

# 5 Common workout mistakes and how to fix them

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Luckily most of us can tell the obvious things not to attempt at the gym — no matter what Instagram says. However, there are other, less egregious exercise mistakes many of us make and have no idea how bad they may be.

Here are four common workout blunders and how to fix them so you can stay safe and get the results you want.

## 1. ONLY DOING MOVEMENTS IN THE SAME PLANE

Going from pushups to mountain climbers or squats to tuck jumps or lunges to switch jumps can help athletes train for endurance and explosive power. But most people won't be as successful on the second exercise.

In the case of pushups followed by mountain climbers, first you give everything you have and tax your wrists, core, shoulders, chest, and arms. Then you ask pretty much the same muscle groups and joints to align and fire again. This could lead to injuries.

**FIX:** Work different muscle groups, move in different planes of motion, and mix up your movement patterns. Follow pushups or chest presses with a rowing movement, for example. If you're moving in the sagittal plane (front-to-back), doing something like a reverse lunge with a biceps curl, add movement in the frontal plane (side-to-side) with skater squats.

## 2. USING ONLY 1 SET OF WEIGHTS

Sometimes instructors simply say "grab a set of dumbbells" when you walk into a group class. If you don't ask what you will be doing, you may grab something too light and end up doing deadlifts with 5kg's or you could go too heavy and struggle to do overhead presses with 10kg's.

**FIX:** Ask what exercises you will be doing and how long you'll be doing them. If you're doing movements that target bigger muscles and others that target smaller muscles, take more than one set of dumbbells. (But be considerate of your classmates and try not to take more than two sets.) If you find yourself flying through movements or having a hard time once class starts, don't be shy — stop and get a more appropriate set of weights.

## 3. DOING COMBINATION EXERCISES BEFORE CORE

Combination exercises are great to get your heart rate up, build more muscle and increase coordination and proprioception. But, if your core isn't strong and pliable, it could lead to injury. Everything is dependent on what is happening in the middle of your body before you add any load. By engaging and warming up your core, you'll add stability to your movements and ensure better form with lower injury risk.

**FIX:** Do core activation exercises, such as planks, before doing combination exercises. If you feel unstable doing a Romanian deadlift and bent-over row, stop, engage your core, and establish a solid foundation first.

## 4. ONLY DOING MUSCULAR ENDURANCE TRAINING

HIIT, Tabata and spin classes are all awesome and torch hundreds of calories fast, but they should not be the only exercise you do. Although these classes improve muscular endurance, they don't have much muscle-building work. There comes a point of diminishing returns with muscular endurance workouts where being able to last longer won't benefit you in shorter, more explosive activities like box jumps, barbell squats and overhead presses. You'll need some muscle for those.

**FIX:** Do 1–2 muscle-building workouts a week. For each exercise, do 3–5 sets of 8–12 reps using 60–85% of your 1-rep-max weight.

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## 5. USING A BOSU UPSIDE DOWN

Training on an unstable surface has incredible benefits. It amplifies all the work you'd do on a stable surface and really works your core and ankle stability. You're only supposed to use a BOSU with the flat, black side on the ground. Most non-athletes who use it the other way are likely not using their full range of motion and using less weight.

**FIX:** Flip it over and use it the right way, then use bigger movements (i.e., your full range of motion) and a weight that really challenges you. You will stay safe and get to a fitness level you desire without risk of injury. Only use it the other way if you are advanced with your training.

