It commonly begins between the ages of 15 and 30. Some people also get seasonal affective disorder in the winter, with feelings of fatigue and sadness.

If you are depressed, you might be in a low mood most of the day and may have little interest in normal activities. Along with feelings of fatigue, you may eat too much or too little, over- or under-sleep, and have other related symptoms. Sound familiar?

## **Solutions to the 'too tired' Excuse**

Now like I said, it's good to have a medical checkup before starting any workout routine. This will ensure that there are no underlying conditions you



may or may not be aware of. If you don't have any serious medical condition and you still feel fatigued most of the time, chances are you might be depressed.

So how do you deal with depression induced fatigue so that you can become more active? It's simple, become more active!

When you have depression or anxiety, exercise often seems like the last thing you want to do. Many people instead isolate themselves and turn to drugs and alcohol which will simply aggravate the problem. However, research shows that the psychological and physical benefits of exercise can greatly help improve mood and reduce anxiety.

Yes, it seems counter-intuitive that you exercise when you feel fatigued, but it's true. While working out can make your muscles physically tired, your body will feel more energized from it. It increases your blood flow which means that your heart is pumping oxygen to your brain, muscles, and tissues faster.

It also promotes the release of neurotransmitters like dopamine, serotonin and natural endorphins that will make you feel better and more energized. (Don't you wish we could have these bottled up? -- I'll take a glass of dopamine and two shots of serotonin). Besides, working out is a better strategy of managing depression and fatigue as opposed to drinking alcohol or dwelling on how you feel. Hoping depression or anxiety will go away on its own can also lead to worsening symptoms. So, when you feel too fatigued to work out, don't let those feelings hold you back -- **WORK OUT!**



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*Don't watch the clock. Do what it does: **Keep Going!***  
– Sam Levenson

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### **EXCUSE #3: I'm not motivated**

Allied to the excuse of feeling too tired, is not feeling motivated. 'I really want to work out, but I just don't feel motivated' – ever heard that one before? When it comes to working out, action is King, and motivation is not a factor. Here's what most people don't understand, action is not dependent on emotion, but emotion is dependent on action. I think that's probably why it's called, 'e-motion', because if you move, you can change it.

The guy says, 'I'd work out, but I just don't feel motivated, perhaps with more experience I'll be more motivated to work out right?' WRONG. I wish I could tell you it gets better with time. That if you work out long enough you'll reach a point where each day you'll waltz to the gym or begin your workout routine with a smile on your face, a song in your heart and a spring in your step. But I can't do that to you.

Of course, when you become more experienced and attain a certain level of fitness you will begin to enjoy your training more. Your body will equally respond better. But the mental battle, the resistance never stops. So you still have to rely on more than just motivation to get the job done.

## **Solutions to the ‘not motivated’ Excuse**

Now I don’t want to waste your time parroting what I’ve already explained. So, to get over the excuse of not being motivated, the solution is what we’re from discussing, ‘JUST DO IT!’ Think about motivation not as having excitement or being fired up to do something. In fact, that isn’t what motivation is all about. Being motivated means having a ‘motive’, a strong reason(s) for doing something.

If your child is sick (which I admit is a bad example), you don’t need motivation (excitement) to take them to the clinic even if you must walk all the way – you have a strong motive. If your job is on the line, you don’t need motivation to stay up late or wake up early to finish a project. You already have a strong motivation.

Taking massive action means making your goal or the act of accomplishing it your duty, obligation, and responsibility. It means taking your feelings out of it and doing what needs to be done -- period.

A story is told of a man that persecuted Christians in the early days. The man’s name was Saul of Tarsus. Saul persecuted some of the early disciples of Jesus, in the area of Jerusalem prior to his conversion when he became Paul. Paul would go on to write at least thirteen of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament Bible. He is arguably one of the most influential followers of Christ during his time.

Now preaching the Gospel of Christ was not an easy task for Paul, listen to how he himself described his experiences in the Book of 2 Corinthians 11;

*‘...with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from*

*robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure....'*

Now you may ask, what motivated Paul, despite all the danger to his own life to continue preaching Christ? He himself answers this question in Romans 1:14 and we can summarize his response in three words:

'I am obligated'



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*“Do you want to know who you are? Don't ask. Act!  
Action will delineate and define you.”  
— Thomas Jefferson*

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## **EXCUSE #4: I'm too broke**

Some people also say they don't work out because they can't afford to (crazy

right?). But with all the grave statistics I've shared on the consequences of not being in shape, I'd say you can't afford NOT to.

