

Adjust Your Attitude to Get in Shape

Getting in shape begins with a mental exercise. It was your positive mental attitude that got you off the couch in the first place, and it will take a positive mental attitude to keep you off the couch.

To become physically fit you must become mentally fit. Your success for reaching your genetic potential will come from the strength of your mental attitude. To avoid hitting a plateau in your progress, keep a positive attitude.

It's amazing how our spiritual lives run a similar parallel. After we learned about the Lord and His love for us, we received Him as our Savior and were born again. Our outlook on life changed—we perceived things differently than before.

But over time, if we are not careful about maintaining a close relationship with the Lord, our spiritual fitness will suffer, and our spiritual effectiveness will plateau. Keep in mind that the reason why you do anything in life should be to honor the Lord. This attitude wins every time.

So for the next two months, I want you to follow the training and diet strategy outlined here. Likewise, make extra time for the Lord. Stay in the Word and talk with Him daily. Adjust your attitude so it is positive, focused and God-pleasing.

START THIS: Your first two months have been your break-in period (see "Phase One" in the January/February 2003 issue). Now it's time to add resistance training to the mix. The greater your muscle mass, or lean weight, the better your conditioning becomes. Your body will benefit from improved

heart strength and function, greater caloric expenditure, plus improved performance overall.

Choose any cardiovascular exercises that you enjoy and bump up the time to 25 minutes per session. Do this three days a week for this month. Next month, add 5 minutes to each session.

Include these resistance exercises with your cardiovascular training program: Perform three sets of 10-12 push-ups. Vary your hand spacing for hitting different chest, shoulder and arm muscles. Perform three sets of 15 deep knee bends (to a chair). Keep your back straight, your eyes looking forward and feet shoulder-width apart.

WORK THIS: There is a saying in the world of bodybuilding: You can't flex fat! If it has been a long time since you've seen your toes while standing and you've forgotten how many you have, then remember to keep hitting those abs!

Add reverse crunches to the regular crunches from Phase One. Lie on your back with your feet off the floor and your knees bent. Place your hands, palms down, alongside your hips. Press down with your hands while curling your knees to your chest. Lower your rear to the floor and repeat for three sets of 10-12 reps, three days a week. Alternate the crunch and reverse crunch for variety and priority.

EAT THIS: Try drinking one 8-ounce glass of water every waking hour until you consume half your body weight in ounces. Sip water before, during and after your workouts.

To lose that extra body fat around your waist, try avoiding carbohydrates at night. Make your last meal 2-3 hours before going to bed. Include protein in each meal and snack for muscle repair, plus a fat-burning effect.

PRAY THIS: I challenge you in your daily prayers to commit your body to Him. Allow the effort and sacrifices you are making toward a healthier more fit body be for His glory.

By turning away from your former frame of mind and taking on a new attitude that places Him in the center of your life—body, soul and spirit—you agree with what the apostle Paul said in Philippians 3:13-14: “Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus” (NIV).

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