

March 2020 Fit Clips

This is the TD fitness podcast with Coach T, episode number 94.

Welcome to the TD fitness podcast, giving you ways to live a healthy lifestyle without giving up the things that make life worth living. And now your host, certified health coach and personal trainer, Coach T. Hey

Hey guys, welcome back to the TD fitness podcast. This is Coach T and this is another collection of the fit vids from the past month. So, over the past month we focused on the final four steps of my 12 principles for living a healthier life. Those four principles, those last four are what can work against me? What can work for me? As in the support system in the things that you have in your favor, measuring the right things and then the final step is how do you assess how you've done over the last period and then adjust going forward? So, that's what these fit vids focused on over the past month. I have three clips or three fit vids for each one of those and I've compiled them here together, just for you. So with that said, I'll let you get right to it. I hope you enjoy. Coach T, TD fitness podcast, episode number 94. Here it is.

How many diet, weight loss or better health plans have you tried before? I mean, think back and try to remember. And if you're currently looking for some help in this area, another good question to ask is why? I mean we've all tried things in the past to get our diet right or to lose weight here or tone a bit there, but if we've tried things before to get after these problems, why are they still problems? I think there are two obvious answers as far as I can see. The first is that those things that I tried, for example before, just didn't work. Maybe they weren't sustainable or maybe they were just ineffective. And the second part of the answer is that I'm 45 now, I'm not 22. Things have changed, my body has changed, my activity level has changed what I can and cannot do has changed. The time available that I have to devote to health and fitness has changed.

So it makes sense that we're still looking for an answer, right? But here's what can help with a no kidding solution. So again, think back to those things that didn't work and ask that question of why and accept the fact that your body and circumstances are different now, but compare the things that you have done before to attempt to live a healthier life. Compare that to the things that you're trying or you hope to try now. My guess is that when you really think about it, some of those things will stand out. Things like, I tried no carb, but I love pasta. Well, that's not sustainable, right? Or it was just hard for me to eat spinach for two out of my three daily meals. Of course it is. Or I just got really hungry drinking lemon juice and honey all the time. Okay.

So this week's theme is identifying what can work against you in your goal for better habits and healthier living and one of the ways to answer that is to identify what did not work before. Think about why it didn't work and don't do that again if it wasn't effective. All right?

Here's a pop quiz for you. What do the following things have in common? Cold weather. A young child. A lost shoe. Oversleeping and an empty refrigerator. I'll let you think about that and I'll come back in a couple of days with the answer. All right, I'm just kidding. So each of those things and many others can be what I call impediments to healthier eating, to consistent exercise or to other healthy habits. For me, cold weather means I'm not running outside. Okay? If I can't find my tennis shoes or something else in my workout gear that's something else that I need for exercise, then I won't exercise. If I oversleep or if one of the girls, one of my young girls gets up early, there goes my workout and if I don't have healthier options readily available for dinner, I'm more inclined to grab something that is less healthy.

So each of these things for you, they may be different. They're what we call obstacles or barriers. Now, I don't make a habit of referring to my daughters for example, as obstacles. But it is true that things related to the people that we love dearly can sometimes trump our best efforts at a healthier lifestyle. So how do we deal with this reality? Well, first I think we have to recognize and identify that they sometimes do exist and we have to plan for them. It sounds simple, I know, but it's a step that we so often overlook and it's something that can derail us before we even get started.

So earlier this week we talked about obstacles to our healthy living efforts. We talked about roadblocks or barriers, if you will. So what do we do about these obstacles and barriers? Well, we have to overcome them, of course. And the biggest takeaway I think from this concept is the notion of planning and also being a little bit flexible.

So here's an example for you. I have carried a set of jumper cables in my car or truck for as long as I can remember. Why? Because in the small town where I grew up, that's what we did. It was one way of being prepared and I've had to use those jumper cables a handful of times either for my own vehicle or to assist somebody else, but why do I tell you that? Well, because if I'm in a hurry and my car won't start because my battery is dead for example, then I can get it going as long as I have another vehicle around to assist and that barrier or obstacle to getting me where I need to go, the dead battery, can be overcome because of a little bit of planning and preparation. Those are the jumper cables.

