FIRE STARTER

Attempting JLo’s pre-Hustlers training routine or just looking to break a sweat more than once a month? Four of CANADA’S LEADING FITNESS EXPERTS break down the need-to-know about realistic goal setting, cultivating consistency and finally beating slothdom in 2020. Put those elastic waistbands on notice.

By KATHERINE FLEMMING

TORONTO

JENNIFER LAU
Co-owner of Fit Squad (fitsquad.ca), Nike Master Trainer and holistic nutritionist

What does willpower mean to you? “Willpower and grit are very important. Pushing past your comfort zone and persevering when your internal dialogue wants to make excuses is often what yields results.”

What is the biggest misconception about weight training? “That females will get huge and bulky. I have been trying to get huge and bulky for over 15 years—so I only wish it were that easy.”

How much does occasional junk food impact results? Say, if you eat a cookie on the same day you work out, is the exercise just bringing you back to neutral, as if you did nothing at all? “I try to practise intuitive nutrition. Having food sensitivities and having experienced IBS in the past, I pay attention to how food makes me feel—how it affects my energy, digestion and mood. That said, if I have a hard craving for some junk food, I might cave, but I also understand that while it may serve to satisfy me in the moment, it may not serve my performance later. Taking the time to understand that relationship influences my food choices. So a cookie here and there may not set you right back. Food is meant to be enjoyed. A consistent, nutritious diet should allow you some freedom in your food choices. Just remember that food is fuel—the cleaner the fuel the more efficiently your body will run.”

What is one small change that can make a big difference? “Ensuring that you sleep between seven and eight hours a night. Adequate sleep is integral to any fitness goal, whether it be weight loss or increasing lean muscle. Sleep reduces stress and improves digestion and energy.”

MOTIVATIONAL MOTTO “Strength doesn’t come from what you can do, it comes from overcoming the things you once thought you could not do.”

HOW MUCH SHE TRAINS Eight to 10 hours a week

STAR POWER Trainer for the cast of Titans, including actress Minka Kelly

FAVOURITE TYPE OF EXERCISE “Deadlifts, because it’s the movement with which I can move the most weight (300 pounds), so it makes me feel strong. And I love kettlebells because they are simply fun and functional. You can do so much with them—like mobility and strength movements—and they can be used as a conditioning tool. They are one of the most versatile training modalities.”
MONTREAL
GAIL GARCEAU
Master Trainer, Essentrics
essentrics.com

MOTIVATIONAL MOTTO “Nothing happens without intention.”
HOW MUCH SHE TRAINS Seven hours a week
STAR POWER Head stretch trainer for the Montreal Canadiens and personal Essentrics trainer to Toronto Maple Leafs forward Frédérik Gauthier
FAVOURITE TYPE OF EXERCISE ‘Essentrics, because it’s like a reward for my body. It helps me be more aware of all my muscles so that I can hold myself with strength and ease no matter what activity I do.”

What is one small change that can make a big difference? “Focus. Concentrate on feeling every exercise and visualizing your muscles as they move, which will activate more muscles, improve your body awareness and yield much faster results. When you concentrate on feeling your muscles as you move, you improve your ability to recruit them more efficiently because you’re enhancing your nerve-muscle interaction.”

How does age impact your results? “Two things happen as we age: Our lifestyle starts catching up with us, and there are physiological changes under way. So we might not see results as fast as we did when we were younger. This doesn’t mean we should push our bodies harder when we get older, as this could actually have negative effects on our joints, but it is even more important to be consistent if we want to see results.”

VANCOUVER
LUCY ULMER Motivational lifestyles coach and pregnancy-fitness specialist

MOTIVATIONAL MOTTO “Train your body, train your mind, change your life.”
HOW MUCH SHE TRAINS Five to seven hours a week
STAR POWER Voted ClassPass instructor of the year in Vancouver four years in a row
FAVOURITE TYPE OF EXERCISE “I love the endorphin rush that comes from combining intense full-body movements with motivating music.”

How do you encourage people to deal with fitness setbacks? “Exhale the ego and inhale confidence. It’s about the journey, not the end result. One day at a time.”

How should you set goals? “Oftentimes, people set overambitious goals and end up failing. Pick a daily practice to build on your goal. Consistency is key.”

How much does diet impact results? “Nutritious food (such as greens, nut butters, beans, avocados, grains and fruit) is fuel—without it, you aren’t getting anywhere, no matter what your exercise program is.”

What is one small change that can make a big difference? “Choose positive self-talk.”

What’s an ideal number of days to work out? “Move every day with a variety of intensities.”

How much does age impact results? “Age plays a significant role in how our bodies use oxygen as well as how long the body needs to recover. The biggest shift with age might be going from wanting to PR [personal record] a race to deciding to finish feeling healthy and strong.”

How should you set goals? “Find a movement that speaks to your soul, whether it’s swimming, tai chi or dancing. If you don’t love it, chances are you won’t do it.”

What is one small change that can make a big difference? “Pay attention to your thoughts and the stories you tell yourself—this is a lifelong journey. Begin by looking at the thought patterns you get caught up in, like obsessing over the past or future projections.”

What’s the first thing you recommend to someone who hasn’t worked out in ages? “Just start! Walking is a big one. Walk somewhere—take control of your choices and you will start to feel more empowered.”

What’s an ideal number of days to work out? “Every day. Moving the physical body untangles the mess inside. Once we understand that we can change from the inside out, we shift our vibration. When you tap into a higher vibration, you’ll want to walk around in the world this way.”

Anything else people should know about getting fit in 2020? “Movement is medicine.”