The guy says;

'gym membership fees are just too high; and diet plans are too costly. Besides, even if I pay, I may not go or be consistent and my membership will go unused, it's a big waste.'

Nice try! But you won't get off the hook that easy! People fail to invest in a gym because they look at the cost they'd incur and not the value they'd get. But if being fit, and having energy to live a rich and fulfilling life are not strong enough reasons for you to invest your money, how about living long enough to realize your goals and dreams? You do have goals and dreams, don't you?

How about being there for your family, your son's graduation, your daughter's wedding, holding your grandchildren in your arms, aren't all these things worth the investment?

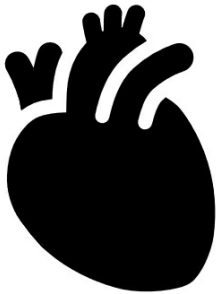
## **Solutions to the 'too broke' Excuse**

To begin with, who says you need gym membership to work out or stay in shape? Do you think the body can tell the difference whether you are working out at an expensive gym or simply using basic gym equipment at home? or even lifting water containers? Instead of spending too much money on a gym (though if you were serious you could find an affordable one), look for more affordable solutions. Create a simple home gym even with just simple equipment like a pull-up bar and a set of dumbbells. You can also access free and/or affordable workout content and videos on YouTube, Netflix, and other easily accessible platforms.

Are you also aware you can do serious exercises and get in shape relying only on your own body weight? Yes, using your own body to work out can

be just as effective as working out in a gym, especially if you are a beginner. You'll often hear people say bodyweight training isn't an effective way to get into shape, but nothing could be further from the truth. Apart from the push-up and pull-up, which most people are familiar with, there are countless other exercises that you can use to build muscle, strength, endurance, and mobility for the whole body! Further, you can use variations to make bodyweight exercises even more effective.

Professional physical trainer will tell you that simple bodyweight exercises are an effective way to stay in shape without burning a hole in your pocket. Walking, running, and jogging can also come in handy if your excuse for not working out is being too broke to pay for gym membership.



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*“Exercise should be regarded as a tribute to the heart.” – Gene Tunney*

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## **EXCUSE #5: I can't see results**

How long did it take you to get out of shape? be honest. Most people live their lives for years eating *'n'importe quoi'* and not doing enough exercise. Then suddenly! one festive season they decide to get in shape as part of their

new year resolutions. But after two weeks of exercise they quit, the reason; they're not seeing results. If you didn't put on all the extra weight in two weeks, what makes you think you can take it off that fast?

You must understand that it takes time to begin seeing noticeable results when it comes to working out. In the beginning, especially if you're older, you'll see literally no external physical changes or even weight loss. But that's normal. What your body is doing during that time is reprogramming itself. Trying to see how best to react to the new pattern of strain and whether this strain will persist to justify body recomposition. So, if you just do it for two weeks and don't persist, the body will take it as a false alarm and won't recomp.

Weight loss also occurs only when you consistently consume fewer calories than you burn each day. And obviously weight gain happens when you do the opposite. Make no mistake, anything that crosses your lips, be it solid food or a beverage, counts toward your overall calorie intake.

## **Solutions to the 'I can't see results' Excuse**

What is the solution to impatience?

You're impatient because you're focusing on the results and not the process. It's the process that matters. Getting stronger each week. Increasing your reps and sets or the weight you're exercising with, that's what matters. Yes, if you're lucky you'll see some visible payoffs in about two weeks. But don't hold your breath. And stop obsessing over the scale!

It'll take weeks for your circulatory system to adjust to changes in your workouts for you to see results. This'll also depend on the intensity of your exercises. Your muscles adapt in about the same amount of time.

Physiologically, it only takes a few minutes or hours for neurons to adapt their ability to transmit electrical impulses between the brain and muscles. However, tendons, joints, and ligaments, take months to adjust to new training stress and stimuli. So, give your body the time it needs --that's the solution!

Your fitness goal must be realistic with a focus on the many benefits of a workout on your mind and body. Don't try to rush it to get ready for the summer, it won't happen. Don't be in a rush! you have your whole life to work out.

## **Common Excuses Rebutted**

In an article on *'Getting Past Excuses and Denial Key to Embracing Exercise'*, A Healthier Michigan gives an example of the thought process of one whose motto when it comes to working out is 'No Excuses'. Here is how they respond to some popular excuses:

*But what if it rains?* I use an umbrella.

