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HOW TO BUILD A BODY THAT LASTS

ADAM RICHARDSON

Exercises for Longevity, Strength and Health

'Fun, informative and engaging. A must-read!' Lucy Lord



HOW TO BUILD A BODY THAT LASTS

Adam Richardson is the UK's top trending health and fitness coach with a rapidly growing audience across both TikTok and Instagram. Adam is passionate about removing barriers to exercise and movement, a philosophy that is key to his work as a personal trainer in which he strives to help his clients feel more confident, as well as more fit and healthy.

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To Mar, Tara & Gwen.
I hope this body lasts, so we can enjoy this life together
for as long as possible!

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Welcome to The Wiggle Room!

Hello, you ray of sunshine! First of all, I want to thank you for buying this book. Secondly, I want *you* to thank you for buying this book. I'm usually sceptical of any product or person that makes life-changing claims, but I genuinely believe the information in this book *will* change your life for the better, the way it has mine. I want to help you feel better, for longer. The secret to building a body that lasts? Mobility. Mobility is the foundation of a thriving existence, and that's exactly what we're here to do – make your life better, one wiggle at a time.

This is a fitness book – sort of. It's a book that will help you become fitter and healthier, but hopefully it won't feel like *just* a fitness book. Instead, I wanted to write a book about *you*; about how to get the most out of your life by teaching you how to extract the very best from your body for as long as possible without having to do anything too extreme.

I want to show you a different side to fitness. One that celebrates how you feel rather than just how you look, and hopefully doesn't feel too daunting. You'll learn all about that suit of meat and bones that carries you everywhere and what makes it so special, and pick up numerous tips and tricks to keep it running smoothly in the long run. Consider this my 'realistic approach to fitness for people who want to live in a body that feels good but don't really know where to start'. Very soon you'll understand what this mobility malarkey is all about and find what matters most to you as a unique individual with hopes, dreams and

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desires. We'll work through 20 exercises that will challenge your body in the best possible way, and explore all the weird and wonderful ways your body parts can (and can't yet) move. I'll be coaching you through my go-to mobility manoeuvres that need nothing more than a body, some mild enthusiasm and occasionally the odd thing lying around your house. Plus, I'll shower you with all my mobility moulding golden nuggets of how to actually make this movement habit stick, by finding ways to get more wiggle into your life.

Reaching a point where I actually enjoy fitness didn't happen overnight. There was a long period where I was just too embarrassed to step foot in the gym on my own, and the last thing I wanted to do was work out. But I have finally figured out what it was I was looking for, and I want to share with you the discoveries I've made through building my own movement habit. I believe it is something that everyone can benefit from, and that it can be truly transformative. But you know what they say – you have to be in it to win it.

We all have a different relationship with exercise. We know it is good for us – that's not exactly breaking news. Some people have a natural affinity for it and depend on fitness activities to get through their day. For others, the whole culture of exercise feels totally alien. I started exercising for the same reason that most people do: *because I wanted to be sexier.* If I'm honest, I wanted to stop looking like a pencil and I thought that growing some muscle and having abs would help me feel a little more confident in my own skin. What I didn't anticipate was that the constant focus on how I looked would start to suck the life out of my soul and only leave me feeling emptier.

I had spent most of my early twenties living in a body that felt about 70 years old. I couldn't help but think 'this isn't normal'. My back hurt, my hips and knees ached, and my

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shoulders liked to dislocate whenever they wanted. It felt like a constant battle against injury and stiffness, alongside this empty obsession with how much fat I had on my stomach. In a weird way, exercising ended up having a negative impact on my overall wellbeing, but it wasn't the moving that was doing the damage, it was how I perceived and used exercise that was the problem. I think deep down we all know that exercise is one of the single most impactful things that any of us can do for our physical and mental wellbeing, but like all good things, there is such a thing as too much.

