

Fitness fads promise a fitter and healthier you, pandering to your desire for a 'miracle cure'. But do they ever work?

Observations of the health and fitness industry and a long term, common-sense approach to getting fitter and leaner.

Be honest - most of us know we need to lose a few pounds and get fitter. And the Covid pandemic should have provided extra urgency and motivation to do something about it, particularly those of us who are overweight and at greater risk of dying if we contract the virus. Even the Prime Minister has reportedly hired a Personal Trainer and instigated a new government campaign to get us eating healthier, taking more exercise and losing weight.

So what typically happens when there is a demand for increased health and fitness? Well the fitness industry marketing departments go into overdrive, they sense an opportunity to launch their latest fitness fads, latest diet, the next craze! There is a clamber for celebrity endorsements, price cutting promotions become common place, we are encouraged to stare in awe at 'before and after' photos and think, 'that could be me'! And then there are the often fanciful but convincing claims and guarantees, often supposedly backed up by 'science'.

But here's the thing! **Deep down many of us are rightly sceptical of the latest fad**, maybe we have tried the 'cabbage soup diet' before and know that it did not really work long-term. **Nevertheless, we desperately want what they are selling and so we sign up, jump on the bandwagon** again and tell ourselves that this time it will be different. But we fall into the same trap. We start keen and eager and see some short term results which keeps us motivated for a few weeks, but then life gets in the way, we start finding the solo cycle session in our garage a bit tedious or that new drama on the television seems so much more appealing than getting hot and sweaty. The excuses start creeping in. I'll restart next week.. I'll start again after my birthday! We rarely do of course, and blame the lack of success on the diet or product itself. But so strong is our desire to change, that in time (usually next January) another fitness craze will tempt us, and off we go again on our yoyo love affair with fitness fads.

So, what needs to change to get long-term results?

There are some 'fads' that do work - at least in the short term. Weight can be lost, we can get fitter. As a rule these fads include one or both of the two fitness imperatives:

- a steady calorie deficit diet (you burn more calories than you consume).
- Higher levels of movement

Applying these simple principles should allow you to filter out the scams and identify those that have a sound basis and might work. But even then it's not easy and results will often be short lived.

To get long term, sustainable results, the answer (or missing ingredients) are **accountability** and **conviction** - a powerful self-belief. This is where the personal touch makes the biggest difference, But it's often missing or not possible with fads which cater to the masses. We are all different after all with different body types, genetics, likes, wants and are all motivated by different things.

So where do you find these missing ingredients? For some, accountability and conviction come after some deep soul searching or perhaps a very dramatic personal event. Many though will benefit from some tailored help.

Enter the land of the Personal Trainer. A good personal trainer will help find what really motivates you, find a diet and exercise plan that works for you and then hold you to account. The very best ones will make exercise fun, get you energised and feel supported better still they will empower you by helping you create a positive health habit. This can be life changing - no yoyoing from one fad to the other. Your new healthy lifestyle becomes engrained - you feel great and look better. The new you is a permanent fixture, no more expensive fads anymore. Your search for the next 'miracle cure' is over.