

# 29. RECOMPOSE YOUR LIFE

*Recomposing: To form  
something again or in a  
different way.*



#NCSAMENTALHEALTHDEVOTIONS

## RECOMPOSE YOUR LIFE

*Hosea 14: 5:55: "I will be to the people of Israel like rain in a dry land. They will blossom like flowers; they will be firmly rooted like the trees of Lebanon. They will be alive with new growth and beautiful like olive tree leaves, they will be fragrant like the cedars of Lebanon."*

Have you recently discovered things about yourself that you did not know? Have you adapted to the lockdown environment? Are there things around you that were convenient to have but are no longer available? Have you discovered new skills and interests you never knew you had? Yesterday my landlady told me that her stove broke and she had not been able to fix it so far. So she adapted and she made a bread on the braai. It is not the type of 'braai broodjies' as we call it in Afrikaans, but a proper loaf of bread on the braai.

Sometimes some of the most amazing growth opportunities come from the darkest places because we are forced to adapt or to die. We are in the race of life and we want to make it. In order to make it, we need to adapt, we need to become fit for the race. When we prepare for a race, we do a lot of things in order to get fit. Many of us do heartbreaking things for earthly races we want to win, but what about the heavenly race? Today I want to share with you how to get fit for the heavenly race. How do we change in order to not let the circumstances get us down? How do we adapt to those circumstances?

I started wondering what makes a person physically fit. If you know the principles of physical fitness, you can perhaps apply them to your spiritual and mental fitness.

**WE ARE IN THE RACE OF LIFE AND WE WANT TO MAKE IT. IN ORDER TO MAKE IT, WE NEED TO ADAPT, WE NEED TO BECOME FIT FOR THE RACE.**

I did a bit of research with the help of my husband and he taught me the five components of fitness.

The first thing one needs in order to be fit holistically, is **muscle strength**. You also need **muscle endurance; heart and lung strength; flexibility** and something which is called **body composition**. Let us look at each of them individually.

### 1. Muscle strength:

In the world of training and fitness, this means you need to enlarge your muscles, you need to grow your muscles. This is done through something called the overload principle. When you go to the gym and you do muscle training, in other words weight-lifting, you are putting a load on your muscles and thus actually tearing the muscle fibres.

This is why you are in a tremendous amount of pain when you go to the gym after you haven't been there for a while, and you do a bit of weight training. Your muscles literally tear because of the overload. You have picked up more than what your muscles are used to and they tear. However, the beauty of the overload principle is that your muscles need to tear in order for them to grow back bigger.

Please do not misunderstand me. Do not hurt yourself.] The fibres have tiny little tears in them because of the overload, and as they heal, they grow back bigger and stronger. This is why your biceps (upperarm muscles), grow back bigger and bigger. Your muscles are growing bigger because of this overload principle of weight and you end up having increased strength. Muscle growth and increased strength happen over a period of time. You cannot go to the gym, pick up ninety kilograms and all of a sudden the day thereafter, you are going to be strong.

**THE BEAUTY OF THE OVERLOAD PRINCIPLE IS THAT YOUR MUSCLES NEED TO TEAR IN ORDER FOR THEM TO GROW BACK BIGGER.**

You need to slowly but surely increase the weight (increase the load), in order to grow muscles and to get stronger and stronger and bigger and bigger muscles.

This overload principle means *'lift heavier, gradually'*. If you do chest presses, you start off maybe with six kilograms. I remember when I was in the gym and my husband introduced me to weight training (which I really hated, I'm not going to lie to you), I was struggling with the six kilogram dumbbells. It was hard, but I kept going. I kept increasing the weights to the point where the heaviest weight I could lift was 20 kilograms. I remember how surprised I was because initially I struggled to move from 6 to 8 kilograms. When I lifted 8 kilograms I couldn't believe it. Then I went to 10 kilograms and said, "Wow, I am strong!" and then I went to 12 and I was like "Wow, this is amazing!" and then 14 and then 16 and then when I hit 18 kilograms and I was like "I'm super human!" and then I lifted 20 kilograms and I was like, "How can this be?" This is the overload principle: by applying a little bit of **pressure** more gradually over time and **gradually** you become stronger.