Although my desire to look like Brad Pitt in *Fight Club* got me exercising in the first place, over time my priorities started to shift away from the mirror. For me, it had stopped being a positive because of *how* I was exercising. I was beating myself up, mentally and physically, and wondering why I didn't feel very good. Cutting a very long-winded story short, I had an epiphany; one that subsequently inspired a large proportion of my career trajectory and this book: one day, if I'm lucky, I'm going to resemble an old soggy tea bag, and how I look won't really matter. But how I feel *will*. My boobs may be sagging, and my biceps likely lagging, but if my body still works, hopefully I'll still be shagging. I wanted my body to stop hurting and for it to stay not hurting for as long as possible, which is what drove me down the mobility lane. I've never looked back, and that is what brings me to where we are today.

To be clear, I don't believe there's anything wrong with wanting to look a little better in your body. Who doesn't want to be sexier? I still train for aesthetic reasons, and I'd be lying if I said otherwise. But my purpose has shifted away from purely how I look to how I *feel* as well, and *mamma mia*, do I feel more fulfilled because of it. These musings about my experiences with exercise may feel like I'm plucking the thoughts from your

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brain – perhaps you too have these same feelings of dissatisfaction with your body. Regardless of your personal relationship with exercise, one thing I'm confident of is that if you choose to take on the information in this book, you'll feel more fulfilled. This book offers a blueprint to an improved relationship with your body, helping you move better than ever before, and hopefully discover a whole new perspective on how to make exercise work for you along the way.

The feeling of discomfort in my own skin is what got me going in the first place, and I'm grateful for the younger me, even though he had no idea what he was doing. I'm grateful he started this ball rolling because I wouldn't be here otherwise. So if, like me, you've reached a point where you're tired of striving to achieve an unrealistic standard pushed by society, feel underwhelmed by a body that keeps letting you down, and fatigued by exercise which feels like punishment, you've come to the right place. If you want to develop habits that make you feel *good*, habits that support and nurture gratitude towards the only body you'll ever live in, and find a way to enjoy doing the things you love, now and for a long, long time, then I'm excited for you to see what I have in store for you. Welcome to *How to Build a Body That Lasts.*

Love,
Adam xxx

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What is Mobility?

So, what is this mobility malarkey that is the secret to longevity? Simply put, mobility is 'the ability to move freely and easily'. Aka your movement ability ('mo-bility' – get it?). In other words, the not-so-sexy yet fundamental aspect of health and fitness that I believe is key to squeezing as much juice as possible out of this short life of ours. There are countless benefits to improving your mobility. The overarching purpose of mobility training is movement freedom – developing the ability to move the way you need to, in order to do the things you want to do and live an independent life. But what are the specific benefits to training your mobility?

If you incorporate mobility training into your life, you will:

- Develop stronger, more robust joints and muscles, which are able to more readily cope with the stresses of life and activities of your choice.
- Improve your flexibility and become more supple, helping you to move through daily life with greater ease.
- Reduce joint stiffness and pain by building happier and healthier joints.
- Better your balance, reducing the risk of falls.
- Reduce risk of injury by regularly exposing and readying your body for what the world is going to throw at you.
- Increase longevity and quality of life by helping you to stay active, now and in the future.

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- Improve your relationship with your body through greater bodily awareness.
- Reduce stress and improve energy and mood.

This isn't an exhaustive list, and there are countless benefits beyond the more obvious physical ones listed here that you'll discover as you wiggle through the rest of this book.

Perhaps it's even more powerful to imagine what your life would be like *without* full mobility. What would your time on this planet look like if you suddenly couldn't move freely and easily? What would your day-to-day life be like if the things you now find easy suddenly felt impossible? Maybe this is what you're facing right now. Maybe you're struggling with certain aspects of your mobility. Maybe you've been injured or live with a disability or chronic pain and know exactly how it feels to struggle through your day.

Or maybe you're one of the lucky ones, who – touch wood – has never *really* struggled to move but simply wants to feel better overall. While I'll never know your individual life circumstances and what makes you *you,* I'm confident that we can both agree, irrespective of where you are now, that life is really bloody tough when you can't move freely and easily. Mobility underpins almost everything we do and is one of the foundations of an independent life. Of course, mobility training isn't a magic pill that will rid you of any and every problem in your body. But if, like me, physical independence is important to you and you want to be clicking your heels, playing with your kids, your grandkids, your cat and your dog, and wiping your own bum for as long as possible, then it's probably a good idea to start paying into your 'movement pension' sooner rather than later.

