



Fitness Frontline

10 habits of fit people





To the memory of Ron Clarke 1937-2015
'The unforgiving minute.'

<https://sites.google.com/view/distance-running-training/articles/ron-clarke>

The 10 Habits of Fit People

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The hardest thing I ever had to do was get outside the front door.
Ron Clarke

THE TEN HABITS OF FIT PEOPLE

It seems to be a tough assignment for most people to maintain the motivation to do the things they need to do to keep fit and healthy. The surgeries of the Western world are littered with the bodies of people who either have never taken part in a fitness program or who started one and then gave it away.

Yet some people do manage to keep their level of motivation up and maintain a long lasting involvement in a regular and systematic aerobic fitness program. They're the ones that keep themselves fit and healthy; who save themselves an absolute poultice on medical bills.

Here are the seven things aerobically fit people do to keep themselves focused on the job of keeping aerobically fit. They understand that it is a big ask expecting to stay healthy without keeping themselves fit.

1. **They write down their fitness goals** and then burn them into their subconscious mind. My main goals are to get 250 Fitbit zone points of aerobic activity each week and go to the gym with Christine for a strength and flexibility workout three times a week.

'Write down the vision and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the vision awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger(s), wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.' Habakkuk 7th Century BC

2. **They have a definite program** of what they're going to do, when they're going to do it, who they're going to do it with and for how long. The program included aerobic fitness, strength and flexibility training. On balance they enjoy what they do. Whilst they may have started off with fear, trepidation and discomfort, for many people the enjoyment came with the development of the exercise habit.

I've been training since I was 8 years old, going to football training twice a week in winter. In summer it was long mornings and late afternoons at the beach swimming between the two diving boards, 55 yards apart - and playing tennis.

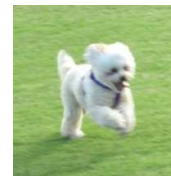
In high school, training for swimming, and running became more serious. Tennis and football training kept on going.

At university weight training and running were the staples all year round, and they have been ever since.

3. **They have an exercise mate – or mates** - who also doubles up as their coach. They perform the same role for their mates. They're in this together.

I've had running and gym mates throughout my life. For some time me and three mates from the street where I live walked, shuffled and ran around our local area. We met at 6.45am Monday, Wednesday and Friday, missing only when it was raining.

In 2011, Honey, wonder spoodle came into our lives. She's now 14 (2025) and still a running dog, who loves to go for a walk/run with her Dad. If you want a training companion, get a dog and get it off the leash as soon as you can. A dog will follow you to the end of the earth and if you mix running with walking, shuffling and jogging they'll have time to do sniffing.



For a while between 2000 and 2005 I had a fitness centre and a much younger bloke and myself would train on the stepper. We encouraged each other.

My wife Christine and I have been regular gym goers, (hopefully) three times a week to do a strength and flexibility routine. All in all it takes about 75 minutes.

4. **They have strategies** for maintaining a high level of interest in their program; for instance, doing things like varying their program, cross training, exercising in different surroundings, on their own, with other people, joining a class where they have to be there at certain times during the week, playing sport... They train for specific events - like a fun run, a monthly fitness test, a birthday, Christmas ...
5. **They exercise at a rate they can successfully manage** over a long period of time. They include variety in their workouts. They have hard workouts and easy workouts. They're consistent as well as persistent. So, don't train so hard today that you can't train for days after, or you belt yourself up so hard a little bird on your left shoulder whispers in your ear and says, 'Give it away.'

It seems to be a difficult assignment for most people to maintain an exercise routine that has too much pain attached to it. Don't train too hard, too often. Take it steady. Enjoy your workouts. They are not a competition.

6. **They monitor their progress.** They establish a benchmark of their aerobic fitness. I use and recommend the **Fitbit** system that automatically monitors and reports on my aerobic fitness training. Fitbit keeps a record of my daily weight through its Aria scales. At the gym I don't need to keep a record of what to do and what weights to use. I've been doing the same routine for donkey's years. I use pin-loaded machines. The 20 minutes of flexibility exercises is always the same with an emphasis on doing the exercise designed to keep the skeleton in good (reasonable) alignment. I'm pleased to say it works.
7. **They stay focused on the results** they want to achieve. A goal is a dream with a deadline.
8. **They have a balanced program** of aerobic, strength and flexibility exercise.
9. **They use the Universal Fitness Test** to measure and monitor their progress,

So what is it that's holding you back? What is it that's stopping you from being a regular exerciser, training at a pace you can sustain over the days, weeks, months and years? What is it that will cause you to drop out of any fitness program that you embark on? Is it laziness, ignorance, stupidity or attachment to a comfortable way of life? In the meantime stay tuned, highly tuned and remember, it's a big ask expecting to stay healthy without keeping yourself fit. It's an even bigger ask expecting to get better by having someone to do something to you; sooner or later you have to do something to yourself.