The fact that I had those jumper cables made me prepared. So going back to some of the barriers that we talked about earlier, the ones that I mentioned a couple of days ago, we have to jump back to this theme of planning and preparation. I'm not asking you to plan your exercise calendar for the year. I'm not asking you to plan your meals for the next month. What I am asking you to do is put a little bit of thought into what you plan to do today or tomorrow to live healthier and actually visualize that you could have the best intention of getting a quick walk in, for example, on your lunch break. But if you don't think about it beforehand, you may not realize that you had committed to lunch with friends or that you forgot your walking shoes that day. So think about what you plan to do and take the necessary steps to overcome those obstacles before they become a problem. Don't even let them become obstacles. Remember that stumbling blocks can sometimes be stepping stones, if you let them.

All right guys. Hey, last week's theme was what can work against me and this week I want to talk a little bit about what can work for me because you want to set yourself up for success. And the first thing that I'll talk about is, it has to do with your environment and your surroundings. What can help you? What can hurt you? What you see behind me is a T-37. This was actually the very first plane that I flew in the air force. I happened to be on travel right now and I thought it'd be cool to maybe film this video in front of that. But I'm here on travel because I'm here to review a good amount of paperwork, if you will, me and a few others. And as part of this review process, what the folks who have set this up have for us, is a lot of things to keep us occupied and motivated throughout the day.

A lot of coffee, a lot of snacks and so forth. So one of the things that's readily available is what I call unlimited peanut M and M's. And for those of you who don't know, any combination of chocolate and peanuts or chocolate and peanut butter is essentially... That's my jam. That is the thing that I could probably eat day in and day out. So the very first day, I didn't count how many peanut M and M's I had but I can tell you that it was a whole lot and when you think about this concept of willpower and what it takes to refrain from doing some of the things that maybe you shouldn't be doing, it's hard and all of us have our vices. So that's one of the things that I just wanted to point out is that, when it comes to your surroundings, you can control what those surroundings are typically.

So one of the things that I'm going to do today is go out and get some of the more healthy dark chocolate covered almonds, which is typically what I use at home to satisfy my sweet tooth. And I'll use that instead of unlimited peanut M and Ms. So, that's just one of the things that I thought I'd share with you today. Again, it comes down to willpower. It comes down to your environment, though, because you can absolutely control that.

Hey guys, Coach T back here with another video and this week's theme is what can work for me. And in the last video we talked about our environment and how we need to control our environment when we can. Well, another thing that goes into the "What can work for me?", bin is the people you surround yourself with. So who do you surround yourself with and what types of things do they value?

So if you look in the distance, they're behind me. I have the camera on it now, you'll see a T-38. So that is another aircraft, U.S aircraft training platform and it's typically used to train our fighter pilots. It's one of the first airplanes that they fly when they come into the air force after they complete their initial pilot training piece and one of the fundamentals of, particularly fighter pilot training and fighter pilot employment and how we execute is this concept of having a buddy or a wingman. And it's an important one because really it gets back to the question of who's there to support you, right? So that's why this is important because as we think about what can work for me, we want to know who is there to support us. And this isn't a new concept.

This is something that is practiced in a number of different venues, a number of different environments. I think of alcoholics anonymous, I think of CrossFit, I think a Weight Watchers, I think of my church group, your tribe, your community, your support system. That

is all super important to how you're going to either succeed or fail because that's a big part of the process and it talks to this concept of culture and the notion of people like us do things like this. So what are you a part of? What group are you a part of? I'll share a quick example with you. My wife, just last week, she had been running around all day with the doing things for the kids, doing things for me and called up one of her girlfriends because she was about to... She was very hungry. She was about to go grab something to eat and basically called her girlfriend and say, "Hey, I'm just going to grab some fast food real quick, what do you think?".