For the most part, the body does a bloody good job at carrying us through, albeit with bumps along the road. I'm sure there are

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a fair few of you who have experienced the feeling that your body just isn't working the way you'd like it to. Whether it's pain in the knee, a sore back or a constant stiff feeling you can't seem to shake, these discomforts are something we'll all know at some point in our lives. But no matter how old or how stiff you might be, I don't believe it is ever too late to reap the rewards of mobility training. I can't remember where I heard it, but this proverb seems appropriate: 'the best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago, the next best time is now'. When you picked up this book, you planted the seed of your mobility, and with every page you read, you water and tend to that seed a little bit more.

Our ability to move is one of those beautiful things that seems so simple, until suddenly it doesn't. We spend years as little bambinos learning how to coordinate our rapidly growing body, falling flat on our bums and sometimes our faces hundreds of times a day – just to learn how to balance our big heads and stand on our own two feet. But by the time we're old enough to appreciate how much effort goes into learning to move, to walk, to talk, or even just use a spoon without making a mess, every aspect of our mobility almost feels like a given – like it's always been there. And like most of the good things in life, you don't know what you got 'til it's gone. Simple movements like climbing the stairs, walking, running, standing up, sitting down, or even just putting socks on – movements that we once glided through without so much as a second thought – can start to feel a little more clunky and painful, and paired with plenty of moans and groans, even at the not-so-ripe age of 30. It's hard not to sound preachy while passionately proclaiming 'it doesn't have to be this way', but I genuinely believe it doesn't. All we have to do is learn how to tend to our body by moving it the way it wants us to. That's what this method is all about: learning to listen to your body and give it what it truly needs. Copyrighted Material

Improving mobility isn't just about avoiding ailments as we hurtle past middle age and into our golden years. The last thing I want is to fill you with the fear that it's all downhill from here. I don't believe dread is the best motivator and, anyway, there's plenty of life to live *now*. This method is about valuing and making the most of what we have while we have it, as much as looking after our future selves. Although eventual physical decline is unavoidable, there are 70-year-olds busting out the splits, 80-year-olds deadlifting their bodyweight, and 90-year-olds running marathons, still living life to the full, fuelled by their ability to move. Equally, there's the 24-year-old version of me who's scared to sneeze in case he puts his back out again. While I don't believe for a second that anyone requires extreme mobility to thrive, the reality is that *your age is defined by your mobility; your mobility is not defined by your age.* If you're tired of feeling older than you are, it all starts with moving more now, regardless of where you're starting out.

I find myself thinking about my grandad, Ron, while writing this. (You don't meet babies called Ron these days, do you?) My grandad was always an active bean. Not in a sporty or athletic sense, though he was always mobile and had no problem chasing us around as young whippersnappers. Whether I was passing a ball around his garden or being bored to death walking around a train museum, I never once doubted his ability to move. But in the last of my grandad's 82 years, he found it impossible to walk more than 100 metres without having to stop because of excruciating pain in his legs. He was a stubbornly proud man and refused to walk with a cane, or much support at all, and sadly within a year he died. He was a sensational grandad, but towards the end, as he stopped stomping about and found himself chained to his chair, and his ability to move diminished, so did his lust for life. I'll never really know how my grandad felt at this point, but one thing I can say for certain is that the ability to move freely

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and easily, and the independence that comes with it, plays a monumental role in making life what it is.

If I'm one of the lucky ones that makes it to 80 before popping my clogs, I want to be able to look back, beaming with pride, saying, 'Cor, I gave that a bloody good go, I've had a great innings.' But I'm not going to wait until then to grasp what I have now, wishing I'd used my body while I had the chance. Instead, I'm going to do my bloody best to take care of it and value it for everything it does for me while I can. It can be really hard to feel thankful for our body at times, especially if it may not be quite working how you want it to. But you and I are going to strive to find a glimmer of gratitude over the following pages by learning more about *your body*, and discovering how to speak its language, so you can take care of it the way it needs. In other words, we're going to get our wiggle on, explore our bodies, and find simple ways of sprinkling movement into our lives that *finally* stick. I like to imagine I'm the 80-year-old version of me, looking back over my life. What would old man Adam be grateful for? What would he wish he could have a helping of in his older age? What do I have now that I don't even notice that would be life-enhancing for the future me?

