

15 MINUTE FITNESS

Slim down fast!

**Lose weight
and keep it off**

**Workouts to suit
every schedule**

**20 delicious
fat-burning foods**

168
TASTY TIME-SAVING
RECIPES



BUSY GIRL'S GUIDE



MINUTE

FITNESS

Burn fat, slim down, feel great!



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Cover model

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W Athletic

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Eddie Macdonald

Clothing

ASICS fuzeX Bra,
ASICS Woven 2 in 1
Short, www.asics.co.uk



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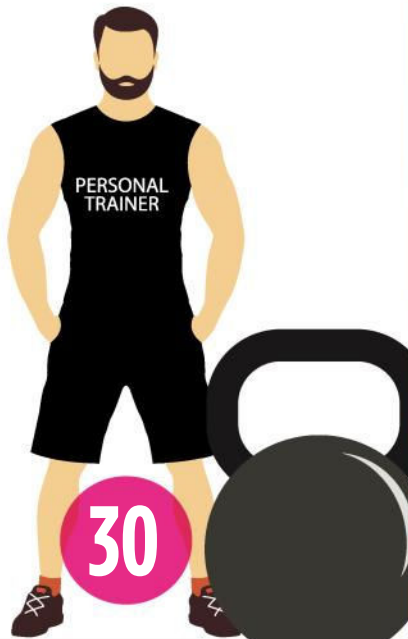
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'Short and sweet gets results'

Fitness writer, editor and personal trainer, Christina Macdonald

I have a friend who spends two hours in the gym every day. She swears it's the only way to stay in shape. But when you watch her exercise, you can see why she has this opinion. Every workout she does is the same – the choice of machines, the exercises, the intensity – nothing about her workout routine has even an occasional hint of variety. And when she works out, she doesn't break a sweat. In some ways, I envy her. She can leave the gym with her hair intact – straight and almost salon fresh! I leave the gym with my hair in a curly mess, but at least I know I've done a workout.

My friend exercises at a low intensity. She pedals slowly on the exercise bike, moves at a snail's pace on the rower, and lifts the same weights, for the same number of repetitions every time. She must be bored, but above all, she won't shake the view that she has to spend two hours in the gym to get results. If she can't find time for a two-hour workout, she won't bother to do any exercise at all, because she thinks anything less than two hours won't be worthwhile. Can you see how narrow-minded this attitude

is? When it comes to fitness, short and intense workouts do add up. All the science these days points to the effectiveness of workouts that challenge and stimulate your body, creating an afterburn post-exercise and an intense fat-burning effect during activity. When you do high-intensity interval training, your heart rate will soar, your breathing rate will rise rapidly and you'll feel like you're really working. If you only have 15 or 20 minutes per day to exercise, some of your workout sessions should be this intense. You'll also burn more calories during these shorter sessions. Your body will need to adapt and get fitter, to cope with the exercise demands. All of these reasons make shorter, faster sessions more effective.

The workouts in this guide can be done in 15 minutes, five times a week – and will help you burn fat, lose weight and tone up. You will find each session achievable in terms of time and commitment, meaning you'll be able to work out and have a life, which is what it's about, after all. We've also provided a complete eight-week meal plan to accompany the eight-week workouts.

We know these sessions are effective, because we've tried them, and we think you'll love the variety – not to mention the extra time you'll have to enjoy yourself!

Christina Macdonald
Editor



15-Minute Fitness

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Printed in China

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'Give all you can!'

Personal trainer, Anne-Marie Lategan



We live in a world where time is everything and we expect results instantly. I've recently heard the average waiting time for an app to open is 0.1 seconds. If an app or website takes longer than 10 seconds to load, we leave it and move on to the next. It's shocking, but I'm the same. I hate the buffering sign, spinning around in circles, wasting my time when I could be doing something else!

So, how do we find a way to fit things that *do* take time into our insanely fast-paced lifestyles? Even I sometimes have to give myself a pep talk – it's so easy to say I don't have time for training. I'm a mum, I work full-time, I have other family commitments and when I get home, I'm tired. We're conditioned to see results instantly, but when it comes to the human body, things don't always happen this quickly. Training takes time.

The most common excuse for not training is that we don't have time. Time is precious! Because of this, I've designed an eight-week, 15-minute fat-burning training plan to help boost your weight loss (I know this will take longer than 0.1 seconds to complete, but in the fitness world, that's just not possible!). Combined with a few dietary changes, you'll soon see great results with just 15 minutes of exercise five times a week. Wondering what the catch is? Well, there is no catch, but your results will relate to your level of commitment. If you really want to lose the weight and you give 100 per cent in every 15-minute session, you'll see significant changes in your body over the next eight weeks.

Take everything step by step, week by week. Give all you can and you'll soon start to reap the benefits of these 15-minute workouts.

Good luck!

Anne-Marie Lategan
Fitness Editor



IT STARTS WITH YOUR HEAD

- ✓ Get the right mindset for change
- ✓ The health benefits of exercise
- ✓ Why consistency is crucial for results
- ✓ Inspirational women who lost weight



Busy life? That's no excuse!

If you're busy, it can be tempting to skip a workout because you have too much on your plate. But exercise can actually help you cope with pressure and solve problems. Here's how to get yourself motivated...



When you're busy and don't think you have any spare time to stop what you're doing and exercise, you may be surprised to hear this is probably the best time to take a break. When you get stressed, your ability to think clearly can be impaired, and it's easy to work yourself into a frenzy about what needs to be done and ponder how you are going to get everything finished. This is the time when you need to be able to think clearly, and find yourself some time and

space to work out a plan to complete your tasks.

Rather than taking a break that involves eating an unhealthy treat because you're stressed, or wasting time watching mindless TV, now is the perfect time to exercise. If you work from home, get out of the house and go for a run or a brisk walk. Or you can do some of the 15-minute workouts in this guide to give your mind a break.

Some people use exercise as a chance to switch off and zone out. For others, it's a chance to solve problems and work

something out in their mind. It's not uncommon for those who exercise to report being able to think more clearly afterwards. When you exercise, blood flow to the brain increases and your brain receives more oxygen. Better blood flow to the brain also means more nutrition for the brain, which means you will be able to think more clearly and work more efficiently. The hippocampus, which is the area of the brain that's critical for learning and memory, is active during exercise, so your brain function improves. Aerobic



exercise can also reduce shrinkage of the hippocampus, which occurs with age.

Scientists also believe that regular exercise can alter your brain, causing more blood vessels to form, leading to better brain function.

So, when you need a clear head to be able to solve your problems, stop and work out for 15 to 20 minutes. Choose something you enjoy, so that you're likely to stick to it, and remind yourself of all the health benefits.

POSITIVE APPROACH

Talk show host Trisha Goddard, now 58, relied on regular running to help her maintain a positive outlook while she was having radiotherapy for breast cancer. She credits it with helping her recover – she's now cancer-free. But she also used her beloved trail runs to help her stay positive and take back control. She would even turn up for radiotherapy sessions treading mud from her trail run into the hospital ward, and would get told off by the nurses. She had no fear.

'I think they thought I was a bit mad, but then as my treatment went on, they could see that my blood oxygenation was coming up to 100 per cent,' she recalls.

Dragons' Den star Kelly Hoppen says she always

starts her day with an hour of exercise, lifting weights as well as doing boxing and Pilates.

To get yourself motivated to exercise when time is tight, here are some ideas you can put into practice:

● **Make a plan and stick to it**

Decide when you are going to exercise and put your laptop down or whatever else you're doing when the time comes. Set an alarm on your phone as a reminder and don't put it off – you won't 'do it later!'

● **Do it early if you can**

Not everyone relishes the idea of exercising early in the morning, but if your schedule for the day has the potential to be unpredictable or you think there's a chance you may have to work late, then get it done early and it's out of the way for the rest of the day. That means you have the right to feel good about yourself all day, instead of feeling guilty!

● **If you don't feel like doing it, do it anyway!**

'BETTER BLOOD FLOW TO THE BRAIN ALSO MEANS MORE NUTRITION FOR THE BRAIN, WHICH MEANS YOU WILL BE ABLE TO THINK MORE CLEARLY'

● **Prepare your kit in advance**

If your exercise routine involves going to the gym, out for a run or anything else that entails leaving the house and taking items with you, plan ahead and get your kit ready. If you're going to the gym, have your gym bag packed and ready by the front door. If you're going for a run, have your running gear laid out on the bed, along with a water bottle, MP3 player and anything else you need. Make it as easy as possible to get out of the front door rather than skipping a session.

Follow the 15-minute rule. Tell yourself you're just going to exercise for 15 minutes. If you get into it and want to do more, there's no reason to stop, but if not, you've done what you set out to do.

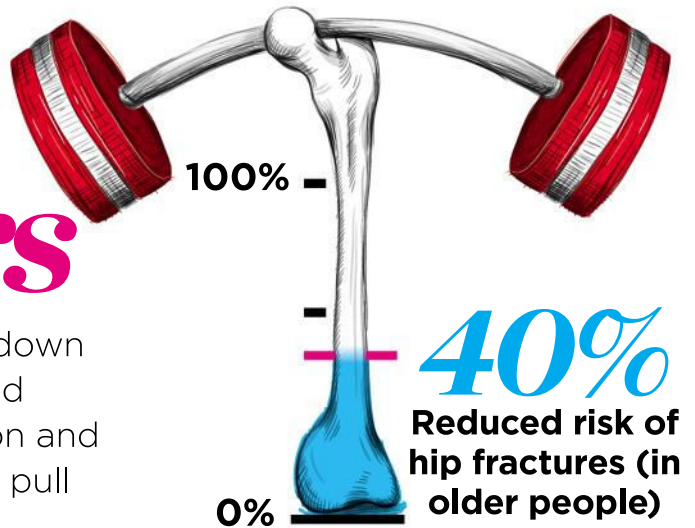
● **Remind yourself how guilty you'll feel if you don't do it**

Also, remember how great you'll feel afterwards. It's also worth reminding yourself of your fitness or weight loss – you need to do this workout to bring you a step closer to your goal of getting fitter, leaner and more toned!



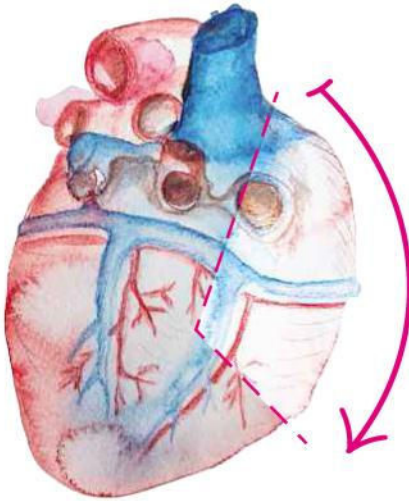
Run the numbers

Exercise won't just help you slim down – it will help you live for longer and reduce the risk of disease. Read on and we defy you to not be inspired to pull on your trainers and get moving...



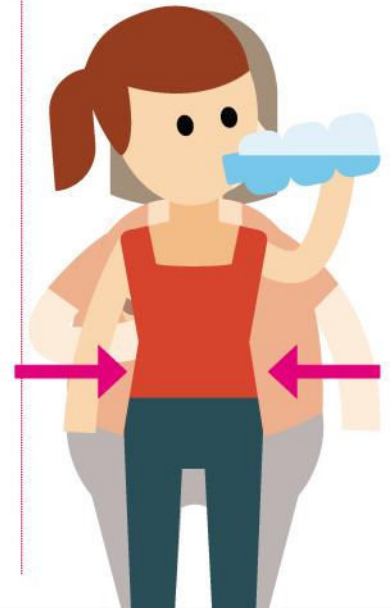
Do you often lack motivation to exercise? If so, it's worth remembering that even a small amount of regular activity during the week can significantly improve your health, as well as your waistline. While this may sound obvious, you might be surprised how significant those benefits are when you look at statistics from the World Health Organization. So, when you need motivation to exercise, consider these benefits and you'll be more likely to want to get active.

In short, regular cardiovascular exercise, such as running, jogging, brisk walking, swimming, cycling, or any continuous movement that raises your heart rate and leaves you moderately out of breath can reduce the risk of disease as follows...



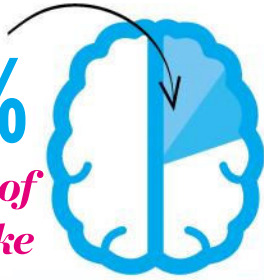
40%
Reduced risk of developing coronary heart disease

30%
Reduced risk of developing Type 2 diabetes



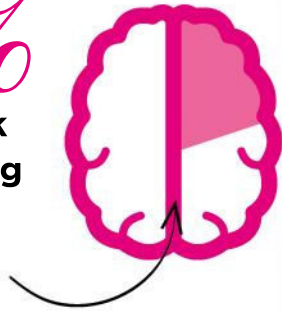
20-40%

Reduced risk of having a stroke



45%

Reduced risk of developing Alzheimer's disease



CALM YOUR MIND

Apart from the physical boost of feeling fitter and looking better, regular exercise offers numerous mental health benefits. The charity, Mind, recommends regular cardiovascular exercise, such as running, cycling, swimming or exercise classes, to help reduce symptoms of mild to moderate depression. Running outside on your own can give you time to overcome problems and deal with dilemmas in your head, or you can use it to switch off from your problems and focus on your breathing. It can be quite meditative. Outdoor exercise can also provide a fantastic mental boost. The variation of scenery, colours, sights and sounds can stimulate your senses and mental wellbeing in a way that busy urban environments often can't, so make the most of the great outdoors and go for a run on the trails or head for a long walk in the countryside.



EXERCISE FOR BETTER SLEEP

Regular cardiovascular exercise can improve your sleep patterns. Even those who exercise in the evenings (provided it's not too strenuous and not too close to bedtime) often report being able to get to sleep more easily. A study published in the *Journal of*

Clinical Sleep Medicine took a small group of sedentary, older adults who had insomnia and prescribed aerobic exercise for 16 weeks, three times a week. By the end of the 16-week period, they were getting an extra 45 minutes of sleep per night compared with the control group in the same study, who did no exercise.