This is the overload principle: by applying a little bit of pressure more gradually over time and gradually you become stronger. It is the same for us. If we want to grow our spiritual muscles, we must allow heavier weights to come into our lives. How else are we going to grow stronger?

Another way for muscles to grow is by spending more time on weight training. In other words, longer training, longer resistance, and then also increasing the intensity. By gradually increasing the resistance, the time that you spend on it and the intensity, you will be comfortable and becoming fitter without the risk of an injury.

**THIS IS THE OVERLOAD PRINCIPLE:  
BY APPLYING A LITTLE BIT OF  
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STRONGER.**

Is it not the same with your Christian race? Are you not experiencing natural resistance with your trials? Sometimes they take long and sometimes they intensify. I realised that we are in life's gym. What you do with the weights that are lying around is going to determine how fit you are going to be. In life you are often faced with this overload, not because you've asked for it, but because it is there – life happens. Sometimes by God's providence, sometimes by Satan throwing things on our way, sometimes just because we live in a sinful world. Life gives you **resistance** and your hardships **last long** and your difficulties **intensify**. What you can do with this resistance is to grow stronger spiritual muscles. With your hardships that last so long, you are taught endurance. With the difficulties that are intensifying and you managing to get through them by God's grace and with God's help, your problem-solving abilities are growing.

If you start thinking differently about the resistance, the duration of the hardships and the intensifying struggles life gives you, you will realise that they are working in you to recompose your life and your walk in life. It is something that changes you from the outside inward and then out again. You perhaps wish that the growth would be easier. It is natural that you may sometimes wish that you did not have to be exposed to the weights, thinking that you don't want to go through the hardships of life in order to get stronger.

I remember a while back I had a talk with my dad and I said to him: "I hate that I have to go through these things. Can't I just skip a few levels? Can't I be strong automatically just by reading God's Word?" I hate the trials, but I need to realise that these things work for my good, just like I used to hate gym and now I am in love with it. That is why James wrote: "Consider it pure joy my brothers when you face trials of many kinds."

**IN LIFE YOU ARE OFTEN FACED  
WITH THESE OVERLOADS, NOT  
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BUT BECAUSE IT IS JUST THERE.**

He also used to hate the trials, but then as he saw how it changed him, he looked forward to it. He looked forward to the challenge. He looked forward to pushing harder and growing stronger.

Instead of wishing that things were easier, you should rather wish for better skills to conquer it. Instead of wishing for less problems, you should wish that you were better at solving the problems. Instead of wishing for lighter weights in life, you should rather wish for bigger and stronger spiritual muscles. The good news is that you can work towards that.

James 4:3 says: *“You ask and so not receive because you ask with wrong motives.”* This verse raised a question in my mind.

Could the reason for my prayers in trials and difficulties not being answered be because I am praying incorrectly? I pray that God removes the resistance and all those things that can make me fit in the spiritual race, that can make me the spiritual giant. Are these prayers wrong? I am reminded of the many biblical characters we see as spiritual giants. Every single one of them went through life’s crushing, heart-wrenching, soul tapping experiences that should have killed them, but it didn’t because they grew strong muscles. The way they grew was by starting off with small trials which God put them through and then the small trials became heavier and heavier. As life goes by, you are going to experience this – maybe you have already. When you were a child you had problems, but now the problems have intensified to levels where sometimes you ask what is happening? This is how you become fit. I have started to change my prayers of late, to ask for the right things. I do not ask for miracles or situations to change or hardships to be removed.

