

An In Home Fitness Program – Something to Start This Year

By Craig Ryan, CPT-CSN

It's fast. It's easy. It's fun. It does not take too much time out of your schedule. It is simple. It is affordable. You already have most of what you need to get started. It's effective. It gives you more energy. You don't have to worry about what you look like. You'll feel great. You'll look great. You'll train yourself to go for something other than the snacks in the pantry.

Do you need more reasons to get started?

In this article I want to give you the tools to begin an in home fitness routine, that will help you get fit and healthier in 2007.

Why It Is So Important To Exercise:

We all know that it is well documented how important it is to exercise regularly, but let me just get your brain going with a few important reminders. Regular exercise, whether at home or in the gym, benefits you in the following ways:

- Helps you sleep better
- Lose weight, gain weight, or maintain weight, whichever you need
- Improve your resistance to fight infections
- Lowers your risk of cancer, heart disease, and diabetes
- Helps your brain work better, making you smarter
- Helps you deal with stress better
- Lowers the symptoms of depression
- Slows Down Aging
- Improves energy levels, endurance, self esteem, and mood
- Improves cholesterol

The list goes on and on, but the above are many good reasons to start, or continue, exercising in this upcoming year.

Why Exercise At Home:

Now that we've reviewed the need for exercising, let me talk about the advantages of working out at home. Today's pace is getting faster and faster, and people are working more and more hours at their jobs. As a fitness professional, I meet regularly with those who cannot get to a gym to exercise. Workout facilities can be very beneficial to certain people, but if you are having a hard time driving to the gym, finding time to shower afterwards, getting changed before work, waiting to get on the machine you want once you're there, then you may want to consider starting an exercise program at home. Working out at home is more convenient, less expensive (no gym fees), more private, and

easier to incorporate into your everyday life. It is perfect for stay at home moms, self employed people who work from their homes, retired folks, the growing number of home schooling parents, or anyone who finds it inconvenient or not enjoyable to go to a workout club.

Starting Your Routine:

In order to start a fitness routine at home, you will need to do a little planning. Knowing what your fitness goals are is the starting point. From there, you can incorporate a plan on any budget. Here are a several recommendations based on 3 budgets, and comments on the exercise equipment needed:

1. For a budget of \$1000.00 or more:
 - Treadmill: Probably the best option for cardiovascular equipment because it can be used for running, walking, and some strength training on your legs. Workouts can be varied by speed, incline, and direction if needed.
 - A Stability Ball: This is also called an “exercise ball” or “fitness ball”. A ball is a must in any fitness routine, especially if at home. It provides numerous exercises for toning, strengthening, and stretching.
 - Resistance Bands/Tubes: This is another option for strength training. You can alternate between dumbbells and resistance tubing to keep the muscles growing.
 - Full Dumbbell Set: Weights ranging from 5lbs. to 50lbs. is enough for most people at home. Dumbbells are superior to most machines and are much more affordable.

2. For a budget of \$100.00- \$300.00:
 - Dumbbell Set
 - Stability Ball
 - Resistance Bands
 - Jump Rope- This allows for very challenging cardio workouts at a very low price.

3. Less than \$100.00:
 - Three dumbbell sizes (e.g. 5, 10, 15 lbs.)
 - Stability Ball
 - Jump Rope

A Few Important Tips and Precautions:

Before running out to buy your new fitness equipment for the new year, consider these important tips.

1. If you are new to the exercise world, or you haven't been working out in quite some time, enlist the services of a fitness professional to help you get started. The investment of a good personal trainer is well worth it over the long haul. An in

- home trainer can provide you with a safe and effective workout based on your desired goals, track your progress, and help you get more from your workouts than you are likely to do by yourself.
2. It is very important to have a plan with your fitness goals established, before going out and buying equipment of any kind. Don't fall into the buy quick scheme without knowing you will use the equipment and that it is the right equipment for the job, especially as time goes by.
 3. Your weekly routine needs to address all 5 components of fitness: cardiovascular conditioning, flexibility, muscular strength, muscular endurance, and body composition (i.e. what your body weight is composed of). It's not hard, but make sure you address each of these areas in your plan.
 4. Make sure you know how to do the exercises correctly before starting, and that you check with your doctor or a trainer before starting an exercise program. Remember, your desire is get healthier, not injured.
 5. Finally, be patient. It didn't take overnight to get out of shape, it is not going to take overnight to get in shape and lose any pounds you want to. The diets and workouts that encourage rapid weight loss that don't address long term results will not help you, a long term lifestyle change that slowly makes progress will.

Have fun this new year starting fitness routine in your home! Remember, eat smart and exercise safely and this 2007 will be your year for change!

This article is written by Craig Ryan, a certified personal trainer and nutrition consultant. Craig and his wife Amy run Renew Your Strength Fitness and Nutrition Solutions, offering in home and online personal training in the Triad area. For more info, or to contact Craig, visit their website at www.renewyourstrength.com.