10-20%

Reduced risk of falls



INCREASED LIFE EXPECTANCY

Those who are active can expect to live longer. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), being sedentary is one of 10 leading causes of death and disability. But being regularly active is thought to increase your life expectancy by up to five years, while some studies claim it can help you live longer. In a study from Brigham and Women's Hospital in the US, published in *PLOS Medicine*, experts found adding low amounts of physical exercise to a daily routine resulted in a gain of 1.8 years of life expectancy after the age of 40. Just a total of 75 minutes of brisk walking a week made a difference. For those who brisk-walked for 150-299 minutes a week, the gain in life expectancy was 3.4 years.



30%

Reduced risk of breast cancer



The health benefits of exercise

Live longer, reduce your risk of disease – what's not to love about regular cardiovascular exercise? Here's how it can help keep you healthy for longer...



REDUCED RISK OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

High blood pressure is known as the 'silent killer', as there are no symptoms, and it can increase your risk of heart attack and heart failure. It can also damage blood vessels, as well as causing kidney disease and stroke. Monitor blood pressure regularly and get it checked if you're concerned. A normal blood pressure range is 120/80 to 140/90. Regular exercise combined with a healthy diet can help to reduce your risk of high blood pressure.

REDUCED CANCER RISK

Exercise can reduce your risk of certain diseases. It's been proven that regular cardiovascular exercise, such

as running or cycling, can decrease the risk of certain cancers. Cancer Research UK says bowel cancer risk can be reduced, as exercise increases the rate at which food moves through our bowels, which reduces the amount of time the lining of the bowel is in contact with harmful chemicals.

Insulin levels in the blood are also reduced. Scientists think insulin can turn on signals that tell cells to multiply. Cancer starts when cells multiply out of control, so reducing insulin levels could stop some types of cancer from developing.

REDUCED OBESITY RISK

Exercise can help to manage your weight and therefore

reduce your risk of obesity. Being active increases your total energy expenditure, which can help you stay in energy balance or lose weight if you consume less than you've expended. Regular exercise will also decrease fat around your waist, as well as your total body fat, which will slow the development of abdominal obesity.

Those with larger waists have a higher risk of premature cardiovascular disease than those who carry more fat around hips and thighs. Abdominal obesity is linked with Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease, as well as death.

In one study, women with a waist measurement higher



'REGULAR CARDIOVASCULAR EXERCISE IS PROVEN TO DECREASE THE RISK OF CERTAIN CANCERS'

than 35 inches had nearly double the risk of dying from heart disease, compared with women who had waist measurements of less than 28 inches.

We can't alter genetics and some of us may naturally have larger waists than others, but regular exercise and a healthy diet will get your waistline under control.

REDUCED RISK OF DEVELOPING DEMENTIA

Regular physical exercise will reduce your dementia risk and can make you mentally sharper. According to Alzheimer's Society, several studies into the effect of aerobic exercise in middle aged or older people have shown improvements in thinking and memory.

Combined results of 11 studies have shown regular exercise can significantly reduce the risk of developing dementia by about 30 per cent and for Alzheimer's disease specifically the risk was reduced by 45 per cent (Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia).

EXERCISE INCREASES 'GOOD' CHOLESTEROL

We have two types of cholesterol – high density

lipoprotein (HDL) and low density lipoprotein (LDL). The latter can enter blood vessel walls and start to build up, creating fatty deposits in artery walls. In time, these narrow your blood vessels. However, HDL can pick up excess cholesterol in your blood and take it back to the liver, where it's broken down. The higher your level of HDL (or 'good') cholesterol, the less LDL ('bad') cholesterol you'll have in your blood.

BE MENTALLY SHARPER

Aerobic exercise can also benefit your performance in

thinking tests. Pulling together the results of 29 clinical trials, Alzheimer's Society found that a month or more of regular aerobic exercise resulted in improvements in memory, attention and processing speed compared with regular non-aerobic exercise, such as stretching and toning. If you already exercise, you've probably discovered that taking a break from your work to go for a run or do a workout at the gym has helped you to clear your head and solve problems, making you more resilient and productive.

So, if you want to feel more alert and become better at solving work dilemmas and other problems, make time to lace up your trainers and go for a run or jump on the Spin bike!





Be consistent, get results!

Missing the odd workout here or there is not an excuse to give up altogether. If you can broadly stick to an exercise routine, even if you miss the odd day, you'll still reap the rewards and get fitter

When you skip a workout, it's common to start feeling de-motivated and skip another. And then another. And before you know it, you've given up your latest fitness routine and gone back to your old habits. You feel bad about yourself... and you feel like you've failed. It's a vicious circle. But here's the important thing: every single workout counts. Every session will add up in terms of calories burned and every workout you do

will help keep you on track mentally. Every workout skipped will increase feelings of negativity and make you feel you aren't in control of your life. When you stick to a workout regime, you feel empowered. You feel like you're taking control. We've mapped out an entire workout routine for the next eight weeks starting on page 36, but if you do miss a workout or two, don't beat yourself up. Just get back on track. If it helps with motivation, each time you exercise, tick it off in

your diary, on your iPhone calendar, or in a fitness notebook. Write down how you feel at the end of each workout. Do you feel proud, pleased or motivated to do the next one? Even if you feel tired during the session, you will more than likely feel motivated at the end of the session and proud of what you've accomplished.

JUST KEEP GOING

The key is to make sure you stay active. Forget about those days that didn't go to plan – when the gym closed before you got there, or you didn't have the energy to get up and go for that brisk walk. Simply focus on being active today, tomorrow... and keep

***'WRITE DOWN HOW YOU FEEL AT
THE END OF EACH WORKOUT'***

going. Here's why every workout matters:

- Regular cardiovascular exercise, such as running, cycling, swimming, brisk walking, exercise classes or anything else with a continuous element, will raise your heart rate and improve the health of your heart, lungs and cardiovascular system.
- Regular cardiovascular exercise will enable you to burn calories – a 15-minute run can burn anywhere from 150 to 200 calories, depending on your age, weight, fitness level and how hard you work.
- Regular exercise, especially high-intensity intervals where you work hard for short bursts of time, will create an 'afterburn' effect that lasts way beyond the exercise session. This is known as Excess Post-Exercise Oxygen Consumption (EPOC), where your metabolic rate stays elevated for anywhere from 24 to 48 hours after your workout. EPOC, also referred to as 'oxygen debt', is the amount of oxygen needed to return your body to normal after a workout. Exercise that places greater demands on the body can increase the need for oxygen after a workout, creating the EPOC effect.
- Science backs up the effectiveness of short

workouts. A study published in the *American College of Medicine's Health & Fitness Journal* showed that short bouts of regular exercise are effective for losing weight off the hips and waist, as well as helping to lower blood pressure. The American College of Sports Medicine recommends exercising for three to five times per week, for 20 to 90 minutes each time. Shorter, more frequent workouts will help you achieve results.

- Being consistent with your workout routine will give you the motivation to stick at it and move yourself closer to your goals. The more you work out, the more in control you will feel.
- Getting into a regular routine of exercising at a certain time of day will help you make exercise a regular part of your life – once it becomes part of your routine, it will be something you're less likely to skip.



Motivational fitness apps



STRAVA Upload your workouts and compete against your friends. You can upload workouts from your iPhone or sports watch, including Garmin, Suunto, Timex, Soleus and TomTom. Analyse your data and compare your fitness efforts against your friends. It may motivate you to work that little bit harder next time.



GYMBOSS This has a range of pre-set intervals, so you don't need to worry about keeping an eye on your watch – it's ideal if you want to do a run/walk programme, or a HIIT session.



TABATA An app that offers timed Tabata intervals – Tabata is eight rounds of high intensity exercises in a 20-seconds on, 10-seconds rest sequence.



MYFITNESS PAL You can log your workouts and food intake, with a food diary that counts the calorie, fat and carb content of everything you eat.

'I lost more than 4 stone with running'

Kelly Wood is a 32-year-old primary school teacher and mum of two from Hertfordshire, who lost 54lbs by taking up running, and has since completed her first half marathon



I decided I needed to lose weight when I caught a glimpse of my reflection in the oven door and thought I looked about eight months pregnant, even though it was nearly 12 months since having my youngest child. This depressed me a lot, so I decided I had to do something about it!

At the time, I didn't do any exercise at all. I was unfit and got out of breath running up the stairs.

Then in March last year, I saw a small Facebook advert looking to recruit some volunteers to help set up a parkrun in my area. I decided I would like to help, as I wanted to do something community based, but I was faced with the dilemma that I couldn't run.

So last April, I decided not to be a hypocrite and started the NHS Couch to 5K Programme (a walk/run plan for beginners) and to my surprise I fell in love

KELLY'S TOP TIP

Doing exercise little and often is a great way of building up stamina, endurance and confidence, as well as a love for exercise. After all, Rome wasn't built in one day!

with running. Physically, my first runs were really difficult. I remember thinking to myself that I would not be able to achieve the times that the c25k app was trying to get me to run. I have tried twice before to start running, but I never gave it enough time to help change my body and outlook. I gave in too quickly. I felt fitter within three to four weeks. Before I began running, my resting heart rate was around 90 beats per minute. By week

And the weight still keeps coming off.

CONFIDENCE BOOST

My confidence has improved tremendously. I became proud of each running milestone I achieved, from being able to complete a 5K to crossing the finish line of my first half marathon. I am happy with the way I look and I have been asked several times what my 'trick' is. There isn't one, apart from being active as much

'I BECAME PROUD OF EACH RUNNING MILESTONE I ACHIEVED'

three of running, it was down to 75bpm!

At first, I didn't run far; it was more about time on my feet. So my first few runs were run/walking from 10 to 20 minutes. I have now completed my first half marathon and have another two booked for this year!

as I can and trying to eat more healthily.

More information
parkrun is a series of free weekly timed 5K runs that take place in parks nationwide. To find your nearest parkrun location, visit www.parkrun.org.uk.

Intense sessions burn loads of fat'

39-year-old Julia Buckley is a fitness trainer and author of *Ignite: 4 Weeks To A Leaner, Faster, Power-Packed Body*. She lost 10lbs of fat when she switched to short exercise sessions



As a child, I hated running, but developed a passion for it in my early thirties after hoping to shed a bit of flab. Within a year, I ran my first marathon, in 2008. Two years later, I reached ultra distance and ran the Lakeland 50. At first it's great – the fat comes off, you feel fitter and healthier, and it seems like you've found 'the answer'.

But just as that starts to happen, the fat stops shifting. So, you decide to push yourself more by exercising for longer. If you've taken up running maybe you enter a race. With the increase in training a bit more fat comes off, but then fat loss stalls again. Your body keeps adapting to cope with the longer sessions.

Eventually, you have to stop, because your body can't take it anymore and you get ill or injured. Or maybe because you realise it's getting a bit ridiculous putting all this time and

effort into something that isn't producing the results you wanted.

When you stop, you gain back all the weight you lost. Maybe even more besides. The truth is this: any long, slow exercise will cause the body to become more endurance-focused. It will store energy as fat to ensure it has plenty of reserves to get through all the miles.

FROM LONG TO SHORT

When I switched from long, steady exercise to short,

steady cardio – maybe once week I'll go for a jog or long walk – for enjoyment as much as fitness, really.

My motto is, 'Go harder, not longer'. When people are used to long training sessions, it can take time for them to learn to go all-out for short durations, as they're so used to holding back so they can keep going. Often they'll say, 'I'm too fit for these short sessions, I feel like I'm training hard'. This tells me they're not pushing hard enough. I push myself

JULIA'S TOP TIP

Swapping long, slow endurance sessions for much shorter, higher-intensity interval sessions will help you shed fat and achieve the fitness level you would like to reach.

'THE FAT CAME OFF, AND MY ENERGY LEVELS SOARED'

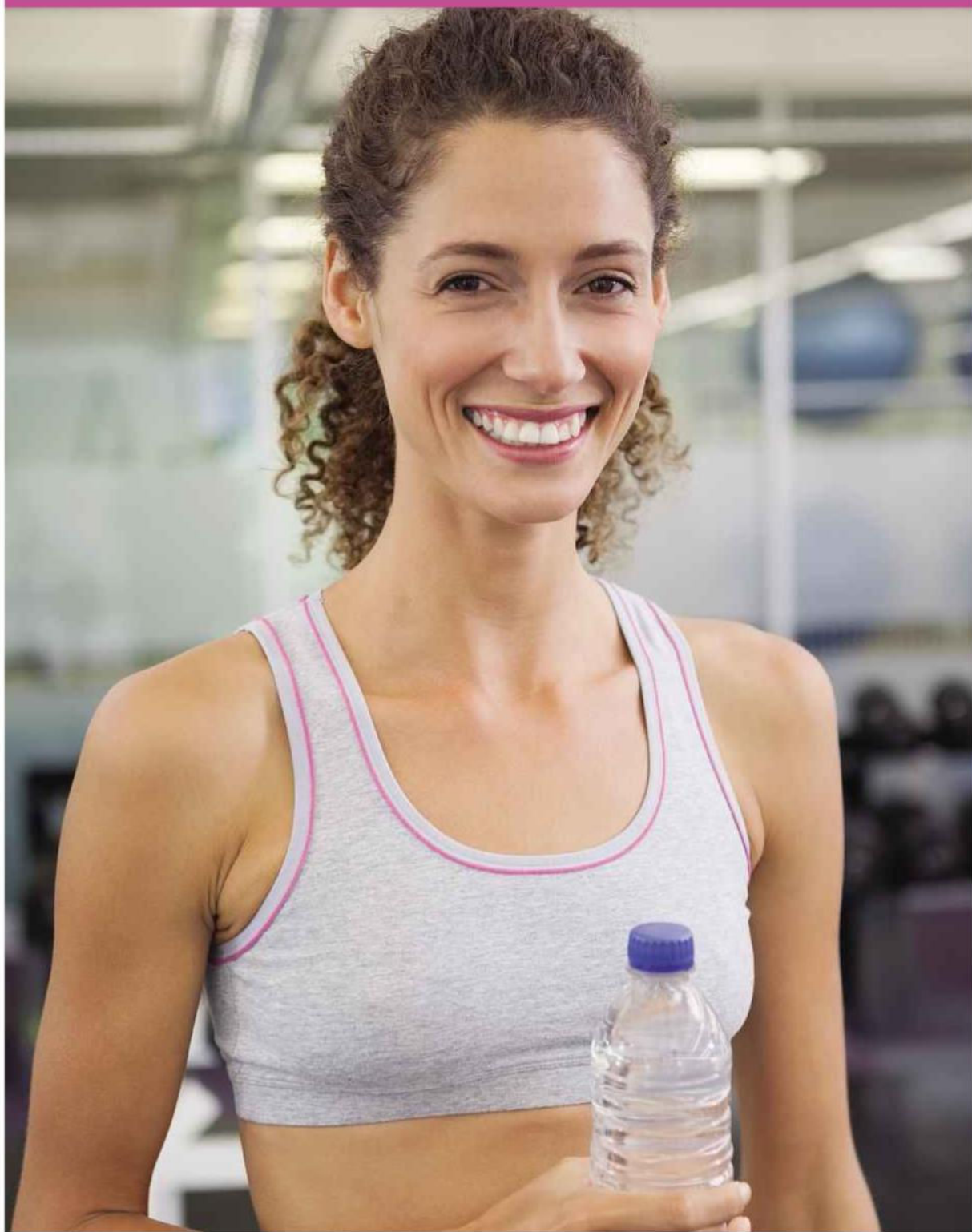
high-intensity sessions and added more variety and strength training into the mix, my body changed. The fat came off, my energy levels soared and I became healthier, stronger and fitter.