**DON'T PRAY THAT GOD REMOVES  
RESISTANCE BECAUSE IT IS  
THROUGH RESISTANCE THAT YOU  
BECOME STRONGER PHYSICALLY  
AND SPIRITUALLY.**

I started asking God for skills to navigate through this, to give me some ingenious thoughts on how I can do things differently with the little I have. I've asked for strength to resist, endurance to keep going and flexibility to adapt.

## **2. Muscle endurance:**

There are mitochondria in the cells of the body. These mitochondria serve as the battery pack of the cells and are upgraded by exercising consistently and progressively. In other words when you exercise, the amount of energy in your muscles increases and you have sustained strength. To me this was a very interesting concept – through constant exercise, more energy becomes available. I realised it is the same with the Christian walk. The more we go through the hardships and trials and tribulations of life, the more energy we have and our spiritual strength increases.

Even in nature the development and the change never stop. You also need to have this consistent growth in order to have energy. There is a saying that says: 'Keep going until it is done', but for a Christian it is never done. You might die here on earth but life never really ends, growth never ends. If you realise this, you can pace yourself towards growth. Endurance is about pacing yourself, seeing the race for what it is and how long it is going to be. Then you can really exercise and slowly but surely you know how to keep going even though it takes time.

2 Peter 1:5-8 tells us how we need to pace ourselves. God never required you to live an instant perfect Christian life. He said perfection takes place in stages. Pace yourself. You add to your life every single day. Peter said: "... add to your faith, goodness and to your goodness knowledge and to your knowledge self-control and to your self-control endurance and then godliness, Christian affection and love."

**SPIRITUAL GROWTH NEVER ENDS.  
IF YOU REALISE THIS, YOU CAN  
PACE YOURSELF TOWARDS  
GROWTH.**

Peter realised the Christian race is not something that is going to happen in a day. It is not something that is going to happen in a month, it is a lifelong race. As much as this verse seems to say that **you** need to keep growing, it is actually impossible. It is impossible for humans to just sit down and say okay you are going to have faith, you are going to have knowledge, you are going to have self-control and endurance. You perhaps tried, but you were not successful.

The Bible tells us what is impossible with man, is possible with God. God can do exceedingly abundantly above all that you can ever think or imagine in you and through you if you invite Him in. If Christ is in you, He works through you to bring about these changes. You need to trust the system. You need to trust the gym of life God has placed you in, where there are obstacles and where you are challenged in various ways. You are challenged in your strength and in your endurance. You need to trust that God is using the obstacle course of life to bring about in you what needs to happen.

I have seen this in my own life. When I was young and throughout my life in every stage of my life, I learnt different things, those adding things Peter was talking about. It did not happen all at once. When I was young, let's say pre-teens, I learned how to really enjoy life, how to be carefree and how to deeply love. In high school, I learnt how to love God and to be passionate about Him. I grew in my faith during that time. When I went to university, I learnt to be social and to care for others and I developed Christian affection. When I started working, I learnt how to teach others and I became confident. I grew my skills and my knowledge expanded.

**YOU NEED TO TRUST THAT GOD IS  
USING THE OBSTACLE COURSE OF  
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WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN INSIDE  
OF YOU.**



When I met my husband and we got married, I learnt about health and training and how to eat wisely and how to exercise and how to (you would have guessed) have self control. When I started working in mental health at Vista Clinic, I learnt about taking care of my mind and how I could go through trials and kept going (to have endurance). During this lockdown, I have learnt how to be industrious and time conscious and also how to endure.

During each stage of your life, God is taking you through the gym of life to learn how to be spiritually and mentally fit. Perhaps you wished that you could take all those things, exercise them in one day and be spiritually fit. But it doesn't work like that. Practise all these things this week the way we've learnt. Do a little bit of each every day. This is how growth happens. This is how you become fit – in stages. It is like a small plant, first there is a seed, then a seedling with some small leaves, then a stem, then a trunk and then big branches. Over time, the small tree you could not climb because it was so flimsy, becomes a giant oak that you can't even bend, even if you take the biggest hammer to hit it down. The Bible says we are like trees. There is a science in development.

