If you’re getting ready to tackle your journey into bettering yourself through fitness—whether it’s starting a resistance training program for the first time, breaking in your new running shoes and hitting the treadmill like you’ve talked about all these years, or even taking a group fitness class like Zumba or kickboxing—there’s likely a little voice in the back of your head giving you doubts.

The voice that makes you wonder if you can really do this—asking you if you are really prepared. Where are you going to start? Will all this time be wasted and will you actually ever see results?

Too often, these doubts simply come from the fact that you don’t have experience with what you’re about to do and are worried there’s too much you don’t know.

To help ease these doubts and make the transition into fitness easier, here are a few of the big things I’ve learned throughout my 10-year journey of fitness.

**Motivation Is Not Enough!**

First, let’s start with the tough truth: You won’t always be motivated. Inspiration comes and goes, even for the most fit and experienced of us. This is normal! In fact, it’s completely OK. So breathe, you’re still cut out for this!

You need understand that you can’t expect motivation alone to carry you through this journey. You need to instill a discipline that simply allows you keep putting one foot in front of the other, trust me results will eventually come. In fact, your ability to stick to your discipline will be the defining factor in continual success. When you combine discipline with motivation, you truly excel in anything in life, fitness is no different. When the motivation comes and goes, your discipline will hold you accountable and continue your progress forward.

Even on those days when you just aren’t feeling into it, do something active. Being active is always better than not, unless your body is screaming for some rest, then listen to your body. When this happens, take that time to continue to learn more, stretch, and recharge your mental batteries.

**Finding Your “Why” Is Key**

Why do you want to exercise? This is a question that is completely personal to you, but find it and write it down! Is it because you want to build self-confidence? Do you want to step on stage and compete in a bodybuilding show? Do you want to reduce the risks of family medical history problems? Whatever your reason is, find it. You may not need it right away, but when you begin to lose your motivation and life gets busy, your “why” will be your biggest reason you stay committed.

Here’s the most important aspect of find the right “why” though; you reason must be out of love and not hate. Don’t start working out because you hate how you look or because someone made fun of you. Destructive motivation will fade and will become associated with your fitness efforts making you hate the process.

**Progress Won’t Always Be Linear**

Wouldn’t it be great if attaining results were as simple as putting in the work and getting equal results? Unfortunately, it doesn’t always work that way. Understand that you’ll progress much faster at certain times than others. It’s common for those beginning to work out to make quick progress only to slow down as exercise is continued. Your body begins to adapt and the stimulus that once produced results, begins to produce less results. This is natural! Don’t give up the fight. Just as things seem to slow, you need to trust that they’ll pick up again.

It’s also important to recognize the difference between slow progress and lack of progress. If it’s been a month or longer without any results, consider it time for a new plan of attack. Don’t keep doing the same thing over and over again, hoping for a different result, learn to periodize your training. (More later)

**Rest Is Key**

Similar to a car rolling down a hill, once you get going it’s hard to pull the breaks on your routine, but learning how and when to properly rest your body will prevent you from burning out and giving up or even worse, injury. Allowing the body to properly rest permits for full recovery of muscles and joints to continue to give your full efforts inside and outside the gym. Remember, when working out you are actually breaking down your muscle, so give adequate time for repair before hitting them again.

Your muscles are not the only part of the body getting taxed while working out, your Central Nervous System is responsible for firing your muscle fibers when under heavy workloads. Not allowing your CNS to recover will inhibit your progress just as much as not allowing your muscles too. Consider your CNS as the amplifier and the muscles as speakers. You can buy the best speakers on the market, but if your amplifier is on the fritz, you won’t be producing much sound.

Rest is a vital component in the process of getting more fit. Learn this now or you’ll be forced to learn it later when you’re sidelined due to fatigue or injury.

**Change It Up**

Periodization, meaning focusing on different goals at various points by utilizing different methods and techniques, is a must. During certain months, gaining strength may be a goal so you may lift heavier. During other months, you might choose to work on muscle size, so you may lift with a higher repetition range. It’s important to set both long term and short term goals to allow you to work towards each.

Periodization is beneficial to allow for a change in routine. This will not only keep you more mentally interested in your sessions, but also give your body a break from the repetitive nature of the exercise you’re doing.

**Comparing Is Counterproductive**

One of the worst things that you can do as you go about this journey is compare yourself to others. There will always be someone out there who is fitter than you, leaner than you, stronger than you, and so forth.

While it can be useful to find positive-minded fit inspirations to keep you motivated, do not allow yourself to compare your body to others. With social media interactions these days, it’s very easy to get sucked into not thinking you are good enough or that you will never be where you want to be because you didn’t get enough ‘likes’ on your selfie. The person in the mirror is your main competition so beat him or her every day and you’ll get to where you want to be.

**Patience Is A Virtue, Consistency Is Undervalued**

Patience is one of the toughest principles to implement in fitness. We see fit people around us all the time without comprehending the amount of time they had to invest to achieve their physique. You want results? Expect months and even years of hard consistent work to see dramatic changes in your body.

While patience is crucial to have, consistent hard work is just as important. Too often will I hear stories of people complaining that they are not making any progress, yet when asked about their consistency to adhere to their workouts or diet, they put their tail in between their legs because they know they lack consistency. Finding a balance between effort and expectation is important in order for you to reach your goals. If you set high goals then set an equal amount of effort to stay consistent!

**Nutrition Is Needed**

You have probably heard that you cannot outwork a bad diet. Or even the way you eat in private will show in public. This is because in order to achieve a fitter you, you must have your nutrition in check.

Let’s touch on an important fundamental understanding about nutrition first. If you choose a time to lose weight, then don’t expect to add muscle. Similarly so, if your goal is to add muscle, then don’t expect to get leaner. Regardless of what someone promises you, this is just plain fundamentals of how the body works. Food is an energy source for the body so in order to lose weight we must be eating less calories that we burn, thus creating a calorie deficit. When in a calorie deficit, the body cannot add muscle since there is no longer an excess of energy and nutrients to create them.

The opposite is true if you are wanting to gain muscle, you must eat more calories than you burn, thus creating a calorie suplus, which will not make you leaner! So if your goal is to add muscle, don’t always diet! If your goal is to lose weight and are not, then you are eating too much. The best way to identify and correct this problem is to track what you eat. Find the right amount of calories for your goal and fulfill those calories with nutrient-dense sources. This doesn’t mean you can’t enjoy what you eat, but you should be dedicating at least 80% of your diet to wholesome foods that will actually fuel your body properly. For more help on recipe ideas, click [here](https://www.healthost.com/blog/view/306866/eat-what-you-want-and-stay-lean-17-healthy-recipes-to-start-your-2017-health-journey) for 17 different recipes that are calorie-friendly and easy to make.

The greatest aspect of fitness is that it is completely personal to you. Your goals. Your ambitions. Your desires. There is no better feeling than self-confidence. A healthy lifestyle can provide that for you. Fitness offers you to connect with other like-minded individuals and create a support system to fuel your efforts to knock out every goal you set. Platforms like the Healthost community is filled with professionals in the fitness industry ready to help you and connect with you to keep you motivated. Download our app and create a profile and see what I mean! We are here to selflessly help educate and keep you going. Don’t let establishing relationships with fit-minded people be something you wish you knew when first starting to work out!