*But what if it's cold outside?* I wear a coat, gloves, and earmuffs.

*But what if I'm tired?* I go anyways, I always feel energetic once I get moving. And if I'm really tired, a glass of iced tea or cup of coffee before my scheduled walk works wonders.

*But what if I don't have a place to walk?* I have walked in my neighborhood, at a local high school track, around a large soccer field, in an elementary school gymnasium, along the beach, along the edge of large parking lots, at the mall, at the park, in a playground and even walked in place in my home. When there is a will, there is a way — be creative!

*But what if I don't have time?* I *make* time. What is more important than your health? The "things" in my life can wait... I take care of me first. This is where most people have difficulty accepting the truth. Yes, you can find time, it is possible, but only if you end the excuses.

*But what if I don't have a walking partner?* I walk with a dog or try to walk with a friend via cell phone. People who do this say that they love it. Walk and talk — it's doable!



*But what if it's too hot? I walk early morning or late evening. Yes, I may sweat a little, but a shower feels great after a brisk walk!*

People who don't want to work out come up with all sorts of excuses. But people who are obligated to work out find a way, no matter what.

And guess what? So can you!



## STEP 4

### RAISE YOUR STANDARDS

**[Recommended for the Passive Bystander, the Kick Addict and Spinning Go-getters]**

*“We only get what we believe that we deserve. Raise the bar, raise your standards and you will receive a better outcome.” Joel Brown.*

When it comes to avoiding workout, I've discovered that people love asking rhetorical questions and try to complicate simplicity.

A friend says to me;

*‘My guy, I just don't know what to do to get in shape. I've tried everything’.*

Hearing this, I can't help but look at him with the people's eyebrow. Let me ask you a question, is this person being sincere? Is it true that they don't know how to get in shape? Do 'you' know what it takes to get and stay in shape? let's find out.

Here is a simple quiz to test your overall knowledge about fitness. Answer the following questions:

1. Q1. Fruit, vegetables, chicken, fish, oats, mixed nuts, beans: **are these good or bad?**
2. Q2. Captain Crunch, Fritos, pizza, Snickers, and soda: **are these good or bad?**
3. Q3. Sitting for long hours, watching TV, or playing video games for extended periods, driving everywhere you go: **are these good or bad?**
4. Q4. Walks, jogging, swimming, bike riding, playing sports: **are these good or bad?**

Congratulations! you know everything there is to know about fitness. So here is getting and staying in shape summarized in a sentence:

*“Do the good, avoid the bad”.*

If you do the good, you'll enjoy the benefits, sooner or later. Likewise, if you do the bad, you'll suffer the consequences, sooner or later. We could end the book right here. But wait, here's the issue, you already knew these things. So what's the problem?

Well, gone are days when people perished for lack of knowledge. In fact, in

the information age, we're drowning in too much of it! 'Infoxication', that's the term. With so much information it's tempting for people to try everything and yet achieve nothing. indeed, it's not that people don't know what to do, but rather, they don't do what they know.

Here is a rhetorical question (Yeah I ask them too): If I told you to workout consistently every day for a month with the promise that at the end you'd receive 1 million cool cash, how many days would you miss? What if I told you to do the same thing, but this time with no promise of money but just the assurance that if you missed even a single day you'd be shot. Yes, it's another bad example, but work with me here, would you do it?

## **Raising the Bar**

I said at the beginning that some people like quick fixes. Hacks and tricks. That one change that'll make all the difference. Well, if you're one of these people, I didn't forget about you. Here's the one solution, the one decision you can make that's the ultimate game changer -- raise your standards.

Tony Robbins says;

*'The strongest force in the human personality is the need to stay consistent with how we define ourselves.'*

Tony is right! Your physical body or the shape you are in (or not in) right now is not a reflection of what you know or don't know. Or what you want or have tried. Early we said you look like your mind, but even more than that, your body reflects your standards.

Earl Nightingale put it this way— *'We are all self-made, but only the successful will admit it.'*

When something is part of what makes you who you are, you will find a way of doing it. If you are a runner, you'll run, if a writer you'll write, if a singer, you'll sing. Why? because everything is filtered through the lens of how you define yourself and the world around you. It's for this reason that as a

musician, Michael Jackson said, “To live is to be musical, starting with the blood dancing in your veins. Everything living has a rhythm. Do you feel your music?” Paul the Apostle of Christ equally said, “To live is Christ, and to die is gain”. It is also for this very reason that given a choice between giving up a part of who he was, and death, Socrates chose death.

