

5 Non-Physical Qualities You'll Gain When You Start Exercising Every Dayⁱ



There's a reason that when you read about habits of successful people, fitness- and health-related rituals are almost always high on the list. How we feel, how we sleep, how much energy we have and our overall state of health affect every area in our lives.

If we want to fuel an active lifestyle, we must eat whole, nutrient-dense foods. If we want to focus at work, we must get proper rest. If we want to keep up with our kids on the playground, we must keep our workouts up so our bodies stay strong. Our physical health needs to be a daily priority if we seek success in our work, respect in our relationships, and have a desire to pursue our passions.

Establishing healthy habits can teach us life lessons as well as benefit our overall well-being. The earlier we start, the more it becomes a part of who we are. What we experience in our fitness regimen can often be a metaphor for what we experience in our day-to-day lives and applied to how we handle what life may throw at us. Here are five skills you can sharpen with a daily sweat session – whether you are 8 or 80 years old:

1. Responsibility

Taking responsibility for your physical health is one of the biggest commitments you have to make over your lifetime. Good health is not something you can buy and no one can do it for you. You, and only you, are responsible for the food you put in your mouth, the time you go to bed and the amount of exercise you get. Taking on this type of responsibility can be very empowering and set the tone for how you take on responsibilities in other areas of your life. From making the right choices as a child to ensuring you hold yourself accountable in work and family life, taking ownership of your actions and your day-to-day health regimens are the most positive ways to achieve a productive lifestyle.

2. Discipline

We've all heard the phrase "when the going gets tough, the tough get going." This is not only true in life, but also in fitness. Our muscles only get stronger when we ask them to do something they can't do, and they'll only develop enough muscle to deal with the resistance placed upon them. In order to grow as athletes, we add resistance beyond what we think our bodies can handle, which results in them growing stronger. If we never push ourselves physically, we don't grow. This mentality can be applied to so many life situations where we resist change. For example, you may resist the idea of reporting to a new boss

at work because of the fear of change. By participating and welcoming the change rather than fearing it, however, you can open up to the idea that change leads to progress. Where there is growth, there will be resistance. If you are able to stay dedicated and move past the resistance, you will always continue to grow as a person.

3. Creativity

Anyone who has had a good workout can attest to the clarity it can bring. Regular exercise can clear the mind, boost your mood and open up space for creativity. Ensuring proper "timeouts" for a workout, whether allocating 15 minutes for a mindful meditation or dedicating time after work, after school or even on vacation for a heart-pumping physical escape, will undoubtedly free the thought process and empower you to go forward in a more productive and positive way.

4. Determination

By definition, determination is "a quality that makes you continue trying to do or achieve something that is difficult." Simply put, if you want something, you have to put in the work for it. You are the only person who can determine what that goal is and what your personal limits are. Each year, thousands of people, many of whom have never been runners but who are intent on pushing their personal limits, commit to running a marathon. If you have ever been part of that training process, or any physically challenging task, you know it's determination that takes you through the last leg and keeps you on track toward accomplishing that goal. So, whether you're in pursuit of the dream job, saving for that once-in-a-lifetime trip or angling for a spot on the student council, set a goal, do the work and enjoy the results that come from your determination.

5. Confidence

Getting and staying fit is a surefire way to increase your confidence. People tend to be very self-conscious when they first begin a physical fitness program and can be embarrassed if they can't do a pushup or run for more than a few minutes at a time. But as they become more fit and their bodies become stronger (no matter the age), they build confidence and start to push themselves to do things they never believed they could do. This almost always carries over into other parts of their lives. Maybe you take on that project that scares you or you join that group that seemed too intimidating before. Like your fitness routine, as you dive further in, your confidence grows, your mental prep gets stronger and you are ready to tackle whatever is thrown your way.

The benefits of working up a sweat go beyond even the impactful physical attributes that we often associate with exercise. So lace up your sneakers, get your to-do lists ready and get moving!


