

Why Working-Out is Dangerous

**The essence of progress
is the ability to accomplish
increasingly more complex
and demanding tasks
with greater ease**

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Have you heard about ‘Boomeritis’ before?

Dr. Nicholas A. DiNubile, an orthopedic surgeon at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, coined the term in 1999. As the Baby Boom generation (people born between 1946 and 1964) began to turn 40 and 50, there was a veritable explosion of bone and joint aches, pains, injuries, and ailments – “Boomeritis”.

It is curious to note that the Boomer generation is also the generation that has been most interested and involved in fitness and working-out and is supposedly the most ‘fit’ generation in US history. It seems that the most ‘fit’ generation in the history of the US also has the highest incident of bone and joint injuries, pains and ailments in the history of the US.

Is it possible that “Working-Out” is dangerous to the health of your joints?

I believe that this is true and that we can safely conclude that “Working-Out” is a dangerous activity that should be avoided or at least minimized at any age and that it becomes more dangerous as you get older (the ‘baby-boomers’ didn’t have these problem when they were in their 20s and 30s).

When I write ‘joints’ most people think about knees, elbows, shoulder and hips, but we have many more joints than that. You have joints between the vertebrae of your spine, between the bones of the hands and between the bones of the feet. You have joints between the ribs and the spine and between the ribs and the chest bone, and they can all get injured in a similar way. Repetitive Stress Injuries are a part of this picture as well.

It is important now to make a clear distinction between ‘being in shape’ and ‘working-out’:

Being in shape means being strong enough to do what you want to do, and being flexible enough and having enough stamina to do what you want to do in life. All of these are very healthy for you!!

Working-Out is how most people get in shape and that is a dangerous activity and should be avoided.

I am all in favor of “being in shape” and strongly against the way in which Americans “get in shape” because I think Working-Out is dangerous to the health of your joints.

What makes ‘Working-Out’ dangerous?

To understand that, you’ll need to know a little about how the body works, and the best way to do that is to pay close attention to how your body moves.

Please lift your arm and just bend and straighten the elbow a few times. Most people can do this a without any problem.

What makes it possible to repeat a movement like that over and over again, rather than just once in a lifetime?

The thing that makes it possible to repeat a movement over and over again is the fact that your muscles are arranged in such a way that one group of muscles moves you one way and another group of muscles moves you in the opposite way.

These two opposing groups are called antagonistic muscles, and they are arranged to do the opposite movement alternately.

What happens when they cooperate perfectly?

When one group works and the other rests you have a nice, smooth and easy movement that you can do many times. Your internal coordination is excellent!!

What happens if they do not cooperate by switching, but work at the same time?

When both sets of antagonistic muscles work at the same time, movement becomes more difficult to do, and the joints between those muscles get compressed and heated. Friction inside the joint increases and the joint suffers a lot more wear and tear. If you repeat it many times, the joint will get injured and ruined. Your internal coordination is not good!

When both sets of antagonistic muscles work at the same time you feel effort. This effort is the result of bad internal coordination and gets in the way even when you are doing movements in everyday life. This is one of the reasons for the stiffness that comes with aging.

The situation is made worse when you work-out, so the more effort you put into your workout, the more wear and tear you’ll have in your joints, and the faster they will get ruined.

Everyone knows the saying ‘**use it or lose it**’ but few people know the saying on the other side of the coin: ‘**abuse it and lose it**’.

The result is that we now have a whole generation (and another in the making) of people who got into fitness because “it is healthy for you”, but were doing it through working-out. As we all know Working-out means making sure to make effort, reaching ‘the burn’ and ‘no pain no gain’

and so on, which means that inevitably you will ruin your joints, and the more effort you make, the faster it will happen.

That is also why so many high level athletes have so many joint injuries even though they should be the healthiest. The difficulty is that not doing anything is no good (use it or lose it) but working-out is also not good (abuse it and lose it).

So what can we do?

We can do Fitness Without Effort™

Fitness Without Effort is easy to do, and takes a short time to understand.

To gain insight into the art of getting in better shape without working-out, please find a friend and do the following exercise:

Start by sitting or standing facing each other and bring your right palms to touch.

Now gently push your partner's hand towards his or her right shoulder, and have them provide no resistance. After you've moved your hands a few inches in that direction, reverse the roles and have your partner push your hand, without you resisting, towards your right shoulder.

