

Kaizen Approach to Fitness

by

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What can Toyota teach us about fitness? Toyota as a company uses a philosophy called Kaizen. Kaizen means continuous incremental improvements. Toyota constantly strives to improve their business by instituting small incremental changes. You may be thinking what does this have to do with fitness? I would tell you that this concept may be the one thing that can do more for your health, body composition, and performance than any other thing I could teach you. The basic principle of Kaizen is that you are constantly trying to improve by just a little bit even if it is only 1%. This same approach can be applied to whatever you would like to accomplish in life. Kaizen can be applied to burning fat, building muscle, running faster, jumping higher, or anything that you would like to accomplish. The way to accomplish your goals is through continuous incremental improvement or Kaizen. Here are some easy ways to implement Kaizen into your fitness program

Kaizen Weight Loss or Gain - Everyone today is looking for the quick fix when it comes to losing weight or gaining muscle. This is evident in the popularity of fad diets and supplements these days. With a Kaizen approach to body composition, the goal should be to lose or gain 1-2 pounds per week. This may not sound like much but if you lose 1-2 pounds per week for 1 year you will lose 50-100 pounds. This is definitely a significant change. The way to accomplish change like this is one pound at a time. The other benefit of losing or gaining weight this way is that you are more likely to sustain your gains, because you would have been forced to make changes in your habits during the year in order to continue making progress. The end result is that you were able to change your body by changing your habits and that is the only way to make sustained changes.

Kaizen Interval Cardio - This is a very simple way to take your cardio up a notch and push it into the anaerobic zone which is really where you get results. Pick any cardiovascular exercise running, biking, swimming, jump rope, or even walking if it has been a while for you. Once you have picked which kind of cardio you are going to do and you have warmed up thoroughly, go ahead and perform 1 minute of whatever modality you chose. In this one minute I want you to try and go as far as you can. When you are done, slow your pace for 2 minutes. After your two minute rest repeat the program again for a total of 4 sets. Record how far you were able to travel in your four minutes of work and then try to beat that total in the next workout. In the following weeks add one more sprint, so in week two you will do 5 sets, and in week three you will do 6 sets. Continue to do this program 3 times per week for 1 month and see how much improvement you have made. If you are overweight and cannot run then begin this program by walking and eventually you will have to begin to jog in order to beat your previous time. Then you will eventually have to run even faster in order to beat your time.

Kaizen Work Capacity - This is a very simple way to both build muscle and burn off body fat. Pick a resistance exercise such as pushups and perform as many pushups as you can in 5 minutes. Record how many pushups you were able to do in 5 minutes. Try this again 1 week later and try to do at least one more pushup than you did in the previous workout. This can be done with any exercise. This can also be done for repetitions as well. For instance, perform 50

pushups and see how long it takes you. In the next workout, try to perform the 50 pushups at least one second faster.

Kaizen Muscle Building - This is a very simple way to get stronger. Strength is probably the most overlooked aspect of health and fitness these days. Perform a compound free weight movement such as a squat or a push-press for a couple of warm-up sets. Next perform three sets of 6 with a weight that is an 8 rep max. Try this again one week later and try to perform at least seven reps. Continue with this for 6 weeks slowly adding one repetition each week until you reach 10 repetitions on all three sets. When you reach 10 repetitions add 5% more weight and begin back at 6 reps again. The goal is to constantly add more repetitions with the same weight or more weight every week. Over time the little gains with this approach will add up.

The Ultimate Kaizen Workout for Fat Loss - This is a great workout for fat loss with a Kaizen focus. Perform 12 repetitions of back squat, deadlifts, push-press, and pull-ups. Repeat this routine four times by transitioning from one exercise to the next with minimal rest, about 30 seconds. Rest for 2 minutes between rounds. Pick a weight on each exercise that is close to your 12 repetition maximum. Record how many repetitions you perform on each lift. Perform this workout twice per week. Once you can perform all 4 sets of 12 with a weight, increase the weight on each exercise by 5%. In this workout you will get fat burning, and muscle building. Be careful with this workout; it is very intense when done properly. If you are a beginner, start slowly and continue to improve your times and weights.

Just remember the one thing that I tell everyone when they start to train with me. "What kind of shape you are in when you start doesn't matter. What matters to me is that you continually improve," and Kaizen is the way to reach your goals.