



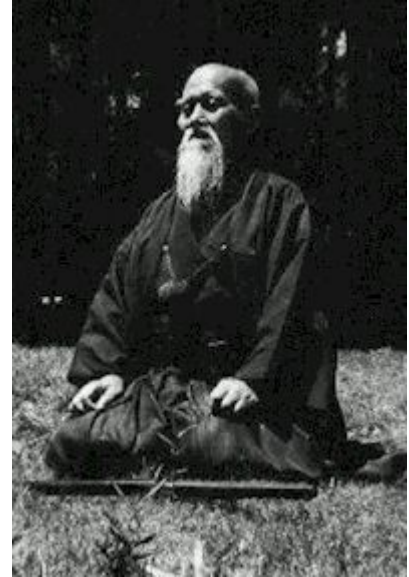
How to Stick With Your Training Program!

Martin Rooney

What did Martin Rooney learn while consulting recently with the NFL's Cincinnati Bengals? Read this insightful article to find out.

A few months ago, I had the opportunity to consult the professional NFL football team, the Cincinnati Bengals. Although I was there to share as much of my training knowledge as I could over a three day period, I gained as much from the experience as I gave away. Even though most of the days were spent educating about training through talking, I did make sure that I worked out with some of the strength staff and athletes. I did this not only to demonstrate some of the things I have learned over the years, but also to get in a good workout as well.

It was then that a staff member asked how long I had been training. To my surprise, I thought about it and realized that I have not missed more than 3 days in a row without physical training in over 20 years! When I reflected on this later that night, I was impressed with my perseverance, but also disappointed for a few reasons as well. I started to come to realize that even though I have been training consistently for over 2/3rds of my life, I was not as big as Arnold Schwarzenegger, and many of my best lifts and personal records just might be behind me. As I dove into thinking about this topic, I came to discover that I was slightly falling into the trap that most of the world does when it comes to training (whether it is strength or martial arts), especially in this day and age. I took my overall experience of training for granted and placed more emphasis on immediate results.



Everything about the world today is starting to revolve around instant gratification. In a way, **some technology is actually making it harder for us to stay healthy and stick with our goals.** If you don't believe me, let me tell you about a few of the technological and human changes that have occurred over the last decade and you make your own decision. Today, if you want your food cooked in a second, you put it in a what? A microwave. Now, food doesn't have to be prepared well and food doesn't really have to be good for you at all, but as long as you can have it quickly, most people will eat it. Not only does this speed up eating and make it more accessible, but the quality of the food is poor, the quantity is high and we are physically getting soft and more disease as a result.

Today, if you want any piece of info in a split second anywhere in the world, you go on the what? The internet. I remember having to look up my own sources, qualify what I was reading and actually have to read books! Today's youth not only get misinformed about many areas from the internet and lose their resourcefulness when it comes to education, but it again mandates that you spend hours upon hours a day sitting in poor postures getting out of shape.

Today, if you want access to any person at any second, call them on their what? Cell Phone! This great device may make us accessible, but it is also helping us to lose our powers to memorize phone numbers, addresses, appointments and increasing car accidents at the same time. All of these technological accelerators all have one thing in common: They are taking away our ability to think and experience. TO me, that is very scary.

Finally, I want to ask one more challenging question about technology. If you want to be in great shape in a second you what? What's wrong? No answer here that technology can provide? No simple way to spend no energy and eat poorly and still get fit? That is right, there is no quick fix

here. **There is nothing that will ever replace good old fashioned hard work and practice.** And not only that, that is where your life happens one plateau at a time. Years ago, I read the book "Mastery" by Aikido master, George Leonard. This book described the fact that although we are always looking for the quick fix or the upward jump in skills, most of the time spent training and practicing is spent on a plateau. Only after diligent practice on that plateau over time would there be another surge of upward movement to the next level. He went on to state that as he evolved as a student, he stopped looking for the breakthrough and started enjoying the practice and the plateau. Think about your own experience. You may have gotten frustrated with your physical or technical progress because you thought it was too slow or not enough. You may have even quit at the point when progress was right around the corner. Imagine that instead of focusing on the results, you focused on the moment. It was there that life was happening.

I love to look back on my writings from years ago in Gracie Magazine, because I can actually track my own progress and the evolution of how I think about training. Why I am writing this article is that I want all my loyal readers to every so often step back from just looking for the next workout or exercise and get back to the principles behind why we exercise in the first place. Training is not about instant gratification. Anyone looking for constant progress will not stick with training for long. The essence of training is the experience of the training, and what you learn about yourself through it.

Training is about the process, not the outcome. If you are always caught up looking for progress, upward movement, or a new belt color, you will be missing the most important lessons that are right there in front of you. You will get there, and there is one simple thing you need to do it: Consistency. When Thomas Edison was asked when he would stop working, he said "I guess the day before I die". Now that man could teach us a lesson or two about consistency. When it comes to your physical training or martial arts or anything you have decided to pursue wholeheartedly in your life, you should have the same answer as Edison. There is no real destination, no end, and certainly no merit for instant gratification. If you are consistent, it demonstrates that you have 2 very important characteristics: **Discipline and Perseverance. With these two attributes, you cannot be stopped from anything you are looking to achieve. Without them, you will never reach any goal you have set for yourself.** Think about your own goals that you are working toward. Have you been staying consistent toward your goals? Have you been patient and always looked for the lessons behind some frustration that you might be experiencing? Have you been attempting to be better at what you do each day than the day before? Have you been pressing too hard and thinking that you should be more fit or a higher belt by now? Well, if you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you need to take the pressure off yourself and enjoy the ride. Remember, the tighter you hold a handful of diamonds trying not to spill them, the more you lose. Loosen your grip on yourself and you will be amazed at the progress you may start to make.

I have been around jiu jitsu and the martial arts for a long time. Often, many athletes ask me why I am not a higher rank in jiu jitsu, and the answer is simple: I may have been around it for a long time, but I have not been practicing it as much as I should. Because of this fact, I am content with my skill. If, however, I decide that I want a black belt soon, that would be unrealistic without making the commitment to consistency. Here is one of the most powerful statements that I tell my athletes daily: Where you are in life is exactly where you are supposed to be as a result of the things you have done up until that moment in time. To do anything else but accept your current situation would be crazy. The real thing to do is then decide where you want to go, use both consistency and patience to get there, and enjoy the ride. It is, after all, the path you have chosen in life.

I hope everyone has enjoyed this article and that it not only helps take unneeded pressure away, but also pushes more people back on track toward their goals. Every journey starts with one step and all the steps afterward are equally as important. Each workout, every piece of food you put in your mouth, every breath you take, they all add up. In the end, you will see there are no little things. Now, get back on the path, and get to work!

Martin Rooney is director of the Parisi Speed School and conditioning coach for Team Renzo Gracie. He has trained champion fighters for the ADCC, UFC, Pride and Olympics as well as hundreds of professional athletes from other sports. His "Training for Warriors" book and DVD training series are at www.parischool.com.