

Fit For A Day

Recover, Restore and Rebuild — A Safe, Progressive,
3-Month Plan for a More Resilient Body



Week 1

John Du Cane

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Week 1

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the *Fit For A Day* program—which has been expressly designed to enhance and strengthen our recovery. *Fit For A Day* takes into account the physical, emotional and spiritual vulnerabilities the recovering person needs to address on a daily basis.

The “Easy-Does-It” approach of *Fit For A Day* aims to embed daily fitness habits as a beloved component of our recovery program. *Fit For A Day* promises us gentle, consistent progress toward a healthier, more balanced, happier and less uncomfortable body.

By reducing our body’s discomfort, we reduce one of the risks for relapsing back into our old behaviors. *Fit For A Day* helps stack the recovery deck in our favor.

In our dependence on drugs of one kind or another, we often wrought havoc on our overall physical well-being. Through inactivity, our systems have become sluggish. We may be weak, underweight or overweight. Our posture is most likely poor, leading to numerous physical dysfunctions. Our breathing may be shallow and stress-inducing. Our tissues may be laden with a variety of toxins that continue to bedevil our well-being. Many of our joints may feel painful and we may suffer from recurring aches. We may have trouble sleeping restfully and may feel groggy during the day.

The *Fit For A Day* routines are designed to progressively alleviate these impediments to feeling good in our bodies.

As part of our “dis-ease profile”, many of us know that we have a tendency to be impulsive, compulsive, driven and overly competitive. When we are striving to regain our physical well-being, it is all too easy for us to jump in to exercise with the same wild abandon with which we once embraced our chemicals of choice. However, compulsively overdoing exercise can all too frequently result in further discomfort and a disappointment that can lead us to either abandon our exercise goals or in some cases relapse back into using.

Fit For A Day recognizes the need for a consistent “at-least-this much”, step-by-step approach to building a sense of self-worth and well-being, in a safe manner.

The different exercises are chosen for their gentle cleansing and strengthening power. Slowly, over the weeks and months, we will add new levels of challenge to our routines, as we progress in restoring and rebuilding our physical capabilities.

We make a choice every day, just for that day, to stay clean and sober. There are ways we can make that choice easier rather than harder. The more we reduce any kind of distress or discomfort in our lives—be it physical, emotional or spiritual—the easier it can be to safeguard our recovery and make safer, wiser choices for that day.

Recovery is a delicate plant that needs careful care and nurturing as it grows in resilience. When we feel uncomfortable in our body, we are more likely to seek to medicate the discomfort. When we feel uncomfortable about or even feel ashamed about how our body looks, we can be more prone to medicate our psychic stress.

The pain that can arise or persist from a lack of proper, consistent exercise can tempt us toward medicating that pain rather than addressing its underlying cause.

In *Fit For A Day* we seek to reduce the vulnerabilities to our recovery from these various dis-eases, dis-satisfactions and dis-comforts.

The ancient and oft-quoted Latin adage, *Mens Sana in Corpore Sano* translates as “a healthy mind in a healthy body”. *Fit For A Day* takes that message to heart: “be healthy in your body to be healthier in your mind and spirit—and therefore your recovery.”

What are some of the likely excuses that might stop us from starting and then continuing a fitness program to complement our recovery?

Here’s a possible sample: “I don’t have enough time.” “I am too weak and out-of-shape.” “I’ve tried all kinds of programs in the past and they don’t ever work for me. So why try again and just fail again?” “I hate gyms.” “I can’t afford it.” “Don’t you

need to buy or have a bunch of equipment? That’s more than I want to take on right now.”

Fit For A Day meets all of these excuses head on! As one teacher put it: “Yes, you have the time, you have all the time there is.” In other words, the no-time excuse is really a value statement, in this case about exercise. However, even the most hardened time-hoarder can’t balk at a “Just-For-Today, do these five quick minutes.” And the value of that five minutes will quickly be felt in terms of an enhanced sense of well-being and greater energy.

The “too-weak” excuse. *Fit For A Day* has three fitness tracks, Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced. All three levels are initially and deliberately set at a very low fitness bar—and your track can vary for any particular exercise. However out of shape you might be, you can still engage successfully with the program.

