



# FITNESS GAME CHANGERS

**10** simple strategies to help you build muscle, lose fat and feel better today

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## **About The Author**

My name is Scott Laidler. I'm a fitness coach working between London & Los Angeles and of course via the internet. You'll see me giving health and fitness advice a couple of times a week in some of the UK's top newspapers & Magazines like Men's Health, Mens Fitness, Women's Health, The Sun, The metro etc.

I also run a state of the art fitness studio in Buckinghamshire with my friend and business partner David Kingsbury. We're always happy to have visitors so feel free to come and say hello, just let us know you're coming as we're inside a working film studio and security can get a little stringent depending on whats happening.

Alongside my experience in fitness, I have an academic background in Psychology. This has helped me understand why some people get results and others don't, even when following the same advice, I've also learnt some pretty useful techniques as to how to rectify that. My approach to training is very personalised which allows me to take the guesswork out of fitness and healthy eating.

In my experience, when exercise is made simple and easy to follow we get results. Being happy in our own skin frees up precious mental space which enables us to avoid negative self talk and enjoy whats really important in life family, friends, free time & health.

Early in my career my techniques were yielding some impressive results, which brought me a lot of opportunities, including being flown out to work in Los Angeles to work with some big names in the entertainment industry. This gave me a wealth of experience and was a kind of 'baptism under fire' as delivering anything short of what was needed for a film role just wasn't an option. I've been fortunate enough to work in fitness industry settings across the globe which has allowed me to help

hundreds of people from all walks of life achieve the results they were seeking. It doesn't take long before you begin to notice patterns and learn to differentiate the essential from the superfluous.

The services I offer and articles I write aren't aimed at the hardcore fitness fanatic, the natural athlete or the food obsessed. They are designed to get any reader to their ideal weight, whilst feeling fit strong and healthy regardless of age, and hopefully highlight ways to make nutritious food worth eating.

I'm sure you've heard a lot of promises from my industry over the years and at times have been left feeling disappointed and shortchanged.

My promise is that I'll always strive to create the best content I can, delivered in a way that is quick to assimilate and easy to apply.

Yours in Fitness,

Scott Laidler

Let's connect, I'd love to hear from you:



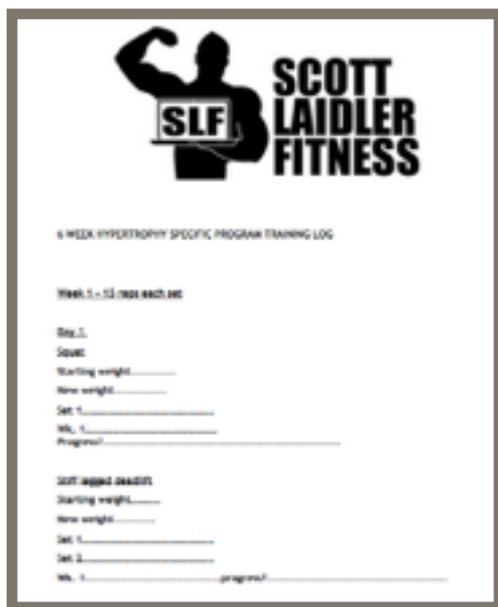
## **About This Book**

I've been writing a weekly column for the Daily Telegraph here in the UK since early 2013. One of my most popular articles was 'The 50 golden rules of fitness' owing to the popularity of the article I thought it would be a great idea to strip it down to the 10 most influential fitness principles, and expand on them to show you how to implement them and make a huge difference to your health and physique today.

Trust me, implementing any one of these techniques could completely change the way you feel about your training regime, body or even your life.

## 1. Keep Track of Your Workouts

This is probably the simplest principle in this book, but its the one I most often see neglected. When new members first visit our studio and they recount their training efforts, nine times out of ten they simply have no idea which weights they've been using, not to mention any record of the progress they've been making.



Ok, they made it to the gym and thats the most important thing! Workout logging is such a an easy little trick to implement that its often overlooked. Just recording your weights each time you train can massively impact the success or failure of your training regime.

Keeping accurate records of your workouts is the only way to determine if you are truly making progress in the gym. Over time you

will notice trends that can help you identify your next move.

For example you may notice a drop in performance that will alert you to the fact that its time to enter a new phase of training to shock your body into producing results. Alternatively you may notice that training at a certain time of day or after certain food affects your performance.

Revelations like these can make the difference between achieving your goals or not.

