



THE ESSENTIAL BEGINNERS GUIDE

GET THE MOST
OUT OF YOUR
NEW PROGRAM

JAMES BEESON
— FITNESS —

FITNESS (NOUN):

“THE CONDITION OF BEING PHYSICALLY STRONG AND HEALTHY”

Some people want to be able to excel in their sports. Others want to be able to keep up with their grandchildren. Some simply want to start the day pain free.

Fitness will mean something special to you too. Whatever your reasons for coming to me, I want you to know that I am going to craft a program that will take you wherever you want to go.

You will be given a program that suits your needs and limitations, but it won't work on its own. The basic principles of health and fitness don't change. Most of these are common sense however, the best training program in the world isn't going to work if you don't stick to them.

Lots of people find this stuff the hardest thing to stick to. Your workouts will be engaging, enjoyable and (hopefully!) you'll look forward to them. Eating your veggies and consistently getting 8 hours sleep day in, day out can be hard and this is where most people mess up.

This book will serve as a companion guide to help you understand why healthy habits matter. It's also here to act as an FAQ of sorts to guide you through the first 6 weeks or so of our time together.

I hope you enjoy it and I'm really looking forward to working with you.

James

THE STUFF THAT REALLY MATTERS: 3 RULES TO LIVE BY

You're about to undertake a significant lifestyle change. The amount of information you're going to take in over the next few weeks can feel overwhelming. Detail and precision do matter which is why your program is very specific about what you should be doing when.

However, I live in the real world and understand that there will be times where sticking to the program is difficult. Work, family and other hobbies all conspire against your fitness efforts from time to time. This is normal and there will be days where you fall off the wagon.

That's why I've created these three little rules to live by. They're essentially the foundation to the foundation. They're here to make sure the work you do in the gym and the kitchen counts. So when you do slip up, you'll have already banked a chunk of quality work. This means that when you do go off the rails so to speak, you won't find yourself back at square one.

RULE ONE: COMMITMENT

You can't buy your dream body and you can't recover from that nagging injury by reading about it on the internet. You're embarking on a process that is going to take time.

You didn't lose your fitness in 12 weeks so you can't expect to recover it in a few months. The good news is fitness is gained faster than its lost but you need to take the long view if you don't want to be disappointed.

Taking the long view also helps when you encounter a bump in road. A bad workout or three aren't so bad when you know you're still going to be training for years to come.

Being committed is very different to being motivated. Motivation is responsive. It comes and goes with the rhythms of life. If you try to rely on motivation alone to get you into the gym at 0600 on a rainy winter morning, it's probably not going to end well.

A commitment is a decision you choose to make. Being committed doesn't mean you have to 'smash' it every session. Nor does it mean you have to stick rigidly to the program forever. It's a choice to keep going no matter what. Sometimes when I'm really not feeling it I commit myself to do 15-20 mins of work then, if I'm still not feeling it I go home. The weird thing is, I've only ever actually taken myself up on this offer once or twice the whole time I've been training!

Sure, there will be times that you have to miss a workout or don't eat well. It might be for a day, a week or a month. People who rely on motivation tend to get disappointed and quit when this happens. The committed person is in it for the long haul. They know they will be back in the gym and eating properly as soon as they can and this is why they succeed.

INTENSITY ISN'T

- * DOING CRAZY LIFTS YOU'RE NOT READY FOR
- * EATING LIKE A RABBIT
- * NEVER HAVING A REST DAY

RULE TWO: INTENSITY

The people who push this sort of philosophy are probably going to end up injured. The truth is, they don't actually train or eat like this. They just do it for attention and internet points. However, just because we're not going to extremes doesn't mean that we're not going to work hard. But as with everything, hard work is relative.

If something is worth doing it's worth doing well. So whenever you're training or eating it's in your interest to give it your best shot. Just do the basics well and you build great foundations to progress.

The body hates change. It's part of our inbuilt survival system. Prehistoric man never knew when his next meal was coming so the body adapted by becoming very good at conserving energy. Essentially, it's not going to lay down muscle tissue or break up fat unless it has to. So we have to try to make our new habits the norm.