## **A Special Forces Commander**

Imagine you woke up from a coma with no memory of your past. After regaining consciousness, doctors revealed to you that you were a Special Forces commander that was injured during a top-secret mission and had been in coma for several years (kinda like Steve Rogers). What would your perception of yourself be then? Do you think this would change how you perceived yourself and physical workout? Do you think you would give less excuses and find a way of getting in shape?

Well guess what, you are special, and you’re the commander of your own destiny, so wake up from the coma of being average today and *Raise Your Standards!*

How do you do that? decide, just decide that you’ll live by a different standard. Change your mind and believe something new and possible for yourself. Until you raise your standards and make working out a part of who you are, and something that defines you as a person, you’ll have a hard time getting and staying in shape.

So getting and staying in shape is not an impossible mission and neither is it complicated. It’s not easy, but it’s simple, meaning it’s something you can do. You already have the knowledge; all you need to do now is plan your execution and execute your plan -- simple.

## **The Way of the Warrior**

As humans, it's normal for us to put up safety nets and escape routes to protect ourselves from getting hurt by life. To set our standards low. But your standards must be the code by which you live by. You might have heard of

Bushido or 'the way of the warrior'.

Bushido was the set of codes of honor and ideals that dictated the *Samurai* way of life. It is loosely compared to the European concept of chivalry.

*The "way" formalized earlier samurai moral values and ethical code, most commonly stressing a combination of sincerity, frugality, loyalty, martial arts mastery, and honor until death.*

Honor till death. This means when you decide to live your life in a certain way, you don't compromise. Now this for you and I might not carry the same gravity as it did for Socrates or the samurai, but we must take our own set of standards no less seriously.

When you decide how you're going to live your life, you 'burn the boats' and give yourself no escape. These are what are called life changing decisions. You cross the point of no return and never look back. That's the day when you finally say, 'I've had it! I won't live like this anymore', or 'That's it! no more excuses!'

Some of the words that changed my own life came from one of my superior officers, late Brigadier General H Ngusa. A man I considered a mentor. At the time I had written several works but was reluctant to publish them. In a Demi-official letter, he wrote to me upon his retirement, he acknowledged my contribution working under his command and praised my work ethic. He ended his letter by saying;

*'...now my dear Victor, [time is not our ally](#), if what you know is not what you do, then you know nothing...Do it, or die.*

So, as we end the first part of this book, I equally wish to implore you my dear friend. I may not know you as well as General Ngusa knew me, but for you to have read this far, I know you do have a strong desire to do better. And I'm equally sure you can. All you must do is believe in yourself and stick to your own set of standards.

...Do it, or Die.



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*“Let your grind be a reflection of the standards that you have set for yourself.” ATGW*

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PART II  
HOW  
TO  
STAY IN



## STEP 5

### START WITH THE BASICS

**[Recommended for the Kick Addict and Spinning Go-getters]**

*“Success is neither magical nor mysterious. Success is the natural consequence of consistently applying the basic fundamentals.” – Jim Rohn*

First let me congratulate you for reading this far. This already says a lot about you and your seriousness over the issue of fitness. However, having gotten this far, these final steps serve as caution. But don't worry, this time I'll not be too verbose and philosophical. (Two of my biggest problems).



## **Champions are Brilliant at the Basics**

Like consumers of any product, it's easy to get fired up at the idea of a 'new' workout plan and try to do too much too fast. This doesn't only make you prone to injury but is likely to render the workouts ineffective. So take it one step at a time and enjoy the process. Like I've already said, getting in shape and being fit and healthy is not a trick or a task. It's being committed and making it part of your lifestyle.

When I went to the Military Academy, being a Marvel fan, I imagined we'd immediately begin with the exciting and dangerous stuff—come on, you know what I mean! Firing high caliber weapons, operating sophisticated gadgets, and jumping out of serviceable aircraft -- the G.I Joe kinda stuff.

You can imagine my shock when our training began with basic skills. And by basic, I mean B.A.S.I.C! Things like marching, drill and military customs and etiquettes. I wanted to learn how to blow things up, and these guys were teaching me how to make my bed -- one I couldn't even sleep in! Then it hit me, it's called, 'Basic military training' for a reason. It's all about the basics! The belief is, the basics are the foundation of excellence.

