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Gym membership checked, sneakers too - now just need a total-body workout on phone - but what's compound-exercise circuit? Sometimes it feels like fitness terms are in different language. Personal trainer Cori Lefkowith says knowing what you're doing something matters more than knowing many moves. She explains that even with planks and push-ups mastered, understanding what happens during training can help reach goals faster. 25 common fitness terms decoded so you can work out confidently. 1. Active Recovery Instead of lounging all day, schedule low-intensity activity like light walking or gentle yoga to aid circulation, ease soreness, and reduce muscle fatigue on rest days. 2. Aerobic Exercise Lefkowith explains that aerobic is a specific energy system using oxygen for extended periods, like long walks, runs, or bike rides. 3. Anaerobic Exercise High-intensity workouts tax anaerobic energy, breaking down glucose to use as energy when oxygen can't deliver it fast enough. 4. Boot Camp Tough classes combining cardio and strength exercises build strength and fitness through intense intervals. 5. Circuit Think of this as moving from one exercise to the next with minimal rest between each, like burpees followed by push-ups and plank jacks. 6. Compound Exercises Moves that incorporate multiple muscle groups or string two moves together, such as lunges or deadlifts, are efficient for increasing overall muscle mass and burning calories because they require more effort. 7. Focus on a single muscle group for each workout. 8. Cool-Down: End your workout with lighter movements and passive stretches to gradually bring your body back to a resting state, lowering your heart rate and calming your nervous system. 9. Cross-Training: Mix different workouts and training methods to create a well-balanced fitness plan and help you reach specific goals, such as improving performance and decreasing the risk of injury. 10. Dynamic Warm-Up: Before exercise, perform light exercises and stretches without stopping to raise your heart rate and body temperature, increasing mobility and range of motion. 11. Foam Rolling: Use a foam roller to loosen tight muscles, improve mobility, and correct form during exercises by releasing trigger points in the fascia surrounding your muscles. 12. Functional Moves: Perform exercises that mimic everyday movements, such as squats or lunges, which help you move and feel better outside of the gym. 13. Heart Rate Zones: Monitor your heart rate to determine the intensity of your workout, with different zones corresponding to varying levels of physical exertion. Best way measure fitness is by taking pulse first thing in morning, which generally gets lower as you get more fit since heart doesn't have to work hard pump out blood. Average resting heart rate according American Heart Association is 60-100 BPM. Maximum heart rate is hardest your heart can work efficiently, and target heart rate zones during workout expressed percentage max heart rate. For low-intensity cardio aim for 60-70% of max heart rate, moderate-intensity 70-85%, high-intensity 85% or above. Calculate max and target heart rate zones to ensure hitting workout goals. Trainers often use the RPE scale to gauge how hard you should be working out, since what feels easy or challenging varies from person to person. On the RPE scale, a 1 indicates zero effort while a 10 signifies working at maximum capacity. Exercise terminology includes several key concepts: - A "set" refers to repeating a certain number of reps for one exercise. - Steady-state cardio involves maintaining a moderate intensity pace over an extended period, often done during long runs or bike rides. This type of training is beneficial for athletes preparing for races or events. - Strength training uses resistance to build muscle mass and can be achieved through various methods, including bodyweight exercises, weightlifting, or using equipment like dumbbells or resistance bands. Additionally, trainers explain certain techniques such as super sets - pairing two exercises together back-to-back to work multiple muscle groups efficiently, often in a short amount of time. Another method is Tabata - a high-intensity interval training protocol involving 20 seconds of all-out effort followed by 10 seconds of rest, repeated eight times for four minutes. Understanding gym terminology can be overwhelming for beginners, especially when English is not their first language. However, knowing the basics can help individuals feel more confident and prepared when starting their fitness journey at a gym. Indoor cycling is an excellent way to get some cardio without putting excessive strain on your joints. Another low-impact option is the elliptical trainer, which simulates walking or running while minimizing joint impact. It typically features foot pedals and handles that help you move in