

This article is the second part of the four important strategies to true fat loss and muscle gain. Training to be Balanced (T2BB) has created the following strategies coined N.E.R.M. *Nutrition [habitual changes], Exercise [resistance (strength) & interval training], Recovery [from exercise and sleep quality], and Mindset [reduction of stress]*. Strongly working together the above contribute to reduction of fat pounds, body percent fat and muscle gain.

We use these strategies in T2BB's annual Transformation Challenge where a team of five who loses the largest percent of body fat and has gained the largest percent of muscle wins a \$3,000 prize. The Transformation concept currently underway changes the scope of people's view on "weight loss" and "getting in shape". Current fitness information states it is not "weight loss" it is building muscle to lose fat. It is not "getting into shape" rather improving upon movement performance. Lifting groceries or a child is an act of performance as much as skinning up the pass or running on Putt Putt trail. Dropping 2 dress sizes, feeling strong and good about one's self is different than dropping 50 pounds of just total weight and regaining it repetitively.

Last month's article highlighted changing nutritional habits before figuring out which type of food to choose. For example, the habit of eating breakfast needs to exist. Instead of worrying about the type of food to eat, begin with a small bit of enjoyable morning food, selection of types of food comes after the habit. In addition, recovery of exercise and sleep quality was also highlighted. If your exercise exceeds your recovery time you increase your chances for injury and create a reverse affect on muscle growth and fat loss. Lastly, sleep quality is the one magic pill that helps everything related to growth, lost, and rest for the body.

By the way, how is your New Year's Resolutions going?

The "E" in N.E.R.M. refers to exercise. In the fitness industry today how we exercise is ever more important, especially the increase outdoor activity level of many. T2BB capitalizes on resistance strength & interval training as to the keys to fat loss and muscle gain.

Steady state aerobic training raises your metabolism. Metabolism is largely a function of how much muscle you carry. Aerobic training does extremely little to even maintain muscle, thus, it will do nothing to contribute to raising your metabolism at rest. Naturally, you will burn calories while aerobic training, but will you burn any more at rest? A small chance.

The biggest problem with aerobic training is that you get better at it. In weight training, as you get better, you add more weight or more reps and there is literally no finish line. In aerobic training, the work required to run 5 miles will become less and less as you get fitter. So to continue to improve you either go further (do more work for the same amount of calories) or you run it faster. Going further kind of defeats the purpose. Is there much joy in running 40 minutes to burn the calories you once burned in 30 minutes? And going faster involves the same problem. Eventually, the new speed becomes too easy for you and you have to go more intense to get the same benefits.

There is no end point with weight training. However there is an end point with aerobic training. You will reach an intensity eventually that will be the end of the aerobic zone. Quite simple going any harder will send your body into the anaerobic zone. So at some point you're not doing aerobics any more. So, if you have to stop doing it as some point to get the benefits you seek why not do anaerobic work to begin?

The "M" in N.E.R.M. refers to mindset. The single most important factor to fat loss is reduction of stress. Notice I wrote reduction and not elimination. It is difficult to eliminate stress unless you are a monk who meditates 13 hours a day. Just because you can handle lots of stress does not mean you should. The body holds onto fat during periods of mental stress. When stressed internally or mentally, the body goes into protection mode and protects that which important to live...the fat that surrounds the organs. The body *can* live without limbs but *cannot* survive without a liver, heart, or even a pancreas.

What are some possibilities to reduce stress, most of you have a clue. First think how you make time to cart your children around the valley, time eat, time to ski, hike, walk, run or even go a visit with a friend at the bar. Then you can make time for yoga, meditation, Tai Chi, reading, books on tape, sitting for 30 seconds and thinking nothing. Whatever it is, find that release and spend time on YOU. A mentor told me “if you don’t make time for yourself, you will have plenty time in the hospital or when your sick...when you are forced to rest (take a break) it creates more frustration because it was not your choice.”

Incorporate, N.E.R.M. [nutrition, exercise, recovery, mindset] at 25% each, 100% of the time. If all are only working at 20% each, that is only 80% of your potential. When you have all four components working jointly at 100%, looking, feeling and performing better becomes longevity success.