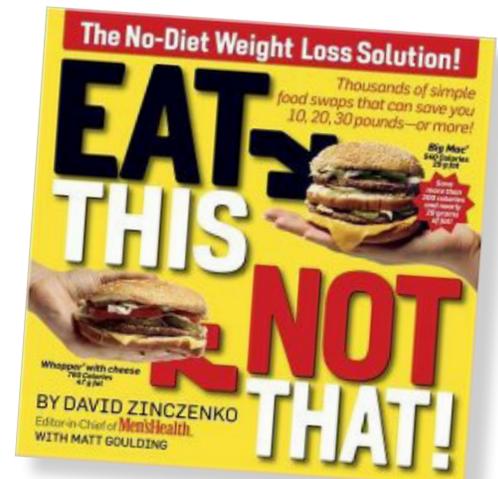


Do This-Not That-With Your 2017 Workouts Paul Connolly, Certified Exercise Specialist

Direct and no-nonsense was the approach that the book, 'Eat This Not That' took a few years ago when it was released. It provided quick, easy-to-follow information on what to eat and what not to eat. More specifically, the book identified examples of less healthy food choices and suggested healthier alternatives. My piece this month uses the same approach with an exercise perspective. I help my training clients identify the exercises they need to replace with more beneficial and safer ones.



Do This – Engage in a dynamic warm-up to prevent back pain and improve total body range of motion. Sitting for excessive amounts of time results in tight hips, low back pain, and general stiffness. Perform a few dynamic movements [like these](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-3FwIRdyd8) at the beginning of each workout (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-3FwIRdyd8>).

Not That – Many fitness enthusiasts begin their workout by either not warming up at all or they do low intensity walking or cycling. Both walking and cycling will elevate your heart rate and engage certain muscle groups, but neither will adequately prepare all of your major joints for activity.

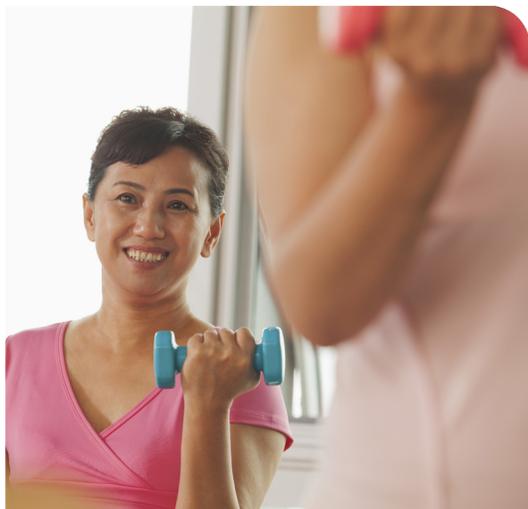
Do This – Don't engage in exhaustive workouts all the time. Mix it up. Include rest periods. It can be dangerous to constantly push yourself to the point of exhaustion. Interval training with periods of alternating intensity is recommended.

Not That – Pushing your heart rate to the limit and exercising to the point of nausea is dangerous, and causes excessive stress to your central nervous system and various joints in the body. While pushing oneself is certainly fine, doing it to the point of total exhaustion is not a worthy/healthy pursuit.

Do This – Practice perfect technique with each exercise you perform, particularly paying attention to performing controlled movements. Note, I did not say SLOW movements. Rather, control the weight during every phase of each exercise and avoid jerking the weight around. If it feels too heavy, simply reduce the load for increased safety.

Not That – Using too high a resistance that forces you to lose control of perfect form is not recommended. Injuring your back simply to achieve a specific strength training goal is simply not worth it.

Ultimately, we are a product of the decisions we make over time. Choosing exercise approaches that provide a lot of 'bang-for-your-buck' are the ones that achieve the greatest results. Saving time while staying safe and still accomplishing one's exercise goals remains the essential component to 'doing this and not that.' Making the right choices over time will undoubtedly make you look and feel your very best!



Paul Connolly is certified through the National Strength and Conditioning Association as a personal trainer and possesses a degree in Exercise Science from UMASS-Boston, where he graduated Magna Cum Laude.