

CARY
CASTAGNA

KEEPING FIT

✉ cary.castagna@sunmedia.ca
 t @SUNcarycastagna
 B blogs.canoe.ca/keepingfit

No excuses

Fitness not optional, says tough-love 'trainer of trainers'

John Platero admittedly takes a tough-love approach to fitness.

But the 55-year-old workout guru, who looks about half his age, has his reasons.

"I lost my father because he was obese. He had a heart attack," Platero explains in a candid phone interview from the Los Angeles area. "My sister's obese. She's going to have major problems."

The heartbreak and disappointment is evident in his voice.

"Everybody has a reason," he adds.

Platero is the founder and owner of Future Fit, Inc., a fitness company that, among other services, manages personal trainers.

He's also the director of the National Council of Certified Personal Trainers (NCCPT), which has certified thousands of personal trainers throughout the U.S. through its intensive, two-day workshops.

The uber-fit "trainer of trainers," a chiselled 155 pounds at five-foot-seven, suggests that too many people have become delusional about what it takes to really get in shape.

Consider the 10-minute-a-day workout trend, which Platero says just doesn't make any sense.

"A calorie is a measurement of heat," he notes. "You can't do something for less time and less energy, and expect to create more heat. You can't."

Platero scoffs at those whose "exercise" is nothing more than parking farther away from the grocery store or taking the stairs at work.

"Really? That's it? You're just going to walk up the stairs twice? That's your activity for the day? Gimme a break, man."

Delusional

He says a lot of people are just as delusional when it comes to nutrition.

Not that Platero always sticks to a Spartan diet.

The other day he splurged on a rib dinner with chocolate mousse and vanilla ice cream for dessert, he confesses.

But, he points out, it was a treat and he doesn't eat like that all the time.

"I earned it," he adds. "A lot of people just do that every day or every other day. That shouldn't be a daily thing. That should be a reward."

Platero says the road to better health and fitness starts by making it a priority. And then acting on it. Now.

"The way I look at it is the present is the window to your future," he explains.

"You can plan all you want, but if you don't do something in the moment, your future's not going to come out the way you planned it."

The bodybuilder-turned-cyclist won four gold medals,

one silver and two bronze in cycling at the Huntsman World Senior Games in 2008.

His training regimen revolves around the March-to-October cycling season, which means he spends a lot of time on his bike.

But Platero also strength-trains and keeps active through a variety of other means, including stretching in his Endless Pool and kayaking.

'Most important'

"The most important thing in my day is, when am I going to move?" he says. "So if I have to get up earlier, then I do it. If I have to stay up later, then I do it. If I have to not eat lunch and work out, then I do it. It's just a priority."

Platero admits that he needs more time to recover from exercise now that he's in his mid-50s, but he still trains as intensely as ever. And he strives to move his body for at least an hour every day.

He likens it to learning to play a musical instrument.

"If you only touch a trumpet twice a week for an hour, you're never going to play trumpet. You might be able to play *Jingle Bells*, but that's it," says Platero, who happens to be a drummer.

"If you shoot for seven days a week for an hour a day, you might get somewhere."

Of course, too many people fall far short of that when it comes to exercise.

"A lot of people are really complacent and lazy, and then eventually they get sick, and they go to the hospital, and this is why our health care goes up. It just goes higher and higher," says Platero, author of *Yes, You Can! Fitness After 40, A new Beginning*. "People don't take care of themselves. They just don't make the right decisions."

Many don't even try.

And that, it seems, is unacceptable to Platero.

"You have to try," he adds. "If you can't do it (get fit) on your own, then you need to get help. You've just got to do it."

"A lot of people are really complacent and lazy."



JOHN PLATERO