

Getting Started - What you will need, in order of importance

The first eight items on this list are non-negotiable. You will need them to execute the program effectively. The other items are recommended and listed in order of importance.

1. [MyFitnessPal app](#) ([Google](#) or [iTunes](#)):



This app is critical for tracking your daily caloric intake and creating a caloric deficit. While setting up your profile, you will enter your goal body weight and date when you want to achieve your goal. The app will determine your daily caloric intake. With over six million foods in its food library, it is one of the best food trackers available. It is easy to use, and the more you use it, the easier it will get. One of the features I like best about this app is the display of macro nutrients by percentage of caloric intake. Very useful information to ensure you are hitting your targets.

5 Things You Should Know About Food Tracking:

1. The more you track, the more likely you are to reach your goals.
2. Tracking gets easier the more you do it.
3. It is always better to track something versus nothing at all.
4. You can start building the habit of tracking by logging one meal at a time.
5. If you cannot find an exact match for what you want to track, just pick something similar.

2. Food Scale and Measuring Cups:



These are critical tools for accurately weighing and measuring your food to determine your daily caloric intake. When I am putting leftovers away in meal containers for lunch at work, I always measure the food and put a post-it on the container, so I know exactly how much food is inside. The more exact you are, the better your results will be.

3. Bluetooth Scale:



I recommend any scale that will work with the MyFitnessPal app. These scales do not have to be expensive. You can find many under \$40. Since this device will sink to MyFitnessPal, your weekly average body weight will be calculated for you. The easier you make it to log your progress the better. And the app will create a digital record you can look back on in the future.

4. Portion control and standard meal containers:



Portion control containers will make it easier to control portion sizes and total calories consumed each day. You can batch cook or cook extra food, and store them in your freezer in individual meal containers for future healthy meals ready to go. These meals can either be taken to work for a healthy lunch, or eaten on evenings when you are too exhausted to cook.

5. [Strides App](#):



The [Strides app](#) allows you to create instant habits by programming action triggers. The app also tracks your consistency. The three daily habits that are critical to your success are:

1. Weighing yourself in the morning.
2. Exercising.
3. Logging your food.

You can program multiple reminders for each daily task. I recommend setting your food log reminder for the end of the day and mark the task as complete. Recording completion of these activities will naturally cause you to modify your behavior and become more consistent. What gets measured gets managed!

6. [Gym membership or a Home Gym](#)

A gym membership is ideal, but you can do well training at home if that is not possible. If you can workout at a gym that is the way to go. That said; having a small home gym can prevent you from missing workouts when you cannot go to the gym. You can save 50 to 75% off retail on lightly used fitness equipment at garage sales, on Craig's List, or use apps like Letgo, but be careful. I recommend you exercise extreme caution when meeting a complete stranger to exchange money for merchandise. Let

people know where you are going, try to meet in a neutral location with security cameras when possible, and bring a large friend or two with you to *help* pick-up the item. For more tips read [Craigslist 101: How to buy and sell safely by John Ewoldt](#).

At a minimum, you will need an adjustable bench and adjustable dumbbells, with enough weight to challenge your muscles. If you do not have quick adjusting dumbbells like [PowerBlocks](#), I recommend you have one heavy pair and one light pair of dumbbells, to minimize the time spent adjusting your weights from set to set. If you have space, a [power rack](#) and an Olympic barbell set would be great additions. A power rack allows you to perform heavy compound lifts in complete safety. They usually have an integrated pull-up bar, and some have a dip station attachment. If you do not purchase a power rack, a [dip pull-up station](#) allows you to perform two of the best exercises for building upper body strength. If I could only perform four exercises, they would be the squat, deadlift, pull-up, and dip. A [trap bar](#) is another great piece of equipment for a home gym. Using a trap bar allows you to [place more emphasis on your legs than a conventional deadlift](#). You do not need machines to do cardio. If you have a limited budget, I would prioritize strength training equipment. A pair of running shoes is all you really need to perform cardio. You can find a lot of ideas here for [No Equipment Cardio Workouts](#).



