

Formal Project: Proposal for Fitness and Strength Training Manual

Executive Summary

As sedentary lifestyles become more and more common, many people are looking for ways to not only get fit, but stay fit. While many programs offer almost instantaneous results, these results are gained by unhealthy practices and are very, if not completely, non-maintainable. The proposed manual will outline a regimen that builds a strong base and allows for a level of fitness that can be maintained for an indefinite amount of time. This will be accomplished through multiple stages of strength training and proper diet.

The rough draft of the project will be completed by 11/28/12 and the final product will be finished by 12/3/12. The cost of the manual will only be that of ink and paper, while adherence to the program outlined in the manual will cost at least \$50 per month (for gym membership and lifting supplements).

Problem Definition: Weaknesses of Fad Diets and Exercise Programs

One of the more popular fad programs is P90X, which steaks its claim on “muscle confusion” (using a large variety of workouts, and performing a different exercise for each of the 90 days) and high intensity bodyweight workouts. While this program and programs like it are proven to yield results, they are not maintainable. After as short as a week off of the program you will begin to lose tone and put on weight. This comes as a result of leaning primarily on cardio vascular exercise (which does not build muscle), high energy and time cost, and a poor nutrition planning. In the description for P90X, there is a lot of talk of “plateaus” or points at which progress is no longer possible. They say the solution to this is their “muscle confusion”. What is not told is that bodyweight exercises quickly stop building muscle and begin only serving as a means of burning calories. This does help you to achieve their goal of making you “absolutely ripped”, but many people don’t realize that you are not getting muscular you are just becoming very lean. While cardio (which is basically what the program becomes) can increase your metabolism, if you do not continue to do it on a regular basis, which in this case is every day as mandated by the program, you will return to the way you looked prior to beginning the program. Even if one were to perform the program regularly beyond the scheduled 90 days, there also comes the problem of costs in energy and time. If no breaks are taken, a day’s worth of exercise in the P90X program lasts a full 60 minutes. This is 60 minutes of high intensity cardiovascular exercise every day. This can lead to overtraining, which causes chronic fatigue and increased risk of injury. If you are tired, or exercising with an injury, the workouts will take longer than the standard amount of time. Another downfall of the program is the nutrition plan. The P90X nutrition plan is three fold: Fat Shredder (phase 1), Energy Booster (phase 2), Endurance Maximizer (phase 3). All of the phases emphasize loading up on certain types of foods, with phase 1 focusing on protein, phase 2 focusing on mixing protein with carbohydrates, and phase 3 emphasizing carbohydrates. Not only will buying specific types of foods, in bulk, result in spending more money, but it can also counteract your workout. It is entirely within the realm of possibility to get the necessary intake of protein and carbohydrates by simply eating a balanced diet. In fact, it is healthier to do so rather than eating excessive amounts of certain compound rich foods.

Solution

The way to achieve maintainable fitness is by utilizing strength training, cardio, a balanced diet, and time for rest and recovery. The proposed document will outline a regimen that works in three phases. The first

phase will be only applicable to people with little to no experience exercising. Strength training will consist of a month of calisthenics exercises to build a strong core as well as muscle tone and cardio will consist of jogging and light running. Once a strong base is built, or if a strong base already exists, the second phase will introduce basic lifts such as the bench press and the squat which will begin to add size and light to moderate running will ensure that muscle put on is lean. The set-up of the lifts will be based off such programs as "Starting Strength" and "5x5's"; lifts will be performed three days a week in five sets of five reps, and in between lifting days will be cardio. Theories such as opposing muscle groups will be utilized to avoid overtraining and maximize performance during workouts. Concepts behind bulking and cutting will be introduced as well, allowing for maximum gains in size and definition. Phase 3 will branch off into two sections based on the desired results of the individual. One section will give details on powerlifting, which will emphasize making gains in amount of weight lifted and technique of the basic lifts. The second section will detail methods for bodybuilding, which places emphasis on continually cycling between bulking and cutting, hypertrophic training, and isolation for aesthetics. Cardio for each of the two sections will be moderate running or sprinting.