

# STOP YOUR BAD EXERCISE HABITS



## 4 bad exercise habits & how to stop them

Finding the time and motivation to exercise amongst the business of life is already a feat on its own. If you're being active and keeping at it, take a moment to pat yourself on the back because you're doing great. However, we are creature of habits and with time, even with our best intentions, we fall into traps that can work against us. No matter how hard we train, at one point or another we reach a

plateau, a comfortable spot where if we don't take action we can actually start undoing all the amazing work put in so far. You might feel like you're not progressing, your focus is just not there anymore and you can't even remember why you're exercising in the first place. Time for a little "shake up". Let's look at how to do it.

## 1. You are on autopilot

It is quite easy to fall into a lull: your body follows a routine like it's second nature, the mind is turned off and you find yourself running the same 5km track on autopilot. What you don't necessarily know is that when your body does the same exercise every time, it is actually de-conditioning. Thankfully, you only need a few tweaks to wake up from the trance and progress again. Pick one thing in your exercise routine that you can rejig and give it deliberate attention: it could be run a different route (or change directions), walk somewhere different, join a different class, exercise with a friend, increase your time once a week or your distance. Keep it fresh so you can wake your mind and body.

## 2. You are overcommitted

It's only human to want something, to want it badly and to want it now. So we throw ourselves at it 110% with great expectations and enthusiasm, but life is hectic and often we can't sustain it all. The secret to overwhelm is to 'slowburn', find your own pace. Ask yourself if your expectations and exercise goals are realistic and achievable with what is on your plate at the moment. Ultra marathon runners are the kings of slowburn, they think long term, they train incrementally, they know they can only go the distance if they build their skills and condition bit by bit, over time. Think of training as a long term game, something you want to keep doing forever.

## 3. You are out of synch

Our external world can be pretty fixed as far as time goes: we work 9-5, we eat at 12:30pm, we exercise around those times, when we can fit it in. Our body though has an internal clock that runs to its own beat and so it is easy to get out of synch. The research on circadian rhythm has now mapped out when it's the best time to exercise: too early in the morning and you're not quite ready yet, too late in the evening and you can disrupt your

sleep. The early afternoon is when activity levels, coordination and power are at their peak so that's the ideal time to train. If you are restricted by fixed working hours, maybe take your lunch break a little later and exercise when you're more in synch with your internal clock.

## 4. You are not investing in recovery

If you're exercising chances are you follow a routine, or at least you try to stick to a regular schedule. You have days when you are active and "days off" when you can rest. Truth is, those quieter days in between are more than just times when you can take a break, they are your recovery days, a key aspect of your training. Recovery means exercising in a lower gear and with less load so you can work on nuances of your performance and reinforce good habits. As we get older your recovery days become a greater priority to help maintain muscle strength and continue to progress without using all your precious resources. So if you love cycling for example, have a spin day as recovery: you'll still be doing the same movement turning your legs over but at different intensity. If you are a runner maybe go for a walk or hike on terrain, even the beach.

No matter what exercise habit you inevitably fall into, just remember that going back to the reason why you are exercising will always steer you back in the right direction. It could be for health reasons or because you want to be the best for your family. It could be because you want to challenge yourself or bring a bit of change into your life. Your why is gold because it resonates with you, because it is you, and will always make you focus on what really matters.

*Dr Brett Lillie, author of Rediscover Your Athlete Within, is a sought-after speaker, coach and rehab professional who helps people rekindle their love for movement and find their mojo so they can live their best life. To find out more about Dr Brett's programs, go to his website [www.brettlillie.com](http://www.brettlillie.com)*