Minimum Home Gym Requirement:

1. [Adjustable bench](#)
2. [Adjustable Dumbbells](#)



Optional Equipment

1. [Power Rack](#)
2. [Olympic Barbell Set](#)
3. [Dip – Pull-up Power Tower](#)
4. [Dip/Pull-up Belt/Weighted Vest/Backpack](#) (to add resistance to dips and pull-ups)
5. [Trap Bar](#)
6. [Fractional Plates](#) (8) ½ lbs. plates
7. [Leg Extension Leg/Curl Attachment for the Adjustable Bench](#)
8. [Spin Bike/Elliptical/Treadmill/Rowing Machine/Recumbent Bike](#)
9. [Heavy Bag](#) or [Wave Master XXL](#) bag with [Gloves](#)
10. [Kettlebell](#) for cardio training (I recommend 15 lbs. for women, 30 lbs. for men)
11. [Jump Rope](#)

7. A Sport Watch with a Countdown Timer:



A sports watch with a countdown timer will help you maintain consistent rest intervals between sets and track total cardio time. The best sports watches, in my opinion, are the [Timex Ironman watches](#). They allow you to customize your rest intervals to the second, and they come in a variety of styles.

8. [Interval Timer app](#) or [Boxing Timer app](#):



These apps are great for high-intensity interval training (HIIT) workouts, kettlebell workouts, and heavy bag workouts.

9. [Body Fat Analyzer](#) or [Skin Caliper](#) (Optional):

Many scales provide an estimated body fat percentage; nonetheless I find them very inaccurate. The scales help show body fat trends, but I recommend the handheld [Omron Fat Loss Monitor](#), for a more accurate measurement. It is quick and easy. [Skin calipers](#) are a little more accurate, they are less convenient and they require some training to use correctly.

10. [Wireless headphones](#) or [wired headphones](#) with a [phone holder](#) (Optional):



Listening to music that pumps you up during your workouts, will increase your workout intensity, focus, performance, and enjoyment. This ACE-sponsored Research Study, [Exploring the Effects of Music on Exercise Intensity](#), concluded that “If you increase the beat frequency people tend to go faster or work harder.” Dr. John Porcari Ph.D. said, “By listening to music, people tend to enjoy exercise more because they focus less on their breathing and perceive it to be less taxing. Music can encourage people to exercise harder.” You can purchase an excellent pair of [wireless headphones](#) for less than \$40.

11. [Protein Powder \(Optional\)](#):

[Optimal Nutrition \(ON\)](#) Gold Stand Whey is my recommendation because they make their whey here in the USA instead of importing it from China, but feel free to do your research. You do not have to supplement your protein intake with powders, but it does make getting enough protein each day a lot more convenient. Real food should be emphasized in your diet, especially on a weight loss regimen. Real foods like beef, fish, poultry, and eggs provide greater satiety and have a slightly higher thermogenic effect than powders.

12. [Multi-vitamin \(Optional\)](#):

A multi-vitamin is a good way of ensuring against any vitamin or mineral deficiency in your diet. I highly recommend Legion Athletics’ vitamins and other supplements.

13. Download [OverDrive](#) and Subscribe to Audible (Optional):



Many public libraries allow you to download free audiobooks using the [OverDrive app](#). The files expire after a specified amount of time has passed, typically 2-weeks. With digital files, you will never pay a late fee, but the file may expire before you finish the book. [Audible](#) typically has more titles to choose from than your library, and you can take as long as you want to listen to the book because you own it. Audiobooks are a great way to make your cardio sessions more enjoyable and promote personal growth.

Audiobooks provide the same benefits as reading. They improved vocabulary, writing, reading comprehension, grammar, and emotional intelligence. If you are interested in finding out more about the benefits of audiobooks, I suggest you read the article, [As Far As Your Brain Is Concerned, Audiobooks Are Not 'Cheating'](#) by Melissa Dahl. Audiobooks will turn your car into a schoolhouse. Your commute to anywhere becomes time for personal growth and enrichment. Zig Ziglar suggests that if you want to excel in life, you need to be an automobile university student. You spend hundreds of hours in your automobile each year; why not make that time work for you. Instead of dreading your commute, you will look forward to it. You will learn and develop new skills. Reading is like having a conversation with some of the finest minds in the world, past, and present.