That's her accountability partner. And her friend was like, "No, you're not going to do that. You're going to go back to the house and you're going to eat something a little bit healthier". And my wife shared that story with me and she said, "You know what? She was absolutely right. That's what I should have done and that's what I did".

And I share that because that's how positive people who have the same values, the same mindset that we do and can help us in our journey, particularly, when we're a little bit weaker. That's how they can help and that's why people are important. So when you think about what can work for you, think about that. Think about the types of people that you surround yourself with. And speaking of that, if there's someone who can use some motivation today and maybe this video will help them. I ask you to share it. Okay. So that's all I have for you Coach T, out.

All right. Hey guys, coach T here again, staying on this theme of what can work for me. We talked about environment a couple of videos ago. In the last video we talked about people who are our support system and the last thing I want to hit on this theme is this concept of accountability and really knowing that someone else is interested in what you do. Maybe keeping track of the types of things that you do so that you can keep yourself accountable. I'll share a story with you. We have a four year old and I can think back to the time when we were helping her potty train and I would go to work early in the morning. I would always call or FaceTime later that morning once the girls were up. And one of the things that my wife would do is say, "Hey, your daughter has something to tell you". And we put our youngest on the phone and she would say, "Daddy, I went to potty". And I would say, "I am so proud of you baby". And you could just see the smile on her face and she sunk back into that little shy pose that she does. But that was positive reinforcement for her and that was knowing that somebody else cares and that's what I'm talking about when I think about accountability.

In our monthly member program, we call them the action takers. We do this through basically the use of an application, an app on your phone and every week, every month they determine the types of things that the goals for that week or month that they want to accomplish. Whether it's maybe accomplishing three exercises, three exercise sessions a week or whatever it is and then they track that in the app and I can see that and I can help to hold them accountable and that is so powerful. But I'll tell you that it doesn't have to be an app. It can be a partner. As we talked about earlier, it can be a log that you keep track of yourself.

Maybe you're the type of person that likes to look back on things just to see how much you've done or some other tracking system.

So, it's these types of things that I'm talking about for accountability. So I'll tell you that if you're interested in learning more about some of those types of tools and particularly some of those tools that are available to our action takers in our monthly member program, you can find out more @tdfitness.net/take action. But the takeaway from this video is that accountability, some mechanism for accountability is super important as we try to live healthier and improve our habits in a healthy way. Coach T, signing out

Measurement is feedback. Here's some examples. If your boss tells you that you only produced 15 TPS reports this month and they asked for 20, that's feedback. If the speedometer tells you that you're going 45 miles an hour and the speed limits 35 miles an hour, you slow down before the speed trap that's ahead. That's feedback. And of course, the infamous number on the scale. That's probably one of the most popular forms of feedback, but we're going to come back to that one.

When your boss measures your progress against what you were hired to do, that matters because if you don't perform on that scale, then you don't have a job anymore and when the speedometer tells you that you're going faster than you should and you slow down and you avoid that ticket from a police officer, that matters. The speedometer is giving you the right feedback.

It's beneficial when we measure the right things, but what about when we step on the scale? What is that telling us? Is it telling us that we're healthier than someone who weighs more? Not necessarily. Is it telling us that we're healthier ourselves because we weighed less than we did before? Not necessarily. Is it telling us that the things that we've done, through diet and exercise maybe, is making us lighter? Well, it may be saying that, but maybe not. You see, the difference between the number of TPS reports you produce for your boss and the speed that you're going according to the speedometer. The difference between those things and your weight is that you can directly control those things. You cannot directly control your weight, you can't control it. And it's not necessarily measuring what you think it is. You see what we measure is important because it informs what we think about ourselves and our ability to continue. It affects motivation and it'll tell us what we need to change or keep doing as we go forward. So what do we measure for health? What should we measure? If it's not weight, then what is it? Well, I'm going to talk about that in the next video.

