

10 Tips for TopForm

By Rachael Gill

If you have never exercised before, or it has been a significant amount of time since you have attempted any strenuous physical activity, there are some tips by Personal Trainer, John Hataisuwan of California Wow Experience fitness center to ensure a healthy introduction to working out.



YOU ARE LAZY ABOUT WARMING UP

No matter what form of exercise you choose, you will benefit from adding stretching exercises to elongate muscles and keep them supple. Skipping your pre-workout warm-up could leave you with sprained or torn muscles, keeping you in bed for a while; it is the best form of injury-prevention for new exercisers.

PT John Hataisuwan: Warm-up is quintessential prior to commencing your exercise regimen; it has a percentage importance of 60%. An ideal period of time for a warm-up is between 10-15 minutes. For instance, be on the cardio machine for 10 minutes and a stretching machine (only 1 available California Wow, Siam Paragon) or general exercises – a few stretches and a couple of light sets of 10-12 reps on whichever muscle group you plan on targeting is a good start before you go all out.

MENTAL IS DIFFERENT FROM PHYSICAL

Just because you have had a tough day of punching the keyboard does not necessarily mean that your body is ready to give in for the day. Mental exhaustion is different from physical exhaustion, and you have to know how to separate the two. A quick workout will not only rejuvenate you, but will leave you feeling fit as well.

PT John Hataisuwan: Even though you may think you feel tired, have a quick snack after work and then hit the gym. A light cardio or circuit workout will do wonders for you because it will boost your BMR and your endorphins will start flowing, giving you instant energy. So go to the gym – it will help get your energy levels up because it gets your blood pumping.

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YOU TRY TO APE THE APES

Just because the big, bulky guys at the gym can do 50 pull ups or do a 150 lbs chest press, does not mean you can do it as well. Have your fitness assessment done and schedule charted out by your instructor, stick to that. What suits someone else, may not suit you.

PT John Hataisuwan: Have a fitness assessment or start with a weight that is feasible and then increase it slowly. If a weight is too heavy for you, switch to a lower weight and gradually increase the level as your body and resistance builds up.

ALTER THE ORDER OF EXERCISES

Shifting the order of exercises just switches things around for the individual exercising. Moreover, in certain instances if there is a three-person queue for the piece of equipment you need, either adjust the exercise order and go back to it later, or switch to a similar one that will work the same body part in a different way.

PT John Hataisuwan: Changing which exercises you do first, last and in the middle does not have an impact on the effectiveness of your routine. The three main steps of warm-up/cardio/weight-training should ideally remain, however, altering the machines that workout the seven major muscle groups makes it less boring and is good in facilitating muscle development.

CHANGE THE INTENSITY

When you lift weights as a means to develop more muscle, the intensity of your workout has to progress upwards. If it remains at the same intensity there is no reason for new muscle to grow.

PT John Hataisuwan: If you want to train efficiently and effectively you have to understand the relationship between the ever-increasing intensity of your workouts and the ever-decreasing frequency of those workouts. For instance, when a person is just starting out, he could, indeed, train three times per week performing bench presses and leg presses of say 150 lbs and 350 lbs; he should only lift those weights during one workout. On his second workout he might be hoisting 165 lbs and 375 lbs on those two lifts. On his third workout they should increase again, or if he cannot get more weights off the pins, he should be increasing the number of reps he performs; something must increase.

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YOU NEVER CHANGE YOUR WORKOUT

So far your workout has been giving you the results you are looking for, but in the long run, your muscles will get used to the same routine, and your body stops showing the results you expect. It is best to amend your routine every 4-6 weeks as that will maximize your workout and target diverse muscles too.

PT John Hataisuwan: Try incorporating a dissimilar type of workout into your week such as swimming, an aerobics class or kickboxing – anything to get the blood pumping in a different way. For example, at California Wow, your trainer would alter the workout every week through a varying program (one program is for a period of four days that works on the seven major muscle groups). Every six weeks or so, change your whole routine; pick slightly different exercises for each of the body parts through the utilization of varying machines. In this way, the muscles get pushed to work in an unusual way plus boredom does not get a chance to set in.

KEEP AN EYE ON THE TIME

The breaks that you take in between sets are just as important as the set itself. Recovery time is imperative as it will determine how much you are going to lift later on. If you take too long in between sets, you will not benefit; and if your break is too short, your muscles do not get enough time to recuperate.

PT John Hataisuwan: Your ideal recovery time is determined on the basis of how much you are lifting, however, in a one hour weight training session which will include 5 exercises done in four sets, it would have a 45-60 seconds break between each set.

YOU WORKOUT TOO MUCH

Working out 24/7 could be the worst thing you could subject your body to. Rest is essential for your body to grow. If you are constantly doing cardio and weight training without a break, your muscles get no time for revitalization. Also, going every day may start seeming like a chore and you could get bored easily.

PT John Hataisuwan: Listen to your body – it knows when it is tired and needs rest. If a muscle is aching, wait till it recovers to get back on the treadmill. Take the day off and go for a light walk or relax in the steam room. Do not always do heavy weights – alternate with other exercises as well.



There are three important principles, ranked in the order of importance:

- Sleep
- Nutrition
- Exercise

Therefore, exercise although important and good for your physique plus functioning of the body, rest is required. A good ratio would be 2:1 (2 days exercise and one day off) or 3:1 (3 days exercise and one day off). With continuous exercise there is no development of muscles (muscles need time to build themselves up with the appropriate rest).

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CHANGE YOUR WORKOUT FREQUENCY

The frequency that you, or everybody else, should train with is variable. The best thing you can do is to ease yourself into a fitness plan by taking a moderate approach. Make your workouts habitual and you will eventually get to the point where you feel worse if you do not exercise.

PT John Hataisuwan: At California Wow, one program runs for an equivalent of four days which works out seven major muscle groups. A workout routine should vary with intensity along with machines that exercises the same part of the body. It is not exactly possible to state an ideal workout frequency as it does differ according to each individual and what they would like to achieve. Nevertheless, a minimum workout per week should be at least 2-3 days (times per week) with an average of 30 minutes spent on cardio and 45 minutes of weight training.

RIGHT GEAR

Finding clothes that make you feel and look good can help get you in the mood to workout, however, there is no need to buy expensive equipment or outfits, but if having a snazzy new exercise wardrobe will motivate you, go for it!

PT John Hataisuwan: Having the right gear is essential for the gym – light/sports wear plus a good pair of sneakers will make exercise easier. The appropriate shoes to buy for the gym would be either cross training or cross running shoes – these are sneakers which have shock absorbers, especially suitable if you are doing cardio.

California Wow Experience is the world's number fitness center, taking fitness to the edge. This is not just another workout club, however, it is the WOW Experience that offers first-class facilities and service; a combination of exercise with entertainment.

Visit their prime locations so that they can raise your awareness of fitness and health plus assist in making everyone look their best.

- Silom Club, at Liberty Building
02-631-1122
- Pinklao Club, at Major Cineplex Pinklao
02-433-7999
- Sukhumvit 23 Club, at Jasmine City
02-665-2999
- Ratchayothin Club, at Major Ratchayothin
02-930-1999
- Siam Paragon Club, at Siam Paragon
02-627-5999
- Sukhumvit 31 Club, at F Galleria Tower
02-260-7999
- Chaengwattana Club, at The Avenue Chaengwattana
02-832-0999
- Esplanade Club, at The Esplanade-Ratchada Complex
02-660-1999
- Chiang Mai Club, at Central Airport Plaza
053-999-499
- Pattaya Club, at The Avenue Pattaya
038-399-999

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