

Episode 055: Should You Seek Help with Your Fitness and Nutrition Goals?

This is The TD Fitness podcast with Coach T, episode number 55.

Welcome to The TD Fitness Podcast, giving you healthy living insights for your physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being. Now, your host, certified health coach and personal trainer, Coach T.

Hey guys, thanks so much for joining me here. I'm Coach T from TDFitness.net, and I teach people how to live a healthy lifestyle without having to give up the things that make life worth living. I'm a certified health coach and personal trainer, and I focus primarily on providing strategies to replace less healthy habits with healthier ones. Because what I found is that those healthy habits not only continue to become more healthy, but they also tend to empower you to go even further and implement positive habits in other parts of your life as well. I'm also the host of the TD Fitness podcast and creator of The Fit Life program.

Today, I'm answering the question, "Should I seek help with my fitness and nutrition goals?" I'll tell you that the answer may surprise you. I'll actually give you a couple of things you can do on your own to make healthy habits stick, and I have a free download for you. It's a double bonus, in a sense. It's 10 Things Your Trainer Won't Tell You, and another 10 Things To Look For In A Personal Trainer. You can find the link right here on this post. So let's jump right in.

But first a quick story. So someone who recently joined my Fit Life program signed up. Then they filled out the quick online assessment. We scheduled a coaching call to get things started. After chatting for a while and then studying her current habits and looking at a meal plan that she was given by a trainer that she was working with, I decided that she really didn't need my services at all. I gave her a full refund and contacted my friends that I work with who are registered dietitians. I referred her to them, because I felt that her meal plan was all wrong, and that she could really benefit a lot more from some professional nutrition advice than she could from my services as a health coach or personal trainer.

I'll tell you that this isn't the first time that I've seen this. The truth is that it can be very confusing on who to turn to for help in your quest for healthy living. In fact, many times I get the question, "What does a health coach?", or "Why do I need a personal trainer?" I mean, it's not that we don't know that we know that we could make some health improvements in certain parts of our lives, right? Generally speaking, we know what to do. We know that some things are healthier than others when it comes to nutrition. We know that regular exercise benefits us. So you might ask, "Why can't I just start an exercise program myself? I don't necessarily need a plan. Even some exercise is better than none at all, right?"

Well, what can a trainer or a coach provide that you couldn't do A, cheaper, or B, without the hassle and stress of having to check in, if you will. So the obvious answer is that a coach or a trainer provides expertise. So let me make a quick distinction between a personal trainer and a health coach. Most people are familiar with what a personal trainer does. A trainer can help you work towards your fitness goals, whether those are performing goals like getting stronger, running faster, improving flexibility or being more agile. Working with a trainer, though, does not necessarily equal getting a weight loss solution. It's important to understand that. The TDFit055 (Completed 10/19/18)

reason is because in most instances, nutrition is going to be about 90% of the weight loss equation. A personal trainer certification does not qualify someone to prescribe meal plans. There are some very strict guidelines when it comes to nutrition advice and personal training.

So what's a health coach? Well, a health coach understands the personal training aspect, and the things required to improve fitness. But they also are trained in the psychological component of creating, practicing, and maintaining healthy habits. In fact, that's why, after being a personal trainer for seven years, I decided to become a health coach as well, because I have learned that it takes more than a few exercise sessions each week to truly affect change in people's lives. The biggest component there is that the things you do 23 hours a day when you're not working out, that is so important. I'm talking about your fitness and your nutrition habits.

So I've mentioned the importance of nutrition a couple of times now. I'll add that the best resource for personalized nutrition, either to lose weight or to have more energy or if you're dealing with GI issues, it's going to be to seek out the help of a registered dietician nutritionist. RDNs, as they're called, have a degree in this. They're accredited, and they have passed a national level examination. The reason this is important is because food prescriptions are essentially like medical prescriptions. Each one of us has a specific need, and a trainer certification alone is not adequate in this regard.

So be wary of someone who says that they are a nutritionist, because there's a number of nutritionist certifications out there, but again that's different than a Registered Dietician Nutritionist. Now I said that coaches and trainers provide expertise. If we look at fitness, for example, as a simple scale between zero and 10, with zero being no fitness at all and 10 being the extreme, the very intense, maybe daily workouts with no rest from day to day ... There's a point on that scale where each person's goal should fall. This point is going to vary from one individual to the next. For someone who's sedentary, maybe just adding a little bit of exercise might be appropriate. Someone who's fit but wishes to add more muscle, or they may fall somewhere else on that scale from zero to 10. An elite athlete or someone training for a marathon, a postpartum mom, they may each fall at different places on that sliding scale.

So how do you decide how much to work out? How much should you lift? How much rest should you take between your workouts? How often should you run? There are an infinite number of positions on that scale between zero and 10. Where should you fall? That's where a good trainer comes in. So when you're looking for precise results, then your fitness regiment must be precise. If you've seen the movie *The Patriot* with Mel Gibson, he tells his son "aim small, miss small", meaning that if you have a very precise target and you fall short, you're still close to the bullseye. How close you get to your goals will be the result of how precise your aim or your regiment is. That's where a good trainer can be beneficial.

