As life slowly returns to “normal” and COVID restrictions begin to ease up in 2022, many people find themselves in a landscape very different prior to the spring of 2020. For those of us in law enforcement, it remained business as usual to some degree, albeit with some new guidelines and restrictions. But, as a result of the modifications we’ve had to make, we’ve undergone some changes in how we handle our health and wellness.

As we worked through the lockdown days, many of us who had been involved in a regular workout and training routine found ourselves having to figure out novel ways to exercise. Or, worse yet, we let our fitness and stress release mechanisms fall by the wayside. The home gym resurgence went into hyper drive, with people across the world figuring out how to work out at home to maintain their physical and mental well-being. This was obvious by the increased prices of fitness equipment and—if you could buy equipment—the lengthy delay in receiving it. If you were a gym owner like me, you saw a dramatic drop in clients, the loss from which has yet to be recovered.

As people transitioned away from the normal gym setting and into their garages, the inevitable question of “what should I be doing?” began to crop up, especially for those who had been participants in group training programs. For those who were doing a “bro-session” workout, not much changed other than the environment, and the ability to mix it up from time to time with some bodybuilding-based conditioning workouts.

Over this time, I did a lot of personal consulting and programming with various clients who were working out in a different environment. I was happy to keep them moving and healthy, but it wasn’t easy since my coaches and I weren’t there to make hands-on fixes to prevent potential injuries and accelerate positive outcomes. I didn’t get the ability to talk...
to people about how the body is working through a particular range of motion, what changes are elicited from that training session, desired outcomes, and how to program their workouts. The “virtual” coaching process was somewhat impersonal and, if it lacked video interaction, it was missing the teaching moments based on discussion or observable movements. It got the job done, yet only for a very small percentage of people who needed a regular workout program.

As we moved into a new frontier and law enforcement personnel were adapting to changes, or starting from scratch with their fitness routines, I began to think about how I could reach a larger audience for proper strength and conditioning training and education. To that end, I sat down at the computer and spent an ungodly number of hours pouring out the basic knowledge I had on the topics of strength and conditioning, anatomy and physiology, exercise science, and programming. The result was a literal book: *The Centurion Strength and Conditioning Manual.*

Now, before I get accused of going on a catfishing trip for shamelessly promoting my book, it’s much more than that. For those who know me, my goal has always been to help better the human beings around me. Whether it is through teaching on tactical topics, leadership, after-action debriefs, motivational speaking, or sharing training information, the end game has always been to make those who chose to listen walk away better than how they walked in. I want to make them “ready.”

In this line of work, you cannot afford to sit around and make no attempt to better yourself and get ready for the “any given Sunday” moment. Spending money on oversized trucks, boats, or random toys you really don’t need isn’t the answer. Sure, you can say it’s a stress release, and it may be, but insofar as bettering the body that must carry you through this career and into your final days, what does any of that do for you? Nothing, it just feeds your ego in the now. What does make the difference is taking the time to make your body better each day. Physically training and eating right over the course of your work week, and taking the weekends off, will make a world of difference. You will develop command presence and confidence, as well as destress and keep bones and muscles in their top functioning shape for years to come.

In our profession, we cannot afford to get lazy, cut corners, or quit, especially when it comes to taking care of our bodies. There are no silver medals...
awarded in a life-and-death struggle with a suspect who is legitimately not going back to prison. If you have chosen to be out of shape and have prioritized your time and money elsewhere, then the award granted may be a serious injury, the end of your career, or worse yet, a crisply folded flag for your family and black bands for all your partners.

So, if you are starting up again, or looking for a new line on physical training, I would urge you to join a group training gym, find a coach, or wander on over to Amazon and purchase The Centurion Strength and Conditioning Manual. The book is an easy read, outlining the how, what, and why of getting physically fit, and it contains a full year of programmed workouts, so you have no excuse for saying, “I don’t know what to do, or why I am doing it.” The programming is doable for anyone regardless of skill level, and can be scaled up or down. The workouts are straightforward and, if you can divert some money from an unnecessary lift kit for your truck, you can set up a perfect home gym with some bare bones equipment needed to get the job done!

Some basic tips to at least get you pointed in the right direction would be to first, and foremost, learn all about the proper range of motion and functionality of a movement to decrease your risk of injury, and increase its applicability. Secondly, leave your ego at the door and progress at your own pace, not that of the people around you! Lastly, trust the program, whatever that may be. You won’t see results for at least 60 days of consistent training in a particular program, so don’t be in a rush for results and jump from program to program, it will only blunt the entire adaptation process.

The choice is yours. You can be strong, fit, confident, and healthy, and have a higher likelihood of getting out of this career alive, or you can take your chances. Be the best version of yourself, and if I can help you do it, please reach out to me! Are you “ready”?  

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