Thankfully you're already reading this book, so your mobility ball is rolling, and as you'll discover throughout this movement manifesto, I don't believe you need to do anything wild and drastic to make the most of your body (unless you really want to). It's more about understanding your baseline, discovering the right amount for *you*, and working within your Goldilocks Zone. I'm going to encourage each of you to become your own scientist and explore how to make movement fit your life and your needs. What we're looking for is the not too much but not too little window (thus Goldilocks), finding just the right amount of movement to allow you to build a resilient body that keeps you on your feet for as long as possible.

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Who Is It For?

The beauty of mobility training is that it really is for everyone. That might feel a little like a seedy sales line, but whether you're my 89-year-old nan or a bodybuilder, an avid gardener or a gym buff, mobility training is the one form of fitness that bridges age and lifestyle. If you want to move better, then mobility training is for you. It isn't just one style of training, however. Without sounding like I'm inviting you to join a cult, mobility is more of a concept than a specific training style and there's plenty of wiggle room in how you train to improve your mobility – hence the title of the introduction (punbelievable).

We will explore why movement is important to you as a unique human being, and how to build and maintain your general mobility. We'll test your movements with a series of challenges that also double up as incredible mobility exercises, and interpret what they tell us about how your body works and how we can make your day-to-day life easier by practising and refining your movement skills. Then we will discover how you can seamlessly integrate these moves into your life, and how to adopt a 'less is more' attitude to exercise to help stick with it, while providing you with a mobility training programme that you can adapt to your own level and time availability. On top of this, I'll be busting a few myths around health and fitness, revealing the nonsense you don't need to worry about, and hopefully making you smile along the way.

While it's impossible to create something for *everyone,* I've done my best to make *How to Build a Body That Lasts* as accessible and inclusive as I can, and I believe this approach is more than enough to help most of us live a wonderfully wiggle-filled life. If you choose to, you can use this movement foundation to

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work towards some fancier, more specific mobility goals. But for now, the aim of *How to Build a Body That Lasts* is to give you a well-rounded footing on which to build your movement hopes and dreams. I want to inspire you to see how incredible your body is and can be, and hopefully help you frolic into the later stages of your life. And all of this without having to step foot inside a gym.

BREATHE

Throughout this book I'm going to be throwing a lot of challenges at you, all of them aimed at improving your mobility.

For the first challenge, all I need you to do is to:

Take a really big, deep breath and breathe it all out.
Repeat this as many times as you like.

I'm not going to tell you how to breathe – after all, you've managed so far, haven't you? The only thing I'm going to ask is that you take a big, deep breath and sigh it out slowly. Nice and relaxed. Feels good, doesn't it?

Breathing is an amazing automatic function that our brain seems to have under control without us having to pay too much attention to it. Imagine how difficult life would be if we had to consciously coordinate that all day? But every now and again, it's a good idea to consciously control our breath and make sure our lungs, ribs and all the muscles in between are expanded to their full capacity. When was the last time you took a really deep breath? Not only does this work incredibly well at snapping us back to the present moment, but it also helps to steady our heart rate and relax our muscles.

If, like me, you find yourself unconsciously holding tension, maybe shrugging your shoulders to your ears or clenching your jaw without realising, taking a deep breath is a sensational way

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of physically and mentally resetting. This is your moment to hit that refresh button. We all know we should take regular breaks throughout the day, but the toughest part of that is remembering to do it. So, throughout this book I'm going to nudge you every now and again, and remind you to take a big, deep breath and chill your beans.

What does breathing have to do with mobility, I hear you ask? Not only is this breathing business important for keeping us alive, but it stops us from becoming too tense while we move. Being able to breathe calmly and in a controlled manner is a great sign that we're in control of an exercise. As we dive into the parts of the book that cover physical movement, we'll explore how to use the breath to improve mobility.

