

## THE GOLD MEDAL BODIES MANIFESTO



SO, YOU'VE GOT A BODY... THAT'S A GOOD  
START.

Now that we've established the obvious, let us ask you this:

What do you do with your body, and how well is it suited to that task?

You see, your body is a machine, and not just in the mechanical sense like a car or a vibrator. Your body is an intelligent machine - a learning machine - with the ability to adapt to nearly any stimulus you expose it to with any degree of consistency.

### ADAPTATION

Adaptation is the fundamental basis on which the idea of training rests. It's behind the very concept of fitness, and it underpins every single workout regimen ever created.

Yet, what's less obvious is that your body's ability to adapt is also the culprit in being "out of shape." Most illness and pathology in the body results from training our bodies to be really, really good at the wrong things. In fact, you're training your body right now, and at every moment, awake or asleep, whether or not you notice or intend it.

People who sit down to work at computers for hours at a time (such as your unfortunate author) become very good at sitting in front of computers. Their bodies learn to bend in certain ways that make other activities more difficult. At the extreme, we can see things like RSI (repetitive stress injuries) and chronic tension. Less obvious are the shortened hip flexors and weakened abdominal muscles that can lead to lower back pain.

Similarly, a body that is consistently exposed to the stimulus of relaxing on the sofa with some cheese doodles and the latest episode of *Dexter* gets evermore efficient at the task of storing doodle-stuff and sinking deeper and deeper into the cushions.

You probably see where this is going.

Since your body is always learning (especially when you wish it weren't), your health demands that you specifically provide an environment in which it can learn the things you do want it to be good at.

## **FITNESS IS A SKILL**

The word “fitness” is thrown around a lot these days, usually in conjunction with a new fad or product. We hear the word so often, that it's easy to overlook the simple definition of fitness: the degree to which one is fit for the task at hand.

Since being fit to watch TV is different from being fit to run a marathon, play a game of soccer, or do a back flip, we find that most people have varying personal definitions of fitness. In fact, we each define fitness personally as the ability to perform the specific tasks we would like the ability to perform.

- ★A fan of the UFC might see a fighter's body as the pinnacle of fitness.
- ★Someone who plays pickup basketball every Friday will determine fitness relative to the ability to run fast and recover between points.

- ★ Even after putting on a few pounds once they join the workforce, most 20-somethings feel they are in “pretty good shape” compared to those who have done the cubicle grind for ten or twenty years.
- ★ An athletic newcomer to a yoga studio may not feel very fit compared to the leotarded woman scratching the back of her head with her toes.

*[Note: No gender stereotypes were harmed in the writing of the preceding list.]*

In fact, we each measure our own fitness relative to our abilities to do those things we wish we could. When we look at things this way, it becomes clear that fitness is a skill - the skill to move our bodies as we desire.

If fitness is really just a measure of skill, why do most fitness programs focus exclusively on work capacity?

## SKILL IS THE FLUX CAPACITOR OF FITNESS

Don't get us wrong here. Work capacity is important, and increasing work capacity can be extremely valuable to many athletes.

In *Back to the Future*, work capacity plays a vital role. Without the requisite 1.21 gigawatts of energy from plutonium or a bolt of lightning, the DeLorean is pretty useless. The time circuits just won't light up, and Marty is stuck running around inventing rock 'n' roll and getting his parents to fall in love.

Eventually, **Mr. Fusion** solves the work capacity issue, but Marty still has trouble thinking “fourth-dimensionally.” As Doc prepares to take them into the future, Marty points out that the DeLorean will run out of road before it gets to 88 miles per hour.

ROADS? WHERE WE'RE GOING, WE DON'T NEED  
ROADS...

Once the DeLorean has acquired the new skill of flight, it's previous limits are no longer effective. In fact, it was never the plutonium that allowed time travel in the first place. It was the ability (skill) of the flux capacitor to bend time that really made the difference.

If traveling at 88 MPH were really the primary requisite for time travel, your humble author would find himself in a different decade nearly every time he got behind the wheel of a car. He'd also listen to a lot more Huey Lewis.

## HOW MUCH MORE DO YOU REALLY NEED?

Let's go ahead and make broad generalization: it's not a lack of roads, lightning, or plutonium that's holding you back.

