

A photograph of Dr. Ashish Jain, a muscular man with glasses, wearing a red tank top and blue leggings, sitting on a gym machine. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background shows a well-lit gym with various pieces of equipment and other people working out.

MEET ONE OF THE FITTEST DOCTORS OF THE COUNTRY

DR ASHISH JAIN !!

With a 24/7/365 schedule and performing surgeries to attending medical conferences, Dr Ashish Jain is an example when it comes not only to the coveted work but to the fitness levels that he maintains. A renowned orthopedic surgeon based in Mumbai, and a brand ambassador of the Fitindia campaign, Dr Ashish has done some noteworthy work in his field. In a candid conversation with Jinnie Gogia Chugh, he talks about his idea of fitness and gives his message to our valued readers.

"His journey is exemplary and very inspirational for the youth. Its a pleasure to feature his journey – JINNIE GOGIA CHUGH"

1. You are a renowned surgeon, and in the medical field since years. What compelled you to take up Fitness so seriously.

I think my journey in Fitness started way before becoming a doctor or a surgeon. I was obese as a child and had major issues with my body image and self confidence from early days in school. I always had the desire to be 'normal' and thin. My parents had tried many times before but nothing worked until I myself felt the need to do something about it. I started on this journey in full earnest from 1990 but there were many hurdles on the way. My training to become a doctor and then an Orthopaedic Surgeon was tough as it is, and trying to keep my focus on my health was difficult. For me the constant drive for Fitness arises from the burning desire inside me to change for the better constantly. They say that motivates gets you started but HABIT keeps you going. In my case it is now an integral part of my life and schedule which I enjoy.

2. Despite being so busy and having an hectic schedule, how do you find time for your Fitness.

Everyone of us is busy in their work schedule and lives. No one has time to spare in today's fast times and last of all for exercise. One must MAKE TIME. It's all a question of priorities I feel. In my case I plan my schedule keeping a window always for my fitness routine. I believe that it is not just that one hour or so that you spend in the gym that matters; it's the remaining hours in the day that will decide and define your success. Some of us are morning

people while some prefer evening exercise. Whenever in doubt I recommend to commit oneself to an early morning workout. It ensures a consistent schedule that doesn't depend on the fluctuations of your daily routine.

3. Being a doctor, what are the changes you have seen in the health and wellness of the people in today's time.

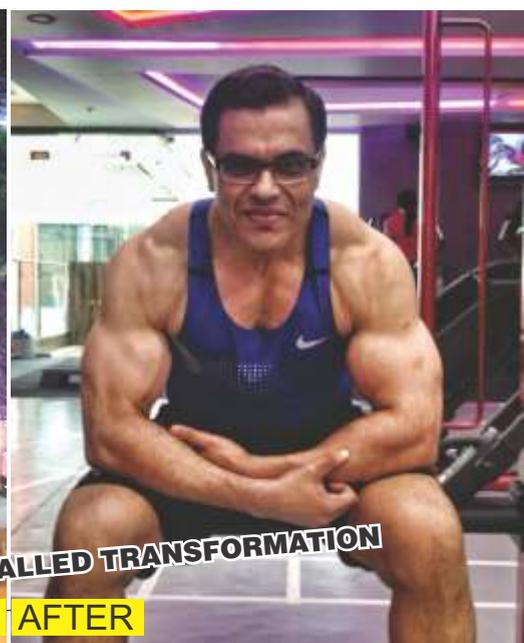
People nowadays have unlimited access to information via the internet. There is an exponential growth in awareness for Fitness and healthy lifestyles. However, the negative side to all this technology is the increasing dependence on various comforts and a very less exposure to any kind of physical activity. So most people now KNOW what they need to do and an increasing number is making efforts to achieve their goals. There is a steady rise in gym and health club memberships all over the country. I encounter individuals of all ages wherever I have worked out in the past. As a doctor I feel happy to see their enthusiasm, but I think many need the right guidance and motivation to keep going. Fitness

is a journey and a long road; one can easily stray once on it.

4. The way the health diseases are on a rise, the expenditure on the curative measures is going to be more than the preventive measures, and this is not a very positive sign for the health quotient of the country. Your opinion?

"THEY SAY THAT IF YOU DON'T HAVE TIME FOR WELLNESS; THEN YOU WILL HAVE TO FIND TIME FOR DISEASE."

Such wisdom in these words. We all know that prevention is better than cure. Modern medicine has raised the Life expectancy globally and we will be seeing a large elderly population to be taken care of. The costs of medical treatment are skyrocketing and with newer technologies coming in they will never slow down. A smart person will see this logic and spend his time and energies and a little money on his fitness; to try and avoid these expenses. What use is a longer life that is restricted by ill health?



NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALLED TRANSFORMATION

BEFORE AFTER

5. What are your observations related to the attitude of people related to health and their fitness.

I think majority of the people are not really serious about their fitness goals. Being a member of a fancy gym with a personal trainer and also following an exotic diet has sadly become a fad for most. I like the enthusiasm and commend those who make the efforts but I feel that most would benefit by putting a little more heart into what they do.

6. Being a doctor, what is the sound advice you give to the people about their health?

As a doctor, I am in a strategic position to directly influence many whom I treat and their families. If I can be an example or a role model to them I am happy. My advice to them is to take full responsibility for their bodies and health. I take care of mine knowing the hazards of illness and I urge them to do so too. No one else can do it for them. Fitness and a good physique can't be stolen, inherited or borrowed. Its only hard work that makes it happen and it can even vanish away if you slacken your resolve.

7. In the times where lifestyle diseases and a sedentary lifestyle are taking a toll on the health of people ,who do you think is the real culprit.

In today's times we are all fully aware and informed about the deleterious effects of our sedentary lifestyles. I think each and every one of us is solely responsible for our bodies and health. All it takes is willpower to overcome the daily

temptations thrown into our faces by media and our peers. If YOU don't feel the need to take the first step towards a fitter YOU then no one can ever help you.

8. You have an awesome physique and maintain your fitness levels very well. Please give us a peek into your FITNESS ROUTINE.

My Fitness Routine hinges on the following principles.

1. Consistency
2. Intense (Smart) Workouts
3. Disciplined Nutrition
4. Constant hunger for Improvement

The road to Fitness is a long journey. It needs the endurance of a marathon runner and not the burst of a sprinter. I am a strong believer in the concepts of Progressive Resistance Training almost to the level of Body Sculpting as I call it. I have always loved the gym with its machines and weights.

It's not how many hours you spend at the gym; it's what you do in that one hour. That is where 'smart workouts' come in. I always have a plan for the week, based on my schedule and surgeries. It's not written in stone but it helps me decide my pre and post workout meals.

I do split body part routines four days a week with two days of only cardio. But. The one thing that has worked wonders for me is my 'post weight training Cardio'. The fat gets incinerated much more effectively. I was always a foodie and that explains my Obesity from the start. But over the years I have trained my mind to 'Stop being a Slave to taste'.

I plan my diets for the entire day based around my exercise routine. I often eat the same foods repeatedly day after day as part of my diet plan. Yes I do have my cheat days now and I have earned them I think.

I prefer a morning workout so that I have the entire day for my work and evenings for my family. I sometimes feel I get my body to the gym even without my brain really waking up. It works.

I am a Man of Science and Fitness is no different. We all are different; genetics, body types, strengths and diet preferences. If you ask anyone, they will always have some opinion on what they think works for them and what doesn't. I had my biases too. Over the years I have come to realize that exercise (20%) and diet (80%) are the cornerstones of any Fitness plan. These have been studied and researched extensively before coming up with guidelines for us all.

I feel a little faith and belief in the science of Fitness is essential. Once the results start showing you will become a believer for sure.

9. Please tell us your opinion on the role of nutrition in one's fitness and health.

I have been working out for years, I had my personal trainer and thought my diet was very healthy. My weight had plateaued out at 105 kg and I wasn't happy. This I believe was the turning point in my Fitness journey. I was given a wakeup call by my good trainer friend and now guide Nitesh Sharma. I realised the importance of Nutrition and made required changes in my diet. It was tough at first, really tough but I saw the results

coming through with time. Since then I have always given more importance to my diet choices rather than my workout routines. Like they always say, abs are made in the kitchen(not the gym). Even today, I never regret a bad day at the gym as I know I can make up with my nutrition. I feel that most Indian cuisines consist of wholesome home cooked recipes. This makes our basic diet of Dal, rice and sabjis quite well balanced in nutritional value. It's the western influences especially junk food, processed foods and take-out habits that are making us unhealthy.

10. What is your opinion about the use of supplements ?

There are lots of questions and doubts surrounding 'Supplements' and their role in Fitness. As a doctor I believe they form an essential part of any Health plan but one must remember they are just supplements; viz. used as an add-on (supplement) to food. They must never be used as a substitute for a good nutritional plan. I always procure my supplements of reputed and well researched brands; from reliable dealers. This ensures genuineness of the supplements at competitive prices. Nowadays ,with the boom in online shopping one is spoilt for choices

and prices. One must decide the supplements one needs based on one's food habits and fitness goals.

11. Health and wellness industry is growing unprecedently. Please give us your views.

It pleases me to see the boom in the Health and Wellness industry. India is more part of the Global market than has ever been. We have always had a strong population which basically converts to a large consumer base. I have witnessed the progressive increase in Health awareness over the years. India has the biggest Youth population on the planet, and these youngsters want to be Fit and Healthy. Like it is in countries abroad, I feel all towns must have state of the art Fitness facilities to encourage the average individual to achieve his goals.

