



**WORKOUT PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES**  
**AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR THOUGHT PROCESS**

In exercise, you want to be a control freak! You need to ensure that the decisions made about an exercise are in your best interest. These decisions are not only made a head of time, but are constantly being assessed through each and everything workout. To assist you in this process, we will take time to establish some workout principles that need to be considered while you exercise.

You first need to identify our health and fitness goals. These goals need to be S.M.A.R.T. Identify some goals that you would like to achieve that cover the following categories.

Specific: \_\_\_\_\_

Measureable: \_\_\_\_\_

Attainable: \_\_\_\_\_

Relevant: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Frame: \_\_\_\_\_

Now that you have stated your S.M.A.R.T. goals, we can start to break it down to individual workout sessions. Each workout requires a desired outcome or purpose. These should be fairly straight forward. The desired outcome of a cardio based workout is to improve cardiovascular capacity. The desired outcome of a strength based workout is to improve strength. These are just simple ideas and you are not limited to only this.

Next, you will need to identify the G.O.T.E. (Goal Of The Exercise). The G.O.T.E. is something that you have under constant consideration. Every exercise needs to push you closer to your desired outcome of the workout. If you find the exercise is not accomplishing what you had hoped it would, either re-focus and try again, or change to something else.

For example. You have decided to focus on strength building during your workout. The first exercise that you do is a bench press. You set your G.O.T.E. to be “work your chest”, but while you are performing the exercise, you find the muscles in your back fatigued quickly and you didn’t feel your chest working at all. Option 1 – refocus yourself and direct your entire attention to your chest while performing the press to ensure those muscles are working. Option 2 – choose a different exercise that will direct you closer towards your goal.

This process is constantly re-evaluated to ensure that each rep, set, exercise and workout is in line with the overall goals that you are working towards! Do not underestimate the power of setting a G.O.T.E.!

\*\*The G.O.T.E. does not need to be written down anywhere. It just needs to be at the front of your mind while you exercise. Do not go into “autopilot” when exercising. This will increase the risk of injury while performing certain movements. Be aware of everything!



Exercise needs to create an environment for an individual to improve performance, and as such, needs to be customized to that specific individual. The following equation is one of the most important principles when it comes to exercise! Every movement you perform will be based around this equation.

$$\text{EXERCISE} = \frac{(\text{P/M} + \text{R} + \text{T} + \text{E}) \times \text{I}}{\text{A}}$$

1. P/M = Positions/Motions – the unique orchestration of joint positions/motions to execute a given movement
2. R = Resistance – ideal load to stimulate adaptation/change
3. T = Time (Tempo) – speed of movement
4. E = Effort/Exertion – during each rep, and each phase of a rep
5. I = Intention – having a specific goal/outcome in mind
6. A = Appropriateness – for the individual of each of the above when mixed together

*The outcome of an exercise will only be as good as the precision with which the position/motion is performed and the exact way it is challenged. It all boils down to the quality of each individual rep!*

Let's take some time to break down each of our exercise variables a little bit more and offer some options for ways that you can alter these to change up your workouts.

**Positions/Motions:** Traditionally, we are told that we should perform certain exercises because they are “good” for us. I'm wanting you to eliminate that thought from your mind! There are no exercises that you need to learn, just rules of the body. The difficult part is understanding each individual body since everyone is a little bit different. Find motions that feel comfortable above all else. Just because a picture in a magazine says to perform a squat in a certain manner, does not mean that it is the only way to perform that squat!

Start to think of your body/joints like the tires on your car. Every so often, you need to rotate your tires to ensure that the tread wears evenly and you are able to utilize your tires for a longer period of time. This concept should be considered for your joints as well. If you always perform an exercise in a certain joint position, the cartilage on that aspect of the joint will wear away, causing pain and discomfort. Be sure to alter your positions strategically as you exercise and don't get stuck into a “routine” of always doing the same exercises. These need to change!

**Resistance:** This variable is fairly straight forward. In order to facilitate change, you must challenge your muscles. One of the ways you can do that is by increasing the weight. This is the most common way of challenging yourself, although not necessarily the one that I would want you to focus on. A good thing to go by when it comes to adequate resistance is the “Rule of 2”. This states that at least the last 2 reps should be a challenge for you to perform (assuming that the form and techniques of the exercise is unaltered). For example, if your goal is to reach 12 reps, and you manage to push out 15 reps, the resistance is too light. If you struggle to get 8, then it is too heavy, but if you can really feel it working for 10, 11 and 12, then you are right where you should be.



**Time/Tempo:** This is an aspect of exercise that is often overlooked. This can be approached in two different ways. First, you can increase the length of a workout. If you are currently exercising for 30 minutes, you can increase that to 35, 40 or 45 minutes in length. This is fairly obvious. The second way of altering this variable is by changing the tempo of each repetition. Generally speaking, most people will perform a 1 – 0 – 1 – 0 tempo (one second to lower the weight, no pause at the bottom, one second to lift the weight, no pause at the top). The tempo has an endless opportunity for change, which is one of the greatest ways that you can effectively stimulate change to your muscular system. As said before, we want to be control freaks when it comes to our bodies. Do not be in a rush to move a weight. Control it every inch of the motion. For starters, you could try a 5 – 5 – 5 – 5 tempo. This forces you to slow the motion down, really focus on the control of each position, and allows you to experience a new kind of contraction from your muscles. You can even go as far as a 30 – 0 – 30 – 0. Each rep would take one full minute, 30 seconds to lower, 30 seconds to lift. Explore some of these options and experience them for yourself to fully understand the power of adjusting the tempo!

**Effort/Exertion:** Give every rep your full attention! If your mind wanders, you have lost the true benefit of the exercise. Stay focused and on track to reap the benefits of your hard work! Keep your mind sharp. Note your rate of perceived exertion. If you feel like you aren't working hard enough, pick it up a bit – change one of the variables. If you feel like you are pushing too hard, tone it back. Listen to your body each step of the way!

**Intention (InTension):** This can be broken down into two categories. You must have a purpose to each rep, set and exercise that you perform. Make sure that the intent of the exercise matches your G.O.T.E.! The second is a new concept called InTension. Simply put, this is how much tension you actively place on a muscle while it is lifting a weight. You can aimlessly lift a weight up and down and never really feel that muscle working, or you can “squeeze” that particular muscle, or group of muscles, and force an extra contraction out of them. This will increase the amount of tension that your muscle experiences, regardless of the amount of weight or resistance that you are lifting.

Time Under Tension (T.U.T.) is an extremely important principle to follow. The longer a muscle is contracting for, the stronger that muscle will be, and the greater the effectiveness of that given exercise. You don't need to contract your muscles as hard as possible during every rep, but ensure that there is an additional amount of tension, above and beyond the weight that you are lifting.

**Appropriateness:** This is less of a “principle” and more of a safety measure. Any exercise can be beneficial or detrimental at the same time, depending on the individual performing it, their current state of fitness, fatigue, knowledge of the movement, etc. Olympic style lifting can be very beneficial with the proper coaching and when executed perfectly, however when utilized with no guidance or knowledge of the lift can be very risky. On the opposite spectrum, yoga can be very useful for increasing mobility and abdominal strength, among other areas, although when an individual is forced into a position that their body cannot control, this can and will lead to an injury. Every exercise needs to be appropriate for the individual who is attempting to execute that movement. If it is not appropriate, don't try it!

Sources: Resistance Training Specialist Workbook, [www.resistancetrainingspecialist.com](http://www.resistancetrainingspecialist.com)

