



Mind Over MATTER

Make 2010 the year you really get into shape. Living North talks to elite training and fitness expert Nick Grantham, Director of Strength and Conditioning at Smart Fitness to discover the fastest way to improve fitness for those who want to take their training to the next level.

nick explains how you can apply the lessons he has learnt during more than a decade working with elite athletes and apply them to your own fitness training. The 'side-effects' of this athletic approach to training (a fit and healthy, lean figure that doesn't wobble and jiggle when running up the stairs) are in fact the precise training effects that the majority of his clients are looking for.

ACCORDING TO NICK THERE ARE FIVE REAL STEPS TO SUCCESS

HARD WORK

The only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary! You need to understand that to achieve your ultimate goal you will need to invest some time and effort. There are no quick fixes for long lasting results.

CONSISTENCY OF EFFORT

It's probably taken you a number of years of consistently eating poorly, and not exercising to get your body into the condition it is in at the moment, so what makes you think you can have a transformation after just one training session? Develop a good programme, and repeat it consistently over an extended period of time.

SMART GOALS

Don't just come into the gym with a fluffy goal of 'I want to lose weight'. That is not a goal. A goal needs to be SMART (specific, measurable, agreed, realistic, timed). If you can tick all these boxes then you have a goal – if not you need to go back to the drawing board.

SUCCESS IS NOT LINEAR

Many clients looking to get in shape and ditch that unwanted fat expect to see linear progress and become disillusioned the first time their progress plateaus. The plan gets thrown out the window, and more often than not, they revert back to their old habits. If you hit a plateau, take a step back, re-evaluate your programme and crack on.

NEGATIVE THOUGHTS AND CHATTER

Most clients seem to be experts at running a constant 'backing track' of self-destructive comments through their heads, and often those of anyone else who is willing to listen. The mind is extremely powerful and guess what, if you continue to put yourself down, then there is no way that you will achieve your goals.

NICK FOLLOWS A THREE POINT ATHLETIC TRAINING PLAN

STRENGTH TRAINING

My clients pick up barbells and dumbbells and throw medicine balls around. They perform 'functional' exercises like push-ups, squats, inverse pulls, lunges and chin-ups. Contrary to what some personal trainers will have you believe, the path to shaping up that sagging butt is not through sitting on the thigh master using light weights with high repetitions.

CARDIO

Not all cardio is created equal. If you can read your magazine/book or hold a conversation with your friend whilst performing your cardio workout then you need to have a rethink! In 20 minutes I will create a fat melting cardio session which will have you incinerating calories even when you have stopped training! We squeeze every last drop out of our cardio sessions by working at high intensities.

NUTRITION

You don't need a diet, you need a lifestyle change.

- Eat 5-6 times a day to provide your body with a constant stream of nutrients.
- Limit your consumption of sugars and processed food – if you can't pronounce it, don't eat it!
- Eat fruits and vegetables throughout the day – the ultimate food source, loaded with vitamins, minerals and fibre.
- Drink more water and cut out calorie containing beverages (beer, wine, fizzy drinks etc) – keep hydrated.
- Focus on consuming lean proteins throughout the day – the building blocks for growth and development
- Save starch containing foods until after a workout or for breakfast – this is when you need a little carbohydrate.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

For the past two years Nick has been successfully putting his training principles into practice with the many clients that train with him. "The response I get from my clients when they adopt an 'athletic' approach to training is amazing. For many of them this is the first time in their lives that they have worked out with any real intensity. For the vast majority it is the first time that they have combined the powerful benefits of resistance training, high-intensity cardiovascular training and a clean diet. It doesn't take long for them to start seeing and feeling the benefits of a more 'athletic' approach to training and enjoying the results of their hard work."