

# 15 Fitness Mistakes Beginners Make



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The writing in this eBook is based on +5 years of experience transforming my own body and helping countless other people build the body of their dreams.



If YOU avoid the diet and training mistakes listed in this eBook, you will be ahead of +90% of people who want to transform their body (and thereby avoid YEARS of wasted effort).

## Before we get started: Proof that my advice works for others...

### **Emilio: “I’ve had the best progress in my life”**

“Hi Oskar, my name is Emilio, I’m 29 years old and I’m from Argentina. I came across your site and felt identified with you almost instantly. As a skinny fat guy, I have been struggling for a long time to improve my appearance with a lot of effort and poor results, following the same bad advices as you in your beginning. It’s been 7 weeks since I started applying your ideas and so far I’ve had the best progress in my life after years of intermittent weight training. Having been a skinny fat for 15 years (I’m almost 30 now), I’m still surprised and enjoying not being it anymore. From being about 1m85 / 87 kg with 20-25% BF, right now I’m about 77 kg, with about 12-14% bodyfat, and I love the way I look. I still sometimes look at me in the mirror and I can’t believe I am now between slim and toned, having been flaccid all my life, ashamed of taking off my t-shirt. I really appreciate having found your website and I want to thank you for sharing all your experiences!” - Emilio

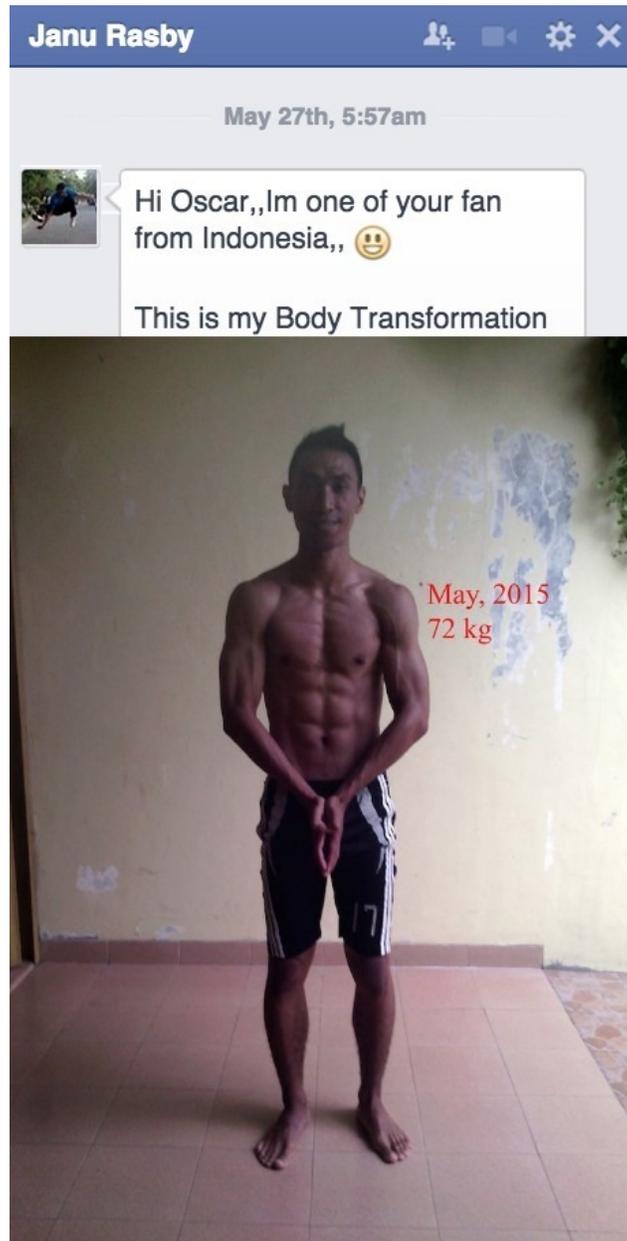


**Tjrejo: "I've been in this kind of state for about 35 years"**

"Hi Oskar, thanks so much for your advice. You know, I'm not skinny fat actually. I'm ectomorph. I have been in this kind of state for about 35 years. I'm tired of this. Just 2 months ago I came across your website after hundreds of browsing body building website. Now, I apply your basic body weight exercise: squat, diamond push ups, and chin ups. I am so amazed to see the result. I can see my chest separation lines for the first time!!!. I don't eat clean because I'm very low paid worker here. I just eat anything in sight. I weight 52 kg before, and now 62 kg with 175 cm height. I know, my real transformation is still very long to go. But I just don't care about it. my hardest adversary is me myself!" - Tjrejo



## Janu Rasby: From skinny to ripped in 6 months



[\(More success stories\)](#)

Now, let's get started with "15 Fitness Mistakes Beginners Make"...