Continue switching roles and move easily and without resistance a few more times, until you can cooperate with each other and coordinate your movements smoothly so you can move forth and back without separating the palms and without resistance.

Switch to your left hands and do the same thing. Take your time. Notice the differences between the right and the left.

Switch to the right hands again and begin to apply some resistance from the one who is not pushing. Very gradually increase the resistance until the movement becomes very difficult to do, and even to the point where the movement becomes impossible to do.

Continue switching roles all the time. When the movements become as difficult as possible to do, remove all the resistance and do it a few more times.

Switch to your left hands and do the same thing. Take your time. Notice the differences between the right and the left.

You can do this exercise by yourself, using your right and left hands. In this case all the resistance is inside you, in the way you do the movement. It will give you a good idea of how much effort you naturally have if your internal coordination is bad.

You will undoubtedly notice that movement with resistance is a lot more difficult to do, and as a result you will be able to do fewer movements.

Let's move on...

Imagine that I am holding a 20-pound weight in my right hand, and I'm lifting the weight to my shoulder and lowering it back down. The movement is difficult for me so after 10 times my arm is so tired that I cannot lift it again.

Now I shift the weight to my left hand and do the same movement and I find that I can do it 50 times without getting tired at all.

Which arm is stronger?

In terms of strength, the easier it is to do, the stronger you are.

If you are in the same situation and you work hard at it (Work-out), you will be able to do more repetitions with the right arm also, and you will be stronger and it will become easier to do, but the over-exertion will be ruining your joints.

You are welcome to make this trade between muscle strength and joint health if you like. Most people do. We should meet again in 20 or 30 years and see if you are still happy about the trade you made. I am not willing to make this trade because I want to be strong and develop healthy joints at the same time.

But how can we get stronger without working- out and building muscles?

There is more than one way of doing this by using the techniques of Fitness Without Effort™!

There is a basic belief in the world of fitness. It is a belief in something that is not correct. The belief is what I call 'the effort way of fitness'. This belief basically says that the more effort you make, the more fit you will be.

We all know that you can get fit by making more effort but what most people don't know is it is not the only way, and that the repeated effort will ruin your joints in the process. Most people don't know that there are ways to get in better shape without using the effort that will ruin your body in ways you will definitely not appreciate as you get older.

It is good to know that fitness has 7 parts and in each one of them you can improve without effort.

Stretching, for instance, is usually pitting the antagonistic muscle groups against each other and you already know what happens from that. This mechanical pull on your muscles can cause microscopic tearing in the muscle fiber itself, and your body has to work hard to repair it.

As you age your body will repair itself less perfectly, and will probably also 'fall behind' on the repairs needed so you will end up with chronic injuries. I am familiar with 6 ways of becoming more flexible, stretching is only one of them and it is the least effective one.

You probably remember from earlier in the booklet that in terms of strength, the easier it is to do, the stronger you are.

Let's do a useful exercise:

Your body weighs a certain amount and so it takes strength to move it from sitting to standing and back to sitting. If you can do it more times with less effort than before, you are stronger for all practical purposes.

If you can find a way to come up to standing more easily, you will be able to do it more times, and for all practical purposes if you can do it more times then you are stronger than before. There are many ways to come up to standing, some are easier than others, and some make it almost impossible to do.

Please sit in a chair, all the way back, with your back completely straight, and try to stand up without leaning forward.

Have someone watch you to make sure you don't lean forward at all; you are likely to do it without noticing. Feel how difficult it is. It may even be impossible for you to get up. Try the same thing sitting at the edge of the chair and see if it became possible to do.

If you lean forward, you will be able to get up much more easily. You will be able to do more movements so for standing up you are stronger when you lean forward.

Let's make it even easier to do:

Start in sitting and get up to standing a few times, making it as easy to do as possible. Repeat the movement of getting up 5 or 6 times in a row with a short break between each time. On purpose try to make it as easy as possible to stand up. Take a rest for 2 or 3 breaths.

Now get up again, 5 or 6 times in a row, and make sure you end up standing mostly over the right leg, so you have almost no weight on the left leg (see if you can lift it off the floor when you are standing up). Take a short break between each movement and the next, and a longer break of 2 or 3 breaths at the end.