The “it won’t work for me” excuse is met by a slow, slow “progress-not-perfection” approach where the results and benefits are incremental—like a sensible, doable hygiene practice you eventually would feel uncomfortable to be without.

Fit For A Day requires no equipment and no gym attendance—or other related expense. It’s just you and your own body, in the privacy of your own place, be it home or work. At most, we may suggest having access to a pull up bar some way down the pike, but it won’t be a requirement.

Of course, you can most certainly do significantly more exercise of any kind you care to, beyond the “at least do this much each day” routines offered here.

On the first six days of each week, there will be a single main exercise for strength and/or cardio, one or more joint mobility exercises, a breathing exercise and a brief isometric hold. We give you a space to log what you actually did for the day.

We do something every day—there is no rest day. However, the seventh day is a special joint mobility and breathing-only day and is considered restorative.

Each week has a cycle of three routines that are repeated twice, with the restorative day on day 7.

At the end of each 4-week cycle we congratulate you with a page for you to write in your results and celebrate your progress.

WEEK 1, DAY 1

SET THE ABDOMINAL BREATH

Physical tension, mental stress and poor posture contribute to shallow, short breaths in the upper chest—which leads to a further cycle of stress, tension and low energy. Breathing into the abdomen instead allows us to take in more oxygen, stimulates our lymph system and induces a relaxation response—with a corresponding sense of serenity and overall well-being.

Place both hands on your stomach just below your navel and put your attention in the same area. Gently inhale into the stomach and feel the stomach inflating under your hands. As you exhale feel the stomach subside of its own accord.



Beginner: 10 repetitions.

Intermediate: 15 repetitions.

Advanced: 20 repetitions.

Number performed: _____

ANKLE ROTATIONS

Lubrication is essential for joint health. However, it takes rotational movement of the joint to stimulate the synovial fluids so vital for good function. Generally, the more we rotate our joints, the better our overall mobility and flexibility. Gentle joint rotations often help reduce pain in the immediate area. Joint rotations are a perfect way to warm up the body before more intense exercise.

Stand on one leg at a time, holding on to a chair for balance if need be. Circle the foot in both clockwise and counter-clockwise directions. After you have finished your circles, point the foot down and then bring back up as far as you can without too much discomfort.



Beginner: 5 repetitions. Intermediate: 8 repetitions.
Advanced: 10 repetitions.

Number performed: _____

THE FULL BODYWEIGHT SQUAT

For an overall energy boost, general body strengthening and cardio impact, nothing beats the full bodyweight squat! This will be a cornerstone exercise in your ongoing fitness program, for good reason.

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Cross your arms over your chest and squat down as low as you can, preferably below parallel and eventually with your thighs touching your calves. Keep your knees from bowing in by aligning them with your feet. Keep your back as straight as possible. Come back up and lock out your legs and hips completely. Squeeze the muscles in your legs as tightly as possible for a second, relax and repeat the squat. Inhale and hold the breath as you descend. Exhale as you ascend.



Beginner: 5 repetitions. Intermediate: 8 repetitions. Advanced: 10 repetitions. Number performed: _____

WEEK 1, DAY 2

SET THE ABDOMINAL BREATH

Place both hands on your stomach just below your navel and put your attention in the same area. Gently inhale into the stomach and feel the stomach inflating under your hands. As you exhale feel the stomach subside of its own accord.

Beginner: 10 repetitions. Intermediate: 15 repetitions. Advanced: 20 repetitions. Number performed: _____

SHOULDER ROTATIONS

With the advent of mobile devices and the increase in desk-bound activities, our postures have declined dramatically. The characteristic modern posture includes rounded shoulders with a head tilted forward on a stiff neck. Our breathing suffers, less blood reaches the brain and our mental acuity and overall energy is diminished.

Stand with your arms down by your sides. Circle your shoulders initially up, forwards, down and backwards, making a full 360-degree rotation. Repeat in the opposite direction.

Next, pull your shoulders back and down, bringing your shoulder blades together as close as possible. Tighten the muscles in that area and hold for five seconds. Relax.



Beginner: 5 repetitions. Intermediate: 8 repetitions. Advanced: 10 repetitions. Number performed: _____

THE PUSH UP

Physical culturists through the ages have revered the Push Up for its impact on strength and physique. It's another vital exercise which will become a mainstay of your ongoing fitness for recovery program.