## **Fitness Mistake #1: Focusing too much on the details while neglecting the big picture.**

When I started working out at age 16, I remember one of the first things I researched was protein supplements. I wanted to know what the best protein supplement for muscle gains is. At the same time, I was eating a horrible diet full of white bread, sugar and deli meats.

I was still at that age where I believed that a supplement can help me gain 20 pounds of muscle mass in 12 weeks.

Unfortunately, that's not the case. You don't transform your body by changing out one supplement for another.

**You transform your body by focusing on the basics and thereby changing your overall lifestyle.**

The basics of physical fitness are sleep, diet and resistance training.

You want to sleep without an alarm, eat healthy food most of the time, stop overeating and do some kind of resistance training. And of course, you want to limit your alcohol intake and drink less often.

Most of you are far from mastering the basics, yet you obsess about supplements (which won't do much at all for you) and advanced bodybuilding techniques (which you aren't ready for yet).

Think about this for a second...

What option would give you the best Return-On-Investment?

**Option 1:** Changing from protein powder A to protein powder B.

**Option 2:** Sleeping 2 hours extra per day, saying no to going out drinking most weekends and training your ass off 4 days a week instead of 2-3.

What do you think would give you the best gains over a time period of 1-2-3 years? Option 2 wins BY FAR.

Not only will you feel much better by choosing Option 2, but your performance and looks will skyrocket.

Therefore, take a look at your current lifestyle and start fixing the basics before you obsess about the small details.

**Fitness Mistake #2: Training with a partner who drags you down or get's you injured.**

Have you seen those guys at the gym who make the bench press into an assisted rowing exercise (you have a guy benching and then his

buddy is helping him get the weight up through a bent over rowing movement while shouting intensively “come on, one more rep”).

Maybe YOU are one of these guys.

**Either way, you need to know that this kind of training is not only dangerous, but also unproductive.**

As a beginner, your joints and muscles are not ready to max out, and that’s exactly what you do when you and your buddy push yourself to max out on the bench press.

In contrast, when you train with a partner that is much weaker than you, you will spend a lot of time talking in between sets and wasting time. You won’t gain any appreciable amount of muscle mass with a partner who chats too much and thereby prevents you from training hard.

(If you have a training partner who talks too much, I suggest you meet up at the gym 15 minutes prior to your training to talk everything out, and then you start your training afterwards and keep non-training-related chatting to a minimum).

Finally, most training partners will show up for a few weeks and then suddenly the excuses start coming in.

“I feel sore today.”

“I have school work.”

“I didn’t sleep much.”

“I have a cold.”

Sometimes these things are true, but in most cases they are just excuses for taking the easy way out and skipping the gym. It’s not like you can’t show up at the gym just because you didn’t sleep much or because you have a cold. These kind of training partners are the worst because they give you an excuse to skip the gym on a regular basis.

### **Fitness Mistake #3: Having expectations that don’t match the work you’re willing to put in.**

“Oskar, I’m not motivated to cook healthy meals daily and train 6 days a week.”

I didn’t cook 6 days a week.

I also didn’t workout 6 days a week (at least not the first 2 or so years where I had no clue about what I was doing).

But, it also took me about 3 years to build a good body.

In contrast, one of my SFT blog readers, Logan Rando is extremely motivated and made immense progress in just 12 weeks:



(Logan Rando's 12-week progress photo)

Logan didn't make better progress than me because of his **genetics**.

He made better progress because he *outworked* me, and that's okay.

Most people would get jealous when they see someone progress faster than them, but here's the thing... It doesn't matter what others do.

Focus on yourself and your own work. If you *expect* fast results, you better work as hard as the guys who get the fast results!

And if you don't expect fast results, that's okay too.

