

# Week One of workouts: hurts so good

Joe Ferry

Halfway through my first workout with personal trainer Fernando Paredes, I wondered what I had gotten myself into.

Two weeks earlier, I had approached the owner of Fusion Fitness Studio in Doylestown with a proposition - guide me through a 10-week fitness and nutrition regimen, which I would chronicle on the pages of this newspaper.

To my great surprise, Fernando enthusiastically accepted the challenge of whipping a middle-aged, overweight, mostly sedentary man into some semblance of physical fitness.

After an initial evaluation, during which several obvious problem areas were identified, Fernando designed a workout routine designed to re-awaken muscle systems that had been left to wither like so many. He compared the process to "rewriting the files on a computer."

Our bodies, he explained, become conditioned to performing routine daily activities



with little or no problems. Ask them to do something different -- like raising an 8-pound medicine ball over your head several times -- and it takes some serious re-programming to get everything moving in sync.

The drills themselves Fernando came up with were pretty benign - mostly stretches with little resistance and not many reps - but my creaky 52-year old body reacted like a '52 Rambler trying to start on a cold winter morning.

"You want us to do what?" I could hear my muscles shouting. "You've got to be kidding."

Somehow, I got through five of the seven exercises Fernando had planned for our first session. An hour sure goes by fast when you're having that much fun.

The next day, I felt pain in places I had forgotten existed. But it was a good pain, the sort of discomfort you would expect from taxing muscles that have been playing hooky for years.

Before the workout, we went over the food diary I had kept for the previous week. He gave me a D for record-keeping (I had forgotten to record a few meals) and a B for making good choices when I did manage to remember to write them down.

But he was positively ecstatic -- an A+++ -- when he saw I had eaten eggs one morning (an excellent source of protein), and split a chicken parmesan stromboli over two meals.

While the stromboli was not a great choice of foods, he said, the fact that I ate half one night and the other half the

next day, rather than eating it all in one sitting, "is a huge step forward"

That led to an interesting discussion of when it is permissible to cheat while on a diet. Fernando doesn't particularly like the term "diet" but he says people should "treat" themselves, not feel like they are "cheating."

There are three advantages to "treating," he said. One, it gives you something to look forward to. Second, if you have been in a "caloric deficit" for several days, "cheating" can actually speed up your metabolism, increasing the number of calories expended.

The third benefit, he said, is that "treating" yourself occasionally only makes you more determined to get back on track.

"Typically, people feel like crap," he said. "They feel terrible and can't wait to get back to feeling good again."

So there, permission from a personal trainer to go a little nuts every once in a while. It can actually be good for you.

By the way, I had a session with Dr. Steve Bimson, my primary care physician, last week to go over the results of my blood work. While I was a bit startled by the initial results - total cholesterol of 203, HDL (the good stuff) an abnormally-low 28, LDL (the bad cholesterol) 135, and blood sugar of 133 - he said there was nothing to be especially alarmed about.

Diet and exercise can reduce LDL by 25 percent, which would put me at about 100, which is acceptable, he said.



*Stretching is an important step after every workout.*

My blood sugar will go down at the same time.

So after a week of working out and watching what I eat, I have lost -- drum roll, please -- one pound. I'm down to 245. At 5-feet, 10-inches tall, I still have a long way to go.

While I'm a bit disappointed by such a puny loss for such hard work, Fernando says I should be pleased. Healthy weight loss, he says, should be at a rate of between a half pound and a pound a week.

"You see all those advertisements that say you can lose 30 pounds in 30 days?" he asks. "It's true. But in 99 percent of the cases, within a month they've gained back 40 pounds."

Remember, he says, one pound a week is 52 pounds in a year.

Yeah, that would be good.

**Photographs by  
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Do you have an inspirational fitness story to tell? Tips to share? I would love to hear from you. Drop me an email at [joeferry@buckscountyherald.com](mailto:joeferry@buckscountyherald.com).