Kneel on the ground and place your feet on the ground. Place your hands on the floor at shoulder's width. Raise your knees up and extend your legs until your whole body is in a plank-like posture. Keep your butt in line with your spine. Tighten your abs. Take about two seconds to gently lower yourself down until your chest almost touches the floor. Push up into your original position. Inhale and hold your breath on the way down. Exhale when you push up.



If the full push up is initially too challenging for you, perform the movement while resting on your knees.



Beginner: 1 repetition. Intermediate: 2 repetitions. Advanced: 3 repetitions. Number performed: _____

WEEK 1, DAY 3

SET THE ABDOMINAL BREATH

Place both hands on your stomach just below your navel and put your attention in the same area. Gently inhale into the stomach and feel the stomach inflating under your hands. As you exhale feel the stomach subside of its own accord.

Beginner: 10 repetitions. Intermediate: 15 repetitions. Advanced: 20 repetitions. Number performed: _____

NECK ROTATIONS

Our poor necks! So much work to do carrying that worried head of ours around—with so little thanks... It's not just those of us in recovery who suffer from stiff and painful necks—it's more like most of the population. Amongst the family of possible joint mobility exercises, it just doesn't get more beneficial than the neck movements. Here are two of the most important:



Stand with your arms down by your sides. Neck Rotation A: Turn your head to the left as far as you can without pain, keeping your head level and your shoulders down and still. Turn your head slowly all the way to the right.

Neck Rotation B: Bring your chin as close to your chest as possible, without moving any other part of your body. Tilt your head back as far as possible.



Beginner: 5 repetitions. Intermediate: 8 repetitions. Advanced: 10 repetitions. Numbers performed for each neck rotation: _____

THE SHORT BRIDGE

Would it be an exaggeration to say that we are only as healthy as our spine is healthy? The prevalence of chiropractic might be one marker for such a bold claim. What is certain is that failure to strength the spine and keep it supple can lead to a host of physical problems that can cascade through our whole system over time. No exercise will give you a more supple and strong

spine than the oft-neglected Bridge. The Short Bridge is the perfect way to start your journey to a more resilient spine—and the health benefits to match!

Lie on your back with your hands clasped on your stomach. Bend your knees so that your feet, at hip-width, are relatively close to your butt (about nine inches). Lift the hips and back off the ground, so your head, shoulders and feet support your raised body. Press your hips up as much as you can, tighten your butt muscles for a couple of seconds, relax and lower yourself down slowly. Inhale and hold the breath before you rise up, exhale on the descent.



Beginner: 5 repetitions. Intermediate: 7 repetitions. Advanced: 10 repetitions. Number performed: _____

WEEK 1, DAY 4

SET THE ABDOMINAL BREATH

Place both hands on your stomach just below your navel and put your attention in the same area. Gently inhale into the stomach and feel the stomach inflating under your hands. As you exhale feel the stomach subside of its own accord.

Beginner: 10 repetitions. Intermediate: 15 repetitions. Advanced: 20 repetitions. Number performed: _____

ANKLE ROTATIONS

Stand on one leg at a time, holding on to a chair for balance if need be. Circle the foot in both clockwise and counter-clockwise directions. After you have finished your circles, point the foot down and then bring back up as far as you can without too much discomfort.

Beginner: 5 repetitions. Intermediate: 8 repetitions. Advanced: 10 repetitions. Number performed: _____

THE FULL BODYWEIGHT SQUAT

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Cross your arms over your chest and squat down as low as you can, preferably below parallel and eventually with your thighs touching your calves. Keep your knees from bowing in by aligning them with

your feet. Keep your back as straight as possible. Come back and lock out your legs and hips completely. Squeeze the muscles in your legs as tightly as possible for a second, relax and repeat the squat. Inhale and hold the breath as you descend. Exhale as you ascend.

Beginner: 5 repetitions. Intermediate: 8 repetitions. Advanced: 10 repetitions. Number performed: _____

WEEK 1, DAY 5

SET THE ABDOMINAL BREATH

Place both hands on your stomach just below your navel and put your attention in the same area. Gently inhale into the stomach and feel the stomach inflating under your hands. As you exhale feel the stomach subside of its own accord.

