



“The Top 10 Mistakes That Are Slowing Down Your Progress!”

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I spend a fair amount of my time hanging out in gyms and I guess you could say that I am a gym rat. Even though I only spend about an hour a day (4 days/week) training myself, during that time I see plenty of people performing their own workouts and I notice some common mistakes being made. I also have the opportunity of training other people, working in health club settings, high school and collegiate weight rooms, and from working with athletic teams I have had ample time to witness gym-goers commit some common errors in their quest for a better body and improved health. I will share with you this list of common errors so that you can make the necessary changes if needed and get the most benefit from the time you are committing to your workouts.

Kyle's List of Commonly Witnessed Workout Errors

- 1. Performing cardio prior to your weight training.** Now this is not a rigid rule but for the most part you should be doing the MAJORITY of your cardiovascular training after you perform your weight training. If you perform too much cardio before your strength training workout then you will not receive optimal results from your strength training as it is a very quality-dependent activity. If you are someone who normally performs the bulk of your cardio training prior to lifting weights I encourage you to switch things around and try lifting weights and then performing the bulk of your cardio training. Give it a shot and let me know what kind of results you get from that!
- 2. Too much cardiovascular exercise.** Cardiovascular exercise or aerobic exercise is definitely a beneficial form of activity. It involves prolonged, continuous movement of large muscle groups that elevates your heart rate. Organizations such as the American College of Sports Medicine recommend performing cardiovascular exercise on most days of the week above a certain intensity level (70-85% of your V02 Max) for 20-60 minutes. That is fine but the problem is that I have seen people in the gym walking on a treadmill for 2 hours! Performing excessive amounts of cardiovascular exercise is not necessarily going to help you decrease fat levels and achieve that physique that you are looking for. Excessive amounts of cardiovascular exercise can have a catabolic effect (muscle-wasting)

on muscle tissue. The problem with this is when you lose valuable muscle tissue you are left with a lowered resting metabolism. You may have burned a lot of calories during that workout but at the cost of lowering your overall metabolism over time. Unless you are specifically training for a long distance endurance sports I recommend keeping the cardio workouts shorter in duration and at higher intensity levels. Between 12 and 30 minutes of cardio after your weight-training workout 3-5 times per week is more than enough to help your body shed unwanted fat without sacrificing your metabolism.

- 3. Not performing intense exercise.** Let me explain something. Health and Fitness are two TOTALLY different things! Working out for health improvement (i.e. lowering blood pressure, improving blood lipid profile, decreasing heart disease risk) can be very different than physique improvement (i.e. lowering body fat percentage, improving muscle size, etc). I know of bodybuilders with horrible health status that look great and some ordinary Joes that are in excellent health but look awful. Do not confuse the two because there is a distinction between them. I constantly see people in the gym working out with 3 and 5 pound weights performing hundreds of repetitions for so-called "toning." After months of watching these toning workouts I see no improvements in their outward appearance and they do not get any stronger. It reminds me of that quote that I am so fond of: "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result."

Research continues to show that intense exercise is very effective for physique improvement. Intense exercise has been proven time and time again to be a necessary component as part of the quest for a lean and muscular body. Look at track athletes such as sprinters and body builders who make intense exercise staples in their training routines. Intense exercise can come in different forms such as training with weights and high intensity cardiovascular exercise like sprinting. Exercise is stress. If you go to the gym and do not stress your body enough, you won't hurt yourself but you probably won't see any results either. If you ask your body to perform at too high of a stress level you might cause injury. If you perform at an optimal stress level you will challenge your amazing adaptive body to change in a positive manner in order to handle the stress of your workouts. These adaptations to intense exercise over time will manifest in changes to your outward appearance. If you want to shape your body, work towards higher levels of intensity with your resistance training and cardiovascular workouts.

- 4. Spending too much time in the gym.** If I knew nothing about working out and I visited a typical health club for the first time I would be under the impression that spending five minutes in between sets was part of the gym experience for most people. Now I understand that everyone has different goals but if you are serious about achieving results in the short time you have to work out every day it would behoove you to spend less time talking and more of your time working out in order to achieve results. If it is your intention to go to the gym and just discuss

politics with Suzy from the next office over by all means go for it. However, please don't complain when you are not seeing results from your workouts. Do you honestly think wandering around the gym aimlessly; stopping to talk for 5-minute intervals in between sets is going to help you discover a leaner physique. If so, I am sorry to say that you have been misinformed.

Time and time again, the people who I see make progress in the gym are the determined souls who have a workout plan that they intensely adhere to. They have a driven appearance on their face the entire workout and can be seen pushing their bodies with higher and higher intensity levels, which brings me to.....

