



## Principles of progression

**Progressive overload** - for a body to progress it must be active at increasing levels, it must be gradually encouraged to work harder. Now that doesn't mean that you have to keep increasing things until you're spending all day exercising, it just means that due to **adaptation** the body will alter to enhance its ability to perform. When the body is asked to work harder, physiological changes occur, particularly during periods of rest between activities. To prevent injury appropriate rest must be given. Therefore a fine balance must be found between work and **rest** to optimise training.

If progressive overload is not constantly applied, the body reaches a point where it can happily meet the demands made upon it and adaptation stops, this is known as **plateauing**. We've all experienced the new surge of enthusiasm for an exercise plan, diligently attended a new gym or gone out walking and begun to feel good and see improvements- then all of a sudden what we once found easy becomes harder again, improvements and results stop and it all becomes too much trouble! That's the plateau. If you don't keep changing things, progressing different aspects of your

programme then your body stops improving.

Each activity requires the ability to perform a different mix from the five components of fitness and this needs to be taken into account when setting goals. **Specificity** means that to increase efficiency in one task then specific training is required. There is little point concentrating on yoga if your goal is to run a marathon! Flexibility will undoubtedly improve your recovery but it's unlikely to improve your running ability directly, for that you need to run. And likewise if your goal is to be able to maintain your garden at the weekend without seizing up for the rest of the week then there is little point in spending hours jogging.

The thing that creates the most challenge for the average member of the population is **adherence** - the requirement to keep exercising. If I could find a way to freeze a person's level of fitness once they had attained a level they were happy with - I would be a millionaire. The principle of **reversibility** is in my opinion the worst. Once you stop exercising all the gains you've made begin to disappear.