Beginner: 10 repetitions. Intermediate: 15 repetitions. Advanced: 20 repetitions. Number performed: _____

SHOULDER ROTATIONS

Stand with your arms down by your sides. Circle your shoulders initially up, forwards, down and backwards, making a full 360-degree rotation. Repeat in the opposite direction.

Beginner: 5 repetitions. Intermediate: 8 repetitions. Advanced: 10 repetitions. Number performed: _____

Next, pull your shoulders back and down, bringing your shoulder blades together as close as possible. Tighten the muscles in that area and hold for five seconds. Relax.

Beginner: 2 repetitions. Intermediate: 3 repetitions. Advanced: 5 repetitions. Number performed: _____

THE PUSH UP

Kneel on the ground and place your feet on the ground. Place your hands on the floor at shoulder's width. Raise your knees up and extend your legs until your whole body is in a plank-like posture. Keep your butt in line with your spine. Tighten your abs. Take about two seconds to gently lower yourself down until your chest almost touches the floor. Push up into your original position. Inhale and hold your breath on the way down. Exhale when you push up. If the full push up is initially too challenging for you, perform the movement while resting on your knees.

Beginner: 1 repetition. Intermediate: 2 repetitions. Advanced: 3 repetitions. Number performed: _____

WEEK 1, DAY 6

SET THE ABDOMINAL BREATH

Place both hands on your stomach just below your navel and put your attention in the same area. Gently inhale into the stomach and feel the stomach inflating under your hands. As you exhale feel the stomach subside of its own accord.

Beginner: 10 repetitions. Intermediate: 15 repetitions. Advanced: 20 repetitions. Number performed: _____

NECK ROTATIONS

Stand with your arms down by your sides. Neck Rotation A: Turn your head to the left as far as you can without pain, keeping your head level and your shoulders down and still. Turn you head slowly all the way to the right. Neck Rotation B: Bring your chin as close to your chest as possible, without moving any other part of your body. Tilt your head back as far as possible.

Beginner: 5 repetitions. Intermediate: 8 repetitions. Advanced: 10 repetitions. Numbers performed for each neck rotation: _____

THE SHORT BRIDGE

Lie on your back with your hands clasped on your stomach. Bend your knees so that your feet, at hip-width, are relatively close to your butt (about nine inches). Lift the hips and back off the

ground, so your head, shoulders and feet support your raised body. Press your hips up as much as you can, tighten your butt muscles for a couple of seconds, relax and lower yourself down slowly. Inhale and hold the breath before you rise up, exhale on the descent.

Beginner: 5 repetitions. Intermediate: 7 repetitions. Advanced: 10 repetitions. Number performed: _____

WEEK 1, DAY 7

FIRE-BREATHING

Many of us under-breathe and as a result have blood oxygen levels that are far from optimal. One tried and true breathing method to push more oxygen into our cells is to perform a series of relatively vigorous inhales and exhales, then holding the final exhale for as long as is comfortable. Lie down or sit in a comfortable position with a straight back. Inhale quickly through the nose and exhale vigorously through the mouth.

Beginner: 1 set of 20 repetitions. Intermediate: 1 set of 30 repetitions. Advanced: 2 sets of 20 repetitions. Number performed: _____

SHOULDER, NECK AND ANKLE ROTATIONS— PLUS PELVIC TILTS

Perform the same sets of shoulder, neck and ankle rotations you performed during the previous six days. Then add Pelvic Tilts.

PELVIC TILTS

As a result of excess sitting, our pelvises can begin to lose their natural mobility. Pelvic restrictions can lead to back pain, poor posture and reduced energy.

Stand with your feet at hip-width. Place your hands on your hips.

Have your knees slightly bent. Pelvic Tilt A: tilt your pelvis back, as if preparing to sit down. Tilt and thrust your pelvis forward until the hips lock out.



Pelvic Tilt B: tilt your pelvis up to the left so the right side sinks down. Tilt your pelvis in the opposite direction, up and to the right.



Beginner: 5 repetitions. Intermediate: 8 repetitions. Advanced: 10 repetitions. Numbers performed for each rotation: _____

Congratulations, you have now completed your first full week of the *Fit For A Day* program! Take a moment to reflect on how the addition of these simple, daily routines have helped with your overall sense of well-being and energy. Feel free to record your thoughts in the space below: