



GIVE ME 20!

Guiding Principles for Finding Your Fit

1. **GO IT ALONE:** Life is filled with too much talk and too many people. There's so much to get out of being by yourself, even if you're surrounded by a bunch of others in a gym. Don your headset, play your favorite tunes, and turn the whole session into an opportunity to sort things out in your head. Be present and concentrate on your physical movements. Be grateful and blow off steam.
2. **SHORT CAN BE SWEET (I.E., CONSTRAINTS BREED BRILLIANCE):** Time can be short, especially as a working woman who might be traveling and/or managing an onerous commute and/or dealing with family demands and/or all sorts of other constraints. The important thing to remember is that this isn't an all or nothing thing—i.e., a workout doesn't have to be an hour. In fact, I've gotten value out of 15 minutes of jumping around like an idiot in a small hotel room at 5 AM before I had to shower at 5:30 in order to be at a meeting by 7:30. Besides all that, there's huge value in sweating and moving around rigorously for a few minutes before sitting around in a walled conference room all day. It also plays an important role in maintaining a routine, ensuring you don't fall off the wagon, so to speak.
3. **MIX IT UP:** Spending most of your time on one machine or doing any one thing isn't an efficient use of your time and body. Ideally, you should aim to do a series of things in every workout that provides aerobic benefits while also challenging you from a strength standpoint on all of your major body parts—arms, legs, core, etc.
4. **NO EQUIPMENT, NO PROBLEM:** Some of the best workouts I've had have included nothing but a weighted jump rope and resistance bands, or maybe not even that. You really can't beat the oldies but goodies—burpees, pushups, dips, squats, lunges, planks—and you can do those pretty much anywhere, including a parking lot or even a medium-sized hotel room. Look for stairs, a park, or playground with equipment and sand. The world is your gym.
5. **HAVE ROPE, WILL TRAVEL:** Building on the previous point, several years ago, I started traveling with a weighted jump rope (see Target fitness equipment for my favorite) and wrapping it with resistance bands. Many hotel gyms are small and/or packed in the morning, so if you're relying on a treadmill or bike for your warm up, you might just walk straight out of the room and bag the whole thing. If you have a jump rope and know how to do burpees along with a bunch of body weight stuff like push-ups, squats, glute bridges, etc., you can pretty much conquer the world.
6. **MULTI-TASKING IS MAGIC:** With each move I make, I am focused on working at least two or three things at a time—i.e., core and arms or glutes and legs while mixing in cardio if I can. Challenge yourself to have a portfolio of moves that capitalize on multiple body parts at the same time. This efficiency can give you the benefits of what you'd normally get in an hour in 30 minutes or less.
7. **VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE:** No two days should be the same. You will certainly end up doing the same things repeatedly over the course of time, but every day should look a bit different. The order of the activities, the time you spend on each, the number of reps or sets you do, whether it's more or less aerobic, more or less focused on weights, includes a series of body weight moves or not, will vary every time to keep things interesting and your body confused and challenged.
8. **EVERYTHING IN MODERATION:** This is a variation on the theme above, but I think it's important not to do any one thing too much. This will help you avoid injury and ensure your body isn't working harder than it should. While I love taking a good three to five mile run every now and then, it's really rough on your body over the long haul and isn't the best workout you can do. As a result, I try to preserve those for when I'm in a place where the run gives me an experience, lets me see a new city, etc. I do a bit of rowing, a bit of spin bike, a bit of body weight, a bit of machines, a bit of free weights, a bit of stretching, a bit of resistance bands, a bit of yoga, and a bit of boxing, usually all within the same week, and all more rigorously and intensely than I would otherwise be able to do if I executed any one of them for an extended period of time.
9. **THREE STRIKES & YOU'RE OUT:** I've found that missing one day is definitely okay. Even missing two days is fine. But missing three is a trend and can lead to a falling-off-wagon situation. Do everything you can to stick with your routine, strategizing the days you're going to skip because you really can't avoid it (all-day flight, sunrise-to-sundown meetings, etc.) while mustering everything you have to make it work, even for a short and sweet workout, by the third day.
10. **EAT THE ELEPHANT ONE BITE AT A TIME (A.K.A. "BABY STEPPING"):** Okay, so I've been guilty of mixing bad metaphors way too many times and this is definitely one of them. My point here is that it's important not to overwhelm yourself by setting goals that are just too big and unattainable. Avoid setting yourself up for failure. Remember "What About Bob" with Bill Murray? Break it down, take baby steps, celebrate small victories, increment your way to awesomeness. It's totally fine to start small, dream big, and evolve all along the way. Most important is sticking with it, making it an integral part your life and who you are. Find a way, one day at a time, one workout at a time.