I mix up high-intensity interval training (HIIT) with strength training. I still do

hard and the results speak for themselves. I've never felt fitter or looked leaner.

More information

Julia Buckley offers online personal training. Visit her website for more information at juliabuckleyfitness.com



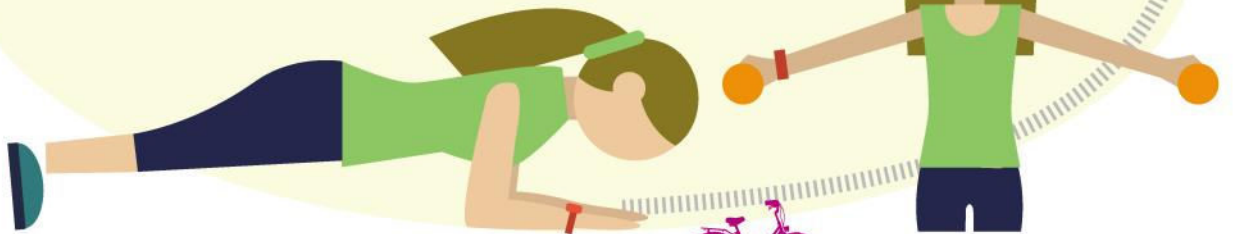
SHORT, SWEET AND EFFECTIVE

- ☑ Why short workouts work
- ☑ The best express fitness classes
- ☑ How often you need to exercise
- ☑ Easy ways to make working out fun
- ☑ A guide to our fat-burning workouts



Why short workouts work

When it comes to working out, short and sweet is the way forward. You'll be less likely to waste time and you'll feel more focused...



Some people wrongly assume they have to spend an hour or two in the gym most days in order to get in shape and lose weight. But this is not realistic for many people and it's often the reason why people fail to stick to an exercise routine. After the initial burst of enthusiasm that comes with embarking on a new exercise regime, the novelty wears off when the person realises they're spending far too much time in the gym and not enough quality time with family and loved ones. Short workouts are often dismissed as ineffective and not sufficient to generate results, but without any

good reason. In fact, science actually supports the effectiveness of these short workouts.

It also makes sense that most of us can get our heads around giving up 15 to 20 minutes of our busy day to get fitter.

Exercise routines that take up less of your time are easier to maintain, which means you're more likely to stay the course and stick at it. You'll be more motivated to do it, because you know it's not going to take up too much time and therefore won't infringe on too many other aspects of your life.

SEVEN-MINUTE WONDER

A study published in the *American College of Sports*



TOP FITNESS TIP

Like cycling? Ditch the stationary bike in the gym in favour of a Spin class, which will burn more calories, as you'll be encouraged to increase resistance. You could burn up to 500 calories in just one 45-minute class!

Medicine's Health & Fitness Journal showed that a fast, high-intensity workout of even as little as seven minutes will produce many of the same benefits as a longer workout.

The Center for Disease Control & Prevention adds that several short workouts throughout the day are proven to be just as effective as one long workout. So if you do get windows of time throughout the day, you could spend 15 minutes doing a weights workout and a separate 15 minutes doing a brisk walk or going for a run. You would get the same benefit as if you'd done the two sessions at the same time. Another

'EXERCISE ROUTINES THAT TAKE UP LESS OF YOUR TIME ARE EASIER TO MAINTAIN'

benefit of shorter workouts is that they tend to focus the mind. If you know you only have 15 or 20 minutes to exercise, you'll be less inclined to waste time chatting to other gym goers, or taking longer rest periods in-between sets. Your workout will be faster, with shorter breaks, as you'll know time is against you, and therefore your workout will be more intense as you'll have less time to recover in-between each set. This, of course, means that you will burn more calories overall.

SHORTER CLASSES

Many gyms and health clubs are now offering shorter exercise classes, as they know these can be effective and that members want results in less time. David Lloyd offers 15-minute abs classes, while many gyms now offer Les Mills GRIT classes, based on HIIT training principles, lasting for only 30 minutes. These classes focus on increasing fitness and boosting fat loss.

So don't doubt the effectiveness of short workouts. Just make sure you do them regularly. Here are some guidelines:

- Even if you've only got 15 to 20 minutes to exercise, always make sure you're warm before you start. Spend five minutes jogging on the spot, walking or warming up on a CV machine in the gym to raise your heart rate gradually and get your muscles and joints prepared for the activity you're about to do. Otherwise, you risk injury.

- If you don't have time to go the gym, you can either follow the workouts in this guide, or devise your own bodyweights exercise session that you can do



from home without any exercise kit whatsoever, and do it in a circuit training style. Circuit training can help to reduce abdominal fat, according to the American College of Sports Medicine. Try these moves – do each exercise for 45 seconds, take 15 seconds rest, then move to the next exercise and repeat the circuit two to three times, depending on how much time you have...

TRY:

- Squats
- Press-ups (box press ups on your knees are fine if normal press-ups are too challenging)
- Shoulder press (two bottles of water will do if you don't have dumbbells)
- Bench dips
- Abdominal crunches





The best *fitness* classes

Burn fat, tone up and work up a sweat, with our guide to the best exercise classes for helping you get the body shape you want

Taking part in a weekly exercise class is a great way to boost motivation and add variety into your training. But if weight loss or toning is your goal, you'll need to choose the right type of class. Fortunately, if time is tight, there are a variety of options that don't take a whole hour of your time. Many gyms now offer express workout classes, as they know many people are pressed for time. Here are some of the best workout classes you can do to burn fat and calories in the least amount of time. Just one or two classes a week will boost your results, and offer you variety and stimulation...

KETTLEBELLS

Most gyms offer kettlebell classes, which involve moves like kettlebell swings, as well as lifts and presses, that you perform continuously. Great for improving strength and tone, you'll also find your heart rate will increase and you'll soon begin to feel like you're working hard. A kettlebell swing works the whole body and will feel strenuous. Typically, a class will last for around 30 minutes, including a five-minute warm-up at the start and a few minutes of cooling down at the end. Don't worry if you're not sure about the correct exercise technique... instructors will assist those who need help.



SPIN CLASSES

A popular class and with good reason. One 45-minute session can burn around 500 calories, depending on your weight, fitness level and how hard you work. It combines sprint intervals with periods of recovery and hill climbs. Great for leg strength, and it's a workout that will make you sweat. Make sure you have the seat at the right height before you start – ideally, it should be at hip height when you're standing next to the bike and your knee should be slightly bent when you pedal downwards.

CIRCUIT TRAINING

These can range in duration from 30 minutes to an hour, but many gyms offer

'MANY GYMS NOW OFFER EXPRESS WORKOUT CLASSES, AS THEY KNOW PEOPLE ARE PRESSED FOR TIME'

mini-circuits classes lasting from 25 to 30 minutes, including the warm-up. The instructor will set up various workstations, including bench dips, press-ups, bodyweight squats and jumping jacks, and you'll do one exercise for a set period of time before moving to the next, with little or no rest. At the end of the circuit, you'll rest for a minute, and then repeat the circuit again. You'll work the entire body and your heart rate will soar.

BRITISH MILITARY FITNESS

Ideal for those who love to exercise outdoors, these classes take place in parks across the UK and offer fun and variety for those who prefer to exercise in a group setting. Again, moves tend to be bodyweight exercises, like press-ups, star jumps,

burpees and competitive games, often interspersed with running intervals. Classes are split into ability levels. Nell McAndrew is a huge fan and credits her toned figure with regular classes. For more information, visit www.britmilfit.com.

BOXERCISE

These classes are fun and varied, offering a range of exercises mixed with boxing moves. You don't hit anyone else – you'll either do shadow boxing or use pads and gloves. You'll warm up for five minutes with a light jog around the studio, and then you'll do a variety of boxing moves mixed in with moves like jumping jacks, squats and lunges. Some gyms offer shorter express boxing classes lasting for 30 to 45 minutes.



EXPRESS ABS

If you want to get your stomach strong and toned, then a short express abs class will be a good way to top up the exercises in this guide. Abs classes typically include a five-minute warm-up and then you'll be doing abdominal exercises for around 10 minutes, before cooling down. So you can be finished in as little as 15 to 20 minutes and feel good about working your stomach. Ideal for those who tend to skip the abdominal workouts!

GRIT

Now offered in many gyms, courtesy of Les Mills, the company that brought us BodyPump, BodyAttack and BodyBalance classes, GRIT classes focus on increasing fitness and burning fat. They switch rapidly between strength work and cardiovascular training, and you're working at high intensity throughout. A typical class lasts around 30 minutes.

BODYATTACK

This works the entire body and is a high-intensity interval training class that combines cardio exercise with strength and core moves, to tone and shape your body. A typical class lasts for an hour, so you'll need a little more time on your hands, but the results will speak for themselves.



How hard, how long?

How often should you exercise and how hard should you work? You'll have to work harder during those shorter sessions...

How often do you need to exercise to get the best results? The American College of Sports Medicine recommends exercising three to five times per week, resulting in an expenditure of between 1,000 and 4,000 calories in total (over the whole week) and working at an intensity of 57 to 94 per cent of your maximum heart rate. To work out your maximum heart rate, deduct your age from 220. It also recommends exercising for 20-90 minutes each time. The workouts here are 15 minutes, but when you add on an extra five minutes for the warm-up, you'll be looking at a minimum of 20

minutes. If you have more time on certain days, then doing more exercise will obviously burn more calories.

Apart from doing the workout plans in this guide, try to increase the daily activity you do when you're not working out. Try to...

- Walk to work or to the station, rather than driving.
- Cycle to and from work if you can – it's a great way to get your cardio exercise levels up.
- Park further from the office if you drive to work, so you have to walk further to and from the car.
- Get your friends and family active – try to get them to go out for a walk or go to the park and do

some exercise, rather than spending time with them that involves drinking, eating or watching movies.

Get involved in domestic tasks – yes, vigorous housework can be classed as a workout! Cleaning or hoovering the floor, or cleaning windows will work your muscles and get your heart rate up.

When you exercise, you will not only burn calories during the session itself, but your body will also become more efficient at using fat as fuel. This is due to increased levels of oxygen delivery and oxygen extraction in the muscles.

Fitness trainer Julia Buckley, who lost 10lbs when she switched from long, time-consuming

all-out for shorter durations, because they're so used to holding back so they can keep going. Often they'll come to me saying, "I think I'm too fit for these short sessions, I feel like I'm training very hard". This tells me that they're not pushing hard *enough*. If you look at elite sprinters, they can be wiped out by the end of just 100 metres.'

LEAVE YOUR COMFORT ZONE BEHIND!

If that sounds too scary, don't worry. Julia adds: 'Please don't get me wrong, I'm not saying people have to be able to run like elite sprinters to do this. It doesn't matter how fast or slow you are – what I'm talking about is the amount

that all exercise has the same effect on the body, so therefore it follows that 40 minutes jogging at a comfortable pace would produce better fat-loss and fitness-boosting results than 20 minutes of intense HIIT. However, this just isn't the case!'

'CHOOSE INTENSE WORKOUTS THAT LEAVE YOU TOTALLY SPENT IN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME'

endurance runs to short, sharp sessions (see page 21), recommends working very hard. But do it only for a short period of time. 'Choose intense workouts that leave you totally spent in a short period of time – definitely less than an hour,' says Julia. 'My motto is, "go harder, not longer". When people are used to long training sessions it can take some time for them to learn to really go

of effort you're putting in. It's about training outside of your own comfort zone. It takes a while for people with an endurance background or who are just used to long workouts to stop holding back their reserves, but with practice, they find that extra gear and start to build more explosive fitness, which does amazing things for their bodies. A lot of people are under the impression



Still not convinced that short workouts work?

Scientific evidence supports the benefits of short workouts, if they are carried out frequently and with a more challenging intensity. The session should have periods where you work very hard, followed by periods of recovery. You should break a sweat and be very breathless during the harder intervals. Julia Buckley adds: 'In many ways, the first 20 minutes of any type of workout is the most beneficial, because that's where you bring your body out of a sedentary state and, if you like, kick up the engines to get energy burning, your heart pumping and blood flowing to your muscles (and brain). Make it 20 minutes of HIIT training and do it on a regular basis, and you could be dramatically improving your fitness levels and torching fat.'

10 easy ways to make exercise more fun!

If you get bored, you'll be tempted to give up. Instead, keep your workouts fun and varied, by following our top 10 tips that will make exercise seem like a breath of fresh air, instead of yet another chore...



2 PUSH YOURSELF

Decide to do something you've never done before – something that pushes you out of your comfort zone. It could be trying a boxercise class for the first time, or taking up an entirely new form of exercise, such as tennis or rock climbing. Anything that's different to what you'd normally choose will stimulate your mind *and* body.