14. Audible (Optional):



A [Gold subscription](#) costs approximately \$14.95 per month, and it allows you to download one book a month. [A Platinum subscription](#) allows you to download two books a month for about \$22.95 per month. If you think that it is too expensive, consider canceling your cable, and stream content from Netflix, Amazon Prime, or Hulu. No need to pay monthly fees for receivers and channels you do not need. Cable does not do anything to enrich your life or make you more successful. You can also add apps like HBO NOW and Stars, so you will not miss your favorite shows. You should be able to save enough money to afford Audible without adding to your monthly expenses. Reading enriches your life so much more than TV ever will. During the writing of this book, I did not have time for TV and I did not miss it at all, especially the news. News stories tend to focus on everything that is going wrong in the world, which has an adverse impact on your mood. It can seep into your mind and de-energize you. I am not suggesting you stick your head in the sand, but I am suggesting you stick to news summaries. Watching the talking heads repeat the same facts, over and over, hour after hour, is a waste of your most valuable resource. Instead of being a bystander in the world, engage in activities that make it a better place. Your time would be better spent improving the world by improving yourself and adding value to it.

Reading more might also increase your income. Author Tom Corley, studied the daily activities of 233 rich people and 128 poor people. He wrote [Rich Habits: The Daily Success Habits of Wealthy Individuals](#). He found that 85% of the wealthy read two or more books every month while only 15% of the poor people did; 63% of the wealthy listen to audio books during their commute to work, while only 5% of the poor shared this habit. The rich tended to focus their reading on self-improvement books and autobiographies. He discovered that 67% of wealthy people limited TV time to one hour or less per day, as compared to only 23% of poor people. Harry S. Truman said, "Not all readers are leaders, but all leaders are readers."

I believe the two most important things you can teach your children are a strong work ethic and a love of reading. We often take our children to Barnes and Noble or the public library, to foster a love of reading and an appreciation for the written word.

15. Polar H7 Chest strap or heart rate monitor (Optional):



If you want to track and record your heart rate during cardio workouts accurately, you will need a heart rate monitor or a Bluetooth chest strap. You will need a heart rate monitor or a Bluetooth chest strap. The Polar H7 strap allows you to log your workouts on your smart phone and it usually connects with most commercial gym cardio machines. I own this chest strap, but I usually prefer to hold my finger on the side of my neck and periodically count the number of pulses over six seconds. Then I multiply by ten to determine my beats per minute. I find chest straps a little uncomfortable, and is just one more thing to carry in my gym bag. I still recommend having one so you can more accurately monitor your effort level, especially when performing a new workout.

16. Visit a Chiropractor; It Will Change Your Life (Optional):



I highly recommend you see a chiropractor on a regular basis. It does not have to be expensive, and you can use your [Flex Saving Account \(FSA\)](#) to cover the cost. You could pay \$69 per month or \$59 per month if you are a veteran, to [The Joint](#) for one weekly adjustment. Many professional athletes, like [Tom Brady, extol the virtues of receiving regular adjustments from a chiropractor](#). Here are a few of the benefits: improved joint motion and coordination, improved physical function and performance, improved posture, relief from back and neck pain, relief from leg, knee, foot and ankle pain, relief from arm, wrist, shoulders or elbow pain, relief from stress and tension disorders, relief from joint discomfort, relief from arthritis, and relief from chronic injuries. Well worth the cost of approximately \$15 per adjustment.

17. [Compression Sleeves \(Elbow or Knee\)](#):

If you have any issues with your elbow or knees, I recommend compression sleeves. They have helped me a lot. The compression helps keep the joints warm. I prefer fabric over neoprene because I found the neoprene less comfortable, and it causes a lot of sweating. A lot of people prefer the neoprene because it keeps the joints warmer.

I have researched each product I recommend. I personally own many of them, and I believe they provide the best value. The links in this book are provided for your convenience.