

How progressive overload breaks the fitness plateau

Small, strategic shifts in your workout can reignite progress and performance

HEALTHY HABITS

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Have you ever felt like your workouts aren't "working" any more?

You are putting in the time, showing up, but not seeing or feeling much change?

Well, you are not alone. This plateau is one of the most common frustrations in fitness.

The good news? There is a proven principle that can help you push past it and keep your body moving forward.

It's called "progressive overload", and it's the foundation for improving strength, endurance and overall fitness.

Simply put, progressive overload means gradually increasing the stress placed on your body during exercise.

It's how you train your body to adapt and grow stronger over time.

So instead of going to the gym and using the same weights for the same amount of time, this requires that you increase those weights (or stimuli) fairly frequently.

Think of your muscles, joints, and even cardiovascular system as incredibly adaptive.

They respond to the demands you place on them.

If you lift the same weight, run the same distance, or do the same number of reps week after week, your body has no reason to improve — it's already mastered that level of effort.

But when you incrementally increase the challenge, your body responds by building more muscle fibres, strengthening connective tissues, improving energy efficiency and enhancing co-ordination.

In other words — you get fitter.

Without progressive overload, training becomes maintenance.

You will stay the same. You might maintain your current level of fitness, but you won't move beyond it.

In the early stages of a new workout programme, it's easy to see results.

Your body is responding to something new and progress can come quickly.

But as your body adapts, that initial growth slows down.

This is where many people give up — thinking they have hit their genetic limit or that "it's just not working any more".

In reality, it's not your body that is the problem — it's your programme. You are lacking strategy.

Without gradually increasing your training demands, your muscles, cardiovascular system, and even your mind stop receiving the signal they need to change.

When you train, especially with resistance or weight training, you create small amounts of stress and micro-damage (controlled "damage") within your muscles.

Your body then repairs this tissue stronger than before — a process called adaptation.



STEADY PROGRESS: A quiet moment inside the gym, where consistent effort meets the science of smart training.

However, if the training load stays the same, there is no new stimulus, and no reason for your body to adapt further.

But if you increase the challenge — for example, by lifting slightly heavier weights, performing an extra set, or improving your technique — you continue to stimulate adaptation.

Over time, these small, smart increases compound into major improvements in strength, muscle tone and endurance.

There are different ways to apply this principle, and it doesn't always mean lifting heavier.

The key is to progress gradually and purposefully. Here are the most common (and safest) methods:

- Increase the weight: The most straightforward method — add a small amount of weight to your lifts as your strength improves. Even a 1-2kg increase can make a big difference over time.

- Add more repetitions or sets: If you are not ready to increase weight, increase the volume. Adding an extra rep or set challenges your muscles in a slightly new way.

- Improve form and range of motion: Better technique often means better muscle activation. Focus on perfecting your form, slowing down the movement and achieving full range of motion.

- Shorten rest periods: Decreasing the time between sets forces your body to recover faster and can increase en-

duration and cardiovascular demand.

- Increase frequency or intensity: Add an extra training session during the week or push yourself to work at a slightly higher intensity — like running faster intervals or doing more explosive movements.

- Vary the exercise: Sometimes the best way to progress is to switch up the movement pattern.

For example, moving from a standard squat to a front squat or Bulgarian split squat changes the stimulus and prevents stagnation.

While progressive overload is essential, more isn't always better. The goal is gradual and consistent increase — not sudden jumps that risk injury or burnout.

One of the biggest mistakes people make is increasing weight too quickly or ignoring recovery. Your muscles need time to adapt.

Without rest, you risk overtraining, which can actually set you back.

Another mistake? Focusing only on one form of progression — such as endlessly adding weight — while ignoring form, flexibility or mobility.

True progress means improving holistically: strength, control, stability and resilience.

Another mistake people make is to try progress with more than one of the above methods at a time.

Stick to one at a time. Don't increase your weight and shorten your rest period at the same

time. First give yourself time to adapt to the increased weight and then later, when ready, decrease the rest period.

To truly apply progressive overload, you need to track what you are doing.

Write down your workouts, weights, reps or times.

Even small notes about how a session felt can help guide your next one.

Progress often happens in small increments, so tracking helps you see improvements that might otherwise go unnoticed — and keeps you motivated.

