



**Cesar Ruano, an elite trainer and fitness supervisor at Supreme Sports Club, guides a client through a workout.**

# Tailor-made fitness

Follow these four simple steps to achieve your workout goals

By Tracy Dye

**W**hether you want to lose weight, build muscle or simply improve your overall health, tailoring your workout to achieve your goals doesn't need to include a laundry list of steps. In fact, you can get on the fast track to fitness with just four easy steps.

## Step 1: Be specific

"Most people are very vague when it comes to goals," said Cesar Ruano, an elite trainer and fitness supervisor at Supreme Sports Club. "Our job as trainers is to actually paint a picture of what they mean by 'lose weight.'"

To change your goals from vague to specific, start by asking yourself four questions: What is the goal? Why have you chosen this goal? How do you plan to achieve it? And why now?

"The reasons for getting in shape vary," Ruano said. "We as trainers want to find out whether the member is completely committed to changing their lifestyle."

Ruano and other trainers also help their clients by taking inventory of dates

to achieve certain goals by, as well as their medical history, current level of activity and nutrition.

## 2. Establish a baseline

Before you can choose the correct exercise, you need to establish a baseline. One way to assess the types of workouts appropriate for you and the level of intensity is through a squat assessment. Trainers can guide you through this test, but you can also perform it at home. Use a chair or bench to gauge your squat and a mirror to check your form. With feet at shoulder's width apart, squat down to the chair or bench so that your knees create right angles and repeat until you become fatigued. By counting the number of squats, you have a starting point to improve upon over time.

Ruano said that a squat assessment is ideal for checking ankle flexibility, knee stability and hip mobility. Proper form is key in getting the most out of your workout and preventing injury, so take time to note several components of the exercise: Do your knees descend evenly, or do they collapse inward? Does your back stay taut and stable,

or does it become rounded as you sink down?

Another key component is heart rate, which can be measured with many devices. Make a note of what your heart rate is — for example, 140 beats per minute — at the point that you feel fatigued. That number will become your threshold and your goal will be to surpass that baseline as you build endurance.

## 3. Choose your exercise

Choose exercises that fit your personal preference, whether that's a slow, meditative activity like yoga or a high-energy Zumba® class.

No matter what you choose, there will be ways to make the workout fit your goal. If you want to lose weight, strength training exercises may include less weight with higher, faster repetitions. Conversely, for those looking to gain muscle mass, do fewer repetitions with a heavier weight.

## 4. Step it up

If you want to continue to see results, reassess your program every 30 days. Personal trainers have resources on hand to ensure you are making progress and changing up your routine. If you started at running three miles, see if you can exceed that. Take advantage of available resources and don't be afraid to step outside of your comfort zone.

Ruano said that his ideal trainer will keep a client for a maximum of one year before that client is ready to exercise independently.

"The idea is to teach a person how to actually change their lives, and hopefully that person will teach somebody else how to change their life, too," Ruano said. "That's a big reward for us here."

*For more information about personal training, visit [ColumbiaFitness.org](http://ColumbiaFitness.org).*