If you're like that, it's best to identify it, accept it and go for slow progress over time.

Just make sure your expectations and drive to transform *match*.

### **Fitness Mistake #4: Bulking before cutting.**

When you want to transform your body, there are two *short-term* goals to choose between:

- 1) **Get lean** (10-12% body-fat). Also called "cutting".
- 2) **Gain muscle mass in the right places** while staying lean. Also called "bulking".

Cutting (fat loss) requires a caloric *deficit* in your diet while bulking (muscle gains) requires a caloric *surplus*.

**Cutting and bulking example:** If you're burning 2500 calories a day (including all your activity) and you want to gain muscle mass, you may want to eat 2700 calories a day, and when you want to lose fat you may want to eat 2200 calories a day.

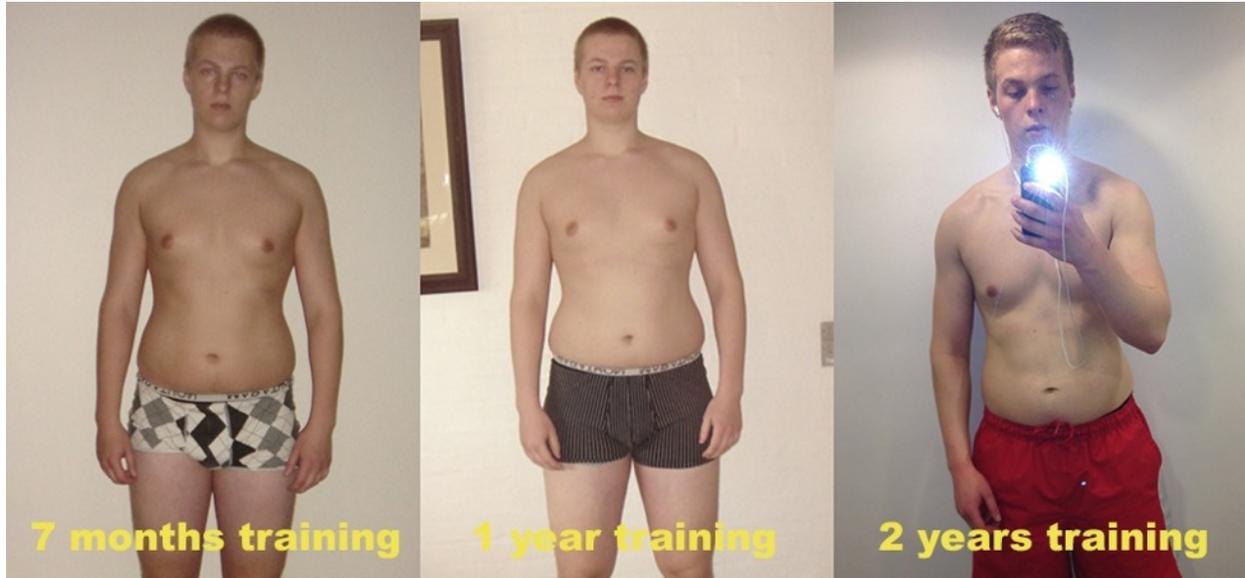
You *can* do both cutting and bulking at the same time (also called body recomposition), but in most cases it's a slower process and requires that you cycle your calories and set up your training properly. It's a slower process because rather than chasing one goal for 7/7 days of the week, you're splitting up the week to chase cutting for let's say 4 days of the week and bulking for 3 days of the week.

I do this with some of my [Online Transformation Program clients](#) with great success, but I wouldn't recommend it for people without professional guidance, since it's just too much hassle to figure out. I know, because I tried to do so myself in my first 2 years of training and got nowhere.

I first tried to bulk with a slight caloric surplus for a few weeks at a time, but got nowhere with that. Then I changed to cutting and instead of losing fat it seemed like my shoulders and arms were just getting smaller. Eventually, I did cut off all the excess body-fat I gained in my first year of training, and ended up looking pretty much the same as when I started.

[SkinnyFatTransformation.com](http://SkinnyFatTransformation.com)

The picture below shows my “2 year transformation”, where I was spinning my wheels with cutting and bulking.



It's obvious that I didn't know what I was doing in my first 2 years of training, and I sincerely hope you won't have to waste as much time as I did following advice that doesn't work.

