

Tara's Top Ten Fitness Tips

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As a personal trainer, business owner, marathoner, and busy mom of two young girls I have learned and regularly utilize the most productive and time-effective training tips that bring great results. With little time to spare for my personal fitness, I need to use every minute as productively as possible. Here are my top ten tips to help you get the most out of your workouts.

Training Tip # 1: Get the 6 pack of your dreams

Don't think crunches are the way to your six-pack dreams. Crunches will strengthen your abdominal muscles but they are not the best exercise to strengthen and sculpt your abs. The most ab effective exercises are moves like pull-ups, pushups, and jump squats. These exercises engage your core and many other muscle groups that burn fat and get you lean. Remember, in order to see your abs you must be lean.

Training Tip #2: Lift weights to increase your metabolism

Many women are afraid of lifting weights because they do not want to bulk up. However, in order to have a tight, toned body you need to lift weights. Compromise and lift light weights with high repetitions. Baseball players, runners, and other athletes do light weight, high rep training for good reason, and I promise you will not look like a football line backer! Weight lifting will also increase your metabolic rate, which is critical for continual fat burning. If you're

new to weight training make sure to consult with a professional on proper form to avoid an injury.

Training Tip #3: Feel the burning muscles

When you are working out you should feel like you are working hard. Work harder and smarter and feel the muscles working. If you are concerned about getting larger muscles then stick with your lightweight dumbbells and higher repetitions, but make sure your muscles are tired for the last five reps. If they are not tired at this point increase your weights by 2-3 pounds.

Training Tip #4: Push it to the next level

I often see walkers ambling along at only 2-3 mph. They do this for hours each day but their scale has not budged. What are they doing wrong? It is great to take the first step and get your body moving but once you have gotten there it is important to exercise strong. You should be finishing every workout covered in sweat with your breathing labored. If you do not feel this you need to work out harder and smarter by increasing your intensity. So walkers: add some speed walking spurts or walk/run to bring your workout to the next level. Follow this plan and you will see greater results! You can get great results from three one-hour high-intensity workouts in a week, making it easy to fit exercise into your busy schedule.

Training Tip #5: Get fit for a fraction of the cost

Hiring a personal trainer is not the only way to reach your goals of weight loss and fitness success. To get the assistance of a personal trainer without the large price tag, look into a fitness bootcamp near you. Research the bootcamp and the trainer who's teaching it to make sure this individual has a background that you admire in both personal and professional training. It is also important that you make a connection with your trainer as you will be working closely together. The best part is you will pay a fraction of the cost of personal training and gain plenty of fitness tips to help you to reach your goals.

Training Tip #6: Set specific fitness goals

Don't just focus on weight loss as your only goal or it will haunt you. I have found the most successful clients set other fitness goals. For example, one of my clients will be running his first 10k (6.2 miles), another is running her first marathon (26.2 miles). Having these fitness goals takes the pressure off the scale and the weight loss, often resulting in a big payoff. So search for a race that you want to run or focus on increasing your plank time or the miles you can run each week, and remember to keep your goal reasonable and attainable.

Training Tip #7: Keep a training Log

I write in a training log every morning. If I feel sore after a training session, I put a extra description of the workout so I can revisit it soon. Usually the more challenging workouts bring the best results.

Training Tip #8: Keep a food diary

Write down your daily food intake. Studies show that people who keep food journals lose more weight and keep more of that weight off in the long run. The National Weight Control Registry—an ongoing research project tracking more than 3,000 people who've lost an average of 66 pounds and kept it off for five years—found that keeping a food journal is the one strategy used by the majority of successful dieters.

Training Tip #9: Start Each Day the Right Way

Wake up your body and mind with your very own wake up workout. Begin by doing 1 set of 18 alternating lunges, 18 squats, 10 pushups, 10 jackknives, and a 20-30 second plank. As you become stronger build up to 3 sets of 18. Pace yourself and do what you can at your own fitness level. These exercises will work your total body and are a great way to start your day!

Training Tip #10: You Deserve This

Remember that you have chosen to become fit and healthy, and you cannot help others until you help yourself first. So take care of your health, have fun, and enjoy this great journey! The way you'll start to look and feel are the best payoff!