3 GET HELP FROM EXPERTS

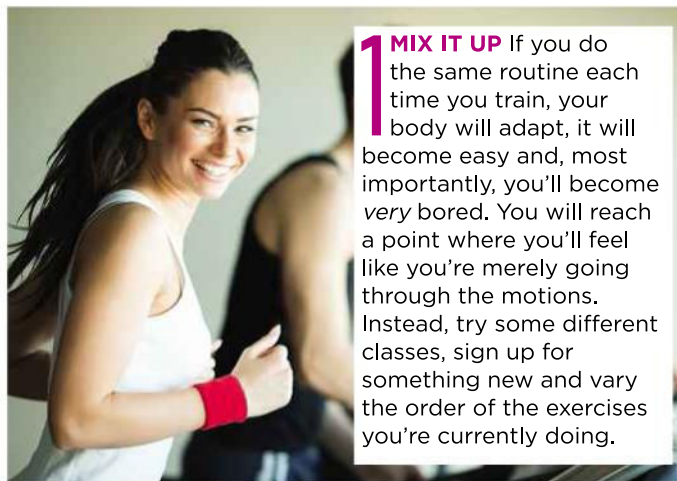
Whether you're swimming, running or taking a yoga class, ask the experts to help you improve. Hire a swimming coach so you can work on your technique, or join a running club. If you're doing yoga for the first time, book a few one-to-one sessions, so you're comfortable with the technique and know the poses before you join a class. The better you are at something, the more confident you will feel and you'll be inspired when you begin to improve.

'WHEN YOU'RE TRAINING FOR AN EVENT, YOU'LL HAVE A GREAT INCENTIVE TO EXERCISE'

1 MIX IT UP If you do the same routine each time you train, your body will adapt, it will become easy and, most importantly, you'll become very bored. You will reach a point where you'll feel like you're merely going through the motions. Instead, try some different classes, sign up for something new and vary the order of the exercises you're currently doing.

4 SIGN UP FOR A CHALLENGE

There are plenty of running events, obstacle races, triathlons (of various distances), swimathons and other charity events you can enter, to raise cash for a good cause and give yourself a target to get fit and train for. When you're training for an event, you'll have a great incentive to exercise – there's nothing more motivational than knowing you have to be fit to run, cycle or swim a certain distance by a certain date!



15-Minute Fitness



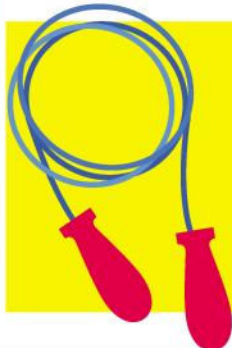
5 MASTER THE TOUGHEST CARDIO MACHINE This takes some discipline, but if you're finding the cross-trainer or the stationary bike in the gym is becoming easy, find a cardio machine that really challenges your fitness. It could mean running on the treadmill, or cranking up the resistance on the rower. The harder it is, the fitter you will get, as your body will need to adapt in order to overcome the challenge of something new.

7 TRAIN FOR AN EVENT WITH SOMEONE ELSE

Whether it's your partner or a couple of friends, sign up for an event, such as a triathlon or half marathon, and train together, so that you can support and inspire each other. It's great fun to have the same goal in mind, plus you'll be more likely to stick with it.





8 CREATE A PLAYLIST Decide how long you're going to exercise for and create a playlist of the same length. Make sure you have upbeat tunes and don't stop exercising until your playlist has finished.



6 TRY CIRCUIT TRAINING WITH A FRIEND You don't have to join a class; you can devise your own circuit to do in the gym or at home. If you're in the gym, warm up for five to 10 minutes on a cardio machine of your choice, then do a short circuit together. You could choose bodyweight squats, lunges, push-ups, bench dips and abdominal crunches. Do the exercises together. If you're at home, warm up with a brisk walk or jog around the block and make sure you clear all furniture out of the way, so you have plenty of room. Doing a mini-circuit together is great fun! Try 30-45 seconds on each exercise, or 15-20 repetitions, before moving on.

9 CUT THE REST BREAKS Get your workout done faster and make it more dynamic by keeping rest breaks short. This will keep the focus on what you're doing. If you normally rest on a machine for 60 seconds, cut the rest period in half, to 30 seconds. Alternatively, you can superset, which means moving from one exercise to another without breaks – you might do two exercises back to back, for instance. This could be for the same muscle group, such as leg press followed by squats, or it could mean doing opposing muscle groups, such as the lat pull down machine for your back, followed by the chest press. This will ramp up your fitness and allow you to get more done in less time. It's the ideal way for busy people to train.

10 MAKE IT A GAME Remember how you used to exercise at school? You didn't think about it – you just ran after a ball or chased your friends. You weren't counting calories burned or worrying about whether you'd done enough. If you're getting bored, ditch your normal routine for a day, head to the park with a friend and throw a ball around. It's fun and it doesn't have to be competitive.



What kit do you need?

If you don't have much exercise equipment at home, don't worry. The exercises here can be done with dumbbells or water bottles as weights, an exercise mat and a resistance band. You may want to invest in a Stability Ball, which makes exercises harder, as you do them on an unstable surface. For instance, doing a chest-press exercise on a Stability Ball is much harder than doing it on a flat bench, as you have to switch on your core to keep yourself balanced on the ball while you do the exercise.

Your new body starts here!

Get ready to make your workouts short and effective. Here's how to get the most from the training sessions you'll be doing for the next eight weeks

The workouts in this guide have been compiled to suit everyone. It doesn't matter whether you're new to exercise or are already regularly working out – the exercises here can be adapted to suit your ability level, so you're able to do them regardless of your starting point. Here's what to do if an exercise is too challenging at first:

- Choose a lighter weight
- Perform fewer repetitions
- Have a slightly longer rest period

The last few repetitions of an exercise should feel challenging. If you complete the last few reps feeling like you could have comfortably continued, then it's too easy. Make it a little harder by doing more reps or adding a bit more weight. But make sure your technique is slow and controlled. Don't rush the exercises. In fact, slowing the tempo down is another way to make an exercise harder, as the muscles are under tension for a longer period of time. This is a great way of upping the intensity without adding more weight. A study published in *The Journal of Physiology* in November 2011 revealed a lighter load performed with a slow lifting movement generated greater results in the prevention of muscle loss than the same movement performed

TOP TIP

If you skip a workout for any reason, don't beat yourself up. Forget it and move on. Start again the next day. Life isn't perfect. It doesn't matter.

rapidly. So, gently lift or push the weight for a count of up to three seconds, pause for a second or two at the top, and then lower the weight down for a count of three.

fatigue is mental rather than physical, and exercise will help you clear your head and usually make you feel better.

If you're doing an exercise and you can't complete the

'A LOT OF THE TIME, FATIGUE IS MENTAL RATHER THAN PHYSICAL'

BEAT FATIGUE

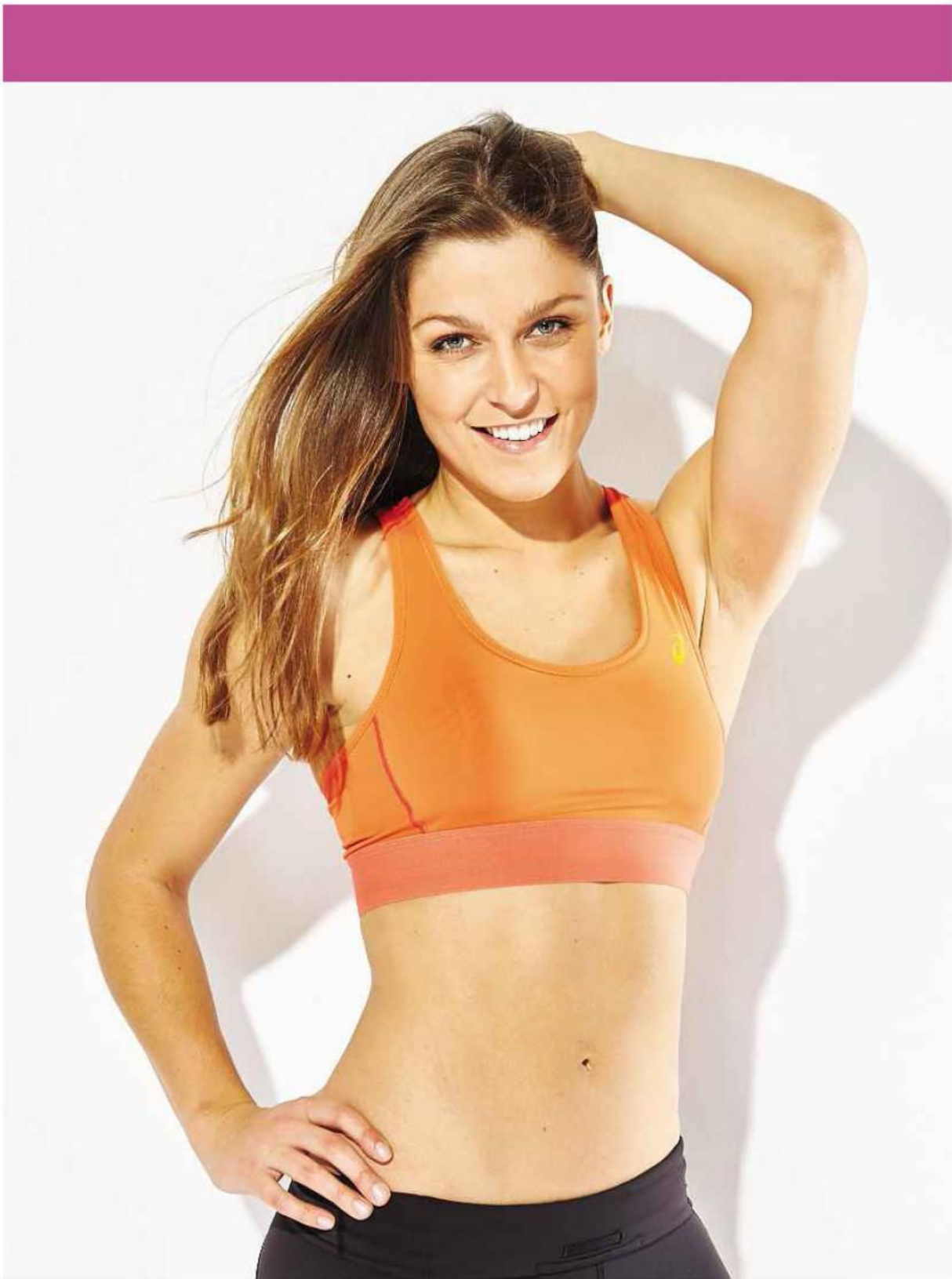
If you feel tired and you're trying to talk yourself out of doing a workout, remember it's only a short session. Once you get started, the oxygen and blood will begin to pump more freely around the body and you'll feel better. A lot of the time,

number of reps you are aiming for, try the rest-pause method. This means doing as many reps as you can until you feel fatigued, then resting momentarily (for between five and 10 seconds) and then doing more repetitions until you feel fatigued again.

Be safe, reduce injury risk

- Warm up for five minutes before a workout – skipping, jogging on the spot or walking up and down the stairs are all fine. Anything that raises your heart rate and gets the muscles and joints ready for exercise.
- Listen to your body – stop if you feel faint or any pain during an exercise. Don't push through pain. Muscles may ache a bit during the last few repetitions of a move, but you shouldn't feel severe pain. Rest if you feel breathless or dizzy. Build up your fitness gradually.
- Always stretch at the end of each workout, holding each stretch for at least 30 seconds.
- If you're exercising at home, use a non-slip exercise mat and an anti-burst Stability Ball for safety.

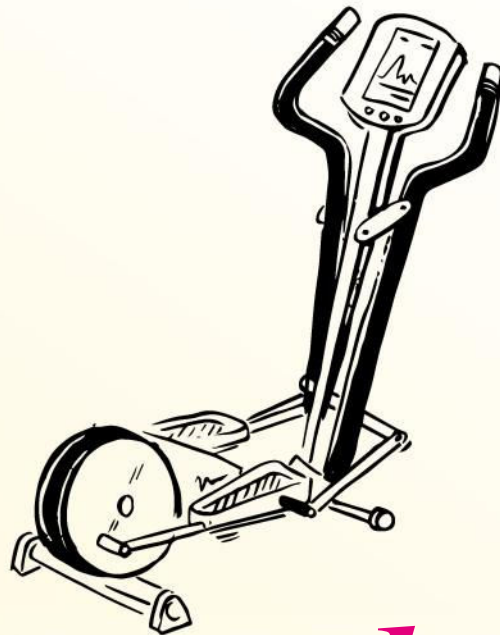




WORKOUTS THAT GET RESULTS

- ☑ Your complete eight-week plan
- ☑ Check your progress, stay motivated
- ☑ Be inspired to keep exercising





Get started today!

Today's lifestyles are so busy, you might find you forget to think about your health. Taking that first step towards a healthy change is often the hardest part – so well done for getting this far! The good news is you can change your body significantly with only 15 minutes of exercise a day.

Throughout your eight weeks of training, you'll see your programme comprises:

- **Three strength-training sessions**
- **Two cardio sessions**
- **Two rest days**

Each week, you'll find your seven-day exercise plan. Feel

free to move the days around, but try to complete all of the sessions each week. The programme gets progressively harder, but if you feel you need more time on a certain exercise, feel free to repeat a week again. And of course, to continue exercising and spice things up after the eight weeks finish, simply follow the same training principles but mix and match your exercises!

WEEKLY CARDIO

Your cardio sessions should include plenty of variety – for example, try walking, running, swimming, cycling, rowing or cross training. For maximum fitness benefits, increase the intensity. To do

this, split your 15 minutes of cardio up into the following:

- **3-minute warm-up at a steady pace**
- **Repeat the following interval session three times (9 minutes):**
 - > **1 minute fast**
 - > **1 minute uphill or add more resistance**
 - > **1 minute recovery**
- **3-minute cool-down**

HOW SHOULD IT FEEL?

You should feel moderate discomfort. This means if you tried to talk, you should only be able to say a few words rather than a long sentence! If you can chat away, increase the intensity!



Your 7-day exercise plan

This week's plan of action



STEP 1: Book an appointment

Book 15-minute appointments into your diary, five times a week. This will help you stay consistent and stop you from skipping your training.

