

Do You Get Fit to Play Sport or Do You Play Sport to Get Fit?

The answer to this depends on how you define sport and fitness. Most people think of sport in terms of particular games, and the types of skills and fitness they need to play those games. And most people think about fitness in terms of what they can use their fitness for. This often involves relating fitness to sport and thinking in terms of meeting the physical demands of particular sports. But in the strict sense there are bigger differences between sport and fitness than this.

Sport is commonly defined as a form of physical activity that is planned, structured and competitive. Fitness on the other hand is sometimes more generally defined than this and sometimes more specifically defined. In the general sense, fitness can be thought of simply as a level of physical ability that adequately meets the physical demands of every day living. In the more specific sense fitness can be thought of as particular skills or physical performance attributes which are normally related to and used in sport. The problem with defining fitness in only these two ways is that people tend to then sit at either one end of the spectrum or the other. Some people think they are fit if they can walk casually around the shopping centre and others only think they are fit if they can play sport for as long and as hard as elite athletes. But real fitness for most people is somewhere in between these two.

Real fitness incorporates five key aspects - cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, and body composition (i.e., the proportion of muscle to fat). To be truly fit – either for every day living or for sport performance – requires that all of these aspects are worked and either maintained at a healthy level or continually improved beyond that level. Only being able to walk around the shopping centre at a casual pace does not constitute being fit and being able to run an ultra marathon involves being fitter than most of us need to be.

To be fit in terms of sport often involves additional sport specific fitness or skills but these should be developed on top of general and broad based fitness. To develop sport specific fitness without maintaining general fitness across all these parameters can lead to physical imbalances or even injuries. So, regardless of what you want to use your fitness for - whether it's every day living or winning your next sporting game - everyone needs to incorporate and work all aspects of general fitness in their training programs.

Don't panic though. This does not mean you need to do five different fitness workouts every day to cover each aspect of fitness! Many fitness activities work one or more of these aspects at the same time. For a balanced and progressive fitness training program contact Hyperactive Personal Fitness Training.

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