If simply doing more were the answer, you would already be optimally fit for doing the things you want to

do. If developing greater work capacity were really the highest leverage training activity, the contestants of the World's Strongest Man events and long distance runners would sport similar physiques.

They both do a LOT of the thing they do. So why does that quantity add up to such different qualities?

THE ANSWER (UNSURPRISINGLY, WE HOPE) IS SKILL.

Running a marathon requires a great deal of skill - not just in efficient movements that conserve energy, but in reducing the risk of injury from repeated impact against the road.

And if you think that strength is the only thing strongman competitors have going for them, you greatly underestimate the amount of finesse it takes to walk with a giant boulder overhead. One clumsy move could mean serious injury for these athletes. Though the capacity to lift a keg is no big deal (ask any bartender),

the skill to throw it and hit a target is pretty damn impressive.

## **MORE IS NOT BETTER; BETTER IS BETTER**

Chances are, you aren't planning to compete as a strongman or long distance runner (and if you are, you'll still agree with us that skill is where it's at).

**SO THE QUESTION THEN IS, WHY DO YOU BASE YOUR PROGRESS ON THE ABILITY TO DO MORE?**

*[Yes, we just made an assumption about the kind of training you do, and if the primary variable in your program has to do with time, reps, or weight, we have assumed correctly.]*

Rather than a mindset on improving weight/volume/time/reps/insert your metric here, what if we judged progress by our ability to perform a certain maneuver? It's nice to push 10 more pounds overhead than you did a couple weeks ago, but how much cooler would it be to pop into a handstand in the office whenever you are

bored? Or be able to hop over a fence when that mean neighborhood dog is chasing you?

Sure, some people will dismiss these things "tricks," and they are, but it doesn't make them any less impressive. Plus, just ask those people if they can do these tricks. Odds are they can't.

These movements require strength and skill that takes time and practice to develop. Time and practice that builds strength and fitness for the activities you want to be good at.

Even if you train complicated skills as part of your regular routine, chances are your primary focus is on doing more of them in less time or with a higher weight load. We're not judging. We train like that sometimes too. It's great for conditioning, and that's just our point.

Conditioning is all well and good, but it isn't always the most effective way to get strong.

## THE CONDITIONING TRAP

“What’s today’s goal? Do more than last time.”

Is that really all there is to fitness? Is there no other way to get better at the things we want to do?

Conditioning is very important. A proper conditioning regimen will give you a whole host of health benefits. You should do conditioning, because its good for you. But...

**THERE'S MORE TO EXERCISE THAN JUST  
CONDITIONING, AND ITS GOOD FOR YOU TOO.**

We should use different training methods to achieve different goals. As we mentioned above, fitness can mean quite a few things to each individual. So it's important that our training makes us more fit for our own goals - not the goals being pushed on us by the

sales literature for every new product on the market.

Being well conditioned (with high cardiovascular and muscle endurance, etc.) is one type of fitness. Being strong is another. More specifically, being able to move your body into different positions with control and ease.

For a prime example of how skill training effects the attribute of strength, we need look no further than gymnastics.

## THE REAL SECRET OF GYMNASTIC TRAINING

How do gymnasts develop their awesome physiques?

Some people will try to tell you that bodyweight exercise is the secret. But if that were true, it wouldn't be possible to get similar results with Clubbells, kettlebells, or even barbells. In fact, it is possible, as the

majority of people you see with enviable physiques did not get that way using bodyweight alone.

The thing gymnasts do very well is practice skills. They practice skills until they master them, and then they practice more difficult skills.

Intelligent athletes in every sport do the same. Powerlifters know that they won't get ahead if they only train the three skills that make up their sport (the bench press, the squat, and the deadlift). They practice a variety of movements to build their strength in the primary skills they perform in competition.

This is fundamental, and it's the true secret of getting a **Gold Medal Body**.

Gymnasts continually strive to perfect movements of greater and greater difficulty. They start with the basics and add variables - a step, a twist, a less stable base. Though they may perform many repetitions of a

particular movement, it's always done with the goal of moving to the next variation.

Olympic gymnastics includes a variety of events: rings, parallel bars, floor, etc. One thing you will never see in Olympic gymnastics is an event in which the person who does the most wins.

THERE IS NO GOLD MEDAL FOR "THE PERSON WHO CAN SPIN AROUND THE POMMEL HORSE THE MOST TIMES."