an oval pattern. The stair climber machine mimics the motion of climbing stairs, engaging your leg muscles, particularly in your glutes, thighs, and calves. The rowing machine offers a full-body workout by simulating rowing motions with a sliding seat, footrests, and handlebars attached to resistance mechanisms. For strength training beginners, weight machines are an excellent choice as they guide you through exercises while ensuring proper form. These machines cater to various muscle groups and can be categorized into several types: Leg press machines target lower-body muscles like quadriceps, hamstrings, and glutes by simulating a squatting motion using your legs. The chest press machine focuses on strengthening upper body muscles in the chest, shoulders, and triceps through pushing motions with handles or grips. Lat pulldowns work the latissimus dorsi muscles in the back by pulling bars or handles downward toward the chest. Shoulder presses target shoulder muscles, particularly deltoids, through overhead pressing motions. For those who become more familiar with weight machines, they may also consider using free weights like dumbbells, barbells, and kettlebells, which come in various sizes ranging from 2-100 lbs. Plates are added to these weights for increased difficulty and can weigh between 2.5-50 lbs. Battle ropes offer full-body workouts through thick, heavy ropes. Weight benches provide seats in the free weights area where you can work out with different styles and angles targeting specific muscle groups. If you decide to join a class or personal training sessions at the gym, be prepared to learn additional fitness terminology that may include phrases related to exercise classes and personal training. When hitting the gym or following a fitness routine, it's essential to understand various workout terms that your trainer or fitness app might use. Here are some basic definitions: Aerobics involves activities like walking, running, cycling, or swimming that increase heart rate and breathing. HIIT (High-Intensity Interval Training) means short bursts of intense exercise followed by quick breaks. Weight/strength training focuses on building muscle strength and size using weights, machines, or bodyweight exercises. Circuit training combines cardio and strength exercises done in a series with minimal rest. When starting a fitness program, familiarize yourself with gym vocabulary like Warm up - a brief period of light exercise before a workout to prepare the body. Reps (repetitions) refer to how many times you do an exercise, while Sets are groups of consecutive reps with short breaks in between. Cool down is the final part of your workout to lower your heart rate and promote recovery. Gym classes often have unique names, such as Pilates for low-impact exercises that strengthen the core, improve flexibility, and enhance body alignment. Yoga combines physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation to promote mind-body connection, strength, and relaxation. Spin class is a group indoor cycling workout improving cardiovascular fitness and leg strength. Zumba is a dance fitness class providing an energetic cardio workout and improving coordination. CrossFit is a high-intensity program incorporating weight training and cardio for overall strength, endurance, and agility. When discussing exercises and workouts, it's common to refer to muscle groups and body parts. Understanding these terms will help you navigate your fitness journey more effectively. body workouts focus on muscles in upper body like chest, back, shoulders and arms; these include latissimus dorsi, trapezius, pectoralis major, biceps and triceps. Lower-body workouts target quadriceps, glutes and calf muscles. Gym has its own terminology and jargon that can be confusing for beginners. gym-goers and staff use special phrases to communicate effectively; learning these can help you feel part of the community. When joining a gym, understanding terms like code of conduct, joining/enrolment fee, liability waiver is essential. some popular gym phrases include 'gains/gainz' referring to muscle growth, 'shredded' describing low body fat with muscle definition, and 'PR/PB' indicating personal records or best times in exercises. Take your workout routine to the next level by utilizing these fitness tips. Save this page for future reference and put your new vocabulary skills into practice immediately. If you're still feeling a bit lost, consider booking a private online lesson with one of our many qualified tutors on Preply. With thousands of options available, you'll easily find a tutor who fits your schedule, budget, and learning style. Coordinate lessons around your workouts or work closely with your tutor to develop a customized plan that reinforces the fitness terminology covered in this guide. Boost your English skills alongside your physical fitness with Preply's expert guidance.