

Common mistakes when losing weight:

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Underestimating the Importance of Muscle

Your metabolism (which is essentially how quickly your body uses calories from what you eat) is greatly affected by the amount of muscle you carry. The more muscle you have, the more calories you burn every day. As such, any training program that doesn't properly incorporate weights in order to build and maintain muscle during a caloric deficit, won't be an efficient or particularly-effective plan. Additionally, any dietary regimen should support the creation of new muscle as well, especially if you're trying to lose weight!

Countless gym goers who ignore the weights and resistance machines simply to "focus on cardio for now" are doing themselves a huge disservice on the road to improving their appearance and health.

High Reps for Definition?

This is one of the most outdated, and simply incorrect ideas about training. But, for some reason, it persists among the general public, beginning gym rats, and even worse, some ill-informed personal trainers.

There are basically two broad categories of skeletal muscle tissue in the human body: fast twitch, and slow twitch (we'll skip over the technical names for now). While both types of fibers are able to adapt to physical stresses placed upon them, only the fast twitch fibers can actually increase in overall size. It is due to this fact, that appearance conscious trainers should focus the majority of their efforts to specifically target these fibers.

As the name implies, fast twitch muscle fibers are quickly called into play when worked, but as they fatigue quickly, only short duration work can be used to stimulate a growth response – they respond best to low repetition work.

Imposing stresses for longer durations (high repetition weight work) will recruit the slow twitch muscle fibers. Remember now, even though you can build endurance by hitting them, these fibers will *not* increase in size, and will have practically no impact on your physique.

The most obvious example of someone who specifically targets slow twitch fibers at the expense of fast twitch ones is a long distance runner. All it takes is a quick look of their physique to find not only a lack muscle, but usually a noticeable degree of adipose (fat) tissue as well. At the opposite end of the spectrum is the sprinter, who specifically targets the fast twitch fibers. Clearly evident is a very obvious amount of lean muscle mass. It is the muscle tissue that gives the athlete their fast metabolism, where nutrients are constantly put to use, and fat tissue never even gets the chance to form.

Bottom line; training with a conscious effort to target fast twitch muscles will not only result in greater amount of hypertrophy (growth, hence visible muscle), but also an accelerated metabolic rate as an added bonus!

“Lifting weights” Instead of Optimally Stressing the Muscles.

For as much as we love to tell everyone how we like to “lift weights,” the real key in any body transformation is not to simply move a weight or strain against a resistance, the goal is to train the muscles so that they are in a constant state of repair and growth. This leads not only to more pronounced ‘lumps and bumps’ through simple hypertrophy, but it also is the root of improving your metabolic rate.



Because we always want our muscle to complete the most work in any training session, any approach or technique that reduces maximal possible stress, or even introduces excessive periods of de-loading is not conducive to achieving our goals. The smart trainer will know to avoid specific points of ‘locking out’ of joints in order to prevent muscle de-loading. Additionally, by making use of varying speeds while performing portions of each repetition we can allow for addressing the natural strength differential between concentric, eccentric, and static strength levels.

An example using a simple bench press movement would include a relatively quick, explosive concentric muscular contraction, a slight pause just before the point of locking the elbows at full extension, yet still a conscious contraction at the “end” point, before allowing for a slower decent speed to address the greater strength of the eccentric portion as the bar returns to the trainer’s chest. This would have eliminated the point of de-load where most gym goers fully extend their elbows, removing all stress from the working pectoral muscles and defeating the purpose of the movement in the first place. Also, as skeletal muscles are stronger during the eccentric or lengthening phases (sometimes referred to as the “negative”), the conscious lowering of the bar at a slower speed allow the muscle to be stressed more fully than by employing a steady cadence throughout the exercise.

Failure to Synchronize Training with Intelligent Nutritional Support.

Most trainers will employ a diet that involves following the same plan day in and day out, with no consideration to the fact that the physical stresses placed on the body inside or outside the gym are not the same on a daily basis.

When attempting any type of physique transformation, the much smarter move is to make use of a cyclical approach. This will allow for not only a better psychological reaction to the whole dieting process, but will promote a better metabolic building point as well as slight hormonal manipulation to truly get the most out of both resistance work, and cardio sessions.

A failure to understand the negative effects of a prolonged diet, and how to correct or avoid them, can be detrimental not only to your physique, but to your well-being.

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