

14 Fitness Tips by the Professionals - Part 1

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Take a look at a selection of some of the fitness tips that have been amassed by the professionals over the years. Some of the suggestions may apply directly to your requirements while others may not be particularly suited to your workout. Filter what applies, but also consider the ones that you may not need at the moment - it's possible that with some modification they could prove to be of value in keeping your exercise programme challenging and enjoyable.

1. **Stretch while sleeping:** Runners often suffer from tight calves the morning after. If you experience this discomfort, try sleeping on your stomach with your feet hanging off the end of the bed. Why? As your body relaxes gravity will take effect and gently stretch your calf muscles as you sleep. This simple fix may just offer the relief you've been looking for.
2. **Work those hamstrings:** If you are looking for ways to improve your sprint performance, try some extra work on your hamstrings - the muscles that help you to push off as you start your sprint can also contribute to improving your speed. A good way to improve this area is to vary the way you execute a leg curl. When you are pulling the weight towards you, try flexing your ankles by pointing your toes towards your shins. Then, as you lower the weight, reverse this move by extending your ankles so that your toes are pointing away. This forces the hamstrings to work harder.
3. **How to lose that gut:** Working on your abdominals may not be the answer. Research has shown that to burn half a kilo of fat requires around 250,000 crunches. At 50 a day, that is a lot of days! You may find it far more beneficial to work on a proper diet management programme. The alternative: 100 crunches a day for seven years for each half kilo you wish to lose!
4. **How to build strength quickly:** If you want to gain extra strength as quickly as possible, try lifting lighter weights faster. How does this work? By lifting lighter weights faster and more often, you can generate the same force as lifting heavier weights slowly. If you want to increase muscle size, then using heavier weights may be better way to go.
5. **Count backwards:** To help ease the boredom of counting your reps throughout your workout, count them backwards starting at the number you wish to carry out. This helps you to concentrate on the smaller rather than the larger number. The result: it feels easier and more achievable if you are pushing yourself to your limit.
6. **How to reduce sickness levels:** It has been found that doing as little as 40 minutes of aerobics or weight training a week can keep you up and going. The best way to do this is through a couple of 22 minute sessions spaced at regular intervals throughout the week. Not a bad price for continued good health.

7. Vary to challenge: To give an added challenge to your muscle groups on the stair machine, turn around and step down the stairs. Face away from the control panel and try running down. Work your way up to around three stairs at a time. Start with around 3 minute intervals taking a rest of at least 30 seconds between each session.