Every time you see the word BREATHE throughout this book, I want you to use it as a little prompt to dip out of the madness, bring yourself back to earth, fill those beautiful lungs with some delicious oxygen, and most importantly – *relax*.

So, for good measure, let's take one more big breath before we look at what mobility actually is.

Key Features of Mobility

It's safe to say that movement can get pretty bloody complicated, especially when we get into the detail of how your brain works with your body. As a result of our sensational supercomputer (our brain) and its ability to simplify complex calculations into easily digestible nuggets, it feels like movement just 'happens'. We're lucky we don't have to put much active thought into moving each individual muscle, joint and bone, otherwise life would be a logistical nightmare. However, this automation has a habit of leaving us in sticky situations if left on autopilot for too long. Our brain

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is constantly making what we subconsciously perceive as the most efficient and effective decisions when it comes to solving the problem of how we move. While this is great for preventing information overload, it can mean that we end up stuck in a movement rut, and our body defaults into using the same patterns again and again with little variety. And of course, if there's one thing our body needs, it's movement variety – which we all know is the spice of life.

We'll explore the brain's computing ability in more detail later in the book, but for now we're just going to marvel at our mysterious supercomputer and simplify our movement processes into a few key components to better understand how we can harness the benefits of mobility for our body. These key components are balance and coordination, strength, flexibility and endurance. Essentially, we're looking at our ability to move through a given range of motion. This requires control and coordination through movements, with enough flexibility and strength so that we don't crumble, snap and become knackered too quickly. Our job is to develop sufficient ability in all of these areas so that we can confidently do the things that are important to us without too much pain and difficulty along the way. Unfortunately for us humans, there's one unavoidable truth about movement: if you don't use it, you lose it.

Practice Makes Progress

The body has an incredible ability to adapt, but in order to stimulate adaptation, we have to expose ourselves to specific things, and here I introduce a fundamental principle of the human body: the SAID principle. This loud-looking acronym stands for 'Specific Adaptation to Imposed Demands', and as you

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might have guessed, it encompasses the ways in which the body adapts specifically in response to the demands and stresses placed on it. In layman's terms, if you want to get better at something, you have to practise it. If you want to get better at cooking, you must cook. If you want to get better at painting, you must paint, and if you want to get better at moving, you have to move. Therefore, to improve our mobility we must expose our body to things that challenge our balance, coordination, strength, flexibility and endurance, and train these elements by regularly and progressively exposing our body to physical challenges that stimulate and maintain adaptation, allowing us to move more freely.

Say you want to get better at improving a specific area of your mobility, like touching your toes: you would need to spend more time reaching towards your toes. If you want to get better at holding a squat, you need to spend more time in a squat (I'm sure you get the point). Of course there are other things we can and will do alongside targeted movement to support our mobility mission and progress faster, but fundamentally this specificity is essential, and the more we expose the body to these exact positions, over time it will adapt to allow us to perform them with greater ease.

This can be tricky when a particular activity, such as a squat or touching your toes, is simply too difficult or painful to even attempt. And if that's where you are, then telling you to *just do more of that thing* becomes a bit useless. This is where we need to regress the movement and find a simpler variation, which is challenging but not impossible, and work up from there. This is known as graded or gradual exposure, and it allows you to train for the specific task at hand without overwhelming you by asking too much of your body too soon. Graded exposure is a fundamental aspect of *How to Build a Body That Lasts* and something we'll

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talk about in much more detail later in the book, including my 5-step method to help you work around painful movements (page 277).

You may be wondering what makes mobility training different from any other form of fitness, such as strength or resistance training (basically fancy ways of saying lifting weights). There's a huge amount of crossover where strength training often leads to improvements in mobility, and mobility training often leads to improvements in strength; that's because mobility training is essentially low-impact resistance training. The main difference is where we shine the spotlight. Strength training focuses more on our muscles and less on what's happening at the joint. Yes, muscles are also a key focus in mobility training, but rather than just making them really beefy, what we're zooming in on is how well our joints work; on our ability to *stretch and control* the muscles and connective tissue surrounding the joints across their designed range of motion. In practice this means regularly exposing our joints and muscles to progressively increasing loads across greater ranges of motion over time. The aim of the game is to stimulate changes to the body which allow you to move with control over larger ranges of motion or improve control within ranges of motion you already have access to. In short, to become stronger, bendier and more supple and for the context of this book, we'll be doing that using little more than your own body.