So I wrapped up the last video by asking what should we measure when it comes to our health? If it's not your weight, then what is it? Well, weight isn't all that bad, but it just doesn't paint anywhere near a complete picture. It's like only looking at your speedometer to drive a car and not looking at how much gas you have or your engine temperature or whether your seatbelt is fastened and not looking out the window to see if you're driving in the right lane or whether there is a stop sign approaching or if there's a tight curve coming up. Imagine trying to drive a car while only looking at the speedometer. So, as a trainer, I measure other things like your body mass index or your waist to hip ratio, your body fat percentage, your

waist circumference, and a number of other things that can give me an idea of your overall level of health and fitness and your doctor take this a step further measuring cholesterol or blood pressure and a host of other things even.

And all of those things together, and more, can paint a more complete picture of your health. But even then there's something different that I feel we should measure as we look to live healthier lives. That thing that we should measure, it's anything that relates to performance and not outcomes. Your weight, your blood pressure, your waist circumference. Those are all outcomes that are determined by a number of different things like activity, nutrition, hydration, stress levels, genetics, gender, age and more and I don't need to tell you that you do not have control over many of those things. Yet they all affect your health and they all affect your weight. So when I say that you should measure anything that relates to performance and not outcomes. Here's what I mean. Your efforts towards healthier living, things like how many times you elect to walk or jog or exercise this week. Things like how many times you intentionally get more than just a few hours of sleep or maybe how many times you add veggies to your diet as you try to improve your nutrition. These are performance metrics. How you do is up to you and isn't it nice to be measured against something that you actually have control over? If you want to get to where you're going, stop staring at the speedometer and look out the windshield.

I started this week's theme of measuring the right things by stating that measurement is feedback. So what do we use this information for? When you step on the scale to continue with the example that I've used all week, because I think measuring your weight, it can be one of the worst things that you can do in your healthy living journey. But when you step on the scale, that becomes a part of what's called your feedback loop, meaning you take that information in and then you make subsequent decisions based on that information and then you weigh yourself again and you continue to adjust based on actions you took from your previous measurement and on and on. Do you see how this cycle can become somewhat vicious or dangerous even? It's easy to step on the scale. It's easy to see and use that feedback but it can be dangerous when it's taken out of context and I should reiterate here something that I mentioned in my last post and that is that weighing yourself isn't all that bad, but it just simply doesn't tell the whole story or even a decent part of the story.

The danger is that we use the number on the scale today to make decisions about tomorrow based on assumptions from yesterday. Let me say that again. We use the number on the scale today to make decisions about tomorrow based on assumptions from yesterday. I gained three pounds. It must've been the burger I ate. No more burgers for me. Or here's ones, I still can't believe I haven't lost any weight on this meal plan. It doesn't work. I'm just going to go back to my old ways. Look, if you're going to use the scale, understand what it's telling you, which is how much you weigh right now. It's not seeing your diet is bad. It's not saying you need to exercise more. Those things may be true, but you don't need a scale to tell you that. It's merely telling you how much pressure you're putting on the scale when you step on it. That's it.

And with the rest of the story, different types of measurements, for example, you may find out that your hydration hasn't been as good lately and that your body is retaining more water to compensate, which by the way is the primary cause of those daily weight fluctuations that we see. Or it might be telling you that the extra stress and hours that you're putting in at work are causing you to get less sleep, which in turn is affecting your hormone levels and causing you to retain weight. But the scale doesn't speak to you like that. But I will speak to you like that because I care.

Thanks for listening guys. Hey, before you go, this is something that I think everyone needs to hear. So do me a favor and share it with as many people as you can and I'd love to get your comments. I'd love to get your questions. I can answer them here directly or privately but I'd love to get some feedback from all of you guys. Thanks again, Coach T, out.

What is progress? I mean how do we define it? What does it mean to improve? What we tend to do is we tend to compare ourselves to this published norm and that term itself implies compliance if you will, as if the norm is normal. Here's an example. I know that somebody that's my height should weigh a certain amount. That's based on published fitness standards and published norms if you will. But the question is, is for what? I mean I'm six feet two inches tall. If I'm six feet two and I play in the NFL, then I should probably have a different weight than if I'm six feet two inches tall and I'm an ultra marathon runner for example. And the weight norm is probably somewhere in between those two extremes. But even then, that doesn't mean that it's necessarily normal for you because everyone, each of us is different. So when you look back at what you've done over a certain assessment period, try not to compare that to the norm. Okay. The theme for this week is assessing and readjusting what we do going forward based on how we've done over the last measurement period. So remember that the norm does not mean normal for you, not necessarily. And improving yourself is going to beat matching or achieving the norm when it comes to living healthier.