11. **A BODY IN MOTION TENDS TO STAY IN MOTION:** As I mention in Men@Work's "Work/Life/World Dynamics" chapter, laws of physics and economics always prevail. In the case of working out and getting fit, I'm referring two cases—both at the micro and macro levels. At the micro level, there will be so many days you just won't feel like working out, but it's critical to avoid second-guessing or over-thinking it. Just turn your brain off, mindlessly get yourself to the starting point, and things will take care of themselves from there. Ironically, I've found most of what feel like my worst days at the start end up being among my best days at the end. At a macro level, I'm referring to the routine piece of this. It's a bit redundant to the "three strikes and you're out" point mentioned above, but momentum is such a powerful thing in either direction—good or bad. Stay in motion, be a shark. Some days will be great, some will feel lame, and others will fall everywhere in between, but any form of workout is always better than no workout.
12. **POSTURE IS CORE TO YOUR PRESENCE:** There's a good pun in here for sure. Your presence and your gravitas are largely a function of how you carry yourself. How you carry yourself is largely a function of your posture, which is mostly related to your core strength. This might seem like a strange thing to include here but how you stand, walk, and move all contribute to your presence and all of that stuff is related to how fit you are, your overall strength. Also, beyond compromising your presence, bad posture can age you five-ten years instantly. Being and staying strong requires deliberate focus. Carve out a few minutes every morning and throughout the day to getting upright, honing your stance, and looking at your profile in the mirror. Does it look as straight and strong as it can be? This might seem trivial, but posture really is a big thing and requires continuous focus and discipline to maintain, particularly as you become an old fart like me. :)
13. **ADVERSITY BREEDS STRENGTH & PERSPECTIVE:** Imposing challenges on ourselves—like forcing ourselves to get up at 5 AM when we don't have to and jump around like an idiot all alone with no one but bored hotel security guys watching you on camera—is so strength building mentally and socially. In this world of a services-based economy, we have so few outlets for physical adversity or challenge, so we have to impose it on ourselves or it will never happen. Every time I make myself rise at the butt-crack of dawn to run in the dark or work out in an empty room, I emerge buoyed by how it seems to put everything in place in my mind. Fears are quelled, ideas are born, stress is allayed, motivation is juiced, confidence emerges, empathy is established.
14. **CROWD THE BAD OUT WITH GOOD:** I once had a fit friend say something that was so simple, yet it effectively reframed the way I thought about fitness, nutrition, and health more broadly. She said, "don't think about what you're not doing and dwell on the sacrifice, but instead crowd out the bad stuff by filling your life with the good stuff you love." What she meant by that is that big changes can be made in small, really positive ways, such as drinking more water vs. diet sodas or starting every meal by loading up on veggies before you dive into the rest of the meat or cutting sugar from your coffee or being proactive about finding a healthy restaurant you love vs. settling for what's easy and convenient. On the fitness front, this might play out by thinking of time at the gym or going on a short run outside as a gift to yourself—time to actively relax and clear your head—vs. hanging on your favorite couch surfing the Web or watching mindless TV.
15. **CHECKING A BAG DOESN'T MAKE YOU A BAD PERSON:** If you're traveling as a working woman, you might already have a couple of things to wear to meetings, etc. Once you throw in workout stuff, your bag may no longer fit in the overhead bin. First, I would NEVER let that keep you from traveling with workout stuff and making fitness part of your travel routine. Second, bags are almost always at the claim by the time you stop at the ladies' room. Plus, you don't have to deal with lugging your bag all over the terminal, fighting with everyone to be first on the plane to get overhead space, and all the other annoying crap that goes down related to carry-ons.
16. **FOCUS ON WORKING HARDER AND SMARTER:** You know the data point that we're only using a very small portion of our total brainpower and need to figure out how to capitalize on the untapped capacity? Looking around at all sorts of people around the world, I've noticed there's a great deal of standing around and talking and doing things a bit too deliberately. Most people have the opportunity to work more rigorously and efficiently to optimize their time and maximize their fitness. Consider your own routine and how you spend your gym time—the pace, the diversity, the challenge—and explore how you can improve each of those factors. Tweaking each of those things just a bit can shed pounds, define muscles, clear minds in a way that's better, faster, and stronger than what you're doing now.
17. **COMPETE AGAINST YOURSELF – IT'S A WIN-WIN:** Set up obstacle courses for yourself, reps, time, and more. Establish the structure to keep yourself on track and aim to beat your last time or other milestones. The cognitive challenge of creating a diverse set of activities that differ every time is great exercise for your brain and the rest of your body.
18. **THE PUZZLE HAS PIECES:** Think of each workout as a puzzle that has a box of pieces that you're going to assemble during the course of your time. In the end, they comprise a picture of the perfectly fit, totally sweaty and spent yet energized, emboldened, walking tall and confident you. One piece is upper arms, one lower, one shoulders, one glutes, one quads, one hamstring, one abs, one core, etc. If a piece of the puzzle is missing, your workout doesn't enable you to paint the complete image.
19. **SELFISHNESS IS UNAVOIDABLE:** To make this whole "finding your fit" thing work and have it truly become a thing for you, trade-offs will be required. I once saw something that said "1) Family 2) Friends 3) Work 4) Fitness. Pick 3." What that meant is that you can't do it all and one of those things probably has to go. So, if you're a working parent who wants to get fit, you won't have as much time to be social and hang with friends. It is what it is—trade-offs are inevitable in every part of life. Both working and working out can feel selfish as a mom, but they have the power to give you independence and self-reliance, which give you the power to do all sorts of things for yourself and those you love.
20. **WHO'S AFRAID OF HARD WORK?...DEFINITELY NOT YOU!:** As a working woman, you're undoubtedly managing all sorts of big, hairy challenges at home, the office, and other parts of your life. You invest in all sorts of other things to drive your career success—wardrobe, commute, education, networking, and more—so why not this? It's not easy but you've never taken the easy way out so why make an exception with your health? Best of all, regardless of what finding your fit takes, everything about the journey is going to be one big gift to yourself and your broader career. Conquer this and you can conquer anything.