

Gain, Don't Strain

Although there is nothing wrong with pushing yourself during a workout, it's vital that you don't risk serious injury in a bid for results.

"Those who are drawn to intense workouts tend to jump into high-intensity athletic training instead of focusing on fitness training," says Mitch Whaley, M.D., chair of the school of physical education, sports and exercise science at Indiana's Ball State University.

First things first, leave your ego at the door. Don't worry about anyone else except for yourself. Initial focus on form and technique is critical. If you thrive on intense workouts, find a fitness professional, like myself, to review your goals and to help establish a base level of fitness. If you do participate in an intense fitness program be sure the instructor is aware of your previous and current health history. He or she should then work you through an evaluation before pushing at high levels or any level for that matter. Great form and smart fitness training will yield success with a limited chance of potential injury and if that's not a great combination I don't know what is?