

The Top 10 Bonehead Workout Mistakes

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Common workout mistakes has always been a very popular topic in fitness publications. But no matter how many times this subject is re-hashed, you almost always hear about the same half a dozen or so mistakes, including poor form, overtraining, going too heavy, not stretching, not warming up, yadda, yadda yadda. Ironically, you seldom hear about the biggest mistakes of all. I call these humongous bloopers "bonehead mistakes" because once you start to analyze and think about them, they're really just common sense and they all seem so obvious... except of course to the person doing it... who is often quite oblivious until someone else points it out to them... then the light goes on and it's like... "Doh!"

Before I begin the countdown, (in no particular order), there's one more gripe I have about the treatment this subject has been given in the past: Most of the attention has been put on the mistakes, but very little on the solutions. It's all too easy to point fingers and say, "Don't do that" and "Shame on you, dummy" but only 1% of your time should be spent on problems. 99% should be spent on solutions. So in that spirit, after I bring each mistake to your attention, I'll give you a solution-oriented training tip to help you avoid boneheadedness and join the elite group who "kick butt" in the gym at every workout...

Bonehead workout mistake #1: "Winging it"

Winging it means having no written goals or plans, no training journal and no way of keeping score. It's when you just show up at the gym day after day and do whatever strikes your fancy, whatever machine happens to be available, or whatever you've become habitually accustomed to doing. Winging it is when you don't know where you are, where you're going or how you're going to get there - but you start your journey anyway - no compass, no roadmap. It's been said that "Action without planning is the biggest cause of failure," and I believe that statement is 100% accurate.

Kick butt workout tip #1: Develop a strategic plan

Successful people never "wing it," they always have a plan. Strategic planning is a never ending process and includes: Assessment (where am I now?), goal setting (where do I want to go?), creating a plan or strategy (How will I get where I want to go?), executing the plan (what action steps must I take daily to reach my goal?), and measuring results (how will I know if I'm moving towards my goal and how will I know when I've reached it?). Boneheads "wing it." Butt kickers have a master plan and goals for every workout.

Bonehead workout mistake #2: Repeating the same workouts ... without progressive overload

In one respect, repeating the same workouts is important - it's called "continuity." Continuity

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means that to experience an adaptive response (more muscle, more strength, less fat and all that other good stuff), you must repeat a certain modality or exercise consistently over a long enough period of time to allow the adaptive response to occur and to reap the full benefits (rather than changing exercises at every workout). That type of repetition is good. The bonehead mistake is when you do the same exercises, same reps, same weight, same everything, week after week, without ever challenging yourself to do more than you've done before. If your muscles could talk they would say, "Yawn ... Did that, done that, been there ... we're just going to stay exactly the way we are ... no need to get bigger or stronger today."

Kick butt workout tip #2: Strive to beat your previous workouts

Muscle growth and strength increases occur when you place demands on your body above and beyond what it has experienced in the past. Your body responds to this progressive overload by getting stronger in order to handle this type of demand in the future. Your objective at almost every workout is to set goals to beat what you did during the previous one. If you can't add more weight, it could be as simple as one more rep with the same weight or the same sets/reps/weight in less time. It could also mean one more minute of cardio, one level higher on a stairclimber, or half a percent steeper incline on the treadmill. Continuous and never-ending improvement is the name of the game.

Bonehead workout mistake #3: Starving yourself

A calorie deficit is the only way to lose body fat. However, the caloric deficit must be kept small. When calories are cut too much, or held too low for too long, your body thinks you are starving and sets into motion a series of metabolic and hormonal events, which ultimately result in muscle loss, slow metabolism and plateaus. Your body is like a power plant or furnace and when you don't feed the fire, your metabolic flame dwindles to a flicker, producing less heat and less energy. That's why not eating enough is one of the biggest mistakes of all.

Kick butt workout tip #3: Eat more, burn more

Did it ever occur to you that if you exercise more you can eat more and that this is a more effective fat loss strategy than eating less and exercising less? To lose body fat, you must create a calorie deficit. A deficit can be created by exercising more, eating less, or ideally, with a combination of both. The best combination of all is a small decrease in calories accompanied by a large increase in activity. Think about it: Decreasing calories slows your metabolism. Increasing calories increases your metabolism. Exercise increases your metabolism.

