

FIT FACT

Presented by LEC Fitness, LLC



Have you ever reached a point in your workouts where you seemed to be stalled – seem to no longer be making progress in your fitness? Or, you simply find yourself bored with your exercise routine? If so, or if you want to avoid this before it happens, please READ ON.

My mantra to help you avoid these stall points or boredom in your workouts is “*Overload to Avoid Plateau.*” The Overload Principle is a simple principle that allows your body to make fitness advances by working at an exercise-intensity greater than what is accustomed to. In *Plain English* this translates to, for example, increasing the amount of weight that you *normally* lift. But, this principle does not only apply to strength training, aside from strength, this principle can also be applied to other fitness components such as flexibility and even your cardiovascular fitness. Here’s how this might work for you.

If you think back to when you first started exercising, certain exercises were probably more difficult than others. For example, if you walk for your health, you may have started out walking a mile. You may have found yourself huffing and puffing along as you walked your mile. If you stuck with it, as you continued your walking routine throughout the days, weeks, months you may have found walking that same mile easier and easier. Here is where – if you want to continue to challenge your cardiovascular system to improve – you may want to *overload* your cardiovascular workout to keep your fitness gains moving forward. You can overload in a number of ways: increase the distance you walk, decrease the time that you walk that same mile (i.e. walk faster), or a more advanced method such as wearing a weighted vest or carrying some external weight while walking that same mile. The same principle applies to your strength training: lift more weight, increase the number of repetitions you perform with the same weight, or decrease

the amount of rest you take between exercises. All of these are examples of overload, and of how you can continue to challenge yourself to make advances in your fitness.

By safely incorporating the overload principle into your workouts you will not only find yourself avoiding the dreaded plateau, but also keeping your workouts interesting and challenging!

One word of caution: Overloading is not something that should be undertaken without planning because, if done improperly, it can lead to injury. Generally speaking, you should NOT increase more than one exercise factor at a time (e.g. time, distance weight). As a certified personal trainer I strongly recommend that you meet with a certified trainer or other fitness professional to help you plan your program so that you can make safe and effective changes to your exercise program.

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