



THE TOP 10 MISTAKES

MADE AT THE GYM

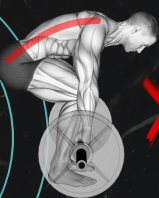
Christian Blanda | Physiotherapist & Personal Trainer
Reuben Pacheco | Physiotherapist

#1

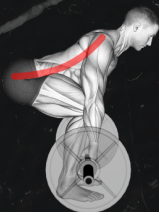
POOR DEADLIFT TECHNIQUE

This can be a contentious topic, and many different sources will tell you a variety of "right" deadlift techniques. We won't get into that argument here, we'll just point out some definite mistakes that we can all agree on!

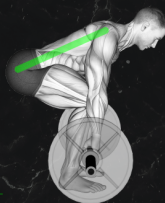
- Don't round your lower back, nor go too far the other way and "hyperextend". Keep your low back neutral.



Too rounded



Hyperextended



Good! Neutral Spine

- Don't let the bar roll away from your body, keep it nice & close
- If the weight is too heavy and you lose your neutral low back position, back off the load
- Make sure you activate your lats before lifting (lock your shoulder blades down onto your rib cage)

Making these mistakes may see you end up with a lower back injury, particularly to the discs between your vertebrae. An injury here will see you out of action for weeks, perhaps even months.



NOT INTEGRATING PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD #2

In order to keep progressing in the gym, whether it is trying to build muscle mass, strength or motor control, it is essential for the body to keep receiving a stimulus to training intensity. In other words, you need to keep pushing yourself, or integrating "progressive overload" to avoid a plateau, and to keep seeing those gains.

Progressive overload can be achieved in multiple ways:

- Increasing the weight, reps and/or sets
- Increasing the explosiveness or the time under tension
- Changing stance/angle/grip

"But how much is too much?"

It depends entirely on your situation. Large increases in short spaces of time are normally not advised. As a rule of thumb, you shouldn't increase your weights or training duration

by more than about 10% at a given time. Once your body has increased its capacity to handle this new load, you can increase by up to 10% again. This PROGRESSIVE overload (rather than sudden overload) will help avoid injury.



#3

IGNORING PAIN



Pain is an integral part of your body's ability to protect itself. Pain is great at telling us that something is not quite right and that there is **potentially** a need to ease back on the amount of physical activity.

In saying this, pain is very unique to each individual and is a very poor indicator of injury severity. As such, exercise is not necessarily contraindicated with feelings of pain. Often discomfort is a necessary part of gym exercises when pushing your body to its limit.

Distinguishing between different type of pain, however, is vitally important. Sharp, constant, worsening, pain at rest or numbness and tingling are all examples of sensations that should be checked by a health professional. However, muscle soreness, tightness and fatigue can be the natural response your body has to exercise. These can be described as 'good' pain.

The traffic light approach

(Only if given the OK by your practitioner!)

Pain = 0 or 1 out of 10: Green Light (all good)

Pain = 2 or 3 out of 10: Orange Light (caution)

Pain = 4+ out of 10: Red Light (see a professional)



#4

NOT WORKING ALL AREAS

A common mistake many gym goers make is only training certain parts of the body. Remember - friends don't let friends skip leg day!

For some people, this may mean they only focus on the chest and shoulders, while others may only concentrate on the quads and hamstrings but not the glutes. This can often lead to neglected areas around that body that are more likely to become injured when asked to perform an exercise or task with a high load.

On the other hand, only training the same area repeatedly without proper recovery may lead to overuse injuries to those areas.

To avoid this mistake, make sure you have a program that is balanced and even. Don't be the show pony who only works the glamour zones!



Guess who skipped leg day?

#5

POOR SQUAT TECHNIQUE

Similar to 'Mistake #1 - Poor Deadlift Technique', this one is also a controversial topic in these times! There are many ways to perform a squat, and the technique will look very different for everyone's unique body structure. Maintaining the lifting form within your individual neutral zone as identified by your health practitioner is the best way to avoid injury.



Rounded Spine
Minimal hip movement



Neutral Spine
Hip hinge

In saying this, the **hip hinge** is an integral part of the squat and commonly not executed correctly by untrained individuals. The hip hinge puts your hip muscles in a powerful position to produce force and can protect the low back from a load it cannot withstand.

#6

NEGLECTING REST/RECOVERY DAYS

Recovery between sessions is as important as the gym session itself. During exercise microscopic muscle tears occur. These tears then heal bigger and stronger as your body adapts.



This adaptation only occurs with adequate rest and recovery. If we do not allow the healing process to occur between sessions the benefits of the gym session will be suboptimal.