I eventually discovered the “secret” to transform my body, and sculpted my body from skinny-fat to jacked in just 1 year.



The key to make that massive change from April 2012 to April 2013 was to be strategic about bulking and cutting. To be specific, you want to lose the fat before you focus on muscle gains!

If you have love handles, [man boobs](#) or you can't see your abs, you must [lose fat](#) first and get lean (about 10-15% body-fat), because doing so will improve your [nutrient partitioning](#).

**Nutrient partitioning is a fancy word for your ability to use food for muscle gains.**

When you're at a healthy body-fat percentage with some visible ab definition in good lighting you are better able to use the food you put into your body for muscle gains.

Besides that, by getting lean first you can see the actual muscle gains you make since they aren't hidden under fat, and you will be able to enjoy a lean body much faster than the guy who bulks first.

Therefore, get lean first, and then [start building muscle mass in the right places while staying lean.](#)

## **Fitness Mistake #5: “Working out” instead of TRAINING.**

“I’ve been working out for years, but my body doesn’t seem to respond.”

There’s a big difference between working out and training.

Training means you follow some kind of plan based on **progressive overload**. You want to be able to do more weight... more sets... more reps... more exercises... more difficult exercises. Over time, progressive overload will make you **gain both strength and muscle mass**.

Working out is going into the gym without any goal, and that’s what most people do. There are plenty of people in the gym who keep coming back, and they will repeat the same workout they did last time. They will do the exact same exercises, use the exact same weight and stop when it starts getting a little bit uncomfortable.

This is fine if you want to maintain your current fitness level or body composition. In fact, that’s what I do now since I’m happy with my body and fitness level. **However, most of you reading this don’t want to maintain. You want to gain, and to start gaining you must stop working out and start training!**

## **Fitness Mistake #6: Not tracking progress.**

If you aren't tracking progress, you're wasting your time.

How would you know whether a specific diet or training program works if you aren't tracking progress.

The mirror can only go so far for those of us who have average or below average genetics. (You will be the last person to see the change in the mirror because you see yourself in the mirror everyday, so it's a very bad way of tracking progress).

Photos are decent to track progress, but you won't see big differences in photos taken a month apart. It usually takes about 3 months of solid training and dieting to see a difference in progression photos.

I have my Online Transformation Program clients take photos every month as a supplement to their number progression tracking, but the numbers are what we use to make adjustments to the training and diet.

You need hard numbers that tell you that you're progressing:

- Waist circumference.
- Hip circumference.
- Shoulder circumference.
- Arm circumference.

- Chest circumference.
- Bodyweight.
- Pull up max reps on your first set.
- Diamond push up max reps on your first set.

Now, I will show you 2 examples of how progression tracking can look, by using online excel sheets from two of my [Online Transformation Program](#) clients.

**Example (1): Client who wants to get better at [bodyweight exercises](#):**

Date	Bodyweight	Waist	Belly	Hips	Pull Up
16/03/2015	154,2	35	37	37	0
22/03/2015	154,2	35	37	36,25	0
29/03/2015	153,8	35	37	36	2
06/04/2015	151,6	34,75	37	36	3
12/04/2015	?	?	?	?	?
19/04/2015	150,4	34,25	37	35,5	5
27/04/2015	155,6	34,5	37	36,5	10

The sheet above shows my client's 5-6 week progression where he went from 0 to 10 pull ups (and he was only training 80 minutes per week due to his busy work schedule). This is amazing progress for a skinny-fat guy in his mid thirties.

On another note, the sheet above look messy. Some weeks there's progress, other weeks there's no progress or the sheet isn't even filled out. That's not unusual for my clients. The truth is that even the most

dedicated people fall of the wagon once in a while, but the difference between the ones who make it and those who don't is *persistence*.

**The clients who make the biggest changes to their bodies are the ones who relentlessly look for solutions whenever they're travelling or busy and who pick up where they left off as fast as possible when they fall of the wagon.**

You don't need to do everything perfectly to get results. You just need to take the right actions most of the time.