This means we have to do quality hard work when we train and stick to our diets as best as we can. Otherwise the body won't change.

This is why it's silly to train so hard that you fall over. It makes sense when you think about it logically.

One crazy intense workout might burn 1000kcal but that's no good if you can't train again for the rest of the week because you're exhausted. A hard but realistic workout might only burn 500kcal but if you do the same four times in a week you're looking at 2000kcal burned over the week.

Don't get me wrong, doing something mad from time to time is important. If you've trained hard for an event you want to give it your all and some of my more experienced clients 'love' a Beasty's Mind Games session. However, when you're first getting started the best thing to do is keep things consistent and achievable.

The same rules apply to diet. Whilst extreme diets technically work, they're dangerous and impossible to stick to long term. It's always better to take a strict but sensible approach over the long term. Taking things slowly and consistently gives your body a chance to adapt to the changes and drop fat without leaving your body short of the nutrients it needs to perform and recover.

RULE THREE: CONSISTENCY

This is the most important rule. The best plan in the world won't work if you don't see it through.

Being consistent doesn't mean you have to be perfect. You just have to keep turning up. Missing a session or having a little dietary dalliance doesn't matter quite as much if you've stuck to your program for the last month.

In fact it's better to have regular little slip ups when you're getting it right most days than it is to be perfect for a month then fall off the wagon for a few weeks because it all gets too much. This is why it's important to hold back if ever you get tempted to do more than the our program prescribes. Everything we do has a purpose and is designed to help you to succeed. I've got programs to take you to the next year and beyond. They get progressively harder so if you stick to what I tell you, you will progress nicely.

We'll set little goals that represent a modest challenge but that are achievable at your current level of fitness.

Just because you can run 3 miles a day doesn't mean you should. Especially when walking three times per week for 6 months will get you to the same place without risking injury.

Lifestyle change and the results you want will take time. Lots of it. It might take 6 months or it might take 6 years. But, if you keep at it you'll get where you want to go.

WATER

YOU PROBABLY AREN'T DRINKING ENOUGH

Water matters. Around 60% of the body is made up of water and this is why you're tired of hearing that you need to drink more of it. Hydration affects everything from mental performance through to mood, energy levels and how well you perform in your workouts.

Simply put, if you're not hydrated you're not living as well as you could be.

1. HEALTHY JOINTS

Water is a major component of synovial fluid (the fluid that surrounds your joints). If you're dehydrated, your body will tap into this reserve. This means less fluid to cushion your joints during exercise or daily activity. Over time this will lead to discomfort and eventually, injury.

2. EFFICIENT MUSCLES

When you train water is drawn from the blood and into the muscle cells. This is part of the cause of the 'pump' sensation you get during resistance training or activities like cycling. Thing is, if you don't have enough water on board it stays in the blood and gets drawn out of the muscles to stop you from passing out from a drop in blood pressure. Less water available = reduced performance in your workouts.

It gets worse- when your cells are low on water, they're less able to create new muscle tissue and the breakdown of existing muscle tissue speeds up. This is the exact opposite of what we want to happen.

3. KEEPING YOUR COOL

When you're working hard, you sweat. The sweat evaporates from your skin and keeps you cool. In order to sweat your body needs plenty of water. This is because when you exercise, different systems in your body compete. Your heart needs it to keep pumping, your muscles need it to contract and remove waste products and your skin needs it to sweat.

If there's not enough water, the heart always wins and sweat will always lose. Your body is primarily concerned with its own survival, after all. However, if you're not sweating you're going to heat up. Best case scenario when this happens is your performance dips. Worst case scenario- you end up with heat stroke.

Action

Aim to drink 2 litres of water per day. If you're struggling to keep track, try to drink an extra glass when you wake up and have a glass every time you eat a main meal.

VEGATABLES

EAT MORE

Eat more vegetables. If you're not eating vegetables you're depriving your body of the essential nutrients it needs to function.