Contrary to popular belief (I'm not sure why those words make me feel rather fancy, but they do), mobility training isn't *just* stretching. Although stretching will play an important role in mobilising our body, it's just one element of a rather large movement puzzle that we'll piece together throughout our movement montage.

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How Much Do You Need to Do?

How much mobility you need will depend on what you want to be able to do. If you have minimal athletic desires and just want to be able to get up off the floor, you won't need the same level of mobility as a gymnast who needs to bust out the splits. That's why this method is all about identifying where you are now and building on your unique baseline towards your goal. To do that, you'll undertake a series of movement challenges to find your ground zero. You'll be looking to master simple exercises while also learning how to pick the 'lowest hanging fruit' when it comes to improving your mobility, in order to get the biggest bang for your buck for the least amount of input.

For a long time, I felt as though every workout had to leave me in a sweaty, panting mess in order for it to be effective or worth my time. Subconsciously, I think a part of me even believed it would be doubly effective if I woke up at 5am to do it. It wasn't, it just made me really tired, and this early morning motivation never lasted much more than a week or two before I would give up. I guess you could say I was following a 'no pain, no gain' mantra, a fairly toxic message that probably still lurks in the back of most of our minds when we think of exercise. If you enjoy pushing yourself to the limit with every workout, then more power to you. But for those of us who just want to be a little healthier and maybe in slightly better shape, I think this ethos around exercise can do more harm than good. Especially when we're just starting out. I don't believe that becoming healthier, or improving general mobility, requires anything drastic or ridiculously intense, I think it just needs consistency.

Don't get me wrong, I'm all for a challenge. And throughout the book I'm going to encourage you to step out of your comfort zone

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into movement and mindset territories you've never walked before. But it's important you do it at your own pace, and that you learn to shift gears and develop an understanding of when to push and when to pull back on the intensity, rather than running at everything as fast as possible. In fact, if you're attempting to approach exercise with this million-miles-an-hour mentality, you're more likely to end up burning out and injured, which doesn't lend itself to the idea of maintaining consistency. The wonderful news is how little exercise you actually need to do in order to reap the rewards.

Minimal Effective Dose

The concept of a minimal effective dose is something I wish I'd grasped a lot sooner. The idea is to do as little as possible and still get results – sounds appealing, right? Well, maybe not as little as possible, but 'just enough' to get results. If you want to improve your health, but struggle to maintain consistent exercise habits, I need you to know that you don't need to overhaul your life to reap at least some of the good stuff. As consistency is a core concept of building a body that lasts (and success in life in general), finding an amount of work you can genuinely stick to over a longer period of time will lead to better long-term results than doing as much as possible for two weeks and then never again.

This doesn't mean we won't push it every now and again, or that frequent, intense exercise is necessarily a bad thing – far from it. Frequent and more intense exercise absolutely has a time and a place, but it doesn't need to be *all the time*. There is definitely such a thing as too much, too quickly, especially if you're new to exercise or you struggle to maintain consistency.

So, how much exercise do you actually need to do to start bringing home the rewards? A meta-analysis[1] (a fancy way of

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saying a study that includes lots of other studies) conducted in 2022 suggests that just 60 minutes of lifting weights per week is enough to reduce your risk of all causes of death by up to 27 per cent, while even just engaging in any resistance training at all resulted in a 15 per cent reduced risk when compared with none at all[1]. So just one hour a week and you'll have reduced your chance of death by about a third. That's 30 minutes twice a week, or less than 10 minutes a day – I'll let that sink in. The same research also suggests those who engage in a combination of both cardio-based activities and resistance training see a 46 per cent lower risk of developing cardiovascular disease.

