

# Get A Grip - Training Plan for Health and Longevity

## Motivation and Consistency

The best protocol is worthless if you are not able to stay consistent throughout your life. The self-determination theory (SDT) is still one of the best theories in terms of human motivation. Three aspects are going to help you to stay consistent:

1. Autonomy. YOU must decide the course of action.
2. Competency. The higher your skill level is, the more motivation you have.
3. Relationships. Connect your training to people or things so you have accountability and interdependency on your side.

## Assessment Strategies

Before starting any workout routine, it is always a good idea to look at the status quo. There are a multitude of assessment strategies one can use that do not rely on any equipment. Note: the following tasks are only a beginning and not the full picture. Make sure to use advanced tools and techniques to get an in-depth assessment if needed.

- Cardiovascular Endurance:

Stair Climb Test: Time yourself walking up a specific number of stairs (e.g., 4 flights) at a brisk pace. Faster times indicate better cardiovascular health.

Self-Paced Walking Test: Walk comfortably for a set time (e.g., 12 minutes) and cover as much distance as possible. Greater distance signifies better endurance.

Hiking and Jogging for an extended amount of time (at least half an hour) without pain and stoppages is also a good indicator of baseline CV health.

- Muscular and Mental Strength and Endurance:

Bodyweight Exercises: Perform exercises like squats, lunges, push-ups (modified versions on knees if needed), or wall sits. More repetitions and longer hold times indicate better strength and endurance.

Mabu or Horse Stance Test: The longer you can hold the Mabu, the better your leg endurance and mental toughness. Aim for holding at least one minute with good posture.

Chair Stand Test: Time yourself repeatedly standing up from a seated position in a chair without using your arms. Faster completion times show better leg strength and endurance.

- Agility and Coordination:

Single Leg standing test: Look to the ground the straight ahead and lastly up towards the sky for time. Aim for at least one minute on each leg. Scale the task by closing your eyes.

Single Leg Hop Test: Hop on one leg for a set distance or time, then repeat on the other leg. Maintaining balance and covering a good distance indicate better agility and coordination.

- Flexibility:

Stand and Reach Test: Stand with extended knees and reach forward, aiming to touch your toes. Greater distance reached signifies better lower back and hamstring flexibility.

Shoulder Reach Test: Reach one arm behind your back and try to touch the opposite shoulder blade with your thumb. Being able to comfortably touch or come close to touching indicates good shoulder flexibility. Advanced: try to connect your hands behind your back (one arm in extension, the other arm in flexion)

Getting up from the floor using only your legs only is a good indicator of flexibility and strength. The less extremities you need, the better.

## The Role of Grip Strength

In recent years, the scientific community established **grip strength** as a quite precise indicator of physical prowess. Grip strength can be a surprisingly reliable indicator of general physical health because:

- Muscle Mass and Strength: Grip strength reflects overall muscle mass and strength. Weaker grip suggests less muscle, which can be a sign of various health issues.
- Bone Density: Strong grip often correlates with denser bones. Weaker grip may indicate bone loss, increasing fracture risk.

- **Cardiovascular Health:** Studies have shown a link between weak grip strength and higher risk of cardiovascular disease and mortality. There is even a study where grip strength predicted mortality risk better than blood pressure.

While not a definitive diagnosis, grip strength serves as a simple and accessible indicator of potential health concerns.

## Workout plan

The following plan incorporates principles from O'Keefe's systematic review to target cardiovascular health and longevity. It emphasizes a balanced approach with flexibility based on your fitness level. The plan caters to people looking for overall health, not increasing specific abilities to an advanced level.

### Key Components:

- **Cardiovascular Exercise (4-6 days/week):**
  - **Moderate-Intensity Exercise (MIE):**
    - Aim for 150 minutes per week. Examples: brisk walking, swimming, cycling (moderate pace).
    - Focus on conversationally paced activity where you can comfortably hold a conversation.
  - **High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT):**
    - Include 1-2 sessions (20-30 minutes) per week. Examples: sprinting intervals, fast-paced cycling bursts.
    - Alternate periods of high exertion with recovery periods.
- **Strength Training (2-3 days/week):**
  - Focus on compound movements that work multiple muscle groups. Examples: squats, lunges, push-ups, rows.
  - Start with lighter weights and gradually increase intensity as you get stronger. Aim for 8-12 repetitions per set, 2-3 sets per exercise.
- **Flexibility and Mobility (Daily):**
  - Incorporate daily stretches or yoga, qi gong or tai chi routines.
  - Focus on major muscle groups and maintaining good posture.

## Sample Weekly Schedule (modify based on your needs):

- **Mon:** MIE (brisk walk 30 min) + Strength (lower body)
- **Tue:** Rest/Active recovery (qi gong, stretching)
- **Wed:** HIIT (sprinting intervals) + Strength (upper body)
- **Thu:** MIE (swimming 30 min)
- **Fri:** Strength (full body)
- **Sat:** MIE (longer walk or bike ride)
- **Sun:** Rest/Active recovery

## Additional Tips:

- **Have a conversation with your body:** Rest when needed and avoid overtraining.
- **Warm-up before and cool down after each workout.**
- **Stay hydrated:** Drink plenty of water throughout the day.
- **Maintain a healthy diet:** Focus on whole foods, fruits, vegetables, and lean protein.
- **Get enough sleep:** Aim for 7-8 hours per night.

**Remember:** This is a general plan. It's crucial to consult with a doctor/therapist before starting any new exercise program, especially if you have any pre-existing health conditions. They can help personalize the plan based on your individual needs and fitness level.

## Further Exploration:

- Consider researching specific exercises and routines for each component based on your preferences.
- There are many online resources and mobile apps offering guided workouts.

### List of Sources:

O'Keefe JH, O'Keefe EL, Eckert R, Lavie CJ. Training Strategies to Optimize Cardiovascular Durability and Life Expectancy. *Mo Med*. 2023 Mar-Apr;120(2):155-162. PMID: 37091937; PMCID: PMC10121111.

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