## 2. Never Diet

One of the more frustrating aspects of working in the fitness industry is that every few months we're bombarded by the next well marketed diet craze that is essentially encouraging people to put themselves through hell for a few short lived weeks of apparent 'weight loss'.

Unfortunately, for the most part all that people experience is a ridiculously restrictive, sometimes downright barmy meal planner (unless

you really like cabbage!), the stress of weighing themselves daily and the dissatisfaction of looking bad and feeling worse because that easy weight loss turned out to be just muscle and water.

The Diet Mentality has come about because there is agreement in our society that the only way to lose weight is by dieting. But dieting produces absolutely no permanent, positive results. In fact, it makes you feel worse about yourself and probably does more damage than good to your health.  
(Robert L. Schwartz)

Then a few weeks later, real trainers have to pick up the pieces and help people start feeling healthy again, let alone achieve their fitness goals. What the diet industry doesn't tell you is that the only people that have any business dieting are people that have already learnt to maintain their ideal weight over time and are dieting for a particular goal, think actors, models and athletes all of whom will be monitored closely by professionals.



For the rest of us, our goal should be to find healthy food choices that make us feel great and allow us to maintain our ideal weight. This is the true foundation of any healthy lifestyle.

### 3. Regular Mobility Work

Most people tend to focus too heavily on aesthetics when they get into exercise. Goals are usually centred around gaining muscle or losing weight which is fine, but doesn't address some major aspects of functionality in the body.

Flexibility, mobility and proprioception aren't exactly the sexiest buzz words in the fitness game, but if left unchecked for too long a lack of these can cause major problems later in life in terms of posture, unnecessary falls and simply making every day activity so much harder than it could have been.



It can be difficult to get into the habit of incorporating mobility drills into your weekly routine, I'll admit it took me years and I'm a trainer!

Mobility drills are important because they help to ensure that our muscles and joints glide fluently through their full range of motion, it's like owning a sports car, even if it just sits in the garage you have to rev it up every now and then or it soon begins to degenerate.



Mobility becomes more of a priority year on year, no matter what age you are you should begin to incorporate some mobility work into your regime, but if you are past 40 this needs to start becoming a priority, believe me you won't want to find this out the hard way.

## 4. You Must Train Legs, Properly

At first glance this is a fairly obvious point to make, it stands to reason that if you are going to workout, you'll work your entire body, but the amount of people that neglect to do so, sometimes to comical effect is amazing.

You know who I'm talking about, we all know a few. Guys that consider every day chest and abs day! These muscles are easy to check out in the mirror so they get trained more often, it's really as simple as that.



But working out your legs not only builds a far more rounded and aesthetically pleasing physique, it also massively promotes the secretion of testosterone and growth hormone which will help keep you lean and promote the growth of all your other muscle parts too.

Training legs is just as important for women as it is for men. developing strong full glutes and hamstrings is essential for enhancing your body's waist to hip ratio which has been touted as the 'one true measure of sexual attractiveness' in women whether you agree with that or not, its an interesting concept.



Marilyn monroe was supposed to represent perfection in this area (by western standards) and had a ratio of 0.68, you can calculate yours at <http://www.bmi-calculator.net/waist-to-hip-ratio-calculator/>

When we speak of training legs, I don't mean whizzing through a few sets at the business end of another workout, squats and deadlift should come first in most routines, they are the bigger muscle groups and require a lot of energy to perform well.

If you feel like your legs are lagging, I recommend 5x5 strength training, it involves doing squats three times per week for 5 sets each workout. I had let my legs go in 2012 because I focused too heavily on martial arts, which was highlighted to me by a delightful youtube comment, I took the point and brought my squat back from the low eighties to 127kg within 6 weeks, which actually classed me as 'intermediate' by official strength lifting standards, which I thought was nice.

## 5. The Power Of Intermittent Fasting

Switching from the ‘small and often’ 5 meals a day eating style to intermittent fasting has without doubt been one of the biggest game changers I’ve encountered in my career. Personally I find it the easiest way to stay lean and muscular, whilst at the same time being the most convenient way of meeting nutritional guidelines.

Actually since I’ve used IF protocols, I’ve been able to maintain 10% body fat year round with relative ease, even when travelling and eating ‘less than immaculately’. It hasn’t just worked for me, at any given time about half my clients are using IF protocols to achieve their training goals.

Intermittent fasting involves switching between periods of fasting and feasting. The most popular windows are the Fast for 16 hours / feast for 8 and the 5:2 protocol, which basically involves eating normally for 5 days and fasting for 2.



Eating this way allows our bodies natural growth hormone to be active in the body for longer as there is no morning insulin spike to cancel it out.

## Additional Benefits Include:

- Increased fat oxidation
- Increased insulin sensitivity
- Opportunity to eat just 2 meals per day
- Potential slowing of the ageing process

For anyone struggling with getting their body fat down, if you haven't tried intermittent fasting, I strongly suggest that you give it a whirl, it could be the answer you are looking for. Don't confuse intermittent fasting with dieting, its a way of life and can be as permanent or temporary as serves your own lifestyle.

## 6. Avoid Overtraining

Have you ever experienced a sudden lack of progress, aching limbs and a feeling that you just can't get up for your training session? If so the chances were you were overtrained.

Overtraining syndrome refers to the psychological, behavioural and psychological combination of symptoms that present as a result of putting your body under too much stress for too long without allowing for proper recovery and regeneration.



### Causes:

Too much Volume in workouts, Working the same muscles too frequently, Too many heavy weights or high intensity sessions without rest, External

Stressors (Financial, Emotional, Work Related), Drugs & Medication, Sleep Disruption

### Signs & Symptoms

Lethargy, Poor Sleep (despite being tired), Aching Muscles, Poor Workout Performance, Inability to Complete Workouts, Irritability, Loss of Appetite, Loss of Libido, Poor Coordination, Swelling of Lymph Glands, Loss of Menstruation, Abnormal Heart Rate

## Treatment and Avoidance

If you are experiencing any of the above symptoms, the most important thing to do is stop training. Your body needs time to recuperate and you need to listen to it. Symptoms could take days, weeks or months to subside. Once you begin to feel that your symptoms are subsiding, it would be wise to reintroduce active rest and more general workouts before heading back into a specified or particularly challenging exercise regime.

Overtraining syndrome can be avoided by properly planned training progressions, adequate rest and finding a balance between 'over-reaching' and over training. 'Over-reaching' is most easily defined as taking the body to a point slightly beyond its current capability, and allowing adequate time to recover and come back stronger. The main contrast with regard to overtraining is that either the workload is too far beyond what you can currently handle or the rest time does not allow for full recovery.

Either way the result is going to be at the very least a decrease in performance and at worst a myriad of the physiological, behavioural and psychological symptoms mentioned above.



## 7. Get Tested

The more you can find out about your body the easier its going to be to influence it and shape it the way you would like it.



Whenever we get new clients in our studio we make sure we put them through a series of diagnostic tests that allow us to determine exactly what their hormone balance is and how it can be optimised. We

also measure the extend to which their thyroid is performing, and assess the degree to which oxidative stress and other factors are contributing to adrenal stress.

We also look for any food intolerances that could cause stomach discomfort or lack of absorption. Not only this we put our clients through rigorous fitness tests that allow us to determine exactly which energy sources they will be using at a range of heart rates, meaning we know exactly how to burn fat or improve cardiovascular fitness.



The majority of these tests can be done from the comfort of your own home without the need for a series of expensive consulta-

tions via my colleague, highly sought after nutritionist Kyla Williams.

Tests can be purchased with a 10% discount at the quantified self shop, just add the coupon code 'scott' at checkout.

Here's the link:



Kyla will then send you a full analysis of your test results and make suggestions as to how to move forward and optimise your health.

## 8. Muscle Preservation is Always The Priority

There aren't many supplements I'd consider 'must haves' but branch chained amino acids are certainly one that in my own regime has earned that accolade.

BCAA's have been used to treat conditions like Lou Gehrigs disease, brain conditions and have even been used to assist in the treatment of certain cancers and liver disease.

What They Can Do For You:

The reason I consider BCAA's must haves is because of their amazing muscle sparing capabilities.

Did you know that when you are heavily fatigued or have gone too low on carbohydrates its actually possible for your body to tear down existing muscle mass for energy?

This literally means that if you do not get your nutrition right you could be suffering from a net loss of muscle mass as a result of exercise! Naturally slim guys known as 'ectomorphs' are particularly prone to this, its one of the reasons they find it so difficult to gain muscle mass.



Think of BCAAs as a kind of barrier between your muscles and catabolism, this makes their use especially synergistic when on an intermittent fasting eating protocol as often strenuous exercise will be undertaken on an empty stomach.

Not only do BCAA's help to protect your muscles they also help to battle fatigue and help facilitate recovery, reducing muscle soreness. This means BCAA's help enter the next training session fresh and ready to perform.

## 9. Keep Things Interesting, Periodisation.

Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

- Albert Einstein

One of the biggest mistakes I see people make in the gym is repeating the same tired workout regime week after week and not getting the results they are seeking.

I could understand if they had their physique exactly as they wanted it, but the amount of people I see frustrated with their results yet still unwilling to switch up their workouts always amazes me.

Our bodies adapt very quickly to the demands we put on them, we are after all a wonderfully adaptive organism. If you want to make year round progress, changing training stimulus is going to be essential. Even if a training phase is going really well for you, you cannot continue to gain size and strength or lose body fat indefinitely, we just aren't built that way.

This is where we must tear a leaf out of the professional athletes book. Athletes train in phases of anywhere between a day and 4 years (olympic game cycles) where every training session is planned and setup to achieve a particular goal.



For general fitness purposes I tend to recommend training phases of between 4-8 weeks, this is enough to see the desired effect and significant changes in the body without getting too used to the stimulus thus hitting a plateau.

For example an naturally slim man who desires to gain muscle over time could approach their goal using the following training phases:

Week 1-4 Pre-Conditioning  
Week 4-8 Strength 1  
Week 8-12 Muscular Endurance  
Week 12-16 Hypertrophy 1  
week 16-20 Strength 2  
Week 16-20 Hypertrophy 2

I can create a comprehensive training program for you, that will take you through every workout to get you to your goal, through multiple training phases via my online coaching services. find out more below:

<http://www.scottlaidler.com/online-personal-training>

**ONLINE FITNESS COACHING**

**“Top online trainer for fast results”**  
**Men'sFitness**

- ✓ No more wasted time or money
- ✓ Take the guess work out of your training regime
- ✓ Workout program tailored to your body type, goals and experience
- ✓ 6 Week training program & meal planner for a fraction of the cost of personal training
- ✓ Personal meal planner from top nutritionist
- ✓ Unlimited email support

**SL**

**FAT (31.7%)**  
99.7g  
897.3 cal

**PROTEIN (29.5%)**  
299.9g  
838.0 cal

**CARBS (38.8%)**  
274.2g  
1096.8 cal

**3 X 12 SQUAT**  
**4 X 8 BARBELL ROW**  
**20 MINUTES AT 107BPM SPIN BIKE**  
**SPIDER MAN PRESS-UP TO FAILURE**

## 10. Don't Lose Sleep

This has to be the most undervalued concept in this book. It's crazy but somehow we've actually created a culture of competition over how little sleep we are getting. How many times have you arrived at work and heard a proud admission to the effect of "I only had three hours sleep last night" or "pulled another all-nighter"

I get it, we're busy and we need to get things done, but sleep deprivation is not to be underestimated. I've experienced it's ill effects personally. Coming



up through the ranks of personal training in London there were several periods where I would begin my commute at 4:45AM and get back home after 11pm having had pretty much back to back days. This kind of

lifestyle was fine at first, I was building momentum in my career and i got through my days on personal development rhetoric and one single-mindedness on my goals.

it wasn't long before this lifestyle caught up with me, I remember one period of being unwell for literally 8 weeks on end, but I couldn't stop working, I experienced dizziness, heart palpitations and couldn't shake the simplest of tiny ailments, my workouts went through the floor, my heart rate was about

20BPM too fast and I knew I'd thrown myself into fatigue. Luckily, before things got to a point I couldn't reverse I drove to Snowdonia, slept for 22 straight hours and spent 3 days, recovering in the Welsh countryside.

Sleep also has massive implications on the condition of your physique, we all know that no muscle is built in the gym. Actually quite the opposite. We create muscle damage in the gym and most of our actual muscle gain and fat loss occurs at night whilst we sleep. It stands to reason that we need to build our lifestyles around the assumption of getting at least 6-7 hours of decent sleep a night. If we fail to do this we will suffer the consequences sooner or later.

These lifestyles changes probably aren't going to be easy to implement over night, but you can significantly improve the quality of your sleep by making some simple changes today, try these:

- Make sure room temperature is cool
- Switch all lights, television and sound sources off at night, even LEDs
- Do not consume caffeine after mid afternoon
- Workout as early in the day as possible
- If sleeping with your partner negatively effects your sleep, try using two duvets to avoid interrupting one another's sleep cycles
- Create a relaxing pre bed wind down routine

Thanks so much for reading, if this book has helped you in any way I'd love to hear from you via twitter [@scott\\_laidler](https://twitter.com/scott_laidler) or email me on [scott@scottlaidler.com](mailto:scott@scottlaidler.com)