

fitness

BREAK OUT OF YOUR FITNESS RUT

Stuck in a routine that's not getting results? Personal Trainer **Anthony Goldsmith** from Performants Personal Training offers expert advice to achieve your desired results

No matter how motivated or focused we are with our fitness routine, at some stage in our life, every one of us will get stuck in a rut. This may be due to the endless demands of work, family and life – which can leave us feeling drained and exhausted. With winter upon us, the cooler weather can frustrate even the most motivated exercisers. I once had a client cancel their training session because it was raining. Yet strangely enough, our sessions were indoors.

There are times when you can't train outdoors, but looking for excuses not to train isn't the answer either. Fitness ruts can be a comfortable, cosy phase of our life. If you are no longer seeing progress then it's time to get back on track.

With all my experience in the fitness industry, I have found that everything keeps coming back to the same key points. We need to try and do more in our training sessions, adding more intensity and focus. We also need variety in our programs, so they're fun and challenging. Being stuck in a rut is really a pattern of bad habits, so by breaking your routine, you will be one step towards extraordinary changes – not only in your fitness program, but in your everyday life.

Review your training program

One of the most amazing things about the human body (apart from everyone being different) is its ability to adapt – however this can also be one of its weaknesses. Once it's adapted, you have to shake things up to make it change again. If you're doing the same thing every time you work out, your body will become conditioned to the exercise. Yet pretty soon, the challenge is gone, and you stop improving and seeing results.

Changing the exercises you do for certain muscle groups

changes the direction of an exercise. For instance, you can work chest muscles from different angles with push-ups or bench presses, using free weights or a chest press on machines.

Do you always do cardiovascular work first and resistance training second? Why not do resistance training first followed by a new choice of cardio work, such as power walking on an incline? This way, your muscles will already be fatigued before you start walking, so your workout will challenge you in a different way.

Why not try doing your workout backwards? You may find that you may be able to lift more weights at the beginning of the workout, where maybe you used to only get through a few exercises. The cardio will also be harder because you'll be more tired. You could even try working out at different times of the day, training in a new location, or changing your movement speed using exercises, rest periods and different intensity levels.

Don't take the easy route

The biggest reason I hear for someone not exercising regularly is shortage of time. It's true, we have become a lot busier these days; two or three jobs, family, commuting and so on. And although for many of us, exercise is an exciting part of our day, anyone can get bored with the same repetitive exercises.

Get more active with small changes like walking more often, taking the stairs, parking further away or cleaning. Small adjustments in everyday activity can result in big changes that'll motivate regular exercise. If you have the time there is nothing wrong with exercising for an hour or more with a range of gym equipment and cardio machines. Whilst taking the easiest routine might seem like the best option, you need to find a good short

series of exercises that will give you the best results for your time.

Purchase some gear for home. A stability ball, medicine ball, resistance bands, dumbbells, a step, and a mat can add fun variety while working muscles in a different way. This means you'll have no commuting to the gym and no excuses. If you have time to watch TV you have time to add fitness into your life.

Hire a personal trainer, they can always give you safe variations of exercises you are doing or give you new ones to add to your program. A trainer can help you get back into a routine, get you out of your rut, whilst pushing your fitness limits and providing encouragement. They can also make sure you are practicing the correct techniques during exercise to avoid injuries.

Set yourself an 'end' date

Set some specific performance goals with an end date. For example, 'I will exercise three days a week for the next three weeks; then four days a week for the following three weeks'. Also set some accomplishment goals such as, 'I will lose one dress size in the next five weeks'. Make sure your goals are realistic. At the end of each week or month, celebrate your success with a new outfit, a manicure or even a massage. Commit to sitting down with a calendar and scheduling your workouts for the next week, including time, location and activity. Treat your workout time as important appointments that can't be missed.

The use of fun in your sessions

Find a program that works for you and keeps you interested. Make sure that your workout is always challenging to prevent boredom. Include fun in your sessions as this will make your

COMMON SIGNS YOU'RE IN A FITNESS RUT

- Your energy drops dramatically.
- You suddenly become undecided, confused and frustrated with your program.
- You begin to gain weight, not sleep properly and generally feel ill.
- Your fitness goals become vague.



workouts more memorable and will take your mind away from family or work issues, keeping attention to your program. Including a friend is also great and will turn your workout into a social event with lots of laughs. As the saying goes 'laughter is the best medicine'. The next time you need motivation to stick with your program, remember that working out has many benefits. Not only will you look great, but you'll gain more energy, become stronger and more self confident. You'll also make smarter life choices to cope with today's stressful environment.

*Anthony Goldsmith is the owner of Performants Personal Training (www.performants.com.au) For the past 13 years he has worked in many of Australia's leading fitness centres. He is currently teaching at Holmesglen Institute of TAFE lecturing the next generation of Personal Trainers. **