

PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD



If a baby doing a push up isn't impressive enough, then a toddler lifting a car certainly is!

Would it be fair to say that if you were able to do just one push up, which is impressive enough, you would probably struggle to lift a car? So how do you go from doing only one push up to lifting a car?



It is through a concept called progressive overload. It simple means that you are progressively or gradually increasing the intensity or workload overtime. In the case of lifting a car, you would probably start with a small box, then over time move to a heavier one and continue to progressively increase the weight until you could lift the car.

This sounds pretty simple – right? I mean if you gradually increase your load then your body must continually adapt to this and as a consequence you must get stronger, fitter, leaner or whatever other outcome you are after. The problem is that many people (maybe even you) do the same exercises, the same repetitions, the same weights (resistance), the same pace, the same intensity for the same time and wonder why nothing changes.

Your body will only change if you give it a need to. By pushing it a little harder each time you exercise your body must change and adapt to keep up. This is where the results come and this is called progressive overload. Let me give you some examples;

1. If you want to get fitter then you need go for longer or go faster than you have previously done on a regular basis. In my attempts to run 10km in under 40 minutes, when 48 minutes was my best time, I needed to gradually increase the speed each time until I achieved my goal over several months.
2. If you want to be stronger then you need to progressively lift heavier weights, or do more repetitions or sets. If this is your goal make sure that you get some professional assistance.
3. There are some fantastic and simple tools that you can use to help measure what you have previously done so that you can set goals to progressively increase your workload. These tools include;
 - Pedometer – measures steps. If you know how many steps you are doing then you can increase them over time.
 - Stop watch – allows you to measure the time you run, swim and/or bike ride so that you know whether you are going faster.
 - Training journal – allows you to record your exercise and then work each time to increase workload. You can record weights, sets, reps, distances, times, steps etc.

Remember, if you focus on the result you are after then you will find the actual process of progressive overload a simple one. **Enjoy the results**