**Example (2): Client who wants to get wider shoulders:**

Date	Bodyweight in KG	Waist in CM	Hips in CM	Arms in CM	Shoulders in CM	Chest in CM
19/04/2015	72					
26/04/2015	72.5	88.5	95	33.3	112	99.6
03/05/2015		88	94.5	33.4	112.6	99.6
10/05/2015		87.5	93.8	33.5	114.6	99.5
17/05/2015		86.3	93.5	33.5	115.2	100
24/05/2015		85.9	93.3	33.5	115.2	100
31/05/2015		85.7	93	33.6	115.9	100.8
07/06/2015	68	84.6	92.5	33.6	116	100.4
14/06/2015						
21/06/2015		84.5	92.5	33.8	118	99.8

This sheet shows my Indian client [Harshit Godha](#) who wants to build wide shoulders. In 8 weeks Harshit added almost 2.5 inches (6 CM) to his shoulder circumference while losing more than 10 pounds of fat and almost 2 inches on his waist. This kind of progression is an anomaly for [skinny-fat men](#). Harshit is a young and hitting the gym 6 days a week for 90 minutes and following a diet plan to the letter, so he is pretty much

an “ideal scenario” when it comes to how fast a skinny-fat guy can progress.



(Harshit Godha after being on my [Online Transformation Program](#) for about 12 weeks)

The 2 guys I’ve shown above are proof that you can achieve massive results as long as you do *most* things right. Stop chasing perfection... If you miss one or two weeks of tracking progress, just get right back to it and keep chasing your goal.

## **Fitness Mistake #7: Doing weight training before mastering basic bodyweight exercises.**



Can you do 20 pull ups in a row with good form?

Can you squat down so your butt touches the floor with your heels planted on the ground and hold that position for a minute?

Most men cannot do these two essential things, yet they start their training careers off with **weight training** before they can even move their own bodyweight properly through space (I know, because I did the exact same thing)!!

**Basic bodyweight training** and mobility exercises such as squat holds will let you develop your movement patterns, mobility, and basic strength, all while gaining good amounts of muscle mass and losing fat.

There's no reason to skip this process.

Just think about mathematics: The basics are extremely boring, but they make it so much easier to learn the advanced stuff.

Similarly, when you build a house, you start with the foundation. Once you build a solid foundation, everything else becomes so much easier.

An early injury can put you out of the gym for MONTHS, and sometimes that injury will stick with you for years and thereby inhibit your true **transformation potential.**

Now, some of you may think that “yeah, bodyweight training sounds reasonable, but I don't care about mobility. I just want to **look good naked.**”

That's the kind of mindset I had, but it's wrong.

When you have good mobility, you have better posture and you move in a more confident way.

This makes you look MUCH better.

It doesn't matter how much muscle you have if [you have the mobility and posture of an 84 year old man.](#)

Furthermore, good posture is associated with [higher testosterone levels](#) (the male hormone responsible for muscle building).

Therefore, don't rush the basics. Get strong at bodyweight exercises, improve your mobility and improve your posture. Once you've done these things, you're ready to start weight training.

## **Fitness Mistake #8: Looking for the best training program.**

*"I heard that [Mark Rippetoe's Starting Strength Program](#) is the best out there."*

There's no best program out there.

There's the best program for YOU, for YOUR goals, at this EXACT TIME of your training.

[This "best program" can quickly change as you progress in your transformation.](#)

And that's why you should ignore a person that tries to sell you on a "perfect program" that works for *everyone*.

Instead, ask yourself what YOUR goals are and how you would like to look, and then follow a program that will help you achieve those goals.

## **Fitness Mistake #9: Neglecting the muscles you can't see in the mirror.**

If you're like most people out there, your gym routine most likely consists of a lot of work for the [chest, shoulders, arms and abs](#).

But how about upper back, lats/wings, medial back, lower back, rear shoulders, medial shoulders and hamstrings?

All these areas are underdeveloped in almost every lifter, and that's a shame, because developing these muscles will give you a much more [balanced physique](#) and reduce your risk of injury.

When you lack [back width and thickness](#), you won't look powerful, and you will have an extremely difficult time creating an illusion of wide shoulders.



(My back is thick and wide after training it properly for years)

When you don't train all 3 shoulder heads, you have no chance of developing those round bowling ball delts.