STEP 2: Make it easy

These exercises don't require a lot of equipment or space. Prepare an area in your house where you can

leave your mat rolled out with your equipment beside it. One of the biggest reasons for not sticking to an exercise routine is the hassle of getting the necessary equipment out each time.

STEP 3: Don't dress for the occasion!

You don't need to get changed into gym gear to

do the exercises – in the time it takes you to change, you could have completed your 15-minute workout! Simply pop your trainers on at lunchtime and go for that walk. You can even use an app on your phone to track your distance, speed and calorie consumption, to give you a boost and help you stay motivated.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Perform 2 sets of 10 reps of all 8 exercises described in Week 1 (over the page)	15 minutes of cardio	Rest	Perform 2 sets of 10 reps of all 8 exercises described in Week 1	15 minutes of cardio	Perform 2 sets of 10 reps of all 8 exercises described in Week 1	Rest

Your full-body workout

It's time to start toning, with this great all-round routine!

TRICEP KICK-BACKS

AREAS TRAINED: REAR UPPER ARMS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Kneel on all fours.
- ◆ Holding a weight in one hand, pull your elbow up until it's slightly higher than your back (this is the starting position).
- ◆ Straighten your arm backwards.
- ◆ Slowly lower with control.
- ◆ Complete one set before changing over to the other side.

Be safe
Don't lower your elbow during the return phase.



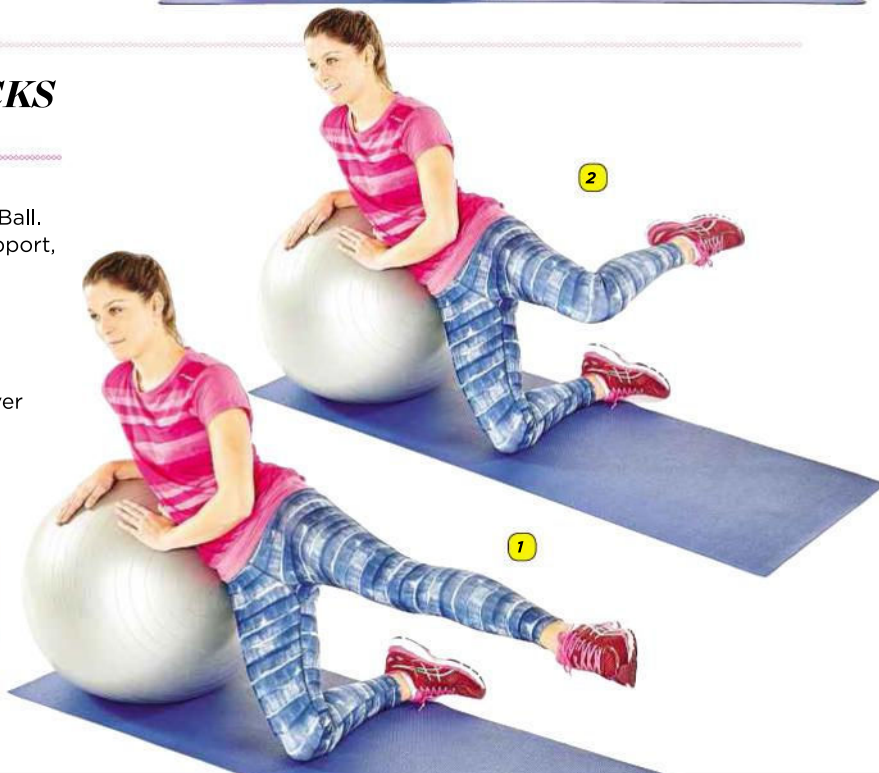
KNEELING SIDE KICKS

AREA TRAINED: BOTTOM

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Kneel on one leg next to a Stability Ball.
- ◆ Lean your body over the ball for support, then extend and lift your other leg sideways, keeping it straight (this is the starting position).
- ◆ Bend your knee, so that your heel kicks your bottom.
- ◆ Perform one set before changing over to the other side.

Be safe
Remember, you will feel both legs working.

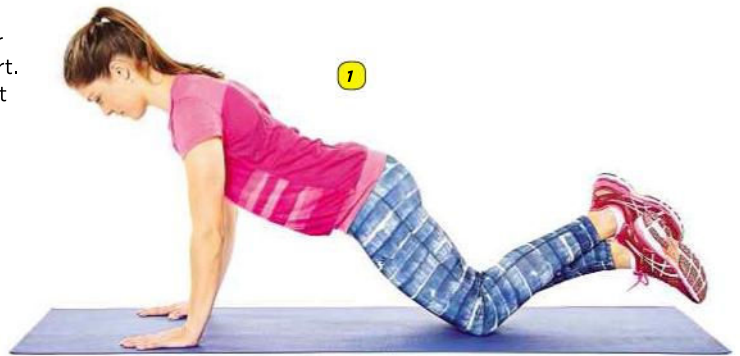


MODIFIED PRESS-UPS

AREAS TRAINED: CHEST AND REAR UPPER ARMS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Kneel on all fours on the floor, placing your hands slightly wider than shoulder-width apart.
- ◆ Ensure you keep your tummy muscles tight and your back straight.
- ◆ Bend your arms, to lower your chest to the floor.
- ◆ Straighten your arms, to push back up to the starting position.



Be safe

Keep your back straight throughout the move.

INNER THIGH PULL-INS

AREA TRAINED: INNER THIGHS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie on one side and roll slightly backwards.
- ◆ Keep your top leg bent and your bottom leg straight.
- ◆ Lift your bottom leg up and tuck your knee into your chest.
- ◆ Extend your leg back to the starting position, but don't rest it on the floor.
- ◆ Complete one set before changing over to the other side.



Be safe

Don't roll too far back, as it will engage the wrong muscles.

BRIDGES

AREAS TRAINED: BOTTOM, REAR THIGHS AND CORE MUSCLES

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie on your back and bend your knees, keeping your feet flat on the floor.
- ◆ Keep your arms next to your sides.
- ◆ Lift your bottom off the floor, while squeezing your bottom and tightening your tummy muscles.
- ◆ Slowly lower with control.



Be safe

Ensure you form a straight line between your shoulders, hips and knees at the top position.

QL LIFTS

AREA TRAINED: BACK

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie on your stomach on the floor.
- ◆ Lift your right leg up and then slowly move it out, away from your body (drawing an upside down 'L').
- ◆ Reverse the move back to the starting position.
- ◆ Complete one set before changing over to the other side.



Be safe

Keep your hips on the floor – it's a small but effective move.

SIDE-TO-SIDE LUNGES

AREAS TRAINED: INNER THIGHS, OUTER THIGHS AND BOTTOM

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand with your feet together.
- ◆ Step sideways with one leg and bend your knee (keeping the other leg straight).
- ◆ Reach down to touch your toes.
- ◆ Step back to the centre position and repeat on the other side.
- ◆ Alternate between each side.

Be safe

Focus on one point in front of you, to aid your balance.



HIP ROLLS

AREAS TRAINED: SIDES

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie on your back on the floor, lifting your legs and bending your knees, to form a right angle.
- ◆ Extend your arms sideways for balance.
- ◆ Slowly roll your legs over to one side, until your knees touch the floor, but don't rest them down.
- ◆ Ensure you keep your shoulders flat on the floor in this position.
- ◆ Slowly lift your legs back up to the starting position.
- ◆ Repeat to the other side.
- ◆ Alternate between each side.



Be safe

If the exercise starts to feel too easy, straighten your legs to increase the intensity.



WHERE TO BUY: Top: Brooks Run-Thru Short Sleeve, www.brooksrunning.com; Bottoms: Model's own, Shoes: ASICS Kayano 22, www.asics.co.uk



Boost your metabolism!

This week, the exercises are divided into upper body and lower body. The benefit of this is that all muscles work together to some extent. So, by repeating four exercises together with no rest, you will be working your muscles harder, which will help to increase your metabolic rate.

METABOLIC RATE – WHAT'S THAT?

Imagine lying down for a whole day, without moving.

The only things happening in your body would be the functions that keep you alive: your breathing, your heartbeat, and your kidney, liver, stomach and brain function. All these processes need energy to occur. This is called your resting metabolic rate – the minimum energy you need to stay alive. Of course, in your day-to-day life, you will also be moving around! This movement will require more energy, and the increased energy requirement is called your

metabolic rate. The easiest way to increase your metabolic rate is to become more active and build a bit more muscle. For every pound of muscle you build, you will burn off an extra 50 calories a day at rest. It might not sound like a lot, but over eight weeks, one extra pound of muscle can burn an amazing additional 2,800 calories – while you're resting! And if you use this extra muscle for exercise, you'll increase the calorie burn even more.

Your 7-day exercise plan

This week's plan of action

When you do the strengthening exercises, make sure your weights are heavy enough to make the moves feel hard, but not so heavy that you can't complete 15 repetitions of all the exercises without losing good form and technique.



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Perform 15 reps of all 4 upper-body exercises without rest. Rest for 1 minute. Perform 15 reps of all 4 lower-body exercises without rest	15 minutes of cardio	Rest	Perform 15 reps of all 4 upper-body exercises without rest. Rest for 1 minute. Perform 15 reps of all 4 lower-body exercises without rest	15 minutes of cardio	Perform 15 reps of all 4 upper-body exercises without rest. Rest for 1 minute. Perform 15 reps of all 4 lower-body exercises without rest	Rest

Top to bottom!

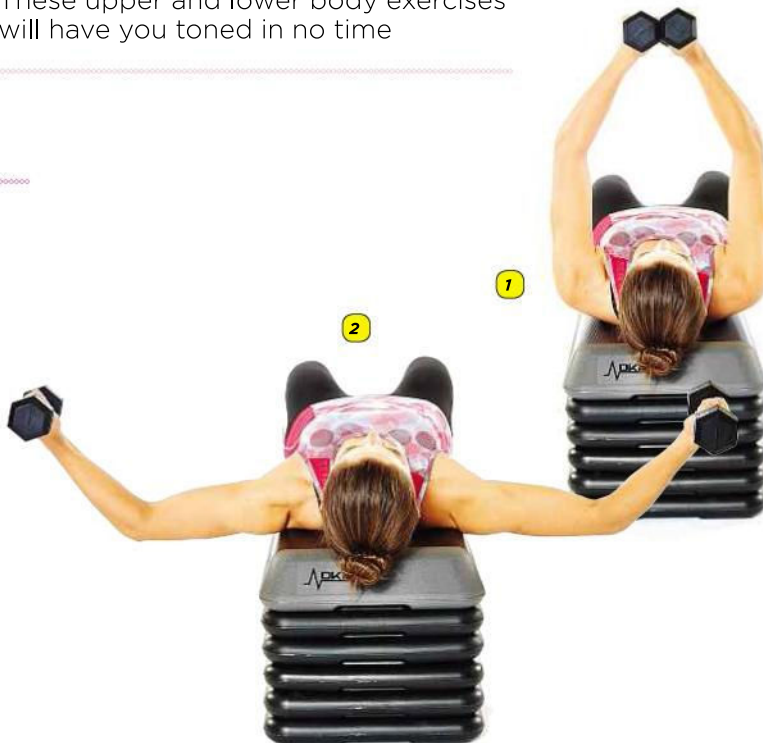
These upper and lower body exercises will have you toned in no time

CHEST FLY

AREA TRAINED: CHEST

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie on your back on a bench, with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor.
- ◆ Hold a weight in each hand up above your head, with your palms facing each other.
- ◆ Keep a slight bend in your elbows.
- ◆ Slowly open your arms sideways, until the weights are level with your chest.
- ◆ Return to the starting position.



Be safe

Keep your feet on the floor, to prevent your lower back arching.

PULL OVER

AREAS TRAINED: UPPER BACK AND REAR UPPER ARMS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie on your back on a bench, with your feet flat on the floor.
- ◆ Extend your arms up to the ceiling, holding a weight in each hand with your palms facing forwards.
- ◆ Keep a slight bend in your elbows.
- ◆ Lower the weights down towards your head, until your arms are next to your ears.
- ◆ Slowly return to the starting position.



Be safe

Squeeze the weights together, to stop you from hurting your fingers.

SIDE RAISES

AREAS TRAINED: SHOULDERS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand with your feet comfortably together.
- ◆ Hold a weight in each hand in front of your body.
- ◆ Keep a slight bend in your elbows.
- ◆ Lift the weights sideways, until they are level with your shoulders.
- ◆ Slowly lower with control.

Be safe

Don't swing your body and don't use momentum – make sure all movements are controlled.



BICEP CURLS

AREAS TRAINED: FRONT UPPER ARMS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand with your feet a comfortable width apart.
- ◆ Hold a weight in each hand, with your palms facing forwards.
- ◆ Keeping your elbows tucked into your sides, slowly lift the weights up towards your armpits.
- ◆ Slowly lower with control.

Be safe

Don't swing your body and keep your elbows still.



FRONT-TO-BACK LUNGES

AREAS TRAINED: FRONT THIGHS, REAR THIGHS, BOTTOM AND HIP FLEXORS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand with your feet a comfortable width apart.
- ◆ Step forwards with one leg and bend both legs to perform a lunge.
- ◆ Step back to the starting position but don't put your foot down – move the same leg all the way back and place it down on the floor behind you.
- ◆ Bend both legs to perform a lunge.
- ◆ Complete one set before changing over to the other side.

Be safe

Keep your upper body upright and look straight forwards.



SINGLE-LEG STEP SQUAT

AREAS TRAINED: FRONT THIGHS, REAR THIGHS AND BOTTOM

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand on one leg on a step, letting your other leg hang beside it.
- ◆ Bend your standing leg until your other foot touches the floor, but try not to put any weight on it.
- ◆ Push back up to the starting position.
- ◆ Complete one set before changing over to the other side.

Be safe

Keep your tummy muscles tight and don't look down, as this will make you lose your balance. The higher the step, the harder your muscles will have to work.



DOGGY SIDE LEG LIFT

AREA TRAINED: BOTTOM

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Kneel on all fours on the floor.
- ◆ Lift your leg sideways until it's at hip height. Aim to keep a 90-degree angle between your leg and body.
- ◆ Hold the top position and straighten your leg to perform a kick.
- ◆ Slowly lower with control.
- ◆ Perform one set and change sides.



