

GYO: [TRANSFORMATION] FITSOAP a fitness prescription:

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In this installment of Gyo [TRANSFORMATION], I will lay out a prescription for optimum health and fitness. You can apply this prescription to any of the eleven concepts written about in the last installment of Gyo II. The method is easily remembered by using the acronym FITSOAP... Lets take a look:

F= Frequency or how often.

I= Intensity or how hard.

T= Time or how long/ duration.

S= The principle of Specificity.

O= The principle of Overload

A= The principle of Adaptation.

P= The principle of Progressive overload.

For illustration purposes, lets transpose the health related component of cardiovascular fitness onto the FITSOAP model. Remember, Cardiovascular fitness by definition, is the ability of the heart, blood vessels, blood, and respiratory system [lungs] to supply fuel, in the form of oxygen, to the muscles and the ability of the muscles to utilize this fuel to allow for sustained exercise. [See previous Gyo issue for the eleven components.]

As Budo Taijutsu practitioners, a way to develop cardiovascular fitness is the use of a walk/run program across and through a natural environment. Using the FITSOAP acronym, here's how it might look...

~Frequency or how often: When someone begins a walk/ run program, I suggest they start with a little work everyday. The bare minimum would be at least three times per week.

~Intensity or how hard: For cardiovascular fitness, we use a formula to determine a persons target heart rate... Take the number 220 and subtract your age. *Take a 40-year-old person: $220 - 40 = 180$ [Maximal Heart rate.]* Now multiply the Maximal Heart rate by 60% for the low end and by 80% for the high end to determine what's known as the target heart rate zone. This is the range you want your heart working to improve your cardiovascular fitness. Our example: $181 \times .60 = 108\text{bpm}$ – $180 \times .80 = 144\text{bpm}$. Our subject would need to keep their heart working between 108 and 144 beats per minute for at least 15 minutes to improve overall cardiovascular fitness.

~Time or how long: When someone is starting out, I recommend they walk/run for a minimum of 15 minutes or around 1.5 miles [remember this is baseline for a beginner] with a goal of about 30 minutes or 3 miles being reasonable to work towards.

~Specificity or the principle of Specificity: As you can see the word specificity contains the root word specific. This is all you need to know about this principle. If you want to develop your heart muscle your not going to perform a bench press exercise, you would walk/run. In the same way, if you wanted to develop chest muscles you wouldn't walk/run. So the principle of Specificity states that you must do activities designed and developed for a specific need.

~Overload or the principle of Overload: The principle of Overload specifies that in order to improve your overall health and skill related fitness you need to periodically increase the workload or the amount of work that you are doing. In order for a muscle [including the heart muscle] to get stronger, it must be "Overloaded," or worked against a greater workload than normal. Three ways in which to do this is by increasing the Frequency, Intensity, or Time/Duration of the activity [see above]. In the context of a cardiovascular fitness activity, you could run more often, run harder [interval training], or run longer.

~Adaptation or the principle of Adaptation: The principle of Adaptation states that the body is able to restore itself to normalcy, [homeostasis]. Individuals react differently to different stressors. Yes, exercise is a form of stress and stress by definition is the body's nonspecific response [generalized adaptation] to any demand made upon it in order to maintain physiological equilibrium or balance. When we talk about health and skill related fitness it has been my experience that the body begins to adapt to a specific level of fitness in about 6-8 weeks. So, in our example of cardiovascular fitness we need to change our routine every 6-8 weeks using the FIT principles. How do we do this?

~Progressive Overload or the principle of Progressive Overload: Well, we have already defined what overload is, so what is Progressive Overload or Progression? Progression is an important corollary of the Overload principle. The principle states that overload should not be increased too slowly or too rapidly if fitness is to result. Beginners should establish a baseline or threshold of training [a starting point] form which to begin. In our cardiovascular fitness example this was our established low number 108 BPM. A person exercises progressively by starting near threshold levels and gradually increasing in Frequency, Intensity, and Time within this target zone. Exercise above or below the target zone is counterproductive and can be dangerous. Clearly it is possible to do to little or to much exercise when developing optimal fitness. Remember, threshold levels and target zones change with fitness levels. We will discuss this more in another writing.

What I have attempted to layout here is a prescription for improving your overall health and skill related fitness. Without getting esoteric I would like to state here and now that the FITSOAP prescription can be used in developing the body, mind, and spirit. I will address this in a later writing. Good luck in applying this theory in your own Naturalistic Physical Health and Conditioning program or Gyo.....

Ninpo – Ikkan,

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