Finally, when you only train the front part of the body, you strengthen these muscles so they become disproportionately strong compared to the back part. A good indicator of your front being too strong compared to your back is your bench-press to bent-over-barbell-row ratio. If you can bench press more than 1.2 times as much as you can bent-over-barbell-row, your front is too strong.

## **Fitness Mistake #10: Ignoring basic bodybuilding training principles.**

Have you ever seen the classical bodybuilding movie [“Pumping Iron”](#) featuring legendary bodybuilders such as Arnold Schwarzenegger and Serge Nubret who had some of the most [aesthetic physiques](#) ever?



([Serge Nubret training](#) during his prime)

If you look at [the way they train in that movie](#), it's basically a lot of sets, a lot of reps, short rest time between sets and training for the pump.

And it's not by accident they all trained that way...

Prior to passing away, Serge Nubret created a thread on [forum.bodybuilding.com](http://forum.bodybuilding.com) where people could ask him any questions related to bodybuilding.

The thread got almost 12,000 comments(!!) and Serge provided all of us with a wealth of knowledge. **One of his main points was that he never lifted heavy weights (“heavy” being a relative word here).**

Serge Nubret stated that you can always [“make the weight harder to lift”](#).

You see... most people in the gym just go through the motions.

They don't think about engaging the target muscles in the movements they are performing, they use a lot of momentum, swinging and don't get in enough quality reps.

If you train with a good trainer who can show you how to do each exercise and each rep properly, and you start doing 8-12 or more reps on each set, and use low rest time between sets, you will [use much lighter weights than you are used to.](#)

I used to do 40-50 pound dumbbells for my sets on biceps curls. After reading through Serge Nubret's topic that weight quickly dropped to about 25 pounds.

Then as I became better at engaging my biceps [I dropped the weight all the way down to 20 pounds.](#)

## **Fitness Mistake #11: Eating like a professional bodybuilder while looking average.**

When I started training in 2010, I read a bunch of articles on bodybuilding.com about how the pro bodybuilders ate, and there was one common theme:

[High protein](#), High carbs and Low fat.

A typical bodybuilding meal would be chicken breast, pasta and a few tea spoons of olive oil to cook the chicken in.

I tried eating like that, and I immediately noticed that I couldn't digest these high protein, high carb meals.

I would be constipated all day, and spend half of the day in the restroom.

Despite that, I ignored the warning signs of my body and kept eating as "prescribed by the experts", and got absolutely nowhere.

I know this scenario didn't just happen for me. It happened to many of you reading this, and now you're probably wondering why that is the case...

YOU don't have the genetics, lifestyle and **overall capabilities of a pro-bodybuilder.**

Pro-bodybuilders are different from you.

They can train for HOURS everyday for YEARS. To sustain this training, they MUST **eat a lot of carbs.**

They have huge amounts of muscle. Muscle burns a lot more calories than fat, so they are fat-burning machines and can eat a much higher calorie diet than you.

They have **exceptional digestion** which enables them to chunk down huge protein meals and then utilize these proteins for muscle building.

**Most are on illegal drugs** (hormones, steroids and pro-hormones), and therefore can eat in a completely different way than a natural trainee.

In other words, their dietary requirements are completely different from +90% of people who train, so stop copying them. Instead, aim for a

balanced diet where you have a bit of everything, and experiment with different types of foods to find the ones that YOU digest best.

## **Fitness Mistake #12: Not matching your training program with your diet plan.**

One thing a lot of people don't know is that your training program and diet plan are connected.



The way you eat, affects the way you train and vice versa.

Just think about your average couch potato who wakes up after a night of crappy sleep,

then goes to work a stressful job and then comes home late at night to watch TV and eat junkfood.

A lot of the food that guy eats is likely to be stored as fat.

In contrast, think about the professional athlete who trains 4 hours a day and sleeps 10 hours each night.

He comes home after a long training session, and he could eat the exact same junkfood meal as the couch potato, but he would most likely not

gain much fat (if any at all), because his body needs that food after a rigorous training session.

The point here is that you cannot look at diet and training separately.

**The more you train and the harder you train, the bigger your dietary requirements are.**

This is also why training too much can be detrimental for people who want to lose fat.

When you want to lose fat, you must restrict your calories. When you train a lot, you must eat enough calories. These are two opposing goals!

The key here is to find that balance where your diet and training match.

