

It's alright to be a beginner.

What seems to be a limiting factor for many people starting a fitness regime is the perceived shame of not being able to lift a certain weight or perform a given number of repetitions. Often the result of this 'shame' is that the person will either sacrifice range of motion (full movement) in the name of achieving a given number of repetitions or will try to lift a weight which is so far beyond their abilities that their form deteriorates greatly. Either way, both of these examples will certainly limit the physical achievements of the individual as well as expose them to a much higher chance of injury.

A good way to think about fitness is to treat your training like a sport. Playing sport requires us to first learn some basic skills, practice those skills and then build on that foundation until all of the aspects of the game are mastered. Fitness is just the same. All too often the beginner is more interested in keeping up with their peers than following a logical order of progression and before they know it, they are trying to bench press huge weights without even knowing how to perform a correct push up.

For those who are new to training or for those that may be guilty of quantity over quality, the following order of progression is a great way to start. (source www.crossfit.com)

1. **Nutrition:** Nutrition is the foundation of all physical achievement and is often overlooked for its importance. Without proper nutrition, you will always be limited in your potential.
2. **Metabolic Conditioning:** Metabolic conditioning develops the cardio-vascular system which makes us more efficient at making use of the oxygen we consume. This includes, running, riding, rowing, skipping and swimming.
3. **Body Weight Movements:** These movements are where the primary aim is bodily control. E.g. push ups, pull ups, squats, abdominal exercises, rope climbing, lunges and dips.
4. **Weightlifting:** Once you can truly say that your nutrition, metabolic conditioning and body weight movements are at a high level then weight lifting is the next progression. This includes, dead-lifts, cleans, overhead presses, weighted squats, bench press and combinations of these activities.

No matter where you are in your fitness journey, next time you train, take the time to review your program and go back to the drawing board if necessary. You could find that something as simple as mastering a body weight squat could open the door to a myriad of other improvements. Enjoy Fitness.

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The information contained in this article is the authors' opinion and should be used as a guide only. If you plan to undertake an exercise program you should first consult your medical practitioner and fitness professional.