It's all well and good training but if you're not eating your vegetables you're selling yourself short.

In addition to being packed with nutrients, vegetables and fruits are filled with fibre. Fibre keeps everything moving through your digestive system and has the handy secondary effect of filling you up.

You might be tempted to believe you're eating plenty of greens. If that's the case I'd challenge you to track your intake for a couple of weeks. You'll probably be surprised at how inconsistent your fruit and veg consumption actually is.

It's also important to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables to get the best nutritional benefits. You could use an app to track your vitamin and mineral intake but an easier and infinitely more practical way to do this is to try to 'eat the rainbow'. The different colours are partly the result of different quantities and types of nutrient. So, if you're eating a good range of colourful fruit and veg it's hard to go wrong.

All this information about eating fruit and vegetables probably seems a little basic, if not patronising. However, this stuff is critically important if you want to achieve your goals.

Simply put, if you don't eat lots of fruit and vegetables you're not going to get where you want to go. This is because fruit and veggies flood your body with the nutrients it desperately needs to perform at its best. Not only that, they also keep you full. Try eating desert after a plate full of broccoli and carrots. It's not going to happen. Even the most prodigious of eaters simply won't have the room.

Action

Eat more fruit and vegetables. Strive to have at least five portions per day. Over time work towards a third of your diet being fruit or vegetables.

SLEEP

'MUSCLES DON'T GROW IN THE GYM'

The old bodybuilding saying '**muscles don't grow in the gym**' has stood the test of time for good reason. It's true.

When we train, we're stressing the body to force it to adapt. Part of this process involves the breakdown of muscle tissue. The body needs time to recover and rebuild after a hard training session in order for you to make progress.

Poor recovery is a common cause of stalled progress in training. Beginners can get away with not paying attention to recovery for a while. This is because when you first start training, your body just won't let you take it to the limit. However, over time progress slows and eventually stops if recovery isn't prioritised.

You might have seen it in others when you've been going to the gym in the past or you may have experienced it yourself. Working really hard but seeing nothing for it or even regressing is incredibly frustrating.

The good news is rest rather than more work is sometimes the solution.

Recovery means taking the time to rest from training and life in general. Go for a walk, read a book or spend time with your family away from the stresses and strains of life. If you're in serious need of recovery, now or in the future I have a recovery program that prioritises movement and mobility over intensity. Sometimes the best thing to do is rest and if you feel that's what you need, tell me and we'll figure out a solution.

Action

From tonight, aim to consistently sleep for 7-9 hours.

SLEEP

'MUSCLES DON'T GROW IN THE GYM'

When we embark on a lifestyle change it's easy to forget that we're not elite athletes with a team behind us and nothing to do but train and eat. We live in the real world and simple stuff like work, family, hobbies and other commitments eat into our energy reserves.

That said, rest and recovery isn't an excuse to stay in bed all day. In fact, this can be detrimental. Too much sedentary time causes your muscles to seize up, shorten and develop imbalances. Active rest and recovery beats lazing about every time.

If in doubt, put your phone away, go for a little walk and read a book. It'll do you the world of good.

Getting enough sleep is also essential. Our body does most of its growing and repairing when we're asleep.

This isn't just restricted to the muscles either. Sleep switches your body into an anabolic (building) state. Your immune, nervous, skeletal and muscular systems all repair and rearm as you sleep. All of these systems are vital for maintaining mood, energy levels, brain function and physical performance.

Just as with a lack of waking recovery time a lack of sleep will result in you struggling to recover from your workouts. If you're not already, you should be aiming to sleep for 7-9 hours per night every night.

If you're finding it hard to get quality sleep, here are a few things to try that might help:

- Try to go to bed at the same time every night
- Avoid looking at a screen (computer, phone, TV) in the last hour or two before you go to bed
- Aim to sleep consistently throughout the week, rather than having a long lie in on days off
- Invest in some black out blinds or an eye mask if you work shifts

Action

From tonight, aim to consistently sleep for 7-9 hours.