

BY JEFF GOTHARD

Christmas can play havoc with a fitness regime. Here's how to stay in shape.

MONTH OF MAXIMUM TEMPTATION

Happy Holidays! This is the time of year we wonder at the blustery pace of it all, and curse the guy who took our parking space at the mall. It's also a good time to get a head start on those New Year resolutions by planning your new fitness lifestyle. Don't drop the ball before the ball drops!

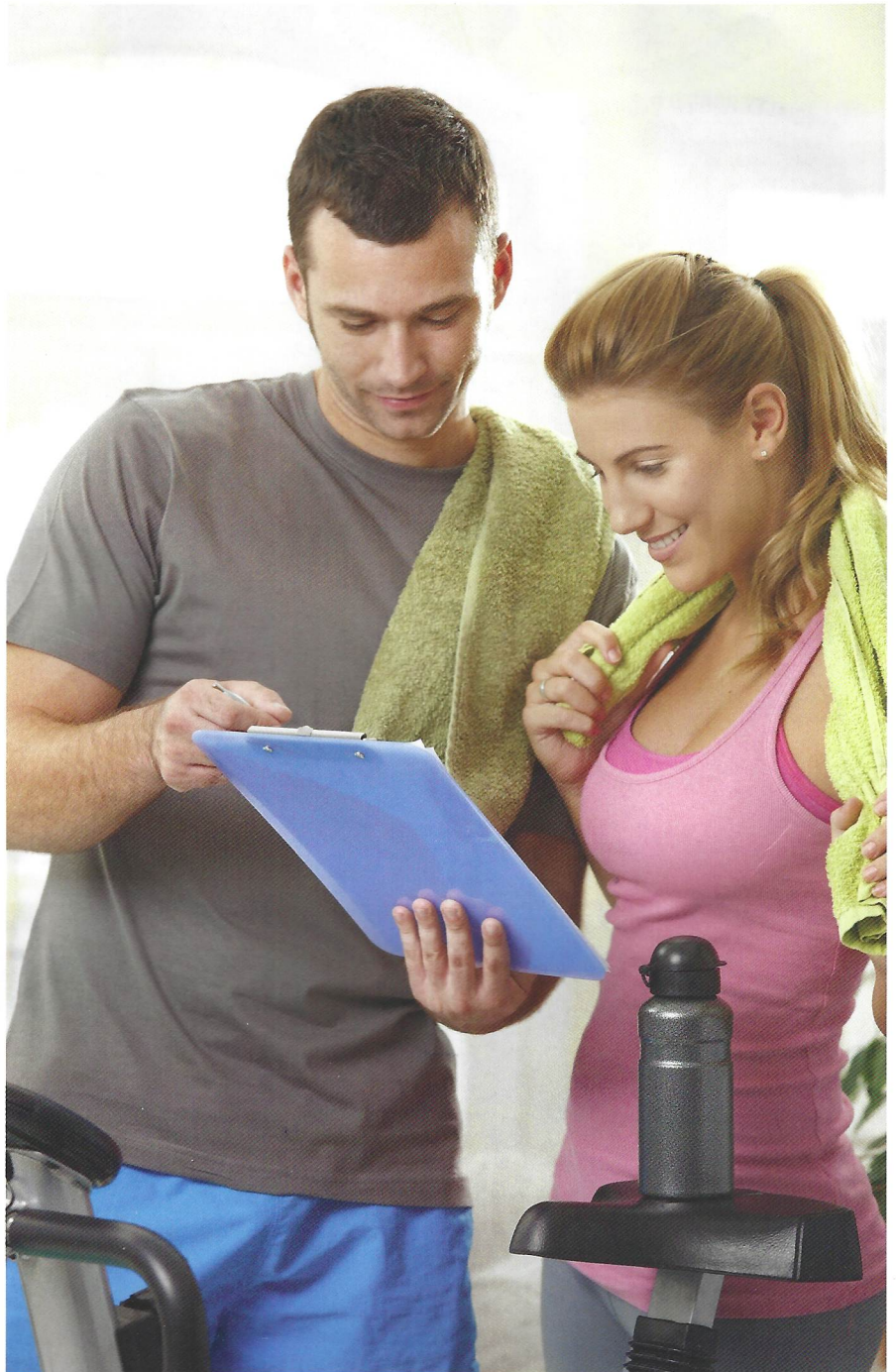
Whatever you decide to do, I suggest you visit a trainer and get advice as to how your program for 2014 should be structured. In doing so, it is important to review some of the terms that he or she may use.

