

Universal Truths!

In life, there are some universal truths. There are also some that pertain to your health and fitness. Let's examine some of these Universal Truths to see if they still hold up to today's standards.

"If you don't use it, you lose it!"

Simply put, if you don't challenge your muscles (or if they are immobilized due to a broken bone), your body will tear down your muscles to conserve energy! Challenge your muscles or lose them!

"Every time you step in the gym you should try to beat your last performance!"

I think that this is true for the most part. Over time, you should try to lift more weight or challenge your body in new progressive manner. This will help to ensure the results you are looking for.

"You are what you eat!"

Those Supersize value meal at McDonalds will Supersize your waistline. Take more responsibility of what and how much you put in your mouth and you'll be a lot happier with your body.

"Just do it!"

NIKE hit the nail on the head with this one. Get out there and get active!

"No Pain, No Gain!"

This is an outdated statement! You need to realize that soreness does not equal progress. There are lots of ways to get sore when you go to the gym but not all will help you lose body fat or gain muscle mass. Measure your progress by how it improves your performance, decreases your body fat, or builds muscle mass.

"Go heavy or go home!"

I think this one holds some truth. Many people, especially women, waste a lot of time playing with plastic-coated 3 pound Dumbbells. Over time, you should progressively aim to lift heavier weights. The heavier weights will help challenge your body and help you see the results you are looking for.

"Curls for girls?"

Many sports coaches say that the only use for Biceps Curls are to impress the girls. If your goals are performance oriented, then there are probably better exercise

choices for you. If you have physique goals, it is still a better idea to focus on multi-joint, complex exercises over isolation exercises. For example, performing rows, Pull-Ups, and Pulldowns will heavily recruit the Biceps (often to a greater degree) while simultaneously recruiting a lot of other muscle groups.

“The only constant in life is that things change!”

Stick with a SET routine long enough for your body to adapt to it but change something about your workouts every 4 weeks (i.e. sets, reps, tempo, exercises, rest periods, format, etc).

“More is not better, better is better!”

Focus on Multi-joint, complex exercises and minimize isolation exercises. If you get more of these 'money' exercises in your routine you will burn more calories, train more muscles in the shortest amount of time, and get the most done in the shortest time possible. Most people waste a lot of time performing isolation exercises when they would be better off performing Squats, Deadlifts, Presses, Pulldowns, Rows, Back Extensions, etc.

Perform intense exercise. Start incorporating more intense exercise in the form of progressive weight training and cardiovascular interval training (i.e. bike fast for 30 seconds, bike slow for 30 seconds, perform 6-8 repetitions of this protocol at a given resistance level and when you can perform all 8 repetitions at that intensity level, increase the resistance level for the next workout and drop the repetitions down to 6 again). Now, there are many different ways this can be done and this is only one example. Try 1 min fast, 1 min slow, 1 and 1/2 min fast, 3 min slow, etc.

“How can you know where you are going if you don't know where you have been?”

Know where you are now so that you can track your progress or lack there-of. This is the number one biggest mistake for 95% of all people. How do you know if you are seeing results if you never measure them? Along those same lines, how do you know if a given training routine is appropriate for you until you see what kind of results you get from it? Get your body fat tested, perform girth measurements, take a digital picture of yourself, note how you feel, how your clothes fit, energy levels, and especially performance measures such as max bench press, timed rides, vertical jump, and anything else you want to gauge your training on. Simply having a performance goal will often times lead to impressive changes in your physique!

“Knowledge is power!”

Understand the WHYs behind training in various ways and you will see better results. If you understand the effects of various training methods and how they can help you improve you will make much faster progress than if you follow some cookie-cutter approach.