

Exercise- Top ten mistakes

Losing weight is not all about what we eat, exercise is also very important. If exercise is not part of a weight loss plan, it will definitely fail. Exercise will not only make you look good, it will make you feel good as it releases endorphins in the brain that enhance our mood.

Mistake 1 - Unrealistic Goals

We tend to be very impatient when it comes to exercise and losing weight. Unless your goal is to lose only a pound or two, it may take you a while to achieve your ideal healthy weight and your goals should reflect this fact. Having a weekly target will help keep you focused.

Mistake 2- Not doing something you enjoy

Do things you enjoy. Don't feel you need to do exercises that you don't enjoy. Pick something that you find fun e.g. swimming, rollerblading, skipping, cycling. Everyone is different so pick something that you enjoy.

Many people find team sports or group activities such as spin classes, five-a-side soccer or tag rugby more enjoyable and a great way to meet new people. There is now tag rugby taking place at Mullingar rugby club.

Try music, for example, a mini MP3 player to listen to while jogging. People who exercise to music report exercising longer and more vigorously than those who don't.

Mistake 3 - Failing to plan

As Roy Keane famously said, "fail to prepare, prepare to fail". If you do not plan your exercise regime you are less likely to keep it up. You should plan set days of the week that you will exercise and try to stick with these (no matter how tired you feel after work!) Your plan should take account of your current fitness and a fitness level you would like to achieve. It should take into account the amount of free time you have, and any injuries or ailments you need to work around. Even if you have very little time to exercise, even 10 minutes twice a day can make a difference.

Mistake 4 - No Exercise Variety

Varying your exercise will avoid boredom and will allow you to lose weight quicker and get fitter quicker. Varying your exercise allows more muscles are used and you will be stronger overall. For example, if you normally only run to exercise, why not break it up with a swim, a cycle or a pilates class

Mistake 5 – Doing it all alone

Find an exercise partner. People who exercise with a partner or group are more likely to stick with a regular routine. Involve family members and friends. You will be less likely to skip your workout if you know somebody else is counting on you.

Mistake 6 - No warm-up and cool-down

Like stretching, many people discard the importance of warming up and cooling down during their exercise sessions. Warming up prepares your body for the activity and intensity of activity ahead and prevents injury. Cooling down help:

- Muscles get rid of waste (such as lactic acid).
- Decrease the heart rate slowly.
- Prevent blood pressure drops which cause dizziness or fainting.
- Re-circulate blood from working muscles to the rest of the body.

- Prevent post-workout stiffness or soreness.

An example is walking for 5 minutes before jogging or lifting very light weights as a warm-up for more strenuous lifting.

Mistake 7 - Training at the same intensity

This mistake typically takes one of two forms; training with too low an intensity all the time, or training with too high an intensity all the time.

If you jog, cycle, row or perform some other type of aerobic exercise in your routine, make sure that most of your training are at the intensities represented by the 60 - 70% and 70 - 80% of your maximum heart rate zones (staff at your gym will give you more info about this)

Mistake 8 - Using improper technique

- Do some homework - find out what the right technique is.
- Get help from a professional (such as a trainer or coach).
- Check your technique periodically to make sure everything's as it should be.

Staff at your local gym can give excellent advice on your exercise regime and techniques.

Mistake 9 - Not rewarding yourself

Set yourself weekly exercise goals and reward yourself at the end of the week if you have achieved these. Rewards could include a new book or magazine, a cinema trip, new clothes, new makeup or a massage.

Mistake 10 - Not resting enough

Rest has a vital role to play in life and in exercise, and getting the mix of activity and rest right is vital in both.

Common signs of over-training include:

- Injury.
- Irritation.
- Insomnia.
- Fatigue.
- Disinterest in exercise.

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