Therefore, eat more, exercise more = double increase in metabolism. Eat less, don't exercise = double decrease in metabolism. This is the entire premise of my Burn The Fat Feed The Muscle System and that's why the program is so powerful and has helped tens of thousands of people lose fat without depriving themselves. Yes, starving is for boneheads.

Bonehead workout mistake #4: Skipping scheduled workouts

A great body doesn't happen overnight. Successful body transformation is the cumulative result

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of dozens or even hundreds of successful workouts. Each workout brings you one small step closer to your goal. Each workout missed takes you one small step backwards. Most people underestimate the cumulative effect of each small step. They figure that “It just doesn’t matter ... it’s only one workout. If you don’t think that one little workout matters, then think about the humble termite; they’re such itty bitty little creatures and they take such itty bitty little bites, yet when enough little bites are taken, an entire building can come crumbling down.

Kick butt workout tip #4: Be disciplined and consistent

Not only do you slip backwards physically when you skip even one scheduled workout, perhaps more devastating is the effect on your mind and character. Every time you successfully complete a scheduled workout, you build your discipline and self esteem. When your self esteem increases, it makes you feel good and that stimulates a positive self-reinforcing cycle of even more discipline, confidence and action. Everything you do helps or hurts. Every workout counts. Treat your word as law. When you say you’re going to work out... **WORK OUT!**

Bonehead workout mistake #5: Focusing on strengths, favorite exercises and favorite body parts, neglecting weaknesses

Most people have a favorite body part or exercise. But playing favorites in your training can lead to big problems. An unbalanced, asymmetrical physique is one of them, but having a great upper body with toothpick legs is the least of your worries. Strengthening and stretching some muscle groups but not others is a great way to cause poor posture, muscular imbalance, dysfunction, strains, pulls, tears or ruptures.

Kick butt workout tip #5: Train for functional balance and aesthetic balance

Non-boneheads train every muscle group for symmetrical, visually pleasing development. However, balance is more than cosmetic. Everyone – athletes, bodybuilders, and recreational exercisers – must also train for functional balance to prevent injury and maintain optimal function and range of movement in every joint and muscle group. Every plane of movement and angle of movement must be trained. Flexors must be balanced with extensors. Front to back movements must be balanced with rotational and side to side movements. Prime movers, antagonists and stabilizers must all be strengthened. Always stretch, strengthen and build to the point of total body balance.

Bonehead workout mistake #6: Using mostly machines and single joint/isolation exercises

So you joined the gym and you hit “the circuit”... you know, that section in the gym with all those fancy, chrome-plated, technologically advanced weight stack-pulley, hydraulic or computerized machines all lined up in neat rows... far, far away from the barbells and squat racks (which you never touch), and which is designed to give you an easy, safe, injury-free, effective full-body workout. The machines may be easy, but most machines aren’t as safe or effective as they’re made out to be.

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Kick butt workout tip #6: Use mostly free weights and compound, multi joint exercises

For lower body, squat and lunge variations are tops. For upper body, barbell and dumbbell presses, chin ups and rows are king. These and similar BIG exercises stimulate more muscle fiber, stir up more fat burning and muscle building hormones, and have more carry-over to real world and sporting activities than machines. Although weight stack machines are safe with respect to the fact that you can't drop a barbell on your head, they're ultimately NOT as safe as free weights because they don't develop the stabilizing muscles and functional strength that protect you from injury. A few machines and isolation exercises mixed into a balanced program is fine, especially if you have bodybuilding goals, but focusing on compound and free weight exercises gives you far more bang for your buck than any machine ever created.

Bonehead workout mistake #7: No mental preparation

This mistake goes hand in hand with mistake number one (winging it). You see, preparation is more than setting goals, writing out plans, and scheduling workouts. Preparation is also mental, yet most people haven't the slightest idea just how powerful the mind is or how to harness its power. Psychologists and brain scientists have proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that the subconscious mind cannot tell the difference between an experience that is real and one that is imagined. Failure to take advantage of this discovery is a mistake of enormous magnitude.

Kick butt workout tip #7: Use visualization and mental rehearsal daily

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jack Nicklaus, Andre Agassi and countless other sports legends have written and spoken extensively about their regular use of mental imagery. Those who succeeded, but claimed not to use such techniques as visualization were surely using it unconsciously or in a non-formalized manner. I would suggest you consciously and deliberately use this technique in the following manner: Twice a day, once in the morning and once at night, get relaxed, close your eyes and form mental images of yourself having the body you've always wanted, completing perfect workouts with motivation and enthusiasm and reaching all your goals. These images will penetrate your subconscious mind and literally program your brain to activate your body for total success.

