

SKIP THE GYM...GET FIT

BY KARIM WAHEED



What type are you?

ONE of the terms I LOATHE is 'cookie-cutter'. We're all unique snowflakes. Then why should our workout routines be the same? Authoritative information has its time and place but something I strongly believe in and recommend to others is -- you ready for this? Our OWN judgment. Read. Gather as much information as you can on whatever it is that intrigues/ concerns you. It's of utmost importance that you go over conflicting information and then form your OWN opinion. Believe in your OWN eyes. Listen to your OWN body. In a nutshell: What works for your best friend, may or may not work for you.

Let's consider 3 types of people: Type A - unfit and mortally afraid of any kind of physical activity; Type B - not exactly the poster child of fitness but enthusiastic about physical activity; Type C - physically fit and works out regularly.

Type A: Starting from the bottom

If you belong to this group and you're reading this: forget form, forget frequency, forget duration. Just do it. (I hope, Nike doesn't sue me.) If you can't sprint, run; if you can't run, jog; if you can't jog, walk. If you want to engage in an activity in a public place and your reluctance is solely generated from what others around you might

think, it's time to ask the tough question: do you really care? Should you? Like every other aspect of your life, when it comes to health, you're on your own. A person, who judges someone trying to do something productive, is a loser. Their opinions of you don't matter. Go get your workout on.

Since you're starting from scratch and unless you're REALLY geared up and excited about this (unlikely, as you hate exercise), perhaps, you should start small. But don't consider it small though. At this stage, when you still don't find the idea of getting sweaty from some kind of activity appealing, 10 minutes of walking, 3 times a week could be your baseline. You can gradually build up on that and walk 30 minutes, 5 times a week.

Use a fitness tracking app on your phone or an old fashioned notebook to keep track of your workout progress so you know how far you've come, and how far you want to go.

Type B: Don't stop believing

Journey is always right. ALWAYS. So you're a Type B dreamer and your dream is to be fitter, more active and stronger, but you haven't figured out exactly how. If you have the will, you're halfway there. Perhaps you're a mother/father of 2 kids, or long hours at work pretty much leave you without the option of going out for a run.

You have enough space in your room to comfortably stand and squat, yes? And you have 15/20 minutes? Well, then start doing squats.

Squats are relatively simple to perform, require no equipment, and can be done just about anywhere. More importantly, although squats are often regarded as "leg" exercises, they actually offer benefits for your entire body.

How to:

Warm up.

Stand with your feet just over shoulder width apart.

Keep your back in a neutral position, and keep your knees centred over your feet.

Slowly bend your knees, lowering until you reach a 90-degree angle.

Return to starting position.

Breathe in as you lower; breathe out as you return to starting position.

Repeat 15-20 times, for 3 sets.

Do this 3 times a week.

Also, pay no heed to the multiple pseudopsych studies that claim taking selfies is a sign of a mental disorder. Use your selfie game to motivate yourself and track progress.

Type C: Be flexible

So, you're there. You've managed to set up a

system that works for you and you get compliments for the achievements you've unlocked. Congrats. Pat yourself on the back; you should be able to - flexibility being one of the 4 main components of fitness. Wait, you can't?

In the pursuit of muscles, many of us seem to forget flexibility. Here's why flexibility is so important:

Reduces stress in the exercising muscles and releases tension developed during the workout.

Assists with posture. Proper posture minimises stress and maximises the strength of all joint movements.

Reduces the risk of injury during exercise and daily activities because muscles are more pliable.

Do this.

Fold-over Stretch:

Stand tall with feet hip-width apart, knees slightly bent, arms by your sides.

Exhale as you bend forward from hips, lowering head toward floor, while keeping head, neck and shoulders relaxed.

Wrap arms around backs of legs or touch the floor with flat palms, and hold anywhere from 45 seconds to 2 minutes.

Bend knees and roll up slowly to release.

Whatever type you belong to/ can relate to, take charge. Get started.

HEALTH TALK

Fit-Yes!

LIVING up to the hype of the ever increasing number of restaurants and the trend of check-ins and selfies have made a gym visit the last thing one can look forward to at the end of the day. We all want to present ourselves at our best, but that is not enough motivation to hit the gym after sedentary office hours and an endless traffic. Due to insufficient parks and the dust engulfed streets, jogging and running are rather unhealthy preferences. We see teenagers being fitness fanatics, but the ones with a tedious and tiresome work life choose to have an imbalanced diet routine rather than an unexciting workout schedule that drains you out. When peace of mind is as scarce as physical fitness amidst the chaos of life, a combination to align the body, mind and spirit is essential.

A new wave of fitness is now trending to flaunt abs over flabs, and so breaking free from the monotonous machine workouts. Yoga, pilates, zumba and aerobics have rather liberated the conventional fitness industry and unleashed a fun and vibrant way to get the shape you desire. Most local gyms now offer aerobics, especially for women. But there are other options too and here are 5 to get you started:

Yogamrita

Yogamrita is an institution that provides traditional "Hata Yoga", designed to increase physical, mental and emotional well-being. Slowly stretch your body and achieve the fittest form of yourself. Not only does yoga make you naturally younger looking, but it also provides therapeutic benefits for diabetes, blood pressure, thyroid problems and joint pains, besides shedding off the extra pounds. The Dhanmondi branch offers 6 sessions and the Gulshan branch offers 5 sessions to suit your convenience. Packages include weekend sessions for job-holders, and separate sessions for women. You can get package details at +88 01732336695.

Yogilates

Shazia Omar has a fantastic fusion of yoga and pilates to offer with separate classes for beginners and advanced students. On average, you can do 2 classes a week to encourage and motivate you to do the twists and turns and splits with confidence. The tranquility of yoga and the core muscle building exercises of pilates will leave you feeling rejuvenated and revitalised. For more information please visit her Facebook page 'Yoga with Shaz'.

Dazzle

Give your calories one last dance, and enjoy a dance party to get rid of those extra pounds. Zumba is a dance fitness

program which involves dance and aerobic elements and incorporates 6 dance forms. Dazzle Fitness Center located in Gulshan 2 offers zumba. Call them at +88 01718917084 and set your appointment, and for Dhanmondi and surrounding residents, Zumba Fitness Club located in Road # 12A is just the place for you. Call for more +88 01715 143719.

Art of Living

When all forms of workout drain you out, meditation will soothe your spirits and keep you feeling healthy. Art of Living offers evening workshops and so it is extremely convenient for those who work. At the heart of this course is Sudarshan Kriya, which harmonises the body, mind and emotions with specific natural rhythms of breathing. A group of highly trained, experienced, and dedicated instructors guide you through an untreaded path and leave you at peace with yourself. The course claims that the answer to stress is right under your nose, and can be achieved through yoga where various asanas are practiced and meditation. Book your spot for the next workshop titled 'Happiness Program', and call Sajeew Menon at +88 01973083639 for more details.

By Sonya Soheli

Photo: LS Archive