Aerobic: Increases the body's ability to utilize oxygen to fuel muscle cells. Strengthens heart and lungs, burns body fat. Examples: Cycling, jogging, walking, swimming.

Anaerobic: Similar benefits to aerobic. Utilizes more glycogen, or stored sugar, in muscle cells. Uses bouts of exercise with rest periods. More intense than long-duration aerobic exercise. Examples: Circuit training, tennis, basketball, martial arts.

Strength training: Increases the ability of muscle fibers to produce force, increases density of muscle fibers (hypertrophy). Examples include varying styles of resistance-training that may utilize body weight (push-ups, leg raises, elastic bands, barbells, resistance machines, etc.).

This is, surprisingly, the most significant facet to embrace, particularly as we age. The average individual gains 10 pounds per decade after 40 years of age, due to a loss of muscle



Personal trainers are a fitness professionals involved in exercise prescription and instruction. They motivate clients by setting goals and providing feedback and accountability to clients.

mass. In fact, the weight gain includes a 5-pound loss of muscle, so that, in effect, we gain 15 pounds of body fat. The culprit is the loss of muscle, which slows our metabolism and makes us look less like Buzz Lightyear and more like Frosty the Snowman.

Other concepts to remember include the following:

PROGRESSION

Progression is part of every fitness movement. In order to get from where we are now to where we want to be, we need to take small steps. Each step is a goal in the progression, and any part of your exercise regimen can be a part of that progression.

Example: Jackie has decided to use running as part of her fitness routine, and her overall goal is to run 30 minutes three times per week. She has started by doing a run-walk three times per week, walking for five minutes and jogging for one, keeping track on her sports watch. She has charted out a progression that will take her to a 30-minute run within three months. She will gradually increase the time of her jogging and decrease the walking portions until she does a slow jog for 30 minutes. Then, she will increase the intensity of her jogging portions gradually, just as she did previously with the walking.

DURATION

Duration refers to the amount of time spent on exercise, or a portion of exercise. For instance, a five-mile jog may have the duration of an hour.

FREQUENCY

This refers to how often exercise is done, usually tracked per week.

INTENSITY

Refers to how hard you are working per an amount of time. For instance, Jackie raised the intensity of her workout by shifting from walking to jogging to running.

REST

This can refer to the time during training that you are not working, or to the amount of time between workouts. It may also refer to how you use that time, i.e., with sleep, activity level, and so on.

CROSS-TRAINING

This approach utilizes two or more methods of training to improve overall fitness.

VeinTherapies... Making Wishes Come True.

My Wish List

- ✓ Eliminate those achy varicose veins
- ✓ Remove the tiny veins around my nose and on my cheeks
- ✓ No more red & purple spider veins all over my thighs—I want to wear shorts again in warm weather
- ✓ Remove the brown age spots on my face and hands
- ✓ See Dr. Fegert about collagen stimulating laser procedures and products

Gift certificates from VeinTherapies make the perfect gift!

VeinTherapies

Laser Skin and Vein Solutions

3770 7th Terrace, Suite 102 • Vero Beach
772.567.6602 • www.VeinTherapies.com

W. Clark Beckett, M.D., F.A.C.S.

Board Certified Vascular Surgeon

Recognized as a "Top Vascular Surgeon"

by U.S. News & World Report

Virginia Fegert, M.D.

Mitch W. Johnson, P.A.-C.

Veinwave™ Treatment for Spider Veins | Laser Skin and Facial Vein Treatments
Laser Treatment for Varicose Veins | Sutureless Microphlebectomy
Advanced Sclerotherapy | Laser Genesis | IPL | Laser Hair Removal
Juvederm® & Radiesse® Dermal Fillers | Botox® | Medical Skin Care

After a full year of this, he looked like Mr. Universe, while I still resembled Mr. Magoo.