Be safe

Keep your tummy muscles tight and remember to breathe.

WEIGHTED WALKING LUNGES

AREAS TRAINED: FRONT THIGHS, REAR THIGHS AND BOTTOM

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand with your feet a comfortable width apart and hold a weight in each hand.
- ◆ Step forwards with one leg and bend both knees to perform a lunge.
- ◆ Push up and step forwards with your other leg, bending to perform another lunge.
- ◆ Lunge 10 steps forwards.



Be safe

Keep your body upright and don't look down at your feet.



WHERE TO BUY: Top: Gore Sunlight Lady Print Top; Bottoms: Gore Sunlight Lady Print Tights 7/8; www.goreapparel.com; Shoes: Saucony Triumph ISO 2, www.saucony.co.uk



Don't resist it!

A resistance band can offer great variety to your workout. It's also a fun and practical option for those weeks where you might be travelling, as it's compact and lightweight – a much better option than trying to lug your weights on holiday with you! Another top benefit is that you can increase the intensity of the exercises easily, helping you to gain maximum benefit from your workout each session.

If you haven't used one before, don't worry – here are a few tips...

CHOOSING YOUR RESISTANCE BAND

Resistance bands come in a variety of resistance levels:

- Easy
- Medium
- Hard
- Extra hard

It can be helpful, before purchasing, to try a few out, to see how hard you find it to stretch the band. Remember that if you buy a medium, as you get fitter, you can simply double the band over to increase the resistance, rather than having to buy a hard or extra-hard

band. Our advice would be to not buy a band that's too hard for your current fitness level – you can increase the resistance of a lower-level band by doubling it over, but you can't reduce the level of resistance from a harder-level band.

There are also different types of resistance bands – for example, some have handles while others don't. There really is no 'best' type – simply choose the one that feels the most comfortable and natural for you. Rest assured, they will all deliver the same performance during your workout.

Your 7-day exercise plan

This week's plan of action

This week focuses on learning new exercises and how to do them correctly. Use slow, controlled movements. It's easy to just go through the motions, but you need to make sure every repetition is effective.



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Choose 4 to 5 exercises. Perform 2 sets of 20 reps of each	15 minutes of cardio	Rest	Choose a different 4 to 5 exercises. Perform 2 sets of 20 reps of each	15 minutes of cardio	Mix and match your 4 to 5 exercises in a different way. Perform 2 sets of 20 reps of each	Rest

Get with the band

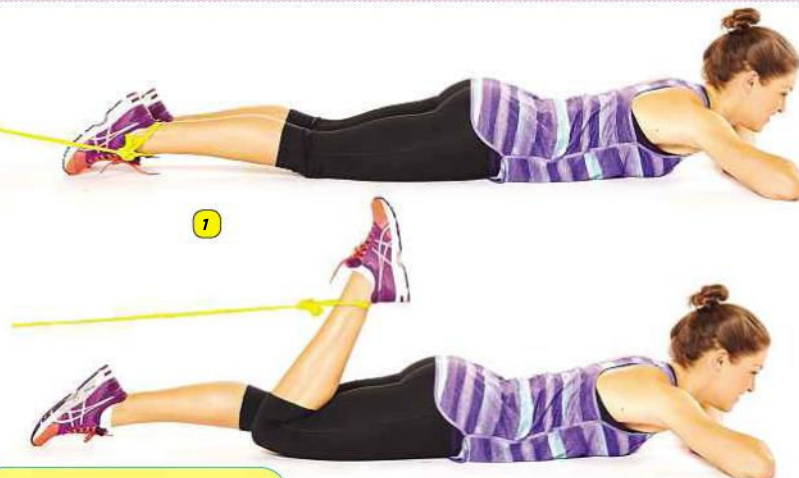
Using a resistance band will add a new dimension to your workout

RESISTANCE BAND LEG CURL

AREAS TRAINED: REAR THIGHS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Tie a resistance band around both a secure object and your ankle.
- ◆ Lie on your stomach, ensuring you can feel some resistance in the band.
- ◆ Pull your heel up towards your bottom.
- ◆ Hold for a few seconds, then slowly return to the starting position.
- ◆ Complete one set before changing over to the other side.



Be safe

Always keep some tension in the resistance band and don't use momentum – make sure your moves are controlled.

RESISTANCE BAND TRICEPS EXTENSION

AREAS TRAINED: REAR UPPER ARMS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Hold a resistance band in one hand and raise your arm to the ceiling.
- ◆ Bend your elbow, lowering your hand towards your shoulder blade.
- ◆ With your other hand, grab the loose end of the resistance band behind your back (this is the starting position).
- ◆ Slowly extend your arm up to the ceiling.
- ◆ Lower with control.
- ◆ Complete one set before changing over to the other arm.



Be safe

Don't let the resistance band jerk your arm down – use slow, controlled moves.

RESISTANCE BAND BACK PRESS

AREAS TRAINED: UPPER BACK MUSCLES AND SHOULDER ROTATORS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Tie a resistance band around a secure pole, slightly higher than your head.
- ◆ Hold the ends with one hand, keeping a slight bend in your elbow.
- ◆ Slowly pull the band behind your back, towards your bottom.
- ◆ Slowly return until your hand is level with your shoulder.
- ◆ Complete one set before changing over to the other side.

Be safe

Don't let your arms lift higher than shoulder level.



CRAB WALKS

AREAS TRAINED: OUTER THIGHS AND BOTTOM

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand with your feet together on top of a resistance band.
- ◆ Hold the ends of the band, making sure it's crossed over in front of your legs.
- ◆ Take four steps sideways one way, before changing over to the other side.
- ◆ Alternate between right and left.

Be safe

Look forwards and keep your back straight.



RESISTANCE BAND STANDING GLUTE LIFTS

AREA TRAINED: BOTTOM

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Tie a resistance band around your ankle.
- ◆ Standing on one leg, extend your other leg backwards.
- ◆ Leaning slightly forwards, push your heel back.
- ◆ Slowly lower your leg while maintaining resistance in the band.
- ◆ Complete one set before changing over to the other leg.

Be safe

Hold on to a secure object to aid your balance.



RESISTANCE BAND BRIDGE

AREAS TRAINED: BOTTOM, REAR THIGHS, REAR UPPER ARMS AND CORE

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie on your back on the floor, with your knees bent and your feet flat on the ground.
- ◆ Place a resistance band over your hips, holding the ends firmly on the floor.
- ◆ Lift your hips off the ground, until you form a straight line between your shoulders, hips and knees.
- ◆ Slowly lower your bottom with control, but don't rest on the floor.

Be safe

Keep your hands on the floor, as they will have a tendency to lift up.

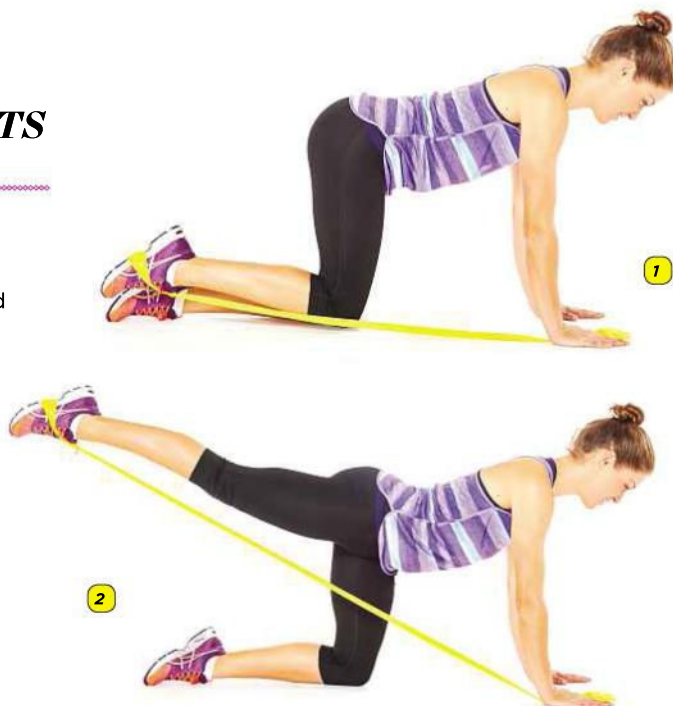


RESISTANCE BAND KNEELING GLUTE LIFTS

AREA TRAINED: BOTTOM

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Tie one end of a resistance band around your right foot.
- ◆ Kneel on all fours and hold the other end of the band in your right hand.
- ◆ Push your right heel up to the ceiling, keeping your knee bent.
- ◆ Slowly lower with control.
- ◆ Complete one set on the right before changing over to the left.



Be safe

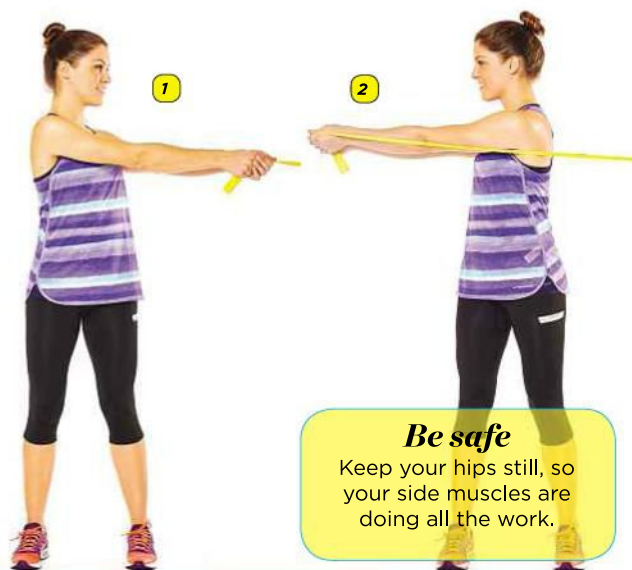
Ensure you can feel resistance in the band throughout the move.

RESISTANCE BAND STRAIGHT ARM ROTATION

AREAS TRAINED: SIDES

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Tie a resistance band around a secure object, at approximately waist height.
- ◆ Stand sideways, with one shoulder to the band.
- ◆ Holding the band with both hands, extend your arms out in front of you.
- ◆ Rotate your upper body away from the secure object, while keeping your arms straight.
- ◆ Return with control, always keeping tension in the band.
- ◆ Complete one set before changing over to the other side.

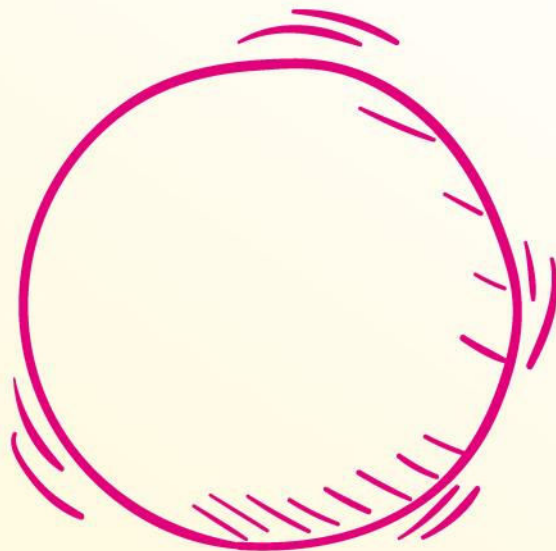


Be safe

Keep your hips still, so your side muscles are doing all the work.



WHERE TO BUY: Top: Brooks Ghost Racerback, www.brooksrunning.com; Bottoms: Gore Air Lady Tight 3/4, www.goreapparel.com; Shoes: ASICS GEL-TROUNCE 3, www.asics.co.uk



Stability Ball - the benefits

We've all seen a Stability Ball – you might even have one deflated and hidden away in a cupboard somewhere! The biggest reason why many people don't use their Stability Ball is they don't understand the amazing benefits training on a ball can offer...

SIX GREAT REASONS TO USE A STABILITY BALL

- It's easy and fun to use
- It improves your balance
- It improves your coordination
- It improves your posture

- It improves your neuromuscular system (the communication pathway between your brain and muscles).
- It improves your strength.

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR STABILITY BALL

When you sit on a Stability Ball, your thighs should be parallel to the floor, with your knees at a right angle. The size of the ball depends on how tall you are. To the right is a size guide, to help you decide on the perfect ball for you. If you are between sizes, opt for the smaller size.

SIZE GUIDE

- 4'11" to 5'4" height = 55cm ball
- 5'4" to 5'11" height = 65cm ball
- 5'11" to 6' 7" height = 75cm ball

GETTING STARTED

To get used to a Stability Ball, sit on it and move around a little. Feel where your balancing point is and how much you can move without falling. The stronger your core, the better your balance will be. Strong core muscles also improve your posture, making your tummy look flatter (a good bonus!).

Your 7-day exercise plan

This week's plan of action

Before you start your workout, move all furniture out of the way, to ensure you have a safe environment. Make sure you use correct technique throughout the workout – if you find it hard to maintain good technique and posture for 20 repetitions, reduce to 10 or 15.



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Perform 20 reps of all 8 exercises	15 minutes of cardio	Rest	Perform 20 reps of all 8 exercises	15 minutes of cardio	Perform 20 reps of all 8 exercises	Rest

Ball games allowed

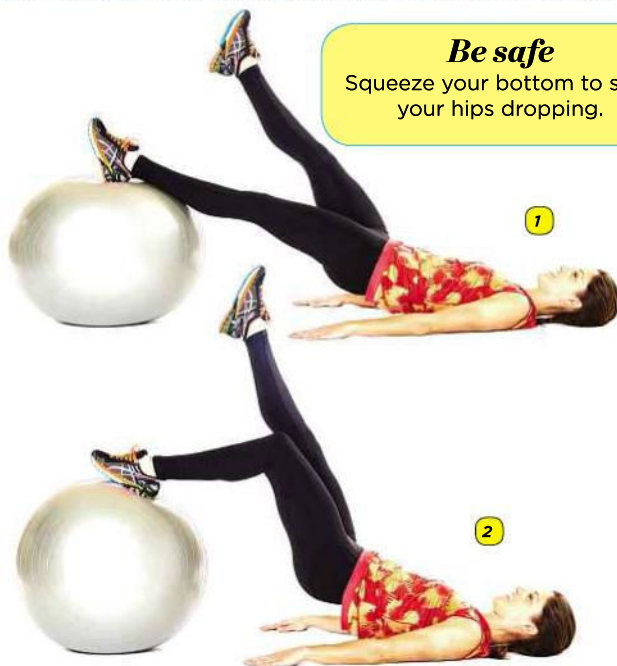
The unstable surface created by the Stability Ball will make your muscles work harder

SINGLE-LEG STABILITY BALL LEG CURLS

AREAS TRAINED: REAR THIGHS AND CALF MUSCLES

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie on your back, placing the heel of one foot on the ball.
- ◆ Extend your other leg to the ceiling.
- ◆ Lift your hips off the floor (this is the starting position).
- ◆ Roll the ball towards your bottom by bending your knee.
- ◆ Straighten your leg, but don't lower your hips.
- ◆ Complete one set before changing over to the other side.