As John Wooden put it, '*Champions are brilliant at the basics.*'

Beethoven had to first master the basics of music, Shakespeare the basics of literature, Einstein the basics of physics and so on. Without learning the basics, none of these prodigies (or any other for that matter) would have excelled to the levels that they are known for even today.

Whether it's in business, competitive sport or seemingly natural and common pursuits such as winning the attention of that person you so admire, success begins with the basics. Successful businessman and founding partner of Brass Check Brent Underwood summed it up as follows;

'[a] winning strategy [involves] sticking to the basics -- the simple principles that have stood the test of time.'

So, as you begin to implement your fitness goals, you must first begin by mastering the basics. And yes, this might involve some research and learning. You must know the basics of fitness and nutrition for your goal to get and stay in shape to be realized.

## **The Foolish Builder**

Unfortunately, like my 19-year-old self, many people suffer from delusions of grandeur and despise the day of small beginnings.

You can't miss these; they're usually the sophisticated one-star reviewers on Goodreads that describe everything rudimentary as shallow. As a result, to seem sophisticated, many people rush for the profound and advanced. Rather than paying due attention to the basics, people want quick solutions to teleport all the way to the top. To reach the peak of the mountain, without starting at the bottom.

Too many of us look for exotic solutions and the clever exciting path to success and self-improvement. Worse still, in an age of connective digital technologies, informatics, Apps and social media, it is tempting to try and fast-track results at the expense of the process. But there's a principle that is trite but true, '*easy come, easy go*'.

Building anything without mastering the basics is like the foolish builder who built his house on the sand. When the rain and floods came down, and the winds blew, and beat on the house; it fell—and great was its fall. The foolish builder ignored the basics, the foundation, and instead concentrated on the décor. So, don't busy yourself decorating your fitness (getting the latest fitness gadgets and trying to seem like you're at a level you're not).

## **Back to the Basics**

Now I'll admit, we've all built on the sand before, most of us more than once. We have been that foolish builder that neglected the foundation, the basics and sometimes the price you pay is very high. But the good news is that one can always return to the basics. In any aspect of our life, we can return to those fundamental truths, the simple principles that have stood the test of time and recalibrate our lives.

If your life is not where you want it to be, get back to the basics. If your health, relationships, career, lifestyle are not what you want, the solution is simple, get back to the basics.

Getting back to the basics is not rocket science. Anybody can do it. If you've followed closely up to this point, you'll know that the basics for getting and staying in shape are diet and exercise. We already summed this up as, 'move

more, eat less.’

Basics to some extent are intuitive, meaning you already know what they are. They are not complicated; they are simple. But what is simple to do, is equally simple not to do.

I can’t over emphasize the need not to get derailed. Remember what we said? When people start their journey to getting in shape, they often fall victim to "chasing the new." In looking for the ‘silver bullet’, they try everything. They end up complicating the process to the point where they can’t make any significant progress. But people who have worked out for a while will tell you that there is no silver bullet. There are just proven basic principles you need to practice and master to succeed.

So, what does step five on your path to getting and staying in shape entail? It’s simple. Forget about quick fixes and magic elixirs. Forget about finding a 90-year-old guru or reading from the dragon scroll. Forget about wearing some magic bracelet that bubbles with lively energy, radiates cosmic power, and makes romance overflow in peace and luxuriousness. In life, in the natural world that is, you don’t have to do the supernatural to get and stay in shape.

So here are the 7 Basic Laws to live by especially if you are a beginner:

1. Find your motivation.
2. Exercise daily.
3. Know your limits.
4. Set realistic goals.
5. Watch your Diet.
6. Be patient.
7. NEVER GIVE UP.



## **STEP 6**

### **MAKE IT A ROUTINE**

**[Recommended for the Kick Addict and Spinning Go-getters]**

*“You will never change your life until you change something you do daily. The secret of your success is found in your daily routine.” – John C. Maxwell*

Getting in shape is kinda like getting rich. Getting there can be relatively easy but staying there is always HARD. What do I mean by this? Remember what we said at the beginning of this book about change? We said change is not an event, but a process that must continue as a lifestyle through your habits. You’ll repeat these habits regularly as a routine for the rest of your life (forever) and consequently you’ll remain in shape forever.

