


The 9 fitness traps you should NEVER fall into

Be warned



Ricardo Riskalla

Official personal trainer for IMG Models Australia, author, nutrition expert and chef, Ricardo has been featured in Vogue and many publications. He is the secret weapon of many a supermodel and actor.

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Setting boundaries is a great way to achieve results, says Ricardo Riskalla

There's a lot of talk about what you should do to get a great body, but not enough talk about what you shouldn't do. Which is strange, because most great results come from a place where you have clear boundaries of what shouldn't be done. In my 20 years of training people, I've collected a few things that I consider it important to avoid in order to get that great body - and keep it that way.

Of course, no one is perfect, so just try to incorporate a good number of the following points into your life. Listed below are the most common traps I want you to avoid.

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1. The 'I got there' complex. Most people on a fitness journey will approach this point: when you've achieved your targets and think to yourself: "I have been working so hard, it's time to treat myself, I deserve it!" Then you eat a treat one day, the day after and then Pandora's box is open and you find yourself eating a treat every single day and the results you worked so hard to achieve have gone in a week. I have seen so many superstars fall right into this trap. The action point here is when you achieve your target, the next day you need to push even harder to maintain it!

2. I googled that. Yes, we all google this and that. The problem is when you decide to change what your trainer has given you because you googled something and decided to take a short cut. I have seen people do crazy things, from spending five hours in a sauna to running two half marathons in one weekend. Everything is possible on Google. So please, if you have any doubts consult your trainer: he or she has studied and has the techniques and tools to create a better plan for you than Google ever can.

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3. The more weight the better. You know that moment when you're doing weights training and you think, 'if I add more weights to this exercise, I might get faster results.' Not so fast: the more likely result is a massive injury. Sometimes it's better to use just your body weight or light weights. I have built so many bodies using only a mat - even the bodies of great male supermodels.

4. "My friend told me." We all have a friend who likes to spruik their health and fitness knowledge. Again, stick to the program created by your qualified trainer - unless your friend is one!

5. I pay my trainer so I manage him or her. That's a funny one. I usually hear it from CEOs. Some of them want to manage the trainer, arriving at a session and announcing, 'today we do cardio, followed by chest exercises.' Remember that your trainer will have spent hours thinking about your program and there are reasons why he or she is asking you to do something. Your trainer always has the best intentions.

6. The cheat day. Hey, this is a controversial one. I know a lot of people who have cheat days. In my opinion, it's counterproductive to eat a whole pizza, ice-cream and trash your body. I am all for making wholesome versions of your favourite foods, like a healthy pizza or ice-cream made from frozen fruit and so on. Finding healthier options is the solution here.

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7. A holiday is a holiday. Yes, a holiday is about adding value to your life and resting, but when a holiday means eating the whole breakfast buffet, things get a bit pear-shaped. I recommend you maintain your diet on holidays. Staying fit is an action of persistence and sticking to your boundaries.

8. The function. We've all been there: you eat well the whole week then find yourself at a function where the only food served is canapés. What do you do? I always ask the waiter if there's a healthier option and if not, I stick to my diet and say no.

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9. But I like that one. This is the most common mistake committed in gyms all around the world. You enter the gym, select a few machines that you like and then repeat the same workout on the same machines over and over again. The result is frustration for the lack of results and boredom from all the repetition. The rule here is to spice it up, try something new and challenge yourself.

So there you have it. Yes, it can sound harsh, but the act of saying NO is a must when you want to be healthy.

Website: [rawfit.com.au](#)

Instagram: [@rawfit_training](#)