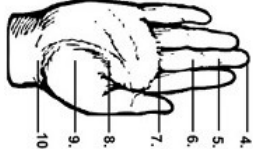
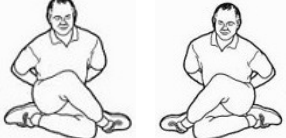
John Miller
August 2025

PS, I'm glad I became a physed teacher. It suited my personality and intelligence strengths and my interest in sport and fitness. I found a job where I didn't have to do another day's work in my life. I'm still a physed teacher.

For those who are interested, I was born in June 1945

There are two birds, one on each shoulder. The one on the right shoulder will whisper in your ear telling you to 'Go for it, train harder.' If you train too hard, the bird on your left shoulder will whisper in your ear, 'Stop hurting yourself, give it away.' Find the happy medium.

UNIVERSAL FITNESS TEST

1. Body composition. How close are you to your ideal weight? You can estimate the number of kilograms over your ideal weight or use percent body fat..	
2. Lower body strength – squat How many squats can you until exhaustion? Your bottom must go lower than the crease at the back of your knees. If you've got sore knees either don't proceed or proceed with caution. Suggest a 3cm heel raise.	
3. Front of body strength – sit-ups to exhaustion. Arms crossed and hands clasping alternate shoulders: knees bent. There is evenly divided conjecture about whether it is safe to do situps with feet held. I believe the exercise is safe.	 If it hurts, stop doing it
4. Upper body strength – press-ups to exhaustion. If you've got painfully sore shoulders either don't do this exercise or proceed with caution – and don't do too many.	
5. Hamstring flexibility - sit and reach Sitting on the floor, with feet outstretched in front of you, see how far down toward or past your toes you can reach with your fingers. Keep the back of your knees flat on the floor.	 
6. Buttock flexibility - ability to sit up straight with legs crossed With legs crossed and hands clasped behind your back, see if you can sit up straight without falling over backwards.	
7. Shoulder function Stand with heels and back against the wall, arms and wrists vertically in the 'surrender position'. The further they are away (in cms) the lower the score.	
8. Aerobic fitness - 20m laps in 5 minutes How man 20m laps can you complete in 5 minutes. One foot must go past the line each time you turn.	

UNIVERSAL FITNESS TEST – scores for ‘regular folks’

1. **Body composition:** how close are you to your ideal weight?

Current weight Ideal weight Percent body fat

Kg over ideal wt	>25	<25	<20	<15	<10	<7	<4	<2
% fat men	>35	<35	<30	<28	<26	<24	<22	<20
% fat women	>42	<42	<40	<38	<36	<34	<32	<30
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2. **Lower body strength** – squats – until exhaustion #.....

>6	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3. **Front of body strength** – situps feet held - until exhaustion #.....

>6	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4. **Upper body strength** – press-ups – until exhaustion #.....
Men on toes, women on front of thighs.

>6	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

5. **Hamstring flexibility** – sit and reach. How far down toward or past your toes you can reach with your fingers?

Can't touch	Fingers			Palm			Wrist
0	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

- 6a. **Right buttock flexibility** – sit up straight, legs crossed, hands clasped behind back.

Left leg under	Big fail	Nope	Almost	Just	Good	Perfect
0	0	0	1	3	4	5

- 6b. **Left buttock flexibility** – sit up straight, legs crossed, hands clasped behind back

Right leg under	Big fail	Nope	Almost	Just	Good	Perfect
0	0	0	1	3	4	5

Ttl

7. **Shoulder function** - stand with back against the wall, arms vertically in the ‘surrender’ position. Measure distance between the arms and wall.

>15	15	13	11	9	7	5	3	2	1	Flat
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

8. **Aerobic fitness** – 5 minute, 20m lap run. Laps

Men	<22	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40
Women	<20	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38
Points	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

X 3

If you want to be fit and healthy, exercise like fit and healthy people exercise!

TOTAL

MY FITNESS PRESCRIPTION

PERSISTENCE

Nothing in the world can take the place of Persistence.

Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent.

Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.

Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts.

Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.

The slogan 'Press On' has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.

Calvin Coolidge