Progressive overload isn't just for the gym-goers lifting barbells. It applies to all forms of training: running, Pilates, swimming, yoga, or even your daily walk.

If you are a runner, it might mean increasing your distance, pace or elevation.

In Pilates, it might mean holding positions longer or adding resistance bands.

In yoga, it might be deepening your poses or improving balance and strength.

No matter the form, progression is the path to growth.

If you want to see change — real, sustainable, noticeable change — your body needs to be challenged just beyond its comfort zone. That's where progress happens.

The magic of progressive overload lies in its simplicity: small, consistent improvements over time lead to lasting transformation.

Influencer Myoli to host event focusing on luxury and beauty

ENTLE MBONYANA

East London influencer Nomawethu "Mimi" Myoli is to treat the city to "Brunch with Mimi" on December 13 at Hidden Gem, a luxury social experience built around connection, style, confidence and good energy.

The event is designed to bring people together to celebrate both small and big wins, while encouraging self-expression over good food, drinks and beautiful vibes.

Myoli said she wanted to create a space where people could celebrate themselves beyond their daily roles and responsibilities.

"Over the years, I noticed how many of us pour so much into our work, families, and communities, but rarely into ourselves," she said.

"In July this year, I met Flourish Events owner Inga Koni while delivering wraps from my brand, The Wrap Collective.

"She told me she followed me on social media and really believed I should host an event, and that felt like a nod from the universe."

Myoli believes fashion helps people express themselves without saying a word, and lifestyles reflect the layers that make people who they are.

She said what made "Brunch with Mimi" different was intentionality.

"It is not just about dressing up or socialising.

"It is about creating an experience that nurtures confidence, connection and appreciation.

"The event is designed to be intimate, purposeful and emotionally elevated."

Flourish Events is creating the visual magic, turning Myoli's vision board into reality and setting the tone for luxury and beauty.

Chef Zinzi Rwicila is to lead



INTENTIONALITY: Eastern London influencer Nomawethu 'Mimi' Myoli says her upcoming event, Brunch with Mimi, aims to bring people together over good food and good vibes. Picture: SUPPLIED

the culinary experience, creating food "that feels like a warm hug and looks like art".

Behind-the-scenes partners will support hospitality and the guest experience. Newly opened Dermalogica Hemingways was one of the first to offer guests a goodie bag.

Myoli said the event had not secured a financial partner.

"Event costs have been out of pocket and partially covered by ticket sales, so we are man-

ifesting a sold-out event." Tickets for the event go for R1,500.

The theme of this first edition is "The Colour Edit", an ode to self-expression, Myoli said.

Guests were invited to choose a shade that reflected their mood, identity or aspirations. They could expect an atmosphere that felt luxurious yet warm and welcoming.

"I want everyone to experience something thoughtfully

curated from the moment they arrive to the moment they leave.

"A luxury experience that says: 'You deserve this level of care.'"

Intended to be an annual event, the brunch would carry a new theme each year, with its own story, mood and message.

Myoli said she hoped each edition would feel like a chapter in an unfolding story.

"It's an invitation to show up authentically.

"Colour is a language, and the hue you choose says something about your personality, your energy, or your season.

"I want guests to feel beautiful, bold, and seen in whatever shade represents them best."

While she is often associated with women, she says her message is for everyone.

"Our guests, not just women, are worthy of celebration.

"Their softness, their strength, their journey, all deserve a moment.

"I want them to leave feeling lighter, inspired and reminded that community is powerful."

Myoli said her goals were to build a community of people who supported and elevated one another.

Flourish Events manager Koni said: "Our vision is to create a soft, elegant and meaningful experience that reflects Mimi's personality and message."

Rwicila said she chose to collaborate with Myoli because she had always loved "girly things" and Myoli perfectly embodied that aesthetic.

As a young woman in the industry, being part of such an initiative was an honour.

"I want to be aligned with initiatives like this one because they help with everything that you do.

"Confidence helps you get through, whatever obstacles you encounter," she said.

Celebrating 20 years. *Nathi Si Connected!*

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Deputy Minister
Department of Communications & Digital Technology

Ms. Vuyo Zitumane
Chief Operations Officer
City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality

Mr. Warren Hero
Architecture Design Segment Product Lead
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VENUE
East London International Convention Centre

DATE
26 - 27 November 2025

TIME
08H00 - 16H00

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