5. **Lack of progression.** Here is another quote for you, "If you never change anything, nothing will ever change." I cannot tell you the number of people that commit this mistake over and over again. They will always perform the same exercises, with the same weight, in the same format week after week. These people are continually applying the same stress to their body with the hopes that it will change. I have some bad news...you are sorely mistaken. In order to see changes in your outward appearance you need to progressively overload your muscles by striving to lift a little more or perform a few more repetitions than you did in your previous workout. This means striving to lift heavier weights!
6. **Lack of Variety:** Variety is the spice of life they say! The human body is an adaptive organism and is always trying to adapt to what you ask it to do (or don't do for that matter). One mistake that I see in a lot of peoples' training programs is a lack of variety. They stick with the same exercises, the same planes of motion, the same number of sets, the same number of repetitions, the same rest periods, the same format, the same training environment, the same surface, and even the same training implements. Coach John Davies taught me long ago that you should always seek variety in your training to avoid stagnation and to continue seeing results from your efforts. There are so many variables that can be manipulated that you could conceivably NEVER perform the same workout twice! Try mixing in new exercises. Try experimenting with new formats such as Circuit Training, Supersetting, and Full-Body Splits instead of Body-Part Spits. Try training outside instead of always lifting in the sterile gym environment. Try training with new implements such as kettlebells, bands, or sandbags and you will be amazed at the challenge these new implements provide. Variety could be the number one reason you are not seeing results so start seeking it out each and every training session!
7. **Lack of Supportive Nutrition** This one is simple to understand but not easy to implement. Your eating must support what you are trying to accomplish. If it does not then you will not achieve optimal results. You see, your nutrition accounts for about 70% of your overall results! Think about that for a minute. You could train your butt off every day but if you fail to focus on what you are putting in your mouth then you will be missing out on your full potential. Start taking responsibility for yourself and pay attention to what you are eating.

Educate yourself on how to achieve better results by focusing on your nutritional intake and I promise you that your overall results will skyrocket!!!

8. **Lack of a plan.** Simply put, do you know why you are training? Without a compelling vision of what you want to accomplish how do you know if you are on the right track. Walking in to a gym, performing a set of Exercise-A and a set of Exercise-B and walking on the Treadmill might not be what you SHOULD be doing to achieve your goals. Once you have a destination in mind, have someone help you design a Roadmap so that you can get to your destination in the most time efficient manner. If I wanted to drive to Florida from good old New Hampshire I probably would not want to head North to start my trip right? "Of course not Kyle," you say, but this exactly what I see people do in the gym all the time. They have a particular goal in mind so they head to the gym to perform a workout that they believe will help them achieve that goal. Unfortunately, most people have been misinformed and are in need of a Paradigm shift. The Random House Dictionary defines Paradigm as: "An example serving as a model." A popular, but flawed, Paradigm that many people have ingrained in their minds is that "high reps are for toning." One of the biggest challenges I face as a fitness professional is cutting through the misinformation and educating my clients about what really works to change their bodies in a positive manner (changing their Paradigm). Some of the ways that I help my clients achieve this end is by helping them develop a Vision, design a Roadmap, and helping them stay on the Right Road! Having a plan can make all the difference in the world!
9. **Lack of a workout log.** This goes hand in hand with having a plan but I have found that most people that are successful in transforming their bodies all keep track of their progress. After all, how will you ever know if you arrived at your destination if you do not know where you started? For this reason I encourage my clients to keep track of objective measurements (see Kenny's results listed above), their sets/reps/weight, duration and intensity of cardio workouts, rate of perceived exertion, and many other tidbits that can provide valuable insight into your progress, or lack there-of. Many businesses keep track of where referrals came from, customer interests, customer dislikes, who is buying what, and who is buying how much. The reason they keep track of all of this information is so that they can track trends and identify patterns. The same holds true of a workout log. Your workout log can help you identify what types of workouts work best for you and what combinations of cardio, diet, and resistance training are most effective in your particular case. I also gain satisfaction in beating my previous performances in certain exercises and I enjoy seeing improvements in my measurements as I follow a program. If I find that, over time, I am not seeing the results I expect, I learn from my workout log and I change things! Do not underestimate the power of a workout log!
10. **Lack of fun.** I love going to the gym! I get excited when it gets to that point in the day when I get to go to the gym and devote a small amount of my daily schedule to physical improvement. I enjoy struggling under heavy weights and

breaking previous performance records. I enjoy how I feel after a hard workout, I like having the knowledge that I am doing good for my body, and I like the aesthetic benefits of working out (yeah, I am a little vain but I try to keep it in perspective). Do you know the reasons that you go to the gym? When I first started working out I wanted to get in better shape so people would respect the advice that I gave them, after all, I should "Walk the Walk not just Talk the Talk" right? What I discovered in my evolution was that I really liked going to the gym. I felt empowered by the results I achieved and I enjoyed molding my body in the fire of my mind. I have discovered a personal Zen of Training that I believe carries over to all aspects of my life. My struggles in the weight room have helped shape my perspectives in ways that I cannot even express. Fredrick Douglas once stated that, "Without struggle there is no progress." I look at going to the gym as a "wonderful training opportunity" (as stated by Samuel L. Jackson in the movie Basic) instead of, "my obligatory workout so that I do not become a slob." I am not saying that you need to adopt my perspective but I do believe that you should have fun and enjoy your trips to the gym. Many people do not stay consistent or faithful to their workouts because they have a negative perspective on working out. Start from scratch, find activities that you enjoy that will simultaneously deliver results. I would not recommend slaving away on a treadmill if it is a miserable experience for you. There are thousands of ways for you to get your heart rate elevated so why bother with methods that don't kindle that fire waiting to burn within you? Consult a fitness professional about designing an individualized workout plan that you'll enjoy performing. Have fun!

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