Maybe that’s where I might have not been too candid when writing out the title of this book. Without turning your goal into a routine, even if somehow you did get in shape, it wouldn’t last. Perhaps the title should have read; ‘7 Steps to get and stay in shape forever if you can form the habit.’ But remember, I’m working on being less verbose.

## **The Struggle is the Same**

It’s true that people tend to look at others who are fit and love work out as though for them it all just comes naturally. That they are always in the mood. Coach Shane Trotter made a confession that even the most committed gym rats can relate to;

*‘[people] believe somehow wires were crossed, and my body interprets pain as pleasure. They assume that I have some disorder that makes broccoli taste like an ice cream sundae. Most days I have to force myself to work out. Most days, I enter the weight room and must fight off childlike self-pity and an overwhelming impulse to procrastinate. Most days, I’d love to have French toast for breakfast, ice cream at lunch, and pasta and wine for dinner.*

The truth is, staying in shape is a struggle even for fitness professionals. We all face the same temptations. And no one is genetically gifted with superior willpower that makes it easier for them. No, the difference between those that get and stay in shape and those that don’t is that the former develop habits and routines that make success more likely. They forge a trained ability to delay gratification that grows with each tough decision. They fight off childlike impulses.

## **How to Develop Routine**

### *The First Step is to Start*

So how do you turn your workouts into a habit and a routine? Well, by taking small steps each day of course. Small actions that will compound with the passing of time. I recommend moving first thing in the morning. You cannot wait for motivation to strike. It rarely does. Your actions will create momentum that enables inspired performance. So, don't overthink it, the biggest step in starting a routine is the start.

### *Schedule Your Workout*

Once you think of a routine and finally decide to start, you need to be clear about specific timings. Don't create abstract routines schedules -- You can't be Picasso when it comes to workout. You **MUST** develop a clear workout schedule that fits well into the rest of the day as well as your week.

Experts say you need about 2.5 hours of moderate-to-intense physical exercise each week. This of course you break into sessions. You can either go for 30 minutes per day, five days a week or three times weekly for about 45 minutes. When starting out I would recommend the first option to help build the habit faster (again preferably in the morning).

### *Make it Systematic*

So, working out for at least 30 minutes for five days each should be your target (Monday to Friday). As a rule, don't miss Mondays, it might disturb your whole week. Also, try to have a systematic approach to your workout. Being systematic reinforces the routine. Don't just jump out of bed and start swinging a 30-pound kettlebell in some semi-conscious delirium. When starting out, start your routine with quality stretching. Then add light-intensity workouts like push-ups, sit-ups, and squats. Gradually increase the intensity and the duration of your exercises each week according to your workout plan. Try hard not to break your routine and the system you set up. If you miss it in the morning, try to squeeze it in later in the day.

### *Focus on the Process*

One way of maintaining the discipline of working out is to begin where you are. Set clear goals and work your way up incrementally (I'm sure I've said

this already). Now when you set your goals, don't make the results your focus, but rather make the process the focus. What do I mean here? It's good for example to set a goal that you will lose 10lbs in two months. You can also weigh yourself obsessively daily to see if you're moving towards that direction. But like we already said, the scale should not be your primary means of assessing your progress.

Weight and getting in shape in general are the result of a process – the routine/actions), e.g. 10 push-ups, 10 squats and 10 sit-ups. So instead of focusing on the result, focus on the process, i.e. increasing incrementally the number of push-ups, squats, and sit-ups you can do from week to week. That way you'll be able to easily measure your progress. You can check on your ultimate goal (weight loss) occasionally just to see if you are getting the desired results but make the process the concentration of all your efforts.

### *Stay Safe*

If you're injured, you can't work out effectively (or at all). Yes, injury can end your fitness ambitions, so you must be cautious. However, injury can be avoided and is in many instances the result of negligence. Yes, self-sabotage can be a strange thing. Some people (even subconsciously) don't want to work out some much that they make it easy for themselves to get injured to say;

'See, I told you, I'm not just cut out for this sort of thing, guess I should stop!'

To succeed, make safety a top priority and start with low-impact exercise that is easy on the joints and muscles. This is critical if you're a beginner or are obese and want to lose weight. As I also mentioned, make sure to consult a physician before taking on a strenuous physical activity your body is not used to.

