



FITNESS

GETTING PAST EXERCISE PLATEAUS

Exercise plateaus happen when the body begins to adjust to the demands of your fitness routine and you stop seeing the same benefits as you did previously.

But don't see this as a bad thing. In fact, experiencing an exercise plateau can indicate that you're getting fitter and stronger and is usually a sign that your body is ready to up its game.

Some reasons for hitting exercise plateaus could be that:

- You do the same workout every day
- You don't know what changes to make to your fitness routine
- You're training too hard
- You're not paying attention to your nutrition

According to the American Council on Exercise (ACE), here are a few tips for pushing past plateaus:

1. **Change your routine.** Depending on your goals, experts suggest that you should make small adjustments to your exercise routine every two to five weeks to see maximum results. For example, if you enjoy lifting weights, try changing your set order and number of reps, or modify the intensity or length of your training session.

If you can afford it, it may be worthwhile working with a Personal Trainer to make sure your form is correct and to get a programme that's tailored to your individual needs.

2. **Increase your intensity.** Consider pumping up your workout with some high intensity interval training sessions that will target different muscle groups and help to keep your mind and body stimulated.

3. **Prioritise protein.** You may not be seeing optimal results after sweating it out because you're not eating right. Say no to junk food and yes to nutrient dense whole foods.

To build lean muscle mass, you must fuel your body with protein to create an anabolic foundation.

4. **Aim to get between seven to eight hours of sleep per night.** Rest is just as important as nutrition and fitness. If your body doesn't get the sleep it needs, you simply won't get the results you want.

5. **Don't overdo it.** Take a look at your fitness schedule. Are you sore all the time? Do you allow your body to recover by implementing full rest days? Sometimes plateaus show up when we are overtraining. Pushing yourself too hard may also increase your risk of injury.

6. **Have fun.** Find new activities that you enjoy doing. Exercise shouldn't just be all about strength gains and weight loss. There are many other benefits of exercise, including social and mental wellbeing that you can reap from staying active.

"Ideally, your fitness routine should become a positive outlet that empowers you to be better, both in and out the gym" – ACE.