Even professional athletes need to take this approach. For example, an elite athlete may train every day. However, there will be an exercise physiologist or strength & conditioning coach that will taper the training loads to ensure they do not overtrain, and that they recover appropriately.

A lot of the injuries we see in the clinic arise from this issue - rest & recovery is important!

#7

What's the best gym program to help me get massive?



To gain mass and build muscle effectively, it's important to follow a well-structured gym program that focuses on progressive overload and targets all major muscle groups. Here's a sample program that can help you in your quest to get massive:

USING CHAT GPT INSTEAD OF A PT

The internet can be great. The internet can also be misleading!

If you are trying to find a very basic gym program, the AI will suffice, but it will not be able to give you all the tips and tricks that an experienced trainer/practitioner's guidance will provide. It is the individual tailoring and experience that will take your workout to the next level.

When you plateau or get tired of the same old program what will you do? Unless you have very specific questions for the AI, you're going to be stuck!

Everyone's body is also different, and some movement patterns may need to be modified to have the desired training effect. Only hands on guidance will be able to detect the necessary changes.

Unfortunately, the internet thrives off polarising personalities. People profit off big claims that attach to the hopes of the person watching. Fancy exercises and trendy diets are at the forefront of this problem. Often these methods of training or dieting work but not in the magical ways influencers suggest. Be wary of big claims.



GOALS

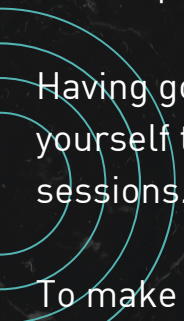


#8

NOT SETTING GOALS


Different types of training produce different adaptations. Hence, it is important to set goals for a specific adaptation you are trying to achieve.

For example, if your goal is to build strength, your workout will look considerably different than if your goal is to improve cardiovascular endurance.



Having goals is a great way to motivate and guide yourself through the programming of your training sessions.

To make your goal setting easier use the **SMART** approach:

- Specific
 - Measurable
 - Attainable
 - Realistic
 - Time dependant
- 

Setting a **SMART** goal will provide you with an outcome measure which you can use to quantify your progress. As the old saying goes - failing to plan is planning to fail.

#9

NO WARM UP OR COOL DOWN



Remember how your under-10 soccer coach always made you do a warm up before diving headlong into the training session or the match? Turns out he was onto something!

Warm-ups can increase body temperature, alertness and improve flexibility. These are all important factors for preventing injury and getting the most out of your workouts.

Your warm-ups should be highly individualised to achieve the above outcomes but not too intense to take away from the activity you are about to perform. If you are returning from injury, it's best to receive the advice of your trusted health practitioner for a warm-up that caters specifically to your needs.



Cool downs are a great way to relax your mind and body after a strenuous workout. Some people like to lightly stroll on a cardio machine, others like to foam roll. Whatever modality you choose keep the cool-down at a low intensity.

#10

COPYING OTHER GYM MEMBERS



Socialising in the gym is a great way to make new friends. However, just because your friend trains a certain way doesn't always mean you should too. What might work for one person

may not work for everyone. We all have different anatomy and training experience.

We also all respond differently to a training stimulus. For example, some people may require more recovery than others for a given workout. This is why when getting started it is important to liaise with your trusted health practitioner to develop an individualised training program specific to your needs.

Comparing yourself to others and trying to match their load is a sure way to end up causing an injury, which will only keep you off the gym floor and on the treatment table for long periods.



NEED MORE HELP?

As we've said throughout this guide, if you're unsure of anything or you need someone to help with an injury (or in preventing one), speak to a health professional.

Your local physiotherapist, chiropractor, exercise physiologist or well-educated personal trainer can all assist in making sure you're not making any of the top 10 mistakes we've written about here (or one of dozens more we didn't have space to cover!)

Here at Pinnacle Spine & Sports we help gym-goers of all levels every day, either getting fixed or staying that way.

Our treatment approach is centred around 3 key stages -

Repair - Retrain - Maintain

We can help you get rid of an injury, teach the body how to move and function properly again, then work with you to come up with a plan to ensure it doesn't return.

If you'd like to see one of our practitioners, call us or email reception@yourpinnacle.com.au and we'll get you in the right hands.

Ian & Naomi Lawson
Clinic Owners



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THE AUTHORS



Christian Blanda

Physiotherapist & Personal Trainer



Reuben Pacheco

Physiotherapist



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17 Victoria Ave, Concord West NSW 2138
Ph: (02) 9743 2311
www.yourpinnacle.com.au

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