Be safe

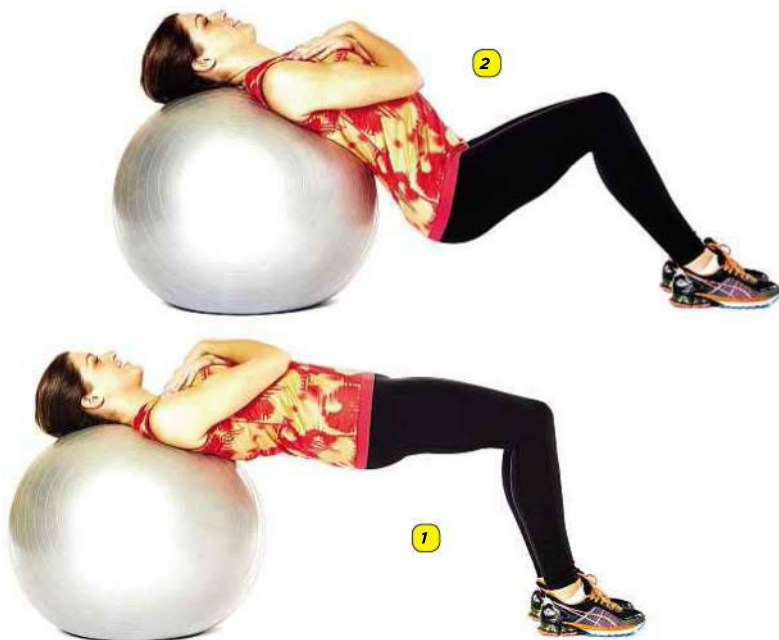
Squeeze your bottom to stop your hips dropping.

STABILITY BALL REVERSE BRIDGE

AREAS TRAINED: CORE, BOTTOM AND REAR THIGHS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie with your head and shoulders supported on a Stability Ball.
- ◆ Keep your feet together and cross your arms over your chest.
- ◆ Lower your bottom towards the floor, without resting it down.
- ◆ Push back up to the start position.



Be safe

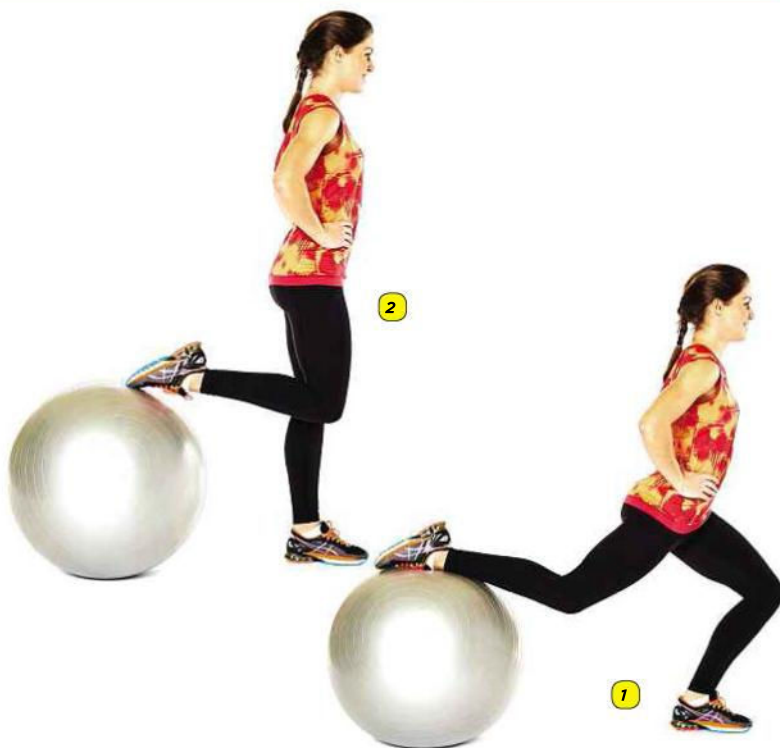
Keep your tummy tight to aid your balance.

STABILITY BALL LUNGES

AREAS TRAINED: CORE, BOTTOM AND REAR THIGHS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand on one leg, placing your other foot on the ball.
- ◆ Bend the knee of your standing leg, to roll the ball backwards.
- ◆ Stand up straight, rolling the ball back to the start position.
- ◆ Complete one set before changing over to the other side.



Be safe

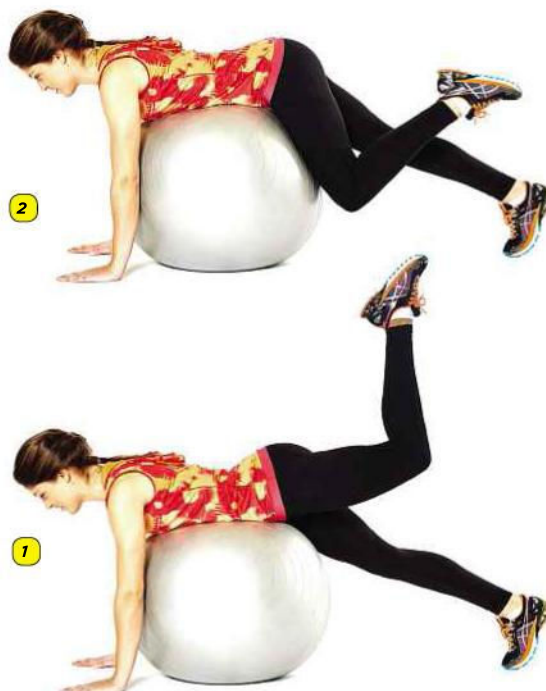
Keep your tummy muscles tight and don't lean too far forwards.

STABILITY BALL GLUTE LIFTS

AREA TRAINED: BOTTOM

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie with your tummy on a Stability Ball, placing your hands and feet on the floor.
- ◆ Bend your left knee, keeping the foot flexed.
- ◆ Push your left heel up towards the ceiling.
- ◆ Slowly lower with control, until your left knee touches the ball.
- ◆ Complete one set before changing over to the other side.



Be safe

Don't bounce on the ball.

STABILITY BALL SIDE LUNGES

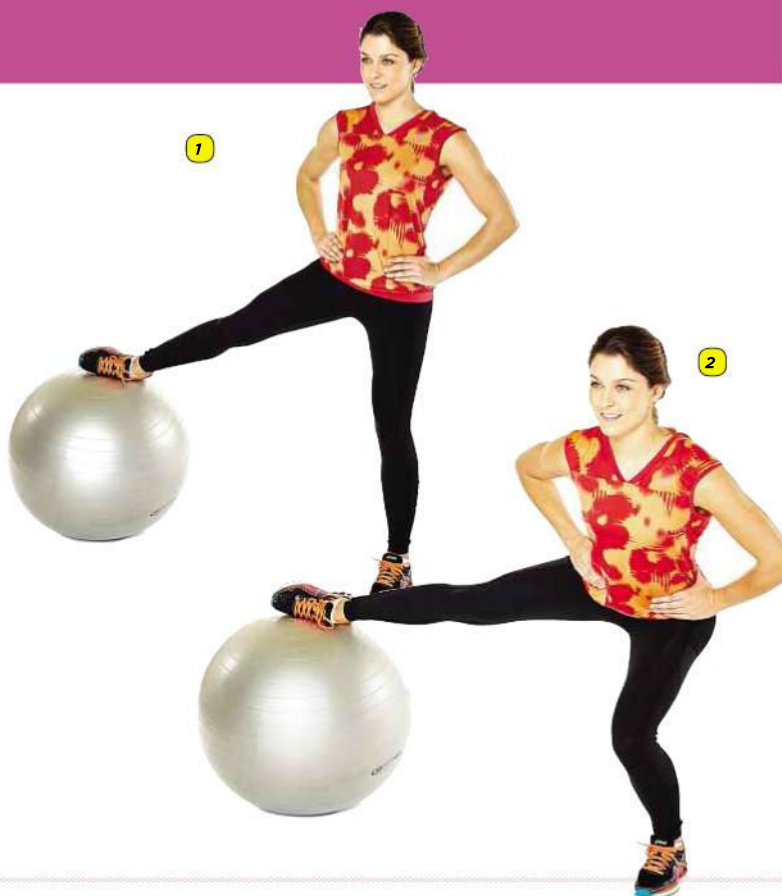
**AREAS TRAINED: FRONT THIGHS
AND BOTTOM**

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand on one leg next to a Stability Ball.
- ◆ Extend the other leg sideways, resting your foot on the ball.
- ◆ Bend the knee of your standing leg.
- ◆ Ensure you keep your tummy tight and your back upright.
- ◆ Return to the start position.
- ◆ Complete one set before changing over to the other side.

Be safe

If you find balancing tricky, hold on to a secure object.

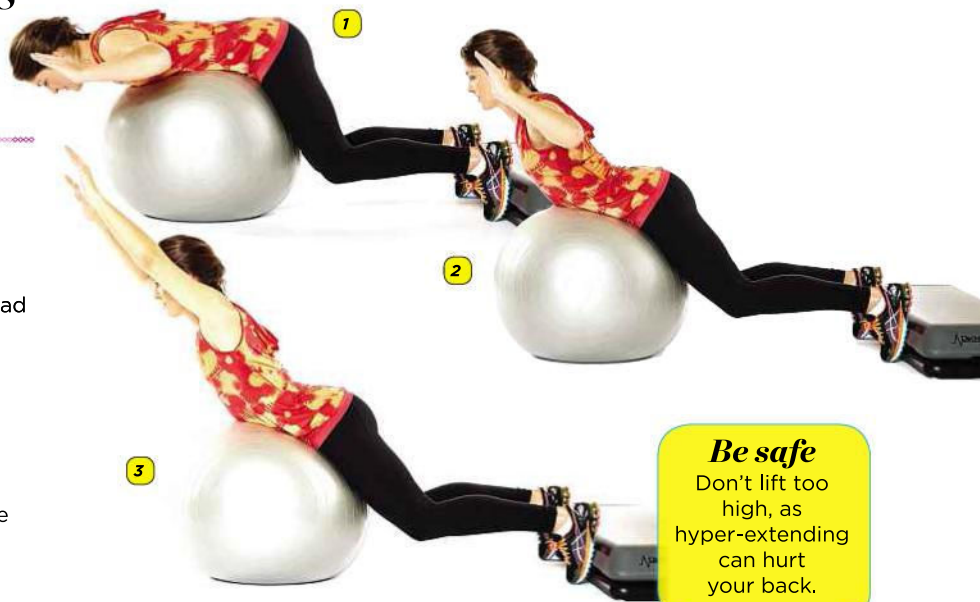


STABILITY BALL BACK EXTENSIONS WITH ARM EXTENSIONS

AREA TRAINED: BACK

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie with your stomach and hips on a Stability Ball.
- ◆ Support your feet against a wall or secure object.
- ◆ Keep your hands next to your head with your palms facing down.
- ◆ Lift your upper body, to form a straight line between your hips and shoulders.
- ◆ Hold the top position and extend your arms, to perform a shoulder press.
- ◆ Bend your arms and return to the starting position.



Be safe

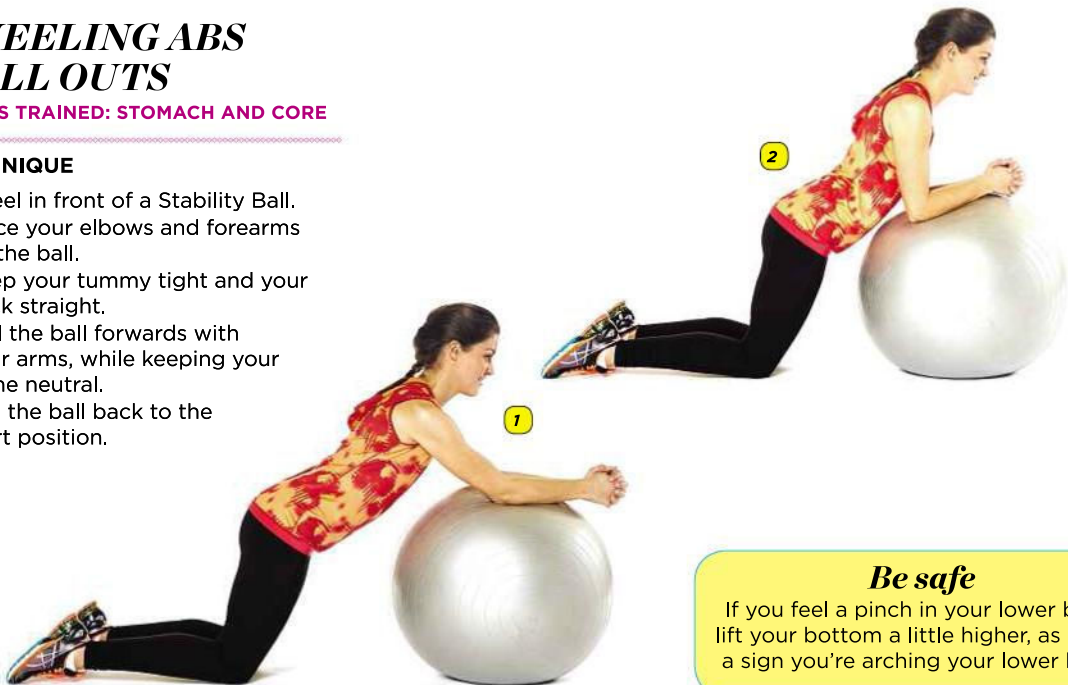
Don't lift too high, as hyper-extending can hurt your back.

