

FIT BY CHOICE

A short, honest guide from Fit By Choice

Getting Fit After 40

Five things nobody tells you — and
what to do about each one instead.

with **Mark Saker**, Personal Trainer — Bexhill-on-Sea & online

Before you start, a quick word.

If you're over 40 and you'd like to feel fitter, stronger and more like yourself again — but the whole thing feels complicated, intimidating, or somehow meant for other people — this guide is for you.

I've spent over ten years coaching men and women over 40, most of whom hadn't exercised properly in years. Almost none of them arrived feeling confident. What they had in common was simpler than that: they decided to start.

There are no fads in here and nothing you need to buy. Just five honest things I wish more people knew before they began — and one small, doable step for each. Read it in ten minutes. Then, if it's useful, we can talk.

— Mark

01

You don't have to get fit before you start.

The most common thing people tell me is that they'd like to lose a bit of weight, or get “a bit fitter”, before they come to me. I understand the instinct — but it's backwards. You don't earn the right to begin. Beginning is the thing that changes everything else.

Fitness isn't a members-only club you have to qualify for. Wherever you are today — however long it's been, whatever shape you feel you're in — that is a perfectly good place to start from. In fact, it's the only place anyone ever starts from.

Try this

Stop waiting for Monday, or January, or “once things calm down”. Pick one small thing you'll do this week and do it, even badly. Starting beats perfect every time.

02

Strength matters more than cardio now.

From your forties onwards, your body slowly loses muscle each year unless you give it a reason to keep it. Less muscle means a slower metabolism, weaker joints, poorer balance and a body that tires more easily — the things we lazily put down to “getting old”.

The best way to hold on to your strength, your bones and your independence is resistance training: working your muscles against some kind of load. That needn't mean heaving barbells or living in a gym — just challenging your muscles, sensibly and progressively, a couple of times a week. Keep the cardio for your heart and your mood; but on its own it won't protect what matters most after 40.

Try this

Add two short strength sessions a week. Bodyweight squats, a push-up against the wall, and carrying something heavy all count. Twenty minutes is plenty to begin.

03

You don't have to love the gym — or even go.

Plenty of people assume that not enjoying the gym means they're simply “not a fitness person”. It doesn't. Usually it means no one ever showed them what to do, so the gym feels like a room full of equipment and unspoken rules — and standing there guessing is nobody's idea of a good time.

The gym is a tool, not a personality. Many of my clients get excellent results training at home, outdoors, or in short one-to-one sessions where they're actually coached. What matters isn't the room — it's having a clear plan and knowing you're doing things properly. Get that, and the intimidation quietly disappears.

Try this

Choose the setting you'd genuinely stick with — living room, seafront, garden, or a quiet gym with someone showing you the ropes. The best place to train is the one you'll come back to.

04

Recovery is part of the plan, not a reward.

When we're younger we get away with doing too much and sleeping too little. After 40, recovery stops being an afterthought and becomes part of the training itself. That's good news: more isn't automatically better, and you don't have to punish yourself to make progress.

Muscles get stronger while you rest, not while you train. Sleep, rest days and keeping stress in check are what let your body absorb the work you put in. Push hard every single day with no recovery and you'll feel worse, not better — and you'll be far more likely to pick up a niggle that stops you altogether.

Try this

Protect your sleep like it's part of your programme, and leave at least a day between hard sessions. Consistency over months beats intensity over a fortnight.

05

The plan has to fit your real life — or it won't last.

Most fitness plans fail not because they're wrong, but because they were never realistic for the person following them. A punishing regime you keep up for three weeks is worth far less than a modest one you can hold for three years.

You have a job, perhaps a family, and a finite amount of time and energy. A plan that ignores all of that is already broken. The version that works bends around your real life — the hours you actually have, the niggles you're carrying, the things you genuinely don't mind doing. It should feel challenging but doable, most of the time. That's how results end up lasting instead of fizzling out by February.

Try this

Be honest about how many days a week you'll realistically train — then plan for that number, not the heroic one. Two solid, repeatable sessions beat five you'll abandon.

If you do nothing else this week...

You don't need the whole plan today. You need a little momentum. Pick any one of these — one is genuinely enough to begin.



Do two short strength sessions.

Bodyweight is absolutely fine to begin. Some squats, a push of some kind, and carrying something heavy will do nicely.



Get outside and walk.

Thirty minutes, most days. It's the most underrated exercise there is — and it's free.



Sort one thing that helps recovery.

An earlier night, water more often, a rest day booked in. Small, but it compounds.

None of this is dramatic. That's rather the point. Small, honest steps, repeated, are what actually change how you look and feel after 40.

When you're ready, let's talk.

If this guide made sense to you and you'd like a hand turning it into a plan built around your body, your niggles and your real life — that's exactly what I do.

Your first consultation is free and completely without pressure. Just a calm chat about where you'd like to be, what's got in the way before, and whether working together is the right fit. No sales pitch, no obligation.

— Mark Saker

Book your free consultation

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Fit By Choice — personal training, nutrition and
menopause coaching for men and women over 40.