You may know someone who knows a fair amount of just about everything. Maybe they have a breadth of experience and knowledge and this is perhaps a good quality to have. Compare that to the person who has been a plumber or an engineer or a surgeon or a taxi cab driver for say 30 years. They've practiced and executed their craft thousands of times and they have depth in their chosen discipline and this is also a good quality to have.

And then I think about what it means to be a leader, for example. I think a lot about this actually and certainly depth of experience and breadth of experience are both important. But what does this have to do with you? As we look at this theme of assessing how we've done in a health and fitness area and adjusting or planning what you'll do going forward, it's often beneficial to choose one. Breadth or depth and either can work. For example, now that you've added exercise one day a week, for example, do you want to go deeper? Do you want to build on that? Do you want to do more exercise or perform more exercise each week? Or will you stick with that current habit of exercising once per week for now and also add something else like a piece of fruit or some type of a vegetable to your diet every day and that would add

some breadth to your healthy living habits. Depth or breadth you choose. Just remember to stay focused on your approach.

I was still in high school when Ice cube released his song called "It was a good day" and it described somewhat explicitly what a good day in his world looked like and whether or not you agree with the content or the delivery I think it is a good artistic expression. Then on the opposite end of the spectrum in many ways is a short story that our seven year old recently had to write for a homework assignment for school. She's in second grade and the assignment was to describe what the worst day she could imagine looked like and this was a great assignment because it made her think through what she doesn't like. It helps us as parents understand what's maybe important to her and her examples included things like forgetting part of her lunch or forgetting her lunch when going to school or falling off of her bike and a host of other things like that.

And all of this got me thinking. I was thinking, what is it that makes good days, good and bad days bad? And whether you're a teenager growing up in South central LA in the early nineties or you're a seven year old who just learned to ride a bike, or you're someone like you or me, I'd argue that what makes good days good and bad days bad is the compound effect of the things that happen on either of those types of days. When bad things happened over and over again, they tend to pile to one another and they get you down because it's one thing on top of another. For example, maybe we give into a craving while we're trying to follow a meal plan and we miss a few days of exercise because of a cold or because one of the kids is sick and now before you know it, you're in a downward spiral and you're thinking, "Man, I just can't do anything right in this fitness area".

And then an example on the positive side may be that you get a good night's sleep and then you have time to exercise that day and time to relax, time to spend with the family and some healthy meal options that are actually appealing and you get some time outdoors and those things may add up to a healthy day for you. But the funny thing is that if only one of those things occurred, maybe on separate days, you would probably consider those days to be just okay. And this is what I refer to as the synergistic effect or the compound effect. So what does that have to do with health? Well, small things add up. They add up to a positive feeling or a negative one and they can build on one another over time to create a healthy lifestyle. Or, conversely, they can leave you constantly defeated and down. So the takeaway is this, it's that small things matter. Those small things add up to both real successes like healthier bodies and perceived successes like having good days or bad days. So start small, improve gradually, and reap the benefits for a long time. Before you know it, almost every day could turn out to be a good day.

Hey guys, thanks for listening to episode number 94. Again, to recap, those fit vids or fit clips were essentially thoughts from the final four steps of my 12 principles for living a healthier life. Again, it talked about what can work against you, what can work for you, measuring the right things and then assessing our previous performance over the last period of time and then understanding how we can adjust to improve going forward. So hopefully

those have been helpful for you and if you like this content and this specifically, this episode of the TD fitness podcast, I had ask for you to leave a review and please share it with your friends. Okay. So that's all I have for you this month. This is Coach T, signing out. Please have a safe and healthy month. I'll be back in the next episode with more healthy living content for you.