But what about flexibility? Surely we need to be slogging it more than this to get bendier? Apparently not. The research we have suggests that 5 minutes of stretching, per movement, per week, is enough to improve flexibility substantially.[2] Most benefit is experienced when this movement is spread throughout a week, rather than all on one day, with the greatest improvements seen when it's broken down into 30-second stretches. Simply put, that's 10 x 30 seconds, which could be twice a day, five days a week. Neat, huh?

On the strength side, expert opinion currently agrees that one to three heavy sets of weightlifting, one to three times a week, will produce significant strength improvements.[3]

I'm not suggesting that doing more physical activity than this minimal recommended dose is a waste of time. It's no secret that most of us could benefit from more exercise, and that aiming for more than the minimal dose will doubtless lead to greater benefits. That being said, you don't have to kill yourself in order to milk the rewards of exercise, and even a smidge can have a massive impact, especially if it means you'll actually keep up with it in the long term. Despite being one of the greatest songs of all time, it pains me to say that when it comes to exercise, Luther Vandross got it wrong – there really is such a thing as too much.

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The Goldilocks Zone

If you're desperate to improve your health but find it impossible to stick to an exercise routine and build consistent movement habits, it's time to focus on doing less and building up gradually over time. While I'm not actually recommending doing as little as physically possible (i.e. nothing) aiming for a smaller, but still effective amount, rather than a maximal dose, may just be the necessary remedy you need to reap the rewards of exercise more sustainably. *How to Build a Body That Lasts* is about finding your personal sweet spot, your Goldilocks Zone, which ultimately will look different for everyone. If you love exercise and you're in a consistent groove already, that is amazing. If you have the habits down but want some tips and tricks to improve your joint health, there's plenty of that to come. But if you don't love exercise, or you're struggling to stick to a consistent routine, or maybe you keep picking up injuries, you don't have to kill yourself to make positive changes.

I want to start by shifting the focus away from how much *can* you do, towards this 'Goldilocks' approach, where you strive to do *just enough* and build up over time. And finding what the right amount looks like for you personally is about trial and error.

CHANGE PLACES

I think it's about time we got a wiggle on, don't you?

All I need you to do now is *change position.*

This might mean standing up and changing seats, or simply having a little shuffle on your bum to change the position of your body. Whatever you do – move.

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To be clear, there's nothing wrong with sitting down, and if I've caught you hunched over this book like a prawn, or lying like a croissant, there's no need to sit bolt upright. There's little evidence to suggest that any *one* posture or position is better than another, but when it comes to battling chronic stiffness, pain and improving your mobility, it's important that you move, and move often.[4]

There is an entire chapter later in the book dedicated to posture, so if you do want to know more, stick around. For now, I just want you to move, and every time you see the words CHANGE PLACES throughout the book, use my little nag as a reminder to have a shuffle, a little rearrange, and keep that body rolling so it doesn't spend too long in any one position.

While we're at it. I also want to remind you to BREATHE. Use this little break to take a big ol' breath and get those lungs expanding while you're having a shimmy. All done? Great. Now get nice and comfy before we move on to the next chapter.

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Wiggle Week

If you've come to this book looking for a quick plan to improve your mobility, then this is the chapter for you. But before I get you rolling around your living room and challenge your movement abilities in all kinds of weird and wonderful ways, I want to share some sensationally simple mobility-moulding nuggets that you can implement into your life *today.* Welcome to Wiggle Week.

Every day this week I want you to challenge yourself to incorporate a different movement into your day.

Day 1: Balance on one leg while you brush your teeth. Set a timer for 2 minutes and try to balance for 1 minute on each leg. Don't worry if you can't manage a whole minute, just challenge yourself to avoid dropping your lifted foot as few times as possible!

Day 2: Sit on the floor for 20 minutes. While watching TV, scrolling on your phone, sending emails, or simply enjoying some down time, get your butt on the floor for at least 20 minutes. I don't care how you sit – the more you move, shuffle and wiggle about, the better. This is an amazing way of getting some good stretching into your hips.

Day 3: Go for a walk. You can call a friend, listen to a podcast, be at one with nature – but whatever you do, strut your stuff! It doesn't matter how long (to be fair, probably more than 5 minutes, but I'm not here

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to judge) how far, or how fast you walk. All I care about is that you get outside for a designated walk and stomp those feet.

