



Destination Fitness: Are We There Yet?

By Joe Stein, President



I finally did it...broke down and ponied up for a navigation system for my car. My concern regarding the cost was answered one dark and stormy night by nine of the most comforting words ever heard by a lost soul: “You have arrived at your destination, map guidance ending.” To be guided to your destination gives you a sure-footed feeling. Over the years, many clients have asked me, “Have I reached my fitness goal...am I there yet?”

On the road to fitness there are many detours, potholes and roadblocks. Basements are filled with home gyms used as clothes hangers. Cupboards are filled with unopened vitamin bottles. Weights gather dust. People fill with despair and confusion as they reach plateaus they cannot surmount. Buckle your seatbelts and sit back. Let’s begin our road trip to DESTINATION FITNESS.

Ding ding, “Detour ahead; adjust exercise routine now.” The dreaded detour of the plateau is not overcome by simply raising the bar. The location, dimension and design of the bar needs to be changed. Most sedentary people begin an initial fitness program that develops core stability, functional strength and baseline cardiovascular conditioning. After a certain time, perhaps three to six months, the exercise routine needs an extensive overhaul so strength and cardiovascular fitness are the new goals.

Ding ding, “Roadblock ahead; make next right turn on to Periodization Highway.” People who have been training for more than six months or so need to redefine their goals in order to avoid the roadblock of falling into a rut. Periodization is a process whereby the goals of your exercise program change in order to prevent injury, maintain mental stimulation and explore new dimensions in fitness. This highway has several exit ramps, each leading to a wonderful new fitness destination ready to explore.

Ding ding, “Definition Drive is ahead, make next left turn.” This is the exit one can take if you want washboard abs and a more defined musculature. Ladies, unless you are taking steroids and working out six days a week, you will not bulk up like a man. Lean and toned will be your reward. Not ready to take this road yet, no problem...back to the highway.

Ding ding, “Endurance Avenue is ahead, make next right turn.” After a while, one may wish to shake things up by concentrating on increasing endurance rather than muscle strength or definition. A revised cardio routine and a customized resistance program that involves additional sets accompanied by increased repetitions with lighter weights will

help prepare a person to compete in a triathlon. Even if you never compete, the increased energy level will make you feel like you're ready for anything the world can dish out. When you have a "been-there-done-that" feeling about endurance training, you can always make a stop at the next exit.

Ding, ding, "Mind-Body Mall ahead, entrance is on the right." Another stop along the road to fitness is a program of mind-body conditioning. This new/old modality includes ancient practices such as yoga and Tai Chi and twentieth century art forms such as ballroom dancing and Pilates. All are designed to meld balance, strength, flexibility, breathing, aerobic conditioning and core stability into a fun yet challenging workout.

The beauty of this road trip is that your vehicle never runs out of gas because your body have the ability to adapt to various new dimensions of fitness. The best conditioned people know there is no "there," because the longer you drive, the more you realize the journey is more important than the destination.

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