

# Conquer a Plateau Alone

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## Session Nine

Reaching and maintaining your fitness goals can't be any easier than with your Certified Fitness Professional at your side. But since this is your next to last session, are you confident that you can do what it takes to achieve your goals alone?

### What is a Plateau?

The human body has a regulatory mechanism that works to keep the amount of energy you consume in balance with the amount of energy you use. In other words, the body does not like to lose weight. Weight or fat-loss only happens when we consume fewer calories than we use (caloric deficit). Working against weight-loss, the body finds a way to establish a new food intake and energy expenditure balance, which closes the original caloric deficit. Weight and fat-loss will slow and eventually stop, even though exercise and food intake is maintained at a consistent level. Often, even if less food is consumed and more energy expended, the body will still not change. This situation is commonly called an exercise/ weight-loss paradox the very efforts made to increase metabolism (burning of calories) may eventually slow it.



*What you'll need to know about overcoming or avoiding a plateau...*

### Lowering Calories Too Far...

"It takes calories to burn calories," is an old fitness adage, which is true both internally and externally. Internally, the body simply slows its metabolic rate (burns fewer calories) when it senses a decrease in food intake. The body still functions correctly, but requires fewer calories, creating hunger and preventing fat loss. Externally, the body is tricked into doing less, (i.e., you get lazy, tired and therefore, move less and more economically).

#### *What to do...*

To prevent a plateau, keep your calories slightly below the amount recommended for maintenance to keep your metabolism and energy levels high during exercise and daily activities. A deficit greater than 500 to 700 calories makes it much more difficult to maintain lean body mass (LBM).

Q: Do you feel you have the ability to do this at this point?

A: Yes            No

### Loss of Lean Body Mass...

"Muscle burns fat. Losing muscle means fewer calories are burned" Therefore, any loss of this fat-burning machinery dramatically lowers your metabolism and brings fat loss to a screeching halt.

#### *What to do...*

The solution can be as simple as keeping your body nourished and following your exercise recommendation. A fully nourished body that still allows for fat loss can be achieved with enough food to create an energy deficit and by

supplementing for subsequent dietary deficiencies.

Q: Are you confident that you can do this on your own?

A: Yes            No

### **Net Weight Loss...**

“The less you weigh, the fewer calories it takes to move your body” A loss of any amount of weight will lead to fewer calories burned during all movements, including exercise.

#### *What to do...*

Concentrate on slightly increasing muscle during fat loss. This is an ideal way to compensate for the fat loss of calories, due to net weight loss, and enhance your look.

Q: Can you address this on your own?

A: Yes            No

### **Adaptation Phase Ends...**

“The calories used while the body stops adapting to exercise before or after performing it” The body makes numerous internal changes to adjust to different exercise. These changes include rebuilding muscle and adding new cellular machinery. Each of these reactions burns calories. Therefore, once the body stops repairing muscle from exercise or adding new cellular machinery, the calories burned to make these changes are no longer spent and the amount of energy your body uses decreases.

#### *What to do...*

Don't let your body get used to exercise. Keep it guessing by changing frequency, intensity, type or time of exercise and include interval training.

Q: Can you effectively manipulate your exercise on your own?

A: Yes            No

### **Exercise Economy...**

“The more you do something, the better you get at doing it” As the body improves at performing a particular exercise, it can actually begin to burn fewer calories during the exercise.

#### *What to do...*

Same as the previous solution, but concentrate on dramatic changes in the type of exercise performed every two weeks. For example, work out for two weeks on a treadmill, then switch to a rower. Additionally, make routine changes in your resistance training system.

Q: Do you think it's realistic to do this on your own?

A: Yes            No

### **Over-Training...**

“More exercise is not always better” Just as with under-eating, over-training may decrease the amount of energy (calories) you use. This is partially due to adaptive thermogenesis\* (a survival mechanism). In other words, there may be a point of diminishing return, when an increase in exercise energy expenditure is negated by an equal decrease in non-exercise energy expenditure. This negates the additional work, at least until expenditure is dramatically increased and/or calories are decreased.

#### *What to do...*

Take at least seven days off from your regular exercise routine (this should be done every 12 weeks, regardless). Start back with less and a different type of work and increase only as necessary (e.g., the least amount of specific work to initiate change). Your metabolism and daily activities will generally increase again.

Q: Will you realize that you are over-trained? And if so, are you mentally prepared to take the time off without guidance?

A: Yes            No

## Enhanced Physical Condition...

“When you are in overall better shape, your system is more efficient or burns fewer calories to operate (i.e., your heart rate slows).” The primary benefit of exercise is to improve health through an appropriate regime. Improved health can cause a slower resting metabolic rate (RMR). In other words, fewer calories are burned during normal daily activities. This is partially due to an increase in cardiopulmonary efficiency (e.g., lower resting heart rate).

### *What to do...*

Stick with your goal of staying healthy. Concentrate on intensity and type changes for a longer “after-burn” (calories burned above the normal resting metabolic rate after exercise).

Q: Can you create the necessary after burn without the help of a Fitness Professional?

A: Yes            No

Just as a well-tuned car gets better fuel economy, a well-tuned body can also thrive on less fuel (calories) when challenged. In order for you to reach and maintain your fitness goals, it is vital that you are able to address the issues mentioned above in relation to your lifestyle and genetic parameters. If you are not confident at having mastered the above-mentioned situations, ask your

Nutritional Coach about the options available to make the most of your investment of both time and money.

### Can You Overcome a Plateau Alone?

- 1 Define a plateau.

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- 2 Answer all questions on the previous pages about the seven reasons for a plateau. Be prepared to discuss them in your next session.

***If you answered “no” to any of the questions above, it’s time to discuss the options of a Continuous Success Program with your Fitness Professional.***