



CUSTOM MADE

Want to discover your fitness age or the best exercise for your body type? Welcome to the personalised plans that know more about your body than you do

BACK IN THE DAY, GYM INDUCTIONS involved a quick Q&A and a lesson on how to work the treadmill. Today, you can find out whether you're primed for marathons or bodybuilding, thanks to DNA testing. Think your arms are holding onto more weight than they should? A body-composition scan can help explain that. Customised fitness programs, tailor-made to your unique genetic, biomarker or body data, are now accessible to the everyday athlete. Intrigued? The WF team put a few to the test...

DEXA SCAN

THE PLAN: A low energy X-ray (it's less radiation than flying from Sydney to Melbourne, FYI), a DEXA scan accurately measures muscle mass, bone density and fat mass. It's a research tool used in body composition and bone density research work that's now applied to the health and wellness market by accredited exercise physiologists. The scan can help determine a person's ideal weight and ensure their diet and exercise habits are bringing them closer to their health goals. Lying on the DEXA bed, the scan (which takes three minutes) completes three passes of the body. There's a lot of info offered up, so

following the scan, a specialist exercise physiologist analyses the results with you. **THE EXPERT SAYS:** "DEXA removes the guesswork and the inaccuracies of other measures like scales, tape measures, skinfold calipers and bioelectrical impedance. DEXA is essentially a cheat sheet for your body. It can provide access to health outcomes like visceral fat estimates, resting metabolic rate estimates and macronutrient breakdowns to assist in losing fat mass or gaining muscle mass. The most important benefit, however, is being more informed about whether your dietary or exercise regimen is working for you." – **Dr Jarrod Meerkin PhD, accredited exercise physiologist, MeasureUp**

WORDS: SARAH IVORY; SAMERA KAMALEDDINE; ALICE HARRINGTON; PENNY CARROLL PHOTOGRAPHY GETTY IMAGES

DNA TESTING

THE PLAN: Opt in for a health and wellbeing genetic profile with Fitgenes and you'll start with a consultation with an accredited practitioner to assess your goals and lifestyle habits. One simple saliva swab later, they'll come back to you with a detailed personalised report covering important markers of wellbeing, such as inflammation and your body's ability to burn fat. It can be hard to decipher, which is why your Fitgenes practitioner will interpret the info, pinpointing any areas of concern and suggesting tweaks to upgrade your workout and lifestyle habits.

THE EXPERT SAYS: "Genetic profiling is a great opportunity to look at our individual genetic strengths and vulnerabilities, which can assist with how we can best achieve our health goals. Specifically, Fitgenes looks at the key drivers of health and wellbeing such as inflammation, the ability to cope with oxidative stress, our ability to detoxify, vitamin D capacity and more. This information aids a practitioner targeting specific areas to create personalised health and wellbeing plans. This kind of DNA test is suited to anyone who's interested in making the best nutritional, exercise and lifestyle choices for themselves."

– **Tracey Porst, Fitgenes spokesperson**
WFROAD TEST: "I've always wondered about my genetic capacity to run long distances, perform at high intensity or hit snooze in favour of an early workout and the health and wellbeing report gave me an incredible insight into how my body operates. The info in the report is pretty mind-boggling, so it really helped to have my practitioner, physiotherapist Miles Browning, walk me through it. Even though we've never met, from reading my results he could tell that I'm reasonably lean, prefer short, sharp workouts and struggle to manage stress. Turns out, my genes would rather I skipped long runs (phew!), took longer rests during workouts (sure) and had more rest days in general (fine by me!) in order to avoid excess inflammation. I also need to watch out for heart issues further down the track. Although some of the results can sound scary, Miles explained that it's all about learning your body's boundaries so you can make good choices. The best bit? I now have a tailored workout plan to follow – and it includes plenty of rest!" – **Penny, deputy editor**

YOUR TURN: Most clients are referred for a DEXA scan by dietitians, exercise professionals or general practitioners. Or, you can hit up measureup.com.au to book in with a mobile lab location.

BIOSCORE ASSESSMENT

THE PLAN: BioScore is an exercise and lifestyle assessment that measures your biological 'fitness age' against your real age. A unique addition to a gym induction, the 45-minute assessment covers three areas – health (for example, lung capacity, blood pressure, height to waist ratio), fitness (think power, agility, core strength) and lifestyle (this is where you need to admit to your stress levels and drinking habits). This data is used to create a bigger picture of your overall wellbeing, which is tallied up – years get added if you fail to meet average results and taken away if you're above average – to create your BioScore.

THE EXPERT SAYS: "BioScore is all about evolving the gym experience, offering members a more tailored and personalised approach to their workout so they can reach the right goals in the best possible way. BioScore takes a holistic approach, looking at someone's lifestyle rather than just how many times they exercise each week. This means they can set realistic goals and kickstart a training program with a deeper knowledge of fitness and health, and not just rely on physical appearance as a gauge." – **Michael Cunico, head of fitness at Fitness First Australia**

WFROAD TEST: "I'm turning 30 this month, so I'm feeling a *little* bit fragile about my actual age – thankfully, my BioScore helped to wind back the clock, giving me a biological age of 28. Initially, I thought the bit where I weighed myself and admitted to more than a couple of post-work wines was uncomfortable – I had no idea about the squats, lunges, jumping drills, *three-minute* plank and all-out stint on the rower that was to come. But once the physical test was done and dusted, and the results came in, I was pretty chuffed. The BioScore evaluates your metabolic, lifestyle and physical test results, indicating with a 'variance' score whether they increase or decrease your biological age. For me, I scored a -1 for the 500m row, indicating that cardio is something I'm good at (note to self: keep up that marathon training!) but a +2 for both my TRX row and standing long jump, which means extra strength workouts could take a few more candles off my cake (and help keep the big three-oh further at bay, at least biologically!)." – **Alice, chief subeditor**
YOUR TURN: The BioScore assessment is available at Fitness First clubs – visit fitnessfirst.com.au to find out more. 📱