

Ask Joe Weider: Strong arms hold the answer

by Joe Weider

Tip of the Week: You must train yourself to turn thought into action. This is the only way you will ever see results in your life.

I can't tell you how many people I've heard say they're planning on starting a fitness regimen, that they're getting ready to begin dieting, that they're going to become more active during their days. And yet only a fraction of these people end up following through on their verbal commitments. Why? Because we've become a culture of talkers.

In today's society, we've made a habit of talking rather than doing. We talk through our problems, talk about our plans, and talk about our likes and dislikes, hopes and dreams. Yet how many turn our words into action? Not enough, I'm afraid.

If you're one who's been talking about getting into a healthy routine but haven't yet done so, I want you to wake up 45 minutes early tomorrow and go for a jog, first thing. Even just a walk. Or do some crunches and push-ups. No if's, and's or but's – do it!

Q: I am 43 years old and have had two knee surgeries this past year. I used to love to take walks but can't do that now. I have gained so much weight from lack of movement that I can't stand it. What can a morbidly obese asthmatic with bad knees do to get control of her weight? I used to be a very attractive woman, and I want that back!

Joe: I am sorry to hear of your predicament, but I will tell you in all honesty that time is on your side. You may not feel it at the moment, but you're still quite young, and with youth comes the time needed to make sweeping changes to your life.

From the sound of it, you do need to make sweeping changes – but not all at once. Start with baby steps and, over a calculated schedule, increase the intensity of your workouts while decreasing your caloric intake.

Do you have medical clearance from your physician to exercise? Finding this out should be your very first act toward improving your health. Assuming you have no restrictions, I would recommend daily swims as a first step. Because you are obese and have bad knees, swimming is ideal. Swimming has the lowest impact on the joints of any exercise, and the water's buoyancy will actually give you an advantage in the water.

You will also need to alter your diet. I recommend finding a good nutritionist to set you off on the right path. If you can't afford nutritional counseling, try picking up a copy of SHAPE magazine, which has loads of valuable diet and exercise tips every month.

Please keep me posted as to your progress, and let me know how I can help you to reach your goals.

Q: Hey, Joe. I'm wondering if you have a favorite body part, either in terms of training or appearance.

Joe: Truthfully, I love all body parts. It makes sense though, doesn't it? I mean, I'm sometimes referred to as the father of modern bodybuilding, and bodybuilding is, after all, about building the entire body.

But I realize that you're looking for something a little more tangible than this answer. So, if I really think about it, I would say that nothing beats a good pair of arms when it comes to impressing me. When bodybuilders come to my office in Woodland Hills, Calif., I'll often ask them to roll up their sleeve and show me an arm. That, to me, is the truest mark of a powerful man.

Maybe it's because we see exposed arms so often that when someone with a massively developed pair comes along, the difference is so dramatic. Possibly it's because muscular arms have come to symbolize strength in all forms, such as World War II depictions of Uncle Sam and Rosie the Riveter with their sleeves rolled up. Even the Arm & Hammer logo is of an arm that's obviously performed a few sets of curls and pushdowns in its day.

So, whether you're a bodybuilder or merely someone interested in being fit, to me it never hurts to be well-armed.

Joe Weider is acclaimed as "the father of modern bodybuilding" and the founder of the world's leading fitness magazines, including Shape, Muscle and Fitness, Men's Fitness, Fit Pregnancy, Hers, Golf for Seniors and others published worldwide in over 20 languages.

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