



**HOW BAD
IS IT TO DO THE
SAME WORKOUT
EVERY DAY?**

Routine is our comfort zone. Most of us set an alarm for the same time every day (and with the same tune), eat the same breakfast and take the same route to and from work.

What's more, a lot of us even do the same thing every time we exercise. Doing the same exact workout every single day is no good.

WHY YOU NEED TO BALANCE EXERCISE AND RECOVERY

Before getting to the explanation for why variety is good, you first need to understand what exactly is happening to your body when you're lifting weights, going for a run, or taking a Zumba class — and after you're done.

When you exercise, you're placing stress on the body, which you recover from once you finish. It's during the downtime that your muscles repair and adapt, which is what allows you to get stronger and fitter.

If you jump into another workout before your body has fully recovered from your last, you interrupt your body's natural recovery process.

Insufficient recovery can not only cause you to plateau, but it can also cause damage to your tendons, ligaments and joints which can lead to injuries such as overuse injuries.

Or even worse: Long-term under-recovering can lead to overtraining syndrome, which is essentially when the body enters a stage of chronic breakdown.

How long it takes to adequately recover after a workout depends on things like nutrition - especially protein intake, stress-levels, sleep quality and quantity, age, training age and more. As a rule: The heavier, harder, and more intense a workout is, the longer it takes your body to recover.

IS IT OK TO DO ANY KIND OF WORKOUT EVERY SINGLE DAY?

No. It is a bad idea to do the same workout seven days a week.

For starters, different workouts require different recovery times. For example, a recent study published in the International Journal of Sports Physiology and Performance found it takes 48 hours to recover from a bench press workout, while another study published in the Journal of Physical Therapy Science found it took 72

hours to fully recover from a sprint workout.

Do the same workout every single day, and you're giving your body less than 24 hours to recover. Under-recovering can result in lack of overall progress towards your goals and/or injury.

You might be thinking, well, what if I am recovering properly between workouts. Ultimately, if you're doing a workout that's gentle enough on the body that it's safe to do every single day, that workout isn't imposing enough demand on the body to make you fitter.

WHAT IF YOU'RE ONLY WORKING OUT A FEW DAYS A WEEK?

What if you only exercise four or five days a week, but every time you do, you're doing the exact same workout? The answer doesn't change.

Whether it's four days a week, or seven, if you do the same workout every time you exercise, you will quickly get diminishing returns on that exercise routine.

Beyond that, doing the same workout every day is boring. Doing the same workout every single day is like commuting home from work every day, at a certain point you zone the whole thing out because it's so tedious.

If you're slinging around weights or logging miles when your mind isn't in it, you're one mis-step or bad rep away from injury. Plus, exercising without being in the zone makes the workout less effective.

Take the deadlift, for example: You may be able to stand the weight up without being mentally engaged, but if you lift without first bracing your core and squeezing your shoulder blades together, you reduce the movement's muscle-building potential.



CAN YOU DO THE SAME ACTIVITY BUT A DIFFERENT WORKOUT?

What if you're really in love with running? Or you're truly passionate about lifting weights?

It's OK to do the same style of workout every day, but not the exact same workout.

For example, if you run the exact same route, at the exact same pace every single day, you will plateau quickly. However, if your weekly run schedule alternates between fartlek runs, hills and tempo run, varying distances and routes, you can become a better runner quickly.

Ideally, though, your program shouldn't just include running. Someone training for a running race will become a better runner if their program includes yoga and strength training.

Another example: strength training. You can do a strength or weight workout every single day, so long as you alternate the muscle groups you're working. That allows you to rest one muscle group while working the other. If you do leg day on Monday, on Tuesday, when you're targeting your back and biceps, your legs are recovering.

As with running, though, a balance of strength and cardio is optimal. While strength training can be taxing on your cardiovascular system, it's not the most efficient form of cardio. In general, most people are better off also doing 15 to 20 minutes of more traditional cardio two or three days a week.

WHAT ABOUT HIIT WORKOUTS?

The one activity you really shouldn't be doing every single day, even if you switch up the movements? High-intensity interval training (HIIT).

True HIIT training should only be done, even by elite athletes, two to three times a week, with an emphasis on recovery in between. HIIT training four to five times a week for the average athlete can be extremely detrimental to reaching their goals.

HIIT training — much more so than lower-intensity exercises like yoga, Pilates, or jogging — damages the muscle tissues and drains them of stored energy.

Because there is more damage, more time is needed for adequate recovery. If you do a HIIT workout on Monday, instead of another one the next day, you should be doing a lower-intensity workout.

You can't recover from a HIIT workout while doing another, but you can recover from it while on a long walk. If walking isn't your thing, try biking, swimming, jogging, gentle yoga, or tai chi.

THE BOTTOM LINE

When it comes to exercise, smarter and harder is generally better than same and more. That means switching up your workouts each day (at least the muscles they target) so that you can go hard enough in one workout to need at least 24 hours to recover from it.

To get fitter, you need to impose stress on the body. If you do something so easy that you're not actually fatiguing your body, you're not reaping most of the benefits of exercise.

Ultimately, the best workout schedule comes down to your goals. If you're a bodybuilder or powerlifter training for the stage or a competition, your program is going to look different than that of someone who's training for a marathon or someone who wants to be able to squat snatch 1.5 times body weight.

But for the average exerciser - two to four days of strength training (half lower-body days, half upper-body days), two days cardio training (think: running, biking), and one day of "body movement training," which includes things like yoga, martial arts, dance, and tai chi.

While this is what "an ideal week" would look like, how everybody responds to an exercise program or workout is different, Hale says.

It's important to check in with your body every day and ask it what it truly needs that day. If it's telling you to take it easy on a specific day, you'd be smart to listen.

