

A close-up photograph of a black, worn kettlebell resting on a dark wooden floor. The kettlebell has a handle that curves upwards and back. The surface of the kettlebell is textured and shows signs of use. The background is blurred, showing a wooden floor and some indistinct shapes.

Step Up Your Exercise Game

Jessica Tax

CEO and Owner of Move Up Health and Fitness
BS Kinesiology, CPT, CCET, RSB Coach, OES,
SFT, AES, YFS, WFS



Why is intensity important?

Intense exercise has been shown to have neuroprotective effects on the brain and induces neuroplasticity.



There are many ways to achieve intensity.

What is intensity?

A novel experience that challenges you and requires focused attention. It requires repetitive attempts to “get it down.”



Get a variety of challenging experiences

- **Cardio:** One of the easiest ways to incorporate a challenging experience if done at an intense level. Doing different types of cardio keeps things novel.
- **Strength:** Overload, pacing, training technique, positioning, speed. Power is an important component to train.
- **Agility and Speed:** Cadence, changing directions, upper body agility, lower body agility, reacting to the environment
- **Balance:** Incorporate unstable positions, unstable movements, falling and recovering, different surfaces, visual changes
- **Complexity:** Non-dominant side, compound exercises, multi-tasking, fine motor and coordinated movements
- **Mobility:** Increased ranges of motion, “big” movements, hips and shoulders, fingers and toes, barefoot vs shoes

Practical Examples

Bring it on!



You're on the right track if it's uncomfortable, frustrating, demands your full attention, and you can't do it

- Cardio
 - Strength
 - Balance
 - Complexity
 - Mobility
- High intensity intervals
 - Lifting heavy weights, training for power, eccentric training
 - Stand on a pillow with your eyes closed
 - Learning a dance routine, misdirection
 - Lift your big toe, but not the other toes. Big movements using targets.

Gamifying Exercise



- **Makes it fun:** if you like it, you will do more of it. It is easier to push yourself when you are more focused on the task than how tired you feel.
- **Adds a social element:** and the best part is that they add an unpredictable factor that will demand that you react to your environment.
- **Check multiple boxes:** games incorporate multi-tasking, coordination, and physical demands making them a versatile tool in achieving intensity.

Examples

- Simon Says
- Red light, green light
- Ping pong catch
- BlazePods
- Bean bag launch
- Mouse trap

In Summary

- Avoid consistency
- Seek novel, challenging activities that require focus
- The more challenging the activity, the more it stimulates your brain
- Target the various areas of fitness
- Be creative
- If it's easy, it's not helping
- Do things you can't do until you can

Thank you!

Jessica Tax

Move Up Health and Fitness

CEO, BS Kinesiology, CPT, CCET, RSB Coach,
OES, SFT

(559)369-4284

Jessica@moveuphealth.com

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