### **3. Cardio-respiratory endurance:**

Basically this is your heart and lung health. The way you reach this goal is through running, cycling and swimming over long periods of time. This type of exercise makes you breathe more deeply. That is going to strengthen your heart and more oxygen is pushed through your heart. It makes me think this is exactly like it is in the Christian life. In the Christian life, you too need to learn to breathe deeply so that your heart, your emotions, can be well. What is spiritual breath? It is prayer. You need to spend more time in prayer, more time going to the Lord on your knees so that your emotions, your heart, can be healthier.

**YOU NEED TO SPEND MORE TIME IN PRAYER, SO THAT YOUR EMOTIONS, YOUR HEART, CAN BE HEALTHIER.**

#### 4. Flexibility:

Flexibility is the ability to use a muscle to its maximum range of motion. This is so cool. Think about it in a Christian walk. Have you used your spiritual muscles to their maximum range of motion? Have you stretched your spiritual muscles in order to really do what needs to be done? It is important to be flexible in your spirituality, in your spiritual muscles, let me rather put it that way. It is important to have free movement. Be careful, it is not about giving up your beliefs. It is not about saying, "O, I need to be flexible in the things of God, I can bend His rules." I am not talking about the Bible, we don't bend the Bible, but you can adapt to the situations around you. Your mind can bend. Your emotions can bend and adapt.

Have you ever tried to split with your legs? Some can't even get half way down to the ground now, but if you keep practising it everyday, trying more and more and more, you are going to be able to do the splits eventually. I have watched body contortionists who can move their bodies in the most amazing ways. They can take their feet and bend their legs all the way around their back, almost becoming a little ball. This only happens because they've practised it over a period of time. We can only be flexible and adapt if we practise to do so over time.

Nature also has the ability to adapt. The trees and the grass grow better once they've burnt on surface level. The grass has a deeper green after it has burnt. It is almost as if it is not the same grass as before. This happens every season. The trees are also constantly changing, constantly growing, constantly adapting to the environment. If they've burnt, they still grow out; if there is cold or heat, they still grow out. In other words, they have learnt to adapt.

**PUSHING YOURSELF TOO HARD,  
TOO QUICKLY, IS GOING TO  
BREAK YOU ADAPT GRADUALLY TO  
THE NECESSARY CHANGES.**

We also need to learn to adapt to our environment, to realise that no matter what environment or what season of life we are in, we can be flexible, we can learn how to navigate in a different way.

If you are not able to pick up a cup with your right hand, you can learn how to pick it up with your left hand. This is what happens when you go through difficulties, you learn new ways to do things you were not able to do before.

### **5.Body compositioning:**

I was introduced to this life-changing concept a few years ago. This is basically where you look at your muscle ratio versus your fat ratio, in other words, how much muscle you have in your body compared to fat in your body. The term literally means 'to form something again in a different way'. The way body compositioning reforms the body is to grow more muscle than fat. The ratio thus needs to be more muscle than fat. The first time I heard this term was in the gym and I realised it was completely different to the normal weight loss programmes or fitness programmes. It does not focus on losing weight, but rather on building the muscles in order to eventually lose weight. It makes sense that a person should have more muscle in the body than fat.

I remember as a young girl, we always talked about weight loss (you need to be skinny). People who have anorexia are skinny, but it does not look so good because they do not have any curves. They have very little fat, but they do not have anything else to replace the fat with. The interesting thing about achieving body composition in order to get the right ratio of fat to the right ratio of muscle, is not to focus on losing the fat and building of muscle, it is focusing on the building of muscles only.