### *Stay Consistent*

Generally, in the world of fitness both quantity and quality matter. That being said, even mediocre 30 minutes workouts are better than nothing. So, the formula for sticking to your routine is very simple. Do the same mediocre 30 minutes workouts for five days each week consistently. And that's exactly what they are going to be if you're a beginner or obese -- mediocre. (told you I'm polite).

But everyone's start is mediocre, I started mediocre, Jeff Cavaliere started mediocre, Simeon Panda started mediocre, Arnold Schwarzenegger's started mediocre (don't mind me putting myself on a list with such legends). The point is, that's where the starting line is, at mediocre. But with consistency, you'll become better. With dedication and determination, you can move from mediocre to master. If you think I'm lying, I dare you to try and consistently train in a mediocre way for a year. And come back after a year of consistent training and say, 'I'm still mediocre'.

So, build momentum and stay consistent. Over time, it'll be easier to continue with the routine because you'll become more determined and tenacious.



**STEP 7**

## BE CONSISTENT

**[Recommended for the Kick Addict and Spinning Go-getters]**

*“I pray to be like the ocean, with soft currents,  
maybe waves at time. More and more, I want the  
consistency rather than the highs and lows.” – Drew  
Barrymore.*

Consistency, consistency, consistency! yes, I’ve probably said this a hundred times already. But you can’t end a book on fitness in any other way. Regardless of who you are and your specific circumstance, consistency is your secret weapon. Without *consistency*, your motivation will be sporadic, your programs disorganized, and your body disoriented. What you may lack in terms of genes, you can make up with consistency. Consistency trumps any type of workout routine regardless of the heaviness of the weights used.

So, as we draw to a conclusion, let’s recap the steps that will get you in shape and help you stay there forever:

Step 1: Change Your Mindset.

Step 2: Take Action.

Step 3: Stop Making Excuses.

Step 4: Raise Your Standards.

Step 5: Start with the Basics.

Step 6: Make it a Routine; and

Step 7: Be Consistent.

Now to show appreciation for reading my first book on fitness this far, I’m going to break one of my own rules. I’m going to use the word ‘easy’. Yes, you heard right; something WILL be easy.

Working out and eating well will not always be as hard as it is at first. As you go through the steps outlined in this book and improve over time, you’ll learn exercises, training methods, as well as diet plans that are more motivating, engaging, and fun. You’ll also discover that you’re not alone, regardless of the condition you’re in. You’ll find social support and networks of people



equally striving to get better. All you have to do is look.

As you progress, your resolve will become stronger and each healthy decision you make will make the next more likely. The mental dilemmas will dissipate almost entirely, and you'll begin enjoying your workouts more. Instead of dreading the gym, you'll dread the thought of missing a workout. Of course, there will still be days when you'll still feel the resistance. Days you don't feel motivated or seem to lack the energy.

But who cares right?

Its mind over matter. You do it anyway! if you fall, you get back up again and keep moving forward.

*“It matters not how strait the gate, how charged with punishments the scroll, you're the master of your fate, you're the captain of your soul.”*

You're, INVICTUS -- UNCONQUERABLE.

## **STEP 8**

### **WHAT NEXT?**

I didn't tell you, but the final step of the book is not step 7, it's step 8, and I left this chapter for you.

Let's see how you can write the ending to your own fitness story....

## NOTES

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*Dr. Lavinia Rodriguez is a Tampa psychologist and expert in weight management. She is the author of "Mind Over Fat Matters: Conquering Psychological Barriers to Weight Management."*

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Victor Simz is a Historian, Author, Educator and Productivity Strategist. He also has 10 years military experience and is specialized in Policy, Doctrine and Strategy Development.

When he's not out trying to save the world, he writes about fitness, productivity, and lifestyle. He loves sharing what he has learnt, and adapting strategies from his professional career to optimize everyday tasks and increase productivity.

His mission is to help people master simple basics and practical strategies to maximize their output and overall performance in different areas of life. Yes, he's kind of an idealist!

Victor lives in Lusaka with his wife and two kids. He is an ambivert but recently decided to take on the world.

To connect with Victor, visit him at any of the following:

Email: [vsimz123@gmail.com](mailto:vsimz123@gmail.com)

Blog: [vs762.com](http://vs762.com)

Instagram: [instagram.com/vsimz1/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/vsimz1/?hl=en)

Facebook: [facebook.com/vsimz1/](https://www.facebook.com/vsimz1/)

Twitter: [twitter.com/vsimz1](https://twitter.com/vsimz1)

Now go out and conquer the world!