

Train Your Body and Soul With These Christ-Centered Workout Habits

Most of us know the hard reality by now: change rarely if ever can be successful forced upon us. Rather, it has to come from a sincere desire within us. Though it is hard to convey and convince others of this hard reality, it is the truth. We all struggle with “change,” and whether we are open and accepting of it or whether it is forced upon us, it is rarely easy or comfortable. The desire to lose weight and start an exercise program needs to be a desire born and cultivated from within. Transformed from the inside out!

The fallen world we live in tells us one thing about getting fit—that it is quick and easy—but the truth is that it’s a slow, steady, lifelong process that starts inside. In his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul reminds us to “not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:2).

Without a doubt, transformation is another way of saying change. God does not want us to be like the world. Instead, He wants us to change who we are by renewing our mind and setting our sights on Him.

Put God First & Let Him Lead!

Faith + Fitness & Wellness = Whole and Holy

Believe the Truth, Not the Lie

The truth is we get fit from the inside out, not outside in. The same applies with our faith. We don’t outwardly work our way to salvation. There is nothing we can do to “earn” God’s

love and grace. It is free. All we need to do is repent and surrender to the one who became flesh and walked among us.

Once we start on the path to better health and starting moving, we gain significant health benefits before any outward signs of improved fitness (like weight loss or the elusive six-pack abs) become visible to you or others around you. It is the same with our faith. When we surrender our lives to Christ, we are radically transformed and renewed. To those around us, we may appear the same, but something inside has changed. We are beginning to grow outwardly and become renewed children of God. Over time, the outward appearance of our inner spiritual transformation starts to become visible (love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control). Change is great on the outside, but real change comes from the inside out. It's more than cosmetic; it's more than a skinnier version of the same old you.

God wants you to be made new from the inside out—spirit, soul and body.

Will we ever see the six-pack abs or “massive” arms? Will we ever look like the model on the cover of the magazine? You already know the answer to that question, so why debate it or believe it? But over time, we will have more energy, lose weight, develop muscle tone, and look and feel better—and isn't that what it's really about?

As you begin your journey to better health and well-being, remember that it is not easy and it will take work and effort. You may fail or succeed on your own, but with Jesus by your side, regardless of whether or not you improve your fitness score, you will be better off. When we consider the “big picture,” what really matters? Whether or not I fit into a certain dress size or have achieved the ultimate fitness prize—six-pack abs—we all leave this earth and our earthly bodies behind and either live with Jesus for eternity or not.

Health is important, and we should all strive to achieve a high level of health and wellness. Our methods of pursuit of health and fitness are what we need to consider. A Christ-centered pursuit of health and well-being will be rewarded here on earth as well as in Heaven.

Learn to Develop Christ-Centered Fitness Habits

- God wants a new you who not only looks different, but who lives and thinks and speaks and acts differently. He wants a new you who is being transformed by the renewing of your mind—a new you who is being transformed into the likeness of Christ.
 - Ephesians 4:23 says, “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.”
 - Make a commitment to the Lord to do the best you can to take care of your body.
 - Realize that your body is not your own; as a Christian, it belongs to Jesus Christ.
 - Get a physical (know what your risks are and what you need to work on) and know what your ideal weight is.
 - Become active daily. Exercise at least 3 times per week, the more the better.
 - Eat a health-supporting diet!
 - Know what your barriers to exercise are.
 - Have fitness accountability partner or team.
 - Avoid fad diets and exercise programs.
 - Don’t become overly preoccupied with your body.
 - Make your body the best it can be, but accept the body style that God has given you.
 - Do both daily devotionals and daily physical activity.
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Scott Roberts, Ph.D., *is currently professor and chair of the Kinesiology Department at William Jessup University.*