



# G.R.A.B. Fitt-Ness

## *With Effective Exercise*

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**Y**ou already know you want to eat right and exercise. You have heard that research shows exercise benefits weight management and your heart, remedies high blood pressure and diabetes, prevents osteoporosis, and even treats depression as well as medications. With so many demands on your time, have you ever wondered if you would get best results for weight loss and fitness through changing your diet first, then adding exercise, or vice versa?

Researchers at Stanford University have answered this question in a surprising way: doing both simultaneously leads to more consistent results. Another study of those with long-term weight loss showed they had three things in common: they ate breakfast every day, just as Mom recommended; they had home exercise equipment so there were no excuses on rainy days or if they could not get to the gym; and they used a home scale to keep track of weight daily. If weight went up by more than two pounds, they buckled down on their efforts until it got back to goal.



### CUSTOMIZED EXERCISE PRESCRIPTIONS: G.R.A.B. AND FITT

The integrative medicine providers at Whole Health Solutions specialize in customized exercise prescriptions along with other natural and lifestyle interventions to help keep you healthy for a lifetime. Many people come to us already exercising but not seeing results on their waistlines or even in how much energy they have. Nina W. (*see photo*) shows the great results you can get consistently with our G.R.A.B. (Guaranteed Results And Benefits) fitness program. In just eight visits, she increased her muscle strength 139 percent! Over 4,000 people, applying the FITT techniques designed by world-record power lifter Tom Davis for just one hour weekly for eight weeks have achieved at least a 25 percent increase in muscle strength as guaranteed. In fact, we have seen results as much as 205 percent increase in strength, and 19 pounds of fat lost with equal muscle gained.

FITT is an acronym to help remember the four factors to get your desired outcome: Frequency, Intensity, Type, and Time. With limited time, everyone needs to get the most out of an exercise routine to make it worth the effort. That's what we mean by *effective* exercise. Just as a medication prescription must indicate the type of drug, the dosage, the frequency, and how long to take it for, exercise needs the same components in order to make efficient and successful contributions to your health.

### EFFECTIVE EXERCISE: FREQUENCY, INTENSITY, TYPE, TIME

Frequency of exercise is probably the most important component. Consistency is the essential requirement of any successful endeavor. Perfection of effort is not required. You are better off going to the gym even a little and persisting, than blowing it off because you can't do a whole routine. Even if you just execute the exercise for ten minutes, you will be keeping your commitment to yourself, strengthening that will-power muscle, knowing you did your best for that day. A key to frequency is also making it convenient and interesting for you so that you will stay consistent. Aim for 30 minutes daily rather than long bouts once a week. A weekend warrior is better than a couch potato, but not truly *effective*, and risks injury if you go at it without building up to the next factor: Intensity.

**Intensity** is probably the least appreciated aspect of your exercise needs. Once you have checked with your doctor to make sure it is safe for you to exercise, it is pushing yourself into the heart-pounding/gasping-for-breath zone that benefits the cardiovascular system. Likewise, since normal wear-and-tear causes us all to lose about 1 percent of muscle per year after age 30 (*YIKES!* that means by age 50, we are already down 20 percent!), we have to maintain that tone by using heavy enough weights to require extra force to get that last rep done. For instance, if you plan to do ten reps at a given weight, the first nine just set up the muscle for the muscle-building exertion of the last rep needed to trigger the strengthening repair and growth process.

**Types of exercise** have grown to fit almost every preference, although we all need some aerobic (cardio), some strength training, and some stretching, such as yoga or Pilates. The best exercises are the ones you stick with, as we have already discussed the need for consistency to see results. Just three weight training maneuvers train about 95 percent of your muscles: squats, bench press, and lat pulls. Nonetheless, changing your routine can not only bring in some fresh motivation, it is necessary over

time to ensure whole body fitness. For instance, if you lift the same weights on the same machine every time, soon those muscle fibers will cease to respond as well, leaving unused fibers to waste. Variety is key to sending cytokines (chemical messengers) to *every* cell, letting your body know you want all of it to perform in tip-top shape.

**Time**—as in how long to do a given exercise—is the factor most of us need to carefully gauge for results. Studies show a minimum of 150 minutes per week of moderate aerobic exercise, along with strength training of all major muscle groups twice a week is needed for real fitness benefits. This works out to about 30 minutes per day. If you can't set aside 30 minutes, you can even get results doing shorter sessions, such as 10-minute-bouts three times per day. In the best news yet, research shows that combining high-intensity with brief time actually yields the best cardiovascular results for the tightest schedule. Burst training, such as wind sprints or spin classes, is a form of aerobic exercise that involves exercising at 85-100 percent of your maximum heart rate for 30-60 seconds, followed by 30-60 seconds of lower-intensity exercise or resting. Use a heart rate monitor to guarantee you are in the performance zone.

Just as you don't need to be a mechanic to enjoy driving a sports car, you don't have to be an athlete to tune your body for top performance. And getting a coach in your corner has been proven to increase your likelihood of getting to goal. Add a buddy to zoom into your fittest year yet. Call us today at Whole Health Solutions (919-651-0820) to attend a free Empower Wellness class or join our wellness group coaching. Like Nina, you can be stronger and more fit in just eight weeks! **h&h**

*Joanne Pizzino, MD, MPH, is board-certified in both Preventive Medicine and Integrative Medicine through the American Board of Physician Specialties. Our empowering team of Karen Saylor, FNP, fitness trainer Tom Davis, and wellness coach Lisa Burdett can guide you to build youth-enhancing muscle while losing an average of one pound of fat per week. See our YouTube channel for a WRAL feature video on our program. Don't diet-ize. Vitalize!*

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