12. What is the basic minimum one must do to lead a healthy life.

In my opinion, the basic minimum for Fitness is Regular exercise and Healthy food choices. Be obsessed about your Health to the extent of being labelled as 'selfish and self centered'. I have and I believe it's ok. First they will ask you "Why you are doing this?", and once the results are obvious they want to know "How to do this?" . Stay hungry and stay focused. Yes life is to be enjoyed and you will have your times but remember Nothing Tastes as Good as being Fit feels.

Way to go Dr Ashish! we are proud of you!

Lets read his personal journey in his own words from talk to fit.



“FITNESS IN TOTALITY -PHYSICALLY ,EMOTIONALLY ,MENTALLY FIT AND HEALTHY – A KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL LIFE.....SAYS THE FITTEST DOCTOR OF THE COUNTRY – DR ASHISH JAIN.

“A PERSONAL NOTE .”

What is Fitness??

In a nutshell, it is a state of being physically fit and healthy. In my opinion this should also include motional and mental health as well.

When I think about Fitness for myself I want the following:

- Feeling happy every time I see myself in a mirror
- Boundless energy levels to get me through my day
- A body that keeps up with my actions and thoughts without aches and pains
- Absence of disease and ailments
- A sense of Positivity that flows out of me to all I meet

This is MY idea of a FIT Me.

Everyone must find and have their own and it may be a totally unique set of criteria.

I come from a family of doctors and was maybe destined to take up medicine as my career. As a kid I was obese from as long as I can remember. Doctor parents doesn't necessarily mean a 'healthy lifestyle' I guess in hindsight.

My childhood memories are not very happy memories. I wasn't a sad kid no way! I had friends in my building and school [all boys ;-)]. I was reasonably active if you call 'building cricket' sports. My school had a massive playground of two football grounds with volley ball nets and a gymnasium. But all that scared the daylight out of me. I went to school, studied what I could, had my meals which was the highlight of the day and came back home.

Every summer break I outgrew my school uniform and was back to my tailor for new spanking whites.

I was a good student; had to do well to get into medicine right? And that was the focus for me and my family. My two sisters and I were all on the 'heavier' side but I was something else.

When I look back I realise that I always had major issues with my self-esteem and confidence. I was only comfortable around my family and close friends. Never made eye contact or liked to be in public places amongst strangers. I was always laughed at and had comments shouted for being FAT.

We live in a shallow world and physical appearances usually decide what people think of you. In our country this is the stark reality and I always felt I was 'a freak' amongst the other 'normal' people. But that didn't stop me from eating away to glory and being a couch potato. I had accepted my fate I guess.

My parents had tried intermittently to get us kids on the road to health. Or shall I say to get us 'Thin'. We went swimming to the club sometimes but what we ate after the swim was more than we would have normally. A fitness 'uncle' was called home for floor exercises. It was a nightmare when I remember those days. Never looked forward to these classes at home. On the spot jogs and jumps. Entire body fat being jolted around; stretches for flexibility and other forms of free hand exercises. It was tiring no doubt and maybe we got a bit fitter BUT the diet remained the same.

My mother even bought me a 'Bullworker'. It was the rage during those times. It was a collapsible spring-loaded contraction which one could told and use in different positions as given in the handbook alongside. I still remember staring at length at the cover which showed the developer of this Bullworker; some German dude I think with all muscles showing in awesome definition. I wanted to look like him someday, all muscles bulging and forearm veins popping. I was so regular with the described exercises but obviously it was not enough for me to change. It soon rusted away and was sold as scrap.

I always wanted to look muscular. Thin was not enough for me even as a child. Maybe I was being greedy then considering how I looked back in the day. All boys want arms and abs and I was no different.

After finishing school I moved to the science Junior college and then things started to change. I was out of the comfort zone of my school, now studying with 'girls' in the same class, travelling by public transport (no more safety of my school bus of 10 years). I became progressively conscious of my looks and my body.

There was no relation from the studies though. Had to become a doctor right???

Classes and tuitions took up my entire day and even the building cricket got episodic. With time I grew bigger and bigger but my focus was always on my exams and my goal to do well in my studies.

My efforts paid off and I got admission into medical college. Then the real career starts. MBBS first and then post graduation. Every time I gave an exam I gained kilos that stayed on.

Having become a doctor (MBBS) in 1990 I started my internship. There was some repeats from studies and after my clinical work in the hospital weds I used to have the afternoon and evening free.

My mother introduced me to a colleague of hers who was a fitness consultant in those days. He was an ex-bodybuilder who had opened a gym in the basement of a nearby building and was giving exercise programs for weight loss. There was no diet. It was called 'dieting' which meant NOT EATING.