Getting that balance right where your training and diet match is very difficult and it took me years of experimentation to find my balance, but once you get it right the effort is 100% worth it.

You will start making massive changes to your body while feeling good throughout the process.

## **Fitness Mistake #13: Thinking of transforming as a sprint rather than a marathon.**

*“I want to look great naked in 6 months.”*

*“I want to lose fat now.”*

*“Please tell me some tips to get ripped fast. (While putting in as little effort as possible.)”*

There’s nothing wrong with looking for optimal solutions that will enable you to reach your goal physique in a timely fashion, however, there’s a big issue at play if you deliberately try to avoid hard work to get results faster.

No matter how you put it, the only way you will **build a great body** is by: 1) setting aside time and money to cook healthy meals and train properly +5 days a week and 2) put in the sweat when you train — both over 1-3 years.

The people who look for quick fixes, easy solutions, secret diet pills are similar to the people who sell these gimmicks: even if they do become successful, they will miss the most important lesson of getting a good body: the character growth that comes as a result of working hard for a goal that you want to achieve.

You see...



**Oskar Faarkrog** @OskarFaarkrog · 14h

Becoming successful is important. The same goes for the way you become successful.

I have seen a lot of steroid and hormone users at my gym, and while they have become more muscular and more shredded than me (in a shorter period of time), they lack the character development that comes from years of working hard.

Most of them are big on the outside, but small on the inside. Same goes for people who sell these diet pills and fitness scams. They may look successful to an outside observer, but on the inside, there's no way they can possibly feel good about what they do.

So think twice before you decide to go for a "quick fix" rather than putting in the work. The decision can shape the way you do things in other areas of life such as business, career and relationships.

## **Fitness Mistake #14: Being narrow minded.**

If you asked me about bodybuilding back in 2010-2012 (where I looked like I didn't even lift), I would have told you that you need to [eat a high protein diet](#) and lift heavy weights, because that's what all the credible sources say you must do to build a great physique.

Then, one day I came across a book called [“How Much Protein”](#) by Brad Pilon. This book completely challenged my beliefs about protein intake, and recommended a much lower protein intake than the magazines (I believe it was 70-130 grams of protein per day depending on your size).

In the beginning, I was skeptical about the advice provided in that book, but I decided to give it a shot, because the arguments made in the book were sound. The book basically stated that there are no good studies supporting the kind of protein intakes recommended by the major bodybuilding and fitness magazines.

The book ended up changing my life in a major way. I stopped obsessing about hitting my daily protein target of 200 grams (a target that I was convinced I must hit to be able to build any amount of muscle mass).

What I'm trying to say is that you should try out different things once in a while and listen to people who have done what you want to do. (But, don't be that irritating guy who quotes "pubmed abstracts" to disprove whether something working or not). You need to actually try things out first, regardless of what some study says.

## **Fitness Mistake #15: Always hungry for more, but never proud.**

I want to finish off this eBook by talking about a topic that's very personal to me: my mental health.

Throughout my first 3 years of my body transformation (age 17-20) I overcame a lot of struggles that most people take decades to overcome (if they ever do).

I overcame depression, man boobs, [low testosterone levels](#), lost 60 pounds and gained a ton of strength.

**Despite my success, I wasn't proud of myself and didn't enjoy myself much.**

I would skip out on fun activities so I could work on myself as much as possible.

Looking back, I went about this the wrong way.

My best results came when I enjoyed myself and had a “full” life.



(Me during my MBA exchange semester in Thailand)

When you live a balanced life, you stop obsessing about “things that don’t work” and focus on what works.

I lost the most weight when I was competing in cheerleading and didn't obsess about my training sessions.



(Me practicing partner stunt acrobatics after being coached by a former world champion in partner stunts, Mika Pennanen)

My point is that, yes, you want to make fitness a priority in your life, but if you have an obsessive personality like most people into fitness do, remember to schedule other activities (outside the gym and cooking) and celebrate your small successes.

That's all I had to share this time.

Be proud but stay hungry,

Oskar Faarkrog, ISSA Certified Personal Trainer

## Want to transform YOUR body?

Then sign up for my [Online Transformation Program Waiting List](#) to get more information about my online personal training services and to stay updated on future openings.

