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## THE TRADITIONAL WAY – FITNESS HACKS

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**Franci Cohen is a NYC certified fitness trainer, nutritionist and exercise physiologist. Here she provides tips on how to hack your way to better fitness before New Year's.**

### **Strength with Cardio**

For most, weight-training and cardio exercise are two separate events. However, mixing strength exercises with a cardio interval, like a 30 second sprint, will boost the metabolism and growth hormones.

### **Go Compound**

Try multi-joint or compound exercises that engage multiple muscle groups at the same time. Replace isolated exercises, which only focus on one muscle group at a time, with movements like the squat or deadlift to burn more calories and increase your metabolic rate.

### **Train Like an Athlete**

Huge biceps look great, but are unlikely to contribute to overall health. Instead of training like a bodybuilder try exercising like an athlete. Include plyometrics, kettlebell swings and sprints in your training plan to add intensity and variety to workouts while improving overall fitness.

## **Go Heavy**

Lifting heavier weights for less repetitions helps to build strength and shed fat. Start with a weight that is manageable for 15 reps. Then add weight over time to find a weight that is doable for eight to ten repetitions. Remember, always practice perfect form, and try to work for an extra rep before calling it quits.

## **Bring a Friend**

Working out with a partner improves results and makes the going-to-the-gym experience a more enjoyable one. Having a partner to provide encouragement during workouts can help you get the most out of a workout. And when you have someone relying on you to do the same, it makes you accountable and more likely to show up for workouts.

## **Don't Train, Compete**

Turn workouts into a competition with yourself or a workout partner. Join a sports league, play pick-up basketball or sign-up for a 5K. Or create your own challenges in the gym by completing a circuit workout as fast as possible, pushing the pace and intensity.

## **Write it Down**

Record the exercises, sets and repetitions performed during workouts. Keeping track of goals and progress will reveal what you have accomplished and where you can improve. With that knowledge on hand, it's then possible to structure workouts that play to your strengths and improve weaknesses.

## **Hydrate**

Be sure to drink plenty of water during workouts and throughout the day. Heading into a workout dehydrated takes its toll on muscles, motivation and energy levels. Drink up and train hard, then don't forget to refuel with food and water after workouts to promote recovery.