Now get up again, 5 or 6 times in a row, and make sure you end up standing mostly over the left leg, so you have almost no weight on the right leg (see if you can lift it off the floor when you are standing up). Take a short break between each movement and the next, and a longer break of 2 or 3 breaths at the end.

Now get up again, just 2 or 3 times in a row, over both legs, the way you did in the beginning. Is it easier to do? Rest again and then get up and walk around.

If you tried to make it easier to do with each movement, you will feel that standing, walking, breathing and your posture are better than before. Most people will get this effect after the first try, but some will have to do the whole exercise 3 or 4 times before they feel it.

In this exercise, your job is to make the movement easier to do, instead of working harder. As you remember from before, when a movement is easier to do you can do more repetitions which means that, for all practical purposes, you are now stronger.

As you can see, there is a way to get stronger without making the effort that everyone is used to, and strange as it may seem, you can get stronger by improving your internal coordination.

It is possible to do the same with all floor exercises, machines, weights, bars and any other gadgets you have. In a similar way you will find it possible to improve in all 7 areas of fitness without effort.

What you need to understand is that it is possible to do and you can easily learn the techniques to use.

Here are a couple of secrets for increasing your strength without effort:

- If you rest correctly you will get stronger faster than if you make a lot of effort and don't rest right.
- It is the repetition, and not the effort, that makes you stronger.

Imagine that you want to do 50 push-ups in a row and right now you can do only one.

The old way is to force yourself to do two and then three and then four, each time making more effort and forcing your body to become stronger while at the same time damaging your joints. There are other undesirable effects to this kind of training.

The new way has many variations. One possibility is to do one push-up every hour or so. Even though you will not be pushing yourself, you will end a day having done 8 or 10 push-ups. Your body will get stronger as a result, and after a few days you should be able to do two in a row instead of only one.

With two very different ways to become stronger, the old one that injures the joints, and the new one that keeps them healthy, I know which one I will choose. What about you?

In the next couple of pages you will find a few hints about the other aspects of fitness. If you take your time to think, try and figure out the hints you will find some very interesting things.

Flexibility: Flexibility and range of motion are basically the same. Range of motion is reduced by stiffness, and the opposite of stiffness is softness or relaxation.

Cardiovascular (Stamina): if two people run 10 miles at the same speed, the one that did not get a cardiovascular workout is the one that is in better cardiovascular condition.

Balance: dynamic balance depends on your body making continuous adjustments. It is closely associated with internal coordination. People have dynamic (active) balance.

Breathing: your breath should naturally adjust itself to the activity you are doing. Asthmatics should learn to hold their breath.

Coordination: Coordination and cooperation are two sides of the same coin. All of your actions must be coordinated in order to succeed. Better coordination means greater success.

Agility: Agility is the ability to change directions swiftly. Forced agility will ruin your body while gentle agility will heal it.

Agging: Most people become more rigid as they age, so it is a really good idea to practice softness. It is very difficult to become softer by practicing harshly.

Exercise: Walking is one of the best forms of exercise. Think about making ‘walking’ easier to do, intend to make it easier. The right kind of walking can relieve stress, tension and pain. There are ways of walking that will improve your posture, help to straighten scoliosis, relieve foot problems, and get rid of headaches and many other health problems.

The most important thing to understand is that you can get in better shape without resorting to effort. Based on this new insight, we can now follow a new course of action in which we deliberately try to make exercises easier to do.

The basic idea behind the current fitness system in the US is ‘the effort way to fitness’. The belief that ‘the more effort you put in, the better results you will get’ is at the base of this idea and as a result, all the techniques that are used are ‘effort techniques’.

As you have seen in this booklet, there is another way: ‘Fitness Without Effort™’ which follows the idea that the more fit you are, the less effort it will take you to do your activities.

You have the opportunity to put to rest all the ‘effort techniques (along with their destructive by-products), and begin to learn and follow a completely new set of ‘no effort’ techniques.

All the basics of CFWE are included in the booklet “Complete Fitness Without Effort”, but if you prefer personal and specific instruction, please feel free to contact me.

If you would like assistance in making success a reality, if you are interested in a presentation or a workshop for your club or group, please contact me:

Wishing you success,

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