

Men's

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AMERICAN HEALTH & FITNESS

GET A GRIP...
ON FOREARM STRENGTH P.48



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Don't be another gym dropout.

It's that time of year again. The hectic schedule, visits with the family, office parties and maybe some time squeezed in for holiday shopping. Do you even remember the last time you trained?

If your last run at the gym left you less than impressed, wondering where you went wrong, all you need is a strategy. Whether you're a veteran making a comeback or a novice in need of a plan, try these get-smart practices that will keep you in the gym.

Back to Basics

Starting from scratch can be discouraging. In most cases, all you need to do is remember the basics of conditioning to boost your self-confidence and see better results.

When you're training with weights, the cardinal rule is to always practice proper form. Don't fuss over the amount of weight you can lift or overexert yourself—especially on your first few days back. That'll only lead to more setbacks from injury, or worse

yet, more time spent away from the gym. Concentrating on the full range of motion with each exercise will ensure you enlist the most muscle possible, and maximize your workouts every single time.

Got Goals?

If you've ever started a fitness regimen and then suddenly quit halfway, the problem is that you more than likely didn't set a realistic goal. "Reasonable goals will help keep you focused and give you something to work toward, rather than just going to the gym and not really having a clear idea of what you're trying to do," says Stacy Berman, certified fitness trainer and founder of her own boot camp.

Whether your aim this time around is to lose three inches off your waist or lift 10 more pounds on the bar, by making it your focus, you'll get there faster. Setting your goal too high or not having a clear vision of what you want will undoubtedly tire your spirit and set you up for failure. Concentrate on the actual process of working out and enjoying the experience, rather than dwelling on the end results.

Simplify Your Life

The biggest challenge facing most men today is finding the time for the gym. Start by making a list of things you do on a daily basis, and take note of the unnecessary things that sap your energy. Get rid of those unneeded responsibilities and make room for new, healthy habits. Once you make the transition, you can increase your training and include more days at the gym until you reach your comfort zone.

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