**THE PRINCIPLE OF BODY  
RECOMPOSITIONING FOCUSES ON  
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WILL AUTOMATICALLY LOSE THE  
BAD .**

Exercise science teaches that by building more muscle, the body requires more energy and therefore burns more fat, even long after the weight training sessions have ended. This is quite amazing. It basically says, focus on building the good (that is muscle) and you will automatically lose the bad (the fat) because the muscle is going to eat the fat (it is going to burn it up).

This is true for our Christian walk as well. If we can learn to focus on the good, the bad will automatically burn away and disappear. What we need to remember when we think about this principle, is not to focus on getting rid of the bad, but it is about adding to the good. We focus so much on getting rid of the bad stuff, the sins and temptations, that we do not focus enough on getting and building the good stuff. We often want spiritual liposuction, we want the spiritual tummy tuck where we get rid of sin and temptation. We think that being spiritually fit, we do not have sin and do not struggle with temptations.

The good news is that we do not have to focus on weight loss, we can focus on building our muscles, our spiritual muscles. We do not want to be skinny only, we want to be strong, so that we can aim for living our lives with energy and strength. Many of us do not have so many sins, we are not bad people. On the other hand, we have very little spiritual muscles, so when the weights of life come crushing in, how are we going to lift them? How are we going to endure them?

True Christian fitness is about changing your body's whole form into its strongest possible version. Christian recompositioning is holistic in all aspects of life, your mind, your heart and your attitude. Learning, practising and focusing on the good to reform your life in a different way.

**TRUE CHRISTIAN FITNESS IS  
ABOUT CHANGING YOUR BODY'S  
WHOLE FORM INTO ITS STRONGEST  
POSSIBLE VERSION.**

The Bible also mentions this repositioning:

- Romans 12:2 says: *“Your mind can be renewed and transformed.”*
- Psalms 51:10: *“Your heart can be cleaned.”*
- You can have *“refreshed spirits”*(Ephesians 4:23).
- 2 Corinthians 4:16: We can have the inner man inside us renewed, changed, recomposed.
- Isaiah 40:29: *“We can renew our strength, those who hope upon the Lord.”*

The Bible is full of examples of how we can reposition our spiritual muscles into being stronger and growing faster. By focusing on the good things we can change into better people and sin will automatically disappear. I need to however issue a warning: ‘Pushing yourself too hard, too quickly, is going to break you. Pushing hard gradually, is what you should do.’

Martin Luther King said: *“If you cannot fly, then run; if you cannot run, then walk ... but whatever you do ... you have to keep moving forward ... GROW!”* You need to become fit and grow. Get fit in all areas of life. Develop your skill sets. If your current skill set is crawling, then crawl till it is not difficult anymore. Then try something new, try walking. Start attempting other things. Crawl till you can walk, walk till you can run, run till you can fly. Just get better!

Everything you can do today, you couldn't do at some point in your life. You are literally an adaptation machine. This is the beauty of how God has made you. Do not listen to the voice inside you that is going to beg you to quit.

**IF YOU CANNOT FLY, THEN RUN;  
IF YOU CANNOT RUN, THEN WALK  
... BUT WHATEVER YOU DO ...  
YOU HAVE TO KEEP MOVING  
FORWARD ... GROW!**

When the gym of life is coming into your being, when the weights are getting heavier and when the resistance is pushed up a notch, when you are pushed to be flexible to the utmost of your abilities, do not resist. Learn, grow, become stronger, become fitter, so that the race of life will be easier for you.

For some people, life is hell because they are in pain, because their spiritual muscles are still developing. For some who have been through hardships already, it is a bit easier.

I want to encourage you today not to give up because of the pain. The pain is going to help you. The pain is going to grow more muscles, more spiritual and emotional muscles so that this life cannot break you anymore. And then when the hardships come and the weight of life presses down on you, you are going to press back up.

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*Northern Conference, Pastoral Counselling Department  
Revive, Refresh, Restore  
flemingn@nc.adventist.org  
Cell: +27836584296  
Author: Nandi Fleming  
Editors: Kobus & Adele Beukes*