

## Time to Simplify Things

Recently I had the good fortune to go on a business holiday. What I thought would be a week of learning along with some rest and relaxation turned into a frustrating time tracking luggage that is still missing in action. What I learned most from this trip had really little to do with the main purpose of my journey.

First lesson; NEVER fly with all your favorite clothes in the hands of others. While I should have been networking, I spent hours on end with agents stationed in India waiting for tracking numbers for luggage that never arrived. A second, more useful lesson learned was the merit in traveling light. It turns out that a few articles of clothing can last a week if you're careful eating anything in tomato sauce.

How does this relate to anything fitness related? Well, there is also merit in 'traveling light' or simplifying your fitness routine as well. While it's really great to have all the amenities of a full gym set up, it really isn't essential to maintain or even improve your fitness level. Some people feel the need to either join a gym with all the best equipment, or set up their homes with the best kit available. Often those are the people that never return to the gym after the first week, or hang laundry on their expensive home gym. Conversely, with the proper motivation, you can get fit with the most basic of equipment.

What equipment would qualify as the bare minimum? First off, proper footwear is a must. Shoes are not only a fashion statement, but are needed for safety and comfort. Remember, function trumps style. There is nothing more discouraging than to see a client who has finally come to a point in their life where fitness is a priority, only to be sidelined by injuries as a result of poor shoes. Secondly, comfortable clothing made with fabrics that are breathable and do not chafe are a wise purchase. Next, a safe space with reasonable lighting for exercise is needed. This could be indoors or out and common objects, such as sturdy benches, poles, walls or fences, curbs, hills and stairs can all play a large part in your workout. You may use hand weights, and a mat, but neither is absolutely essential. You'd be surprised how much sweat you can generate with body weight exercises alone. You can achieve a short but intense 30-40 minute workout that taxes your cardio vascular system, improves your strength, endurance and flexibility with nothing more than your body as equipment.

Why don't more people do this? Well, it's hard work! As well, education and motivation are needed. While most people know some basic body weight exercises, it's important to know how to modify some as they are especially challenging. Many people think a 'machine' is necessary for cardio work, when a skipping rope, a set of stairs or a hill will suffice. It does take creativity to set up a simple fitness routine with the very basics, but it can be done. Once you have a plan, it's the motivation to actually do it that will determine your success. Having a regular training partner is a very helpful incentive that ensures accountability.

If you are that someone that's looking to add fitness to your life but don't want the gym experience or are looking for something different, consider hiring a trainer that could set up this sort of workout for you. Or, consider joining a class, such as an outdoor boot camp, that will teach you how to train with the very basics. What's important is that you actually do an intense workout, not the setting that it occurs in. If you find a simple, enjoyable way to add fitness to your life, it's more likely that you will engage in it.

Now, if it were only as easy to find lost baggage....

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Shawna is shaking up the fitness routines of several people in her outdoor boot camps and with personal training. Please contact the editor if you wish to work with her.