Day 4: Perform countertop push ups every time the kettle boils or you make a meal. Making a cuppa? Do some push ups on the countertop! Making a sandwich? Do some push ups on the countertop! Using the microwave? Do some push ups on the countertop! You get the idea. Doesn't matter how many, just place those hands on the countertop, lower your chest down, push up, and repeat as many times as you can throughout the day. If you're proficient in floor-based push ups, don't let me hold you back – go wild. The important thing is that you push it real good.

Day 5: Squat every time you open the fridge. Next time you whip that fridge door open, it's time to do some squats – 1, 5 or 10 – however many squats you like! The rule is: when the fridge pops, you drop it like it's hot.

Day 6: Sleep: Go to bed 1 hour (or even 30 minutes) earlier (if possible). Rest and recovery is everything when it comes to a mobile body, so if it's humanly possible, get yourself to sleep earlier tonight. If you have young kids or a job that doesn't allow you to get extra Zs, limit your screen time before bed instead.

Day 7: Do something you *love.* Happiness and healthiness go hand in hand, so whatever you do today, do something positive for yourself – literally anything that's going to put a smile on your face and bring you genuine joy. This doesn't have to be a 'health seeking behaviour' specifically, it can even be a little indulgent, whatever it is, just make sure it's something that you really love.

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I'm not suggesting that you have to abide by these seven commandments in order to waltz through the pearly gates of mobility heaven. Nor am I saying there's no need to read the rest of this book. But sometimes we just don't have the time to commit 100 per cent, even when we know it's good for us. So the Wiggle Week challenge is a simple seven-day approach to help springboard your mobility efforts and get you moving more, even when time and energy levels are super tight.

The challenge here is to be consistent in doing *something,* rather than consistently doing *nothing.* You can carry these movements through more than one day, adding each one to your hand until you build an entire deck of wiggles that you can shuffle seamlessly into your life, and if you're feeling really spicy, you can even make up your own. Whatever you do, I want you to make a pledge that this week is Wiggle Week, and thou shalt Wiggle – got it?

Mobility Snacks

> *You don't stop playing because you grow old, you grow old because you stop playing*.
>
> (George Bernard Shaw – no idea who he is, but I like the quote)

Dedicated, structured mobility sessions are a sensational way of improving your abilities, and a key part of this book, but as you'll see during your Wiggle Week, they ain't the only tool in the toolbox. If you *really* want to improve how you move and make it last, it helps to take a two-pronged attack and sprinkle movement across your day as regularly and often as possible. Rather than relying solely on the benefits of a few workouts here or there throughout the week, maximise your movement

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time during your daily life. Start with the Wiggle Week, then begin to introduce more and more 'Mobility Snacks' throughout your day.

If you're anything like me and you find yourself randomly opening the fridge 30 times a day, you'll be very familiar with snacks. While a mobility snack isn't quite as delicious, these little nuggets of movement can have a monumentally positive impact on your health and wellbeing over time as you consistently introduce them into your life.

You've probably heard someone somewhere spout some unhelpful rubbish along the lines of 'We all have the same 24 hours in a day' when it comes to exercising. The issue I have with this short-sighted idea is that although the sands of time may fall the same for all of us, the demands on each of us within those 24 hours are drastically different. I don't think shouting or guilting anyone into exercise is a helpful approach, especially those who are already struggling to juggle an endless list of tasks. We all know that we need to move more – it doesn't mean we need to do five killer workouts every week. Instead, we need to shift the focus away from an 'all or nothing' mindset towards a 'something is always better than nothing' approach, and this is where our Mobility Snacks come in.

Simply put, a Mobility Snack is a short burst of movement, which, when spread throughout the day, helps create a more accessible approach to movement, especially when dedicated exercise feels totally out of reach. This bite-sized approach helps us 'sneak' these snacks into our life and bank our movement minutes each day, which can be extra handy for those gruelling times – either at work or at home – when we simply can't face the idea of a full workout. They allow us to contribute to our movement quota and keep the movement juices flowing, even when time is short.

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