Bonehead workout mistake #8: Not eating immediately after training

Not eating anything after your workout (or waiting 2-3 hours to eat), because (a) you don't feel like eating, (b) you don't have anything to eat with you, (c) you heard that you get leaner if you don't eat after your workout... is one of the most boneheaded things you can ever do!

**Kick butt workout tip #8: Eat protein AND carbs (not just carbs)
immediately after your workout**

Much research has been done on the topic of post workout nutrition in recent years and the scientific literature is almost unanimous in its findings: At one time carbohydrates were emphasized after a workout. Other people insisted that protein is more important. The truth is, the optimal post workout meal includes quickly digesting protein and carbohydrates and is consumed immediately after training during the period known as the post-workout window of

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opportunity. Although the ideal amount and type of protein and carbs is still debated, the studies have shown that proper post workout nutrition increases protein synthesis, suppresses cortisol, replenishes glycogen, and enhances recovery.

Bonehead workout mistake #9: Comparing yourself to others

Always trying to one-up the next guy is bonehead behavior. Comparing yourself to others is a great way to lower your self esteem and stay perpetually frustrated, unhappy and dissatisfied!

Kick butt workout tip #9: Compare yourself to nobody but yourself

Legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden always advised his players, 'Never try to be better than someone else; but never cease trying to be the best you can be. That is under your control. The other isn't.' So why not focus on competing with yourself? Compare yourself to yourself. Improve yourself. Work on progress and forward movement. Become better than you used to be. Ultimately, competitive sports are most valuable to the degree you use them to better yourself, not to beat others.

Bonehead workout mistake #10: Making excuses

Many people, when they don't get the result they want, or when things don't go the way they expect, insist it's not their fault. When they don't lose any body fat, it's their genetics or "The diet just doesn't work! When they fall off the wagon, it's their friends and family's fault - They just don't support me ..they even tempt me with junk food and eat in front of me. When they miss workouts, it's their boss's fault -I just don't have time with so much work being piled on me at the office. No matter what the situation, the boneheads never even consider that the problem is staring right back at them in the mirror - someone or something outside of them is always responsible.

Kick butt workout tip #10: Accept total, 100% responsibility for all your results - good or bad

When you win, you don't attribute it to luck or give someone else the credit for it. You proudly say, 'I created it ..I did it ..that was me! However, if you want to take the credit for your wins, you must also take credit for your losses and say, 'Yep, I created it ..I did it ..that was me! ' Boneheads want to take credit for their successes but not accept responsibility for their failures.

Ultimately, that turns them into nothing but big losers. Winners and successful people became successful because they learned three magic words: I AM RESPONSIBLE. Once you claim responsibility for every result in your life - the good and the bad - the feeling of empowerment and liberation that comes over you is beyond description. For the first time in your life, you realize that YOU are in control. From that moment on - and not a second sooner - you become the creator of circumstance rather than a victim of it.

Well, that's all ten of em'. Let me wrap up with what is perhaps the biggest mistake of all, and that is: Not learning from your mistakes. Mistakes are okay. The only people who don't make any

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are the timid, wimpy people who don't even attempt anything. If you realize you've been making a lot of these mistakes, don't beat yourself up. As long as you learn from them and then stop making them, you're off the hook! But if you keep repeating these mistakes over and over again, then it's official: You're a bonehead!

If you enjoyed this article and you're interested in learning how to quickly and easily lose fat permanently - without drugs, supplements or fad diets - AND without making any bonehead mistakes - click here to visit my BURN THE FAT website: www.burnthefat.com

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Tom Venuto is a lifetime natural bodybuilder, an NSCA-certified personal trainer (CPT), certified strength & conditioning specialist (CSCS), and author of the #1 best-selling e-book, "[Burn the Fat, Feed The Muscle](#)." Tom has written more than 200 articles and has been featured in print magazines such as IRONMAN, Australian IRONMAN, Natural Bodybuilding, Muscular Development, Exercise for Men and Men's Exercise, as well as on hundreds of websites worldwide. For information on Tom's Fat Loss program, visit: www.burnthefat.com

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