That was the first time I stepped into a gym facility and believe me it changed my life. I loved the basic machines they had and the dumbbells. Treadmill was non-motorised and there was a basic belt driven cycle. I don't think anyone back in that day had the concept of Cardio and High protein diets; or then maybe I was blissfully unaware. But I was a doctor now. I'm supposed to know it all. So I starved myself, ran every morning at the race course, finished my ward work at the hospital, then on an empty stomach would hit the gym at 4 pm sharp (once the ladies time was done). The next two to three hours was a daily Full body circuit. No body parts or splits with cardio. Just killing myself.

Once done I would reach home half dead, have a lemonade and sleep off. And the cycle repeated itself day after day. I touched my lowest weight at the end of my internship at 100 kilos and I was looking like a NORMAL person.

I had got addicted to this. I enjoyed my time at the gym come rain or floods I was there. Somedays I was the only guy in the facility. I was on a roll.

Then I decided to become an ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON.

I changed my college and hospital; and started on the Orthopaedic residency program of 3 years. It was stressful stuff. Ward work, surgeries, emergencies, studies. This was the REAL stuff. I was treating or at least learning to treat patients.

The motto was Eat whenever you can; never know how busy you will be later in the day. Obviously the exercises stopped as there was no time for fitness, and the kilos progressively returned with a vengeance.

I was enjoying my work and my path to becoming a Surgeon but every time I saw the mirror I was disappointed. However much I wanted to change myself, my schedule and work bogged me down.

Finish your studies and then look at your health. That was my consolation to myself.

A stage came when I had finished my graduation and become an Orthopaedic Surgeon, started working at a big hospital in Mumbai, and had some time get back to a fitness routine.

It started off at the gym in my club. Good facility with motorised treadmills, cycles, steppers, free weights and a multi gym. Diet was again whimsical at its best. Avoid fried and sweets. No concept of proteins and carbs etc.

A senior consultant once commented on my being overweight and unfit. He asked me if I hoped to become a busier and famous surgeon someday and whether I would find time THEN for my own fitness.

THAT WAS MY WAKE UP CALL.

I decided that I want to be able to call myself FIT at least once in my life. Not just Thin or normal as I wanted earlier. This rejuvenated my interest in exercise and a healthy lifestyle. It has been a battle I have been fighting for years and I keep telling myself that I am nearer my goal.

I believe Fitness is not an end point. No one in their own eyes is FIT. One always strives to improve. I feel its a journey. If one follows the lifestyle like healthy fit people do then you are already FIT. Just keep going.

I have no goals like body weight or dimensions that I plan to achieve now or in the long term. I want to be true to myself and do the best I can to follow this path of Fitness. Life is to be enjoyed and I do have my cheat days, only to bounce right back with a vengeance.

Being a Doctor and a Trauma surgeon I have odd hours of work and responsibilities on my shoulders. No one has TIME for fitness; one must MAKE time.

Being Fit gives me energy to get through my long days and give my 100% to my patients in the clinic and in the operation theatre. Orthopaedic surgery needs mental and physical strength to perform the sometimes long and strenuous surgeries. Weight training and cardio endurance training along with a healthy regular diet in fact helps me with my work.

As a Doctor I have the opportunity to interact and make a difference in peoples lives. Strangers who I meet in the casualty department following a fracture or an accident. These trauma patients are at their low point when they first see me. As a 'Fit doctor' I feel I give them not only confidence and reassurance but also I feel I have the God sent chance to impact their lives in a positive way.

If I can set an example by leading a Healthy lifestyle and inspiring even a few of the people I meet; I feel I have achieved my purpose.

Having been on the other side of the Fitness fence I know how it feels to be overweight and 'unfit' or at least labelled so by the world. I know how it feels to be stared at and I get stared at even now; but for different reasons.

At work and at the gym people just see the 'new' ME. I feel I must tell my story for them to know that when you want something so bad it is achievable with some guidance and hard work.

Talking about 'Fitness'; there are a lot of hypes and controversies regarding different diets,

exercise regimen and supplements. I often get asked as a medical practitioner whether these methods are safe for the body. People have their doubts and apprehensions which as a Doctor I can alleviate to a much greater level.

Should I take protein supplements? Is weight training necessary? Why cant I just run and do cardio? Aren't fats bad for health? All supplements have steroids in them right? These are just a few of the questions I encounter regularly.

I believe that

"Fitness is a Science that has to be followed religiously to achieve your goals. Yes there are things to be careful about and what works for one may not for someone else, I agree.

Just follow the principles and find your own twist to it.

Motivation gets you started but Habit keeps you going. Keep the faith and consistency is the key. Keep your Focus on the process and not the end point or goal. It will take you there."

Surely it Will!!!



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