

# Learning From Superhumans: The Incredible Fitness and Success of Jack LaLanne

Jack LaLanne was a pioneer in the world of fitness.

The gyms that you see all over town? He opened one of the nation's first fitness gyms in 1936.

The machines that fill those gyms? He invented dozens of them.

All of those home workout videos and television weight loss shows? He was the man who first brought fitness into your living room. The Jack LaLanne Show was the longest-running television exercise program of all time. It was on television for 34 years.

And that's just his business career.

If you really want to be impressed, take a look at a handful of his personal fitness achievements.

Here are a few of the fitness feats that LaLanne accomplished...

- He swam from Alcatraz to Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco while wearing handcuffs.
- At age 42, he set the world record for pushups by doing over 1,000 in 23 minutes.
- At age 45, he did 1,000 jumping jacks and 1,000 pullups in 1 hour and 22 minutes.
- At age 60, he swam from Alcatraz to Fisherman's Wharf for the second time. This time he not only wore handcuffs, but also towed a 1,000 pound boat.

LaLanne was in such remarkable shape that he could do one-armed fingertip pushups while in a completely stretched out position.

Ready for something really incredible?

To celebrate his 70th birthday, LaLanne swam 1.5 miles along the California coast from the Queen's Way Bridge to Long Beach Harbor. And he did it while wearing handcuffs and shackles on his arms and legs and towing 70 row boats holding 70 people.

## What Made Jack LaLanne Different?

In some ways, LaLanne's accomplishments are so out of the ordinary that it's hard to translate them into our own lives. (I mean, I love doing fitness challenges, but I'm not planning to tow 70 boats anytime soon.)

Thankfully, there is a lesson you can learn from Jack LaLanne that applies to nearly everything in your life. You won't discover it by looking at his accomplishments, but rather, by examining his daily habits.

## The Daily Routine of Jack LaLanne

*The only way you can hurt the body is not use it.*

—Jack LaLanne

LaLanne was a big believer in rituals and routines. He realized the power that consistent daily actions could have on his life.

Here are a few of the habits that Jack LaLanne did every day for decades...

- Lift weights and do strength training for 90 minutes.
- Swim or run for 30 minutes (in addition to his strength training).
- Eat 10 raw vegetables.
- Eat two meals: a late breakfast and an early dinner (hmm... that sounds familiar).
- Wake up at 4am (in his later years, LaLanne "slept in" until 5am).

Look at that list. It's not overly long, but imagine doing those things not just for one day or one week, but for 60 years like Jack LaLanne did.

Even at age 94, LaLanne was still exercising for two hours every day. 90 minutes of strength training. 30 minutes of swimming or walking. 10 raw vegetables. Every. Single. Day. For 60 years.

When we see someone who accomplishes something incredible, the easy way out is to discount it, chalk it up to natural talent or genetics, and claim that they were born with something you could never have. It takes the responsibility off of you. But the truth is that most incredible people — even the ones who accomplish superhuman feats — are simply more consistent than everyone else.

It was his incredible consistency that made Jack LaLanne superhuman.

When you look at Jack LaLanne's life, it's easy to focus on the big accomplishments and overlook the daily habits. Similarly, in your own life it's easy to spend all of your time focused on transformations, big goals, and rapid changes, and forget that it's the daily habits that lead to long-term success.

Success in any field is about lifestyle choices, not life-changing transformations. It's your daily routine that will carry you to wherever it is you want to go.

## **If Something is Important to You, Schedule It**

How did Jack LaLanne stick to his daily habits with such consistency?

Do you think he just waited until he felt motivated to workout each day? No way. His consistency has very little to do with willpower or motivation. Nobody is motivated every day for 60 years.

LaLanne knew what was important to him and so he scheduled it into his life. He started every day with strength training. Then he did his swimming and walking. Then he has his breakfast. Same order. Same time. Every time.

If you look at LaLanne's daily habits, everything had a time and place when it was going to happen. *Can you say the same about your goals?*

So often we tell ourselves things like, "I'm going to eat healthier" or "I'm going to workout more" or "I'm going to start writing more" ... but we never say when and where these things are actually going to happen.

Carve out some time. Pick a date. Choose a place. Give your actions a time and a space to live.

LaLanne didn't rely on his willpower or motivation. He just stuck to his daily schedule. That's how all professionals approach their work.

## Lessons from LaLanne: Keeping Life In Perspective

In his later years, Jack LaLanne was fond of saying, "I can't afford to die. It would ruin my image."

Eventually, he passed away at 96 years old. And in all of those years, I think one of his greatest accomplishments was holding on to his happiness as much as his health. Even with all of his fitness achievements, LaLanne didn't ruin the rest of his life in pursuit of a particular goal.

The balance between achievement and happiness is something that I think about often – not just in my own life, but also in what I write on this site. I'm still working on it, but I believe that you don't have to be dissatisfied to be driven. There's no reason you can't love the life you have and want to make it better at the same time.

But it's not easy. Happiness and gratefulness require constant tending, much like diet and exercise. Your happiness and your health form the basic foundation of your life. There's nothing new or complex about this — despite what the newest commercials for health products, new drugs, and fitness programs want you to believe.

This balance between happiness and achievement is something that I'm working on getting better at myself. What Jack LaLanne showed us — not just in his words, but also through how he lived — is that you can do incredible things and have a wonderful time while doing it.

## Learning From Jack LaLanne

Jack LaLanne lived an incredible life, and he mastered something that we can all benefit from: **the daily routine.**

Is there a skill that is more valuable than the ability to consistently work towards goals that are important to you while maintaining a sense of perspective and happiness?

It's not the incredible achievements, but rather your daily habits that determine who you are and what you accomplish. Get your habits handled, and the rest will fall into place. If we can take this small lesson and apply it to our lives, there is no doubt we will all be better off for it.