But let's be honest. Not everyone needs precise results. Most of us are not elite athletes. We've already said that some exercise is better than none, and that we could just improve the quality of foods we eat. But what's more applicable, I think, to most of us, those who simply seek to live healthy and be in pretty good shape, is that there's a balance between preventing injury and protecting what is probably our most valuable resource. That resource is our time. So sure you could walk 10 minutes a day and you'd get some definite benefit from that. But are those benefits going to be in line with your goals? Is walking alone going to help with weight loss, for example? Possibly, but again I know as a trainer and coach that nutrition is going to be a huge part of the weight loss equation for most people.

So similarly though, you could also run two hours a day every day. But do you really need to do that? Do you really need to risk injury and overtraining if your goal is simply to get in better shape? So here's the thing. What we all look for is the most effective and efficient strategy to get us to our goals. We want to get there in the the safest and quickest way possible. The key is in finding that sweet spot in the middle of those two extremes that makes the most of your available time while minimizing the risk for injury.

Now, fitness professionals like personal trainers and health coaches can help you safely reach your goals while making the most of the time you have available. I'll add that if you do work with a trainer, hold them accountable. Ask why or how the exercises that they prescribe are getting you closer to your goal. I mean, their job is just as much to educate you as it is to give you workouts.

Now if you struggle more with maintaining healthy habits, or with finding time to exercise, or choosing healthier food options, then a health coach may be a good option for you. People have asked me before, "Why should I get a health coach?", or "Why should I get a coach? Aren't they just for professional athletes and kids?" I'll say that you don't need to be under 12 years old or a professional athlete to have a coach, but I will say it should say something that even the most highly successful people ... When you think about elite athletes, think Michael Phelps, for example, or Fortune 500 executives or even surgeons. They utilize coaches in their disciplines because they know that education and ability alone are not enough when you want to continue to improve.

I can't think of too many things that are more important than improving your personal health and your well-being. I'll tell you that for me, having the ability to work with people and help them live healthier by making healthier choices, and then showing them how to maintain that healthy lifestyle completely on their own is something that ... It excites me to no end. Because when you're able to maintain those healthy habits, you feel empowered. That feeling spreads to so many other areas of your life, and it spreads to the people around you. That is what I love about it.

Now, I promised to give you a couple of things that you can do on your own to help you live healthier. The first is going to be tracking your nutrition or exercise habits. There are a number of free online trackers and apps that can help with this. I've used an app called My Fitness Pal. I've used that myself, and I've used it for those that I've coached. It's really easy to use. It's free and it has some cool features so you can check that out. Another one is My Plate from Livestrong.

I'll that you that tracking your dietary intake for a day or two, or even just a portion of the things you eat ... if you want to track, for example, just the amount of sweets you take in, or how much water you drink from day-to-day, or logging your exercise sessions, for example. That tracking can give you insight into trends that you wouldn't normally spot, you wouldn't normally know at, and things that you would just otherwise assume were fine. For me, logging exercise gives me something to shoot for each week. It's kind of like a miniature goal each week. Then I can look back and see how I did over a period of time.

The next thing I would recommend that you can implement on your own is some type of accountability mechanism. So for those that I coach through my Fit Life program, I provide an online and app-based accountability platform. So each day, they answer a simple yes or no question about whether they completed a certain habit the day before. Then we work together to spot trends and change up habits over time. You can also do this, though, with an accountability partner. Whether it's someone that you exercise with, or maybe a relative or

friend that really could be all the way across the country. It doesn't matter, but just knowing that someone else is looking for you to exercise can make a world of difference.

So there you have it. That's just a couple of quick things you can do on your own to jumpstart or spark healthy habits in your life, and a little bit of insight into whether a trainer, a health coach, or even a registered dietician is right for you. So do me a favor and give me a like or comment if you're watching on YouTube or on Facebook. If you're listening in iTunes or Google Play, be sure to rate the podcast. Don't forget to grab your free download, 10 Things Your Trainer Won't Tell You, and 10 Things To Look For in a Personal Trainer. You can grab that TDFitness.net/055download.

As always, the show notes for this episode will be found at TDFitness.net/055. You all have a good one. Have a blessed one. Coach T out.

Why did I create The Fit Life program? I wanted to provide something that wasn't just for weight loss, not just for feeling better, not even just for better health. I wanted a more complete solution. I also wanted to make it sustainable. It's not just about starting something or sticking with it for a month or two. Healthy living, which includes fitness, nutrition, and a healthy mindset, is about practicing healthy habits consistently. Not all the time, because no one is perfect, but practicing those healthy habits more than you are right now. That's how change beings, and that's how healthy living continues.

Find out more at FitLifeProgram.com or TDFitness.net/fitlife.