Personally, I am a huge fan of cross-training and for several reasons. For one, your body improves by adjusting to stimuli (compensation). What many people, even advanced athletes, don't understand is that your body gets better at compensating as we train over time.

If you perform the same workout month after month, you will eventually experience diminishing returns. This is easily avoided with practically any change to your program. Cross-training, or using varying genres of fitness training, avoids the compensation dilemma. Circuit-training, interval training or simply alternating genres each workout are examples of cross-training.

While considering your personal fitness goals, it is important that they are realistic and achievable. Otherwise, you will become discouraged, which suggests a misconception that I want to clear up. Many fitness products and/or programs will tell you, either literally or by suggestion, that they can turn anyone into a rock hard, superbly symmetrical physical phenomenon. That is bull mularchy (pardon my language), and morphology is why.

We humans are individuals. We inherit certain traits from Ma, Pa, Grandma and Grandpa. In this cosmic lottery, we don't get to choose what we get, but we can certainly improve upon it. The concept of morphology tells us there are three basic body types:

Ectomorph: These folk have narrow physiques and tend to be thin.

Endomorph: People with narrow shoulders and wide hips, the proverbial pear shape.

Mesomorph: These folks are naturally muscular and lean.

Few people fit these models exactly; most people are a combination of two. For instance, I would classify myself as an endomorphic mesomorph. I gain muscle with training, but gain fat easily – say, if I watch too many Taco Bell commercials. My original physical status was made evident to me long ago.

It was a cold Midwestern night, and I was sitting with other boys on my middle school gym floor. We were at team tryouts. I had never participated in organized sports and, to my chagrin, all the other boys wore sports team jerseys or shirts boasting of their previous team experience. I was dressed in oversized white shorts and a Batman t-shirt.

We were awaiting our turn for strength testing with Coach Voss, who was the team coach and school gym teacher. He was a Viking of a man, with blond hair, a blond mustache and huge muscles, and I was certain that on weekends he invaded villages with his Nordic horde, forcing innocent women and children to do push-ups, and making any warrior late for the pillaging run laps.

Currently, however, the Viking King was testing his puny proteges on dips. The dip is performed on the parallel bars, and involves supporting yourself with arms straight, lowering to a deep arm bend, then pushing back up. My name was called and I approached the bars with trepidation. Mounting the bars, I supported myself shakily and, with a deep breath, lowered myself to the bottom position – and there I stayed. For what seemed like an hour, I struggled. I saw the boys snickering;

I saw Coach Voss look at his watch.

Finally, I dropped to the floor, respiration up and eyes down. Mr. Voss looked at me warmly, and in his most encouraging, sensitive tone said, "Gothard, you're too fat to be on this team." Ah, adolescence.

Years later, I trained strength with a friend of mine. We did exactly the same movements, and exactly the same reps as prescribed by our coach. After a full year of this, he looked like Mr. Universe, while I still resembled Mr. Magoo. The lesson here is that folks respond to training differently, and to compare yourself to anyone else is futile folly.

This truth applies even more to performance than to appearance. Many other variables come into play when we discuss performance, and even how we respond to sports training. Some of this variance is due to our inheritance of muscle cell types. Some muscle cells react to stimulus faster than others, and with more force. But those that respond a bit slower, with less force, can fire much longer and with less fatigue. This explains how seemingly opposing traits, like body fat and speed, can go together.

Considering the possibilities we are born with and can create, it makes sense to simply consider ourselves fortunate to move and progress, period. We should not wish to be like another, but only to get better. As the late Steve Jobs was fond of saying, the journey *is* the reward. ☘

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Coach Voss and I soon became friends. He helped me start strength training, giving a kick-start to the untrained mesomorph in me. In high school, I ended up setting three county strength records and being named MVP in two sports. I also discovered that, on weekends, Coach Voss did not pillage, he mowed lawns. Back then, like today, educators were underpaid.