Gymnastics competitions are judged on the ability of the competitors to smoothly combine various skills. In most events, the competitors demonstrate mastery by performing a routine consisting of many skills, and points are awarded, not for the speed or power with which they are performed, but for control.

The most skilled player (not necessarily the biggest or fastest) is deemed the strongest.

## TRAINING SKILL ACQUISITION

For many goals, skill is the real key to achieving the particular type of fitness that you are after. Even in activities where you are trying to do the most work in the least amount of time, your skill at the movements is a big factor.

Now instead of working to improve our skill in just a few movements that we are going to do over and over again (*borrrrrring!*), let's try thinking like a gymnast. Let's try working to improve our skill level in a basic movement, then move on and work at improving skill in a more difficult movement.

IT'S THE OPPOSITE OF MOST EXERCISE ROUTINES,  
WHERE THE KEY WORD IS "ROUTINE."

It's invigorating to train this way - mentally as well as physically. We change our goals from more/longer/faster, to better and more skillful. The kicker with this mindset, is that training with a focus on skill also brings pretty

impressive levels of strength.

How's that for a side benefit of having fun?

## FIVE TRAINING TRUTHS

We hold these truths to be self-evident:

- ★Fitness is a skill.
- ★Size without strength is a shame.
- ★Strength without skill is a waste.
- ★Being "tough" isn't always enough.
- ★Training is goal-specific.

These truths form the core of the **Gold Medal Bodies** training philosophy.

This philosophy comes from our experiences as athletes, coaches, and guys who enjoy being able to do what we want, where we want, and whenever we want without fear of injury. Our bodies deliver Gold Medal performances for us every day.

Our kind of strength is not about seeing how much weight we can lift over our heads but the kind that allows us to perform confidently and proudly in everything we do.

AND IF WE HAPPEN TO LOOK GOOD DOING IT,  
THAT'S A SIDE EFFECT WE'RE PREPARED TO DEAL  
WITH.

**Gold Medal Bodies** programs are built on this idea of training cool skills that make us strong for our families, friends, and loved ones.

We're not out to create the ultimate badass. Dolf Lundgren did that in *Rocky IV*, and Stallone still cleaned his clock. Why? Because he was the better boxer. Skill

and finesse won out over strength. Better defeated more. And *Rocky* movies aren't the only example.

*Shaolin Soccer. Superman 2. Sex and the City. Shaft. Shanghai Knights. Shaun of the Dead. Spaceballs. Silverado. Seven Samurai.* Don't even get us started on movies that begin with 'B'.

Just because we like movies doesn't mean that skill only wins out in fiction. *Rocky* was based on a true story.

## THE INTEREST EQUATION

Here's another true story:

In the 1977 film *Pumping Iron*, a young Arnold Schwarzenegger claimed that he had literal orgasms while training. While that sounds pretty messy to us (and your author wagers that Arnie's sexual experience at the time was pretty limited), we can certainly agree that it

would be excellent incentive to keep training consistently.

Everyone knows that consistency is key, but it's also the point where most people fail. Simply put:

IT'S NO FUN = IT DOESN'T GET DONE

Yes, that's probably the sorriest excuse for an equation you've ever seen. It's also one of the truest statements we can make about what passes for training programs these days.

The reason people don't work out consistently is that working out is usually boring.

**Read that again:** *The reason people don't work out consistently is that working out is usually boring.* Notice, we don't think that the difficulty of a workout is much a deterrent at all for someone who really wants to get fit. Difficulty is much less of a problem than boredom.

People do some stupid stuff when they're bored. Just watch **YouTube** if you need convincing.

In fact, it seems people will do almost anything rather than another boring workout. But give someone an interesting challenge, something that's kind of fun, and they jump at the chance. Even if it happens to be a little difficult or - *gasp* - good for them.

IF BOILED CHICKEN BREAST TASTED LIKE CHOCOLATE CHEESECAKE, WE'D ALL LOOK A LITTLE BETTER.

Which is why we feel so strongly that workouts have to be fun, or at least interesting. It's also one more reason that skill training will always trump any method that relies on more.

You need some incentive to keep coming back and working. Who knows, maybe you and Schwarzenegger have figured out something we haven't, but that's OK, because the feeling we get from constantly performing

better and better at our skills is more than a little addictive.

It's fun to learn new and interesting ways to move. It's even better when you know that the thing you're practicing today can be applied to do something really cooler down the road.

## THE “GETS YOU OFF YOUR ASS” TEST

Which is more motivating, the difference between doing 6 and 7 muscle-ups, or the difference between doing a muscle-up and an iron cross?

Which one will make you want to work harder? Which one will bring you consistently to train?

Trying out the latest push-up variation has some novelty for the first couple of sessions, but novelty soon wears off, and you're stuck trying to do more and more in less

time. Stop playing this lame numbers game.

**SCREW THE REPS - WE WANT THE SKILLS!**

Skills that lead to more sophisticated skills have the power to motivate us in unexpected ways. Not only do we want to master the current skill, but the ones that follow from it. Skill A1 is a component of Skill A2, which is one step closer to Skill A5. Now imagine chaining several skills together into infinite combinations of combinations and routines.

Sounds like fun, right?

A workout that doesn't make you want to get off your ass and train is not going to be effective in the long run. A program that has you repeating the same movement patterns cycle after cycle is going to get old fast. But given the chance to get better at doing something we think is cool, most of us will jump.

We'll get off our asses to train if that training is fun.

**Gold Medal Bodies** programs are organized around progressively challenging skills and routines that will give you something to look forward to each session. You'll never wonder where you're going, and you'll never find yourself without a movement goal.

Better yet, you'll spend less time watching the clock and marking your log and more time playing - doing the things you really want to do and enjoying your *fitness*.

## THE GOLD MEDAL BODIES WAY (THREE BIG PROMISES)

WE ALL WANT TO BE SKILLFUL, BECAUSE THAT'S  
WHAT FITNESS IS.

We also want you to know what you're getting into, so we're going to go ahead and make three big promises about our products and the way we do business.

### Promise Number One:

YOU WILL IMPROVE YOUR FITNESS FOR DOING THE  
THINGS YOU LOVE TO DO.

You'll develop skills and strength. You'll develop control and precision. You'll develop a greater sense of your body and what it's capable of, and you'll find yourself looking for excuses to move in interesting ways and apply your skills to everything you do.

### Promise Number Two:

YOU WILL LOVE YOUR BODY.

Whether or not you ever actually win a gold medal in anything, you'll know that your body is worthy of the distinction.

You may never have a six pack or bulging pecs, but you'll most definitely have the confidence that comes from knowing your abilities and your limits. Limits are OK when you know you're expanding them. They're OK

when you you know that your body is working for you - not against.

When your skills improve at every workout, how much you bench will become irrelevant. We'll help you stop comparing your 'scores' with others and start being proud of what your body can do for you.

**Promise Number Three:**

WE WILL NEVER SELL YOU OUT TO ANYONE. EVER.

Let's be honest for a minute: This is our job. Creating programs that make you fit for doing your thing is how we feed our families. Yet, we know you have zero obligation to use our programs.

IF WE WANT TO KEEP DOING WHAT WE LOVE, WE HAVE TO HELP YOU DO WHAT YOU LOVE. AND WE HAVE TO DO IT WITH INTEGRITY.

It's tempting to take the short path and focus on making the sale. We could team up with bodybuilders and

shady marketers to squeeze every cent we could out of you. But you'd never trust us again, and we know it.

Our relationship with you is important to us - the better results you have, the more fun we all get to have together down the line. That's why we'll never resort to cheap marketing tricks or con you into recurring commission schemes. We'll never sell or share your information with anyone and we'll only recommend products from people we're confident we can stand behind.

**WHAT TO WATCH FOR**

We've been releasing a series of training programs based on the ideas expressed in this manifesto. The programs are inspired by gymnastic training, but geared toward developing practical strength for your specific fitness.

We have two programs available now and a third on the assembly line, all of which work together using the same

principles to make you strong. They move from simple to sophisticated to give you a clear progression to building skills that will challenge you in fun and interesting ways.

We also have a number of free programs and videos, so be head on over to our site and check those out at [goldmedalbodies.com](http://goldmedalbodies.com).

Finally, you can count on everything we do having genuine personality. We plan to include at least five typos in every printed resource and more than a few stupid jokes.

THINGS ARE ABOUT TO GET FUN AGAIN, SO LET'S  
GET STARTED.

## THE GOLD MEDAL BODIES TEAM

*Ryan, Andy, and Jarlo*