KNEELING ABS ROLL OUTS

AREAS TRAINED: STOMACH AND CORE

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Kneel in front of a Stability Ball.
- ◆ Place your elbows and forearms on the ball.
- ◆ Keep your tummy tight and your back straight.
- ◆ Roll the ball forwards with your arms, while keeping your spine neutral.
- ◆ Pull the ball back to the start position.



Be safe

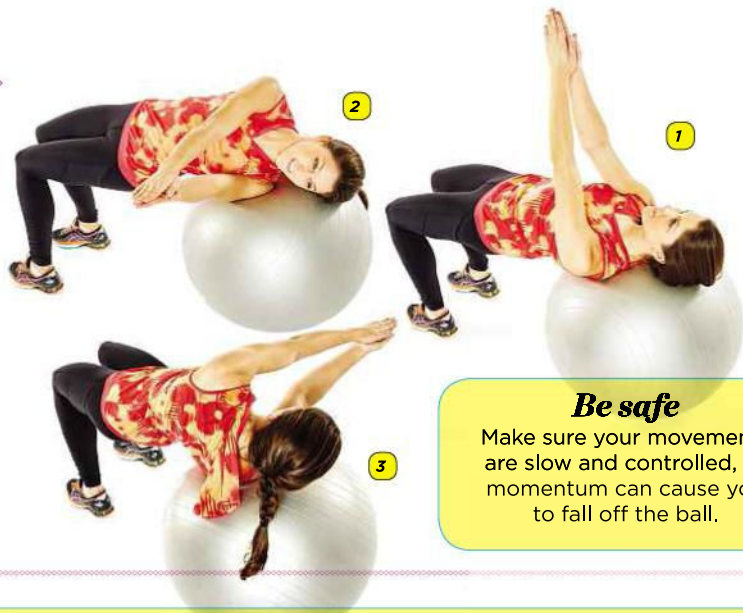
If you feel a pinch in your lower back, lift your bottom a little higher, as this is a sign you're arching your lower back.

RUSSIAN TWISTS

AREA TRAINED: SIDES

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie with your head and shoulders on a Stability Ball.
- ◆ Extend your arms up to the ceiling.
- ◆ Rotate your arms and upper body over to one side, until you're resting on your shoulder.
- ◆ Roll back, then rotate to the other side.
- ◆ Alternate between left and right.



Be safe

Make sure your movements are slow and controlled, as momentum can cause you to fall off the ball.



WHERE TO BUY: Top: ASICS fuzeX Sleeveless Hoodie, www.asics.co.uk; Bottoms: Model's own; Shoes: ASICS GEL-KINSEI 6, www.asics.co.uk



Stay on track!

You're halfway through your eight-week training plan and progress should be noticeable by now. Stay motivated and don't give up!

You've got this far... well done! Hopefully by now you've noticed some changes. You should look and feel slimmer, and may have noticed that your thighs are more toned and your stomach is beginning to look flatter.

Make sure you keep checking your progress regularly. We all have different ways of doing this when it comes to weight loss, but find a method that works for you. Measuring yourself can be an effective way to monitor progress, as long as you make sure you measure yourself consistently. Take a tape

measure and measure the widest part of your hips, as well as your waist, bringing the tape measure across the belly button so you know you will measure yourself consistently each time. Make a note of your measurements and check them every two to three weeks or so.

Normal scales can provide an indicator of progress, but aren't necessarily very reliable, as they will only give your total body weight. Your body weight can fluctuate depending on hormonal changes and hydration levels, as well as time of the day. If you choose to use normal

scales, only weigh yourself once a week (daily weighing can sometimes lead to obsessive habits), at the same time of day, preferably when you first wake up before breakfast.

DON'T GET OBSESSIVE

Body fat scales provide a clearer picture, as they measure total body fat and will also reveal how hydrated you are, which can affect your overall body weight.

Try not to get too obsessed about what you weigh – measurements and noticing how your clothes feel are probably the two most effective ways of measuring progress.

STAY MOTIVATED

Remember, you're halfway through the programme and you're doing a great job of making exercise a regular part of your life. At the end of the eight weeks, you will have proved to yourself that exercise can be a habit and something you can stick to – you will have developed new habits that can last a lifetime!

And if you're in need of some motivation on days when you don't feel like exercising, here are some top motivational tips from women who have lost weight and improved their body shape...

'YOU'RE DOING A GREAT JOB OF MAKING EXERCISE A REGULAR PART OF YOUR LIFE'

15-Minute Fitness

If you dread the thought of that exercise session, remember how good it feels afterwards and for the rest of the day! Or decide to do half the session and you'll probably change your mind halfway through and keep going.'

Jackie

If I go from work to the gym, I change at work so I can't talk myself out of it on the way.'

Esther

I get in from work and go straight upstairs to get changed. Once I've done that, I might as well go - I'm always glad I did once I'm back!'

Clare

I have a motivational board in front of my treadmill with my training plan, which works a treat!'

Gail

When I go for a run, I try different speeds, different running companions, different routes - the same route the other way round counts, too!'

Tanya

I do a list for the week of what exercise I want to do and tick each session off once I've done it - it keeps me motivated.'

Karen

I have a nice shower gel and body cream that I'm only allowed to use if I've done some exercise. I tend to go early morning: alarm goes off, I roll out of bed, kit on, teeth brushed and out. It goes wrong if I stop and think about it.'

Claire

Have a training partner, so you have someone other than yourself you'd let down if you don't go, and you can keep each other motivated.'

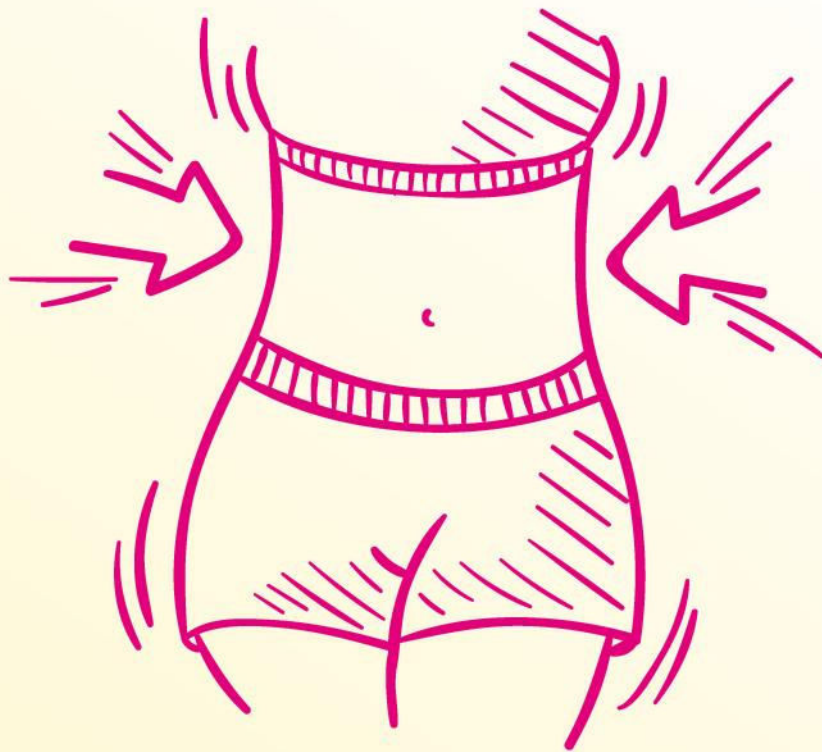
Sinead

How we stay motivated!



Routine helps me massively to stay motivated (I always run on Mondays, Wednesdays and do a long run on Saturdays), as does remembering those post-run endorphins.'

Theresa



Core conditioning

This week, we'll be focusing on abs. Most people think if they do a lot of stomach exercises, it will lead to a flat stomach, but sadly it's not that simple!

When you focus on strengthening your stomach, you will improve the muscle tone and will start to lose a

few inches around your waistline, but this will have limited results, as you won't burn the fat that sits on top of your stomach muscles (called spot reduction). To maximise your results, trim your waistline and bring those stronger, more defined stomach muscles into focus, you will also need to

concentrate on your diet. It's important to remember that abs are made in both the kitchen and the gym!

When you train your stomach muscles, you need to focus on working all the different muscles involved. You should include exercises that train your upper abs, lower abs and sides.

Your 7-day exercise plan

This week's plan of action

Your aim this week is to focus on maximising the strength in all the abdominal muscles. Don't give those tummy muscles a rest in-between exercises; simply alternate the exercises, so each one focuses on a different section (for

example, an exercise for the upper abs followed by an exercise for the sides followed by an exercise for the lower abs). This will help keep the rest times to a minimum, as well as giving each muscle group some time to recover.



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Time how long it takes you to perform 15 reps of all 8 exercises. Can you increase your reps to 20 on Thursday's session?	15 minutes of cardio	Rest	Time how long it takes you to perform 20 reps of all 8 exercises. Can you increase your reps to 25 on Saturday's session?	15 minutes of cardio	Time how long it takes to perform 25 reps of all 8 exercises	Rest

Straight to the core

These eight moves will help get your tummy flat and toned in no time!

STABILITY BALL CRUNCHES

AREAS TRAINED: STOMACH AND CORE

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie with the small of your back on a Stability Ball.
- ◆ Place your hands next to your head and look up to the ceiling.
- ◆ Perform a pelvic tilt, pushing your lower back into the ball, while simultaneously crunching your head and shoulders up.
- ◆ Slowly lower with control.



Be safe

Make sure your movements are slow and small – not more than two inches.

STRAIGHT-LEG CRUNCHES

AREAS TRAINED: STOMACH AND CORE

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie on your back on the floor, with your legs extended up to the ceiling.
- ◆ Straighten your arms up above your chest and look up.
- ◆ Crunch up, reaching your hands towards your toes.
- ◆ Slowly lower with control.



Be safe

Breathe out when lifting up, and in when lowering down.

CYCLING

AREAS TRAINED: STOMACH AND SIDES

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie on your back on the floor, lifting your legs and bending your knees to form a right angle.
- ◆ Place your hands next to your head.
- ◆ Lift your head and shoulders off the floor, then rotate your opposite elbow and knee towards each other.
- ◆ Repeat towards the other side.
- ◆ Alternate between the two sides.



Be safe

Keep your core muscles tight, to make sure your lower back doesn't arch off the floor.

SCISSORS

AREAS TRAINED: LOWER ABS AND CORE

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie back, resting your body weight on your elbows and forearms.
- ◆ Keeping your legs straight, lift them just off the floor.
- ◆ Open and close your legs.
- ◆ Use controlled movements and aim to keep your legs at the same level throughout the set.



Be safe

The lower your legs are to the ground, the harder your stomach will work. Make sure you don't arch your lower back.

STABILITY BALL SIDE LIFT

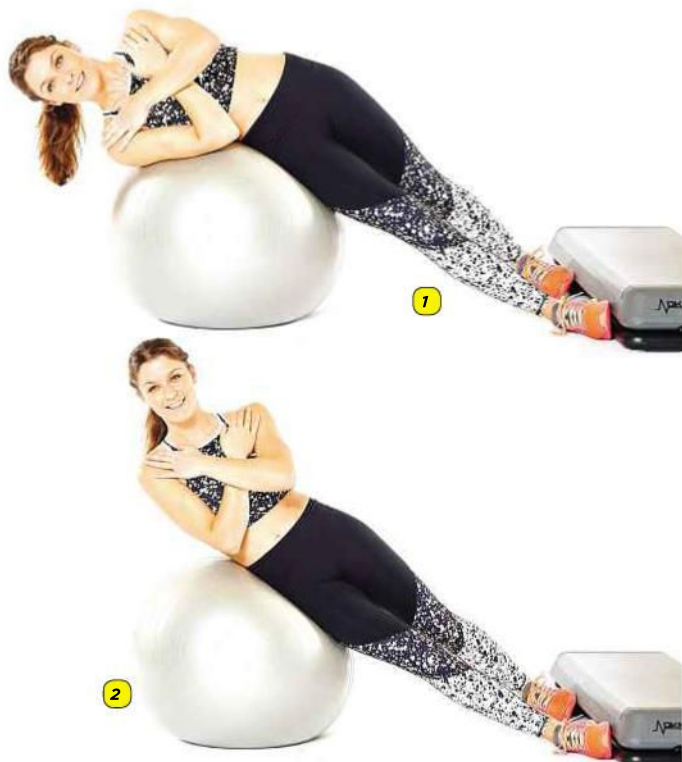
**AREAS TRAINED: DEEP AND OUTER SIDE
MUSCLES, AND CORE**

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Sit with one hip on a Stability Ball.
- ◆ Place your bottom leg in front and your top leg behind you, with your feet against a wall for support.
- ◆ Cross your arms over your chest and lower your body over the ball (this is the starting position).
- ◆ Lift your body up, hold the top position for a second, then lower back down to the starting position.
- ◆ Complete one set before changing over to the other side.

Be safe

Keep your legs slightly wider than hip-width apart, to aid your balance.



REVERSE CRUNCHES

**AREAS TRAINED: LOWER ABDOMINALS
AND CORE**

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie on your back on the floor.
- ◆ Keep your legs raised, forming a right angle at your knees.
- ◆ Pull your knees into your chest, then push your legs up towards the ceiling.
- ◆ Lift your bottom up off the floor, but keep your back on the ground.
- ◆ Lower with control.

Be safe

Don't pull your knees into your chest too much, as this will make your tummy muscles relax.



SIDE KNEE TUCKS

AREAS TRAINED: SIDES

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Sit on the floor, placing both hands behind your hips on the ground.
- ◆ Roll your knees over to one side and lift your feet off the floor.
- ◆ Straighten your legs and lower your upper body slightly.
- ◆ Sit up straight once more.
- ◆ Complete one set before changing over to the other side.



Be safe

