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A PRACTICAL FITNESS GUIDE • AGE 30+

# 5 Fit Over 30 Commandments

Five simple ways to exercise smarter, stay consistent, and keep moving through every decade.

## Hey, friends!

As we move through our 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s and beyond, life gets busy - and our bodies change, too. But getting older is not a reason to give up on fitness. Far from it!

I'm a triathlete, and I've seen some seriously inspiring athletes train and race well into their 70s. The big lesson? Fitness doesn't have an expiration date. We just need to be a little smarter about how we move.

Here are my five tried-and-true 'commandments' for building a fitness routine you can keep coming back to. No perfection required. Just consistency, a little patience, and a willingness to listen to your body.

**THE BIG IDEA: Exercise smarter, not harder.**

## 1. Thou shalt not skip the warm-up

I know, I know. The warm-up can feel like the boring part before the 'real' workout. Some of my clients would love to skip it! But it's one of the best ways to ease into movement, especially as we get older.

Give yourself about 10-15 minutes to gradually bring up your heart rate and body temperature. Think controlled, easy, whole-body movement rather than jumping straight into your hardest set.

**Try this before your workout:**

- March or walk briskly to get moving.
- Add gentle arm circles, hip circles, and torso rotations.
- Practice light bodyweight squats or easy versions of the exercises you plan to do.
- Use dynamic movements first; save longer held stretches for your cool-down.

**My reminder: Motion is lotion. Give your body a chance to get ready!**

## 2. Thou shalt make room for movement

Life in our 30s and beyond can be a juggling act - jobs, families, errands, bills, and everything in between. If you're waiting for a perfectly free hour to exercise, you might be waiting a long time.

Instead, look for realistic places to fit movement into your day. A shorter session still counts, and small bouts of activity can add up.

**Easy ways to fit it in:**

- Work out earlier in the day if that is when your schedule is most predictable.
- Take the stairs when it makes sense.
- Park a little farther away and enjoy the extra walk.
- Bike or walk for part of a commute, if practical.
- Split movement into shorter sessions instead of requiring one long gym visit.

And don't forget: moving your body can be a great way to give yourself a mental break when life feels stressful.

**My reminder: The routine you can repeat beats the perfect workout you never get to.**

## 3. Thou shalt make flexibility a priority

Strength matters, but so does being able to move comfortably. Flexibility and mobility deserve a spot in your routine - not just whatever time is left at the end.

After a workout, spend a little time slowing down and stretching. In my original talk, I suggested 10-20 minutes of gentle, comfortable stretches as a cool-down. You can start with less and build the habit.

**A simple cool-down might include:**

- Gentle stretches for your hips, calves, chest, and shoulders.
- Easy breathing as your heart rate settles.
- Slow, comfortable movements that help you unwind.

Keep stretches comfortable - don't force a position or bounce through pain. Consistency is the goal, not seeing how far you can stretch today.

**My reminder: Make time for mobility, not just muscles.**

## 4. Thou shalt listen to your body

Here's one we all need to hear, myself included: that little nagging pain you keep hoping will disappear? Don't just ignore it for months.

Your body sends you signals. Some post-workout soreness can be normal, but persistent, worsening, or unusual pain deserves attention. If something doesn't feel right, modify the movement, stop if needed, and get appropriate professional advice.

Think of it like the check-engine light in your car. You wouldn't want to keep driving forever without checking what it means. Give your body that same care.

**A quick self-check:**

- Is this normal effort or soreness, or is it sharp or unusual pain?
- Is it improving with rest and adjustment, or does it keep returning?
- Would changing the exercise, range of motion, or weight help?
- If it persists, have I checked in with a qualified healthcare professional?

Forget the 'no pain, no gain' mindset. Progress should not mean pushing through warning signs.

**My reminder: Pay attention now so you can keep enjoying movement later.**

## 5. Thou shalt be willing to pivot

Maybe you loved chasing one-rep maxes in your 20s. Maybe your favorite workouts used to be all-out cardio. Great! But you don't have to train exactly the same way forever.

As your goals, energy, schedule, and recovery needs change, your workouts can change with them. This does not mean you have to stop lifting heavy or challenging yourself. It means making thoughtful choices instead of treating every workout like a competition.

**Mix things up with movements that support everyday life:**

- Strength training: rotate challenging sessions with lighter or moderate-weight work when appropriate.
- Kettlebells: build coordinated, full-body strength with good technique.
- Yoga: add movement, body awareness, and a chance to unwind.
- Barbell exercises: keep them in the mix if you enjoy them and have the technique and capacity.
- Swimming: enjoy full-body, lower-impact movement.
- Tai chi: explore gentle movement, coordination, and balance.

Choose activities you enjoy and can perform safely. A good plan should fit your current body, not the body you remember from 20 years ago.

**My reminder: Adjust your workout, not your commitment to yourself.**

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## Your smarter-fitness checklist

- I warm up before I ask my body to work hard.
- I make time for movement, even on busy days.
- I give flexibility and mobility some attention.
- I listen when my body tells me something feels off.
- I adapt my training as my needs and goals change.

And that's it, gang! Five simple reminders to help you keep moving for years to come. You don't have to do everything perfectly. Start with one habit, give it a little practice, and keep showing up for yourself.

**Stay strong and keep moving!**
**Lee-Ann Watanabe**

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Note: This guide is general fitness education, not individualized medical advice. Seek qualified guidance before starting or changing exercise if you have a medical condition, injury, or concerning symptoms.