

7 common exercise errors

May 9 2017, by Julie Davis, Healthday Reporter



(HealthDay)—Are you sabotaging your exercise goals? Avoid these common mistakes.

Mistake No. 1: Not keeping an exercise chart or journal. A record tells you how far you've come and when it's time to go to the next level. Noting improvements in your [heart rate](#) will also provide motivation. Check it 15 to 60 minutes after exercising—you'll see a decrease in this number as your heart gets stronger.

Mistake No. 2: Not writing down goals. Studies show that people who chart short- and long-term goals accomplish more of them.

Mistake No. 3: Strength-training the same muscles on consecutive days. This prevents proper recovery and growth. Allow one to two days before working the same [muscle groups](#).

Mistake No. 4: Holding your breath. Proper breathing is almost as important as proper form. Exhale as you lift, and inhale as you lower.

Mistake No. 5: Not eating enough protein. To lose weight and tone up, your plan should include cardio, strength training and a lower-calorie diet that's high in protein—about three-quarters of a gram per pound of your ideal body weight. More [protein](#) enhances the effects of exercise and decreases fat without [muscle loss](#).

Mistake No. 6: Being distracted during workouts. Reading or watching a complex TV show can actually slow your pace. Instead, listen to energetic music or try a sitcom (just be sure to place the screen at eye level for better performance).

Mistake No. 7: Ignoring flexibility and balance training. Both are key to overall fitness.

More information: The American College of Sports Medicine has 10 do's to [get your exercise routine on track](#).

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Citation: 7 common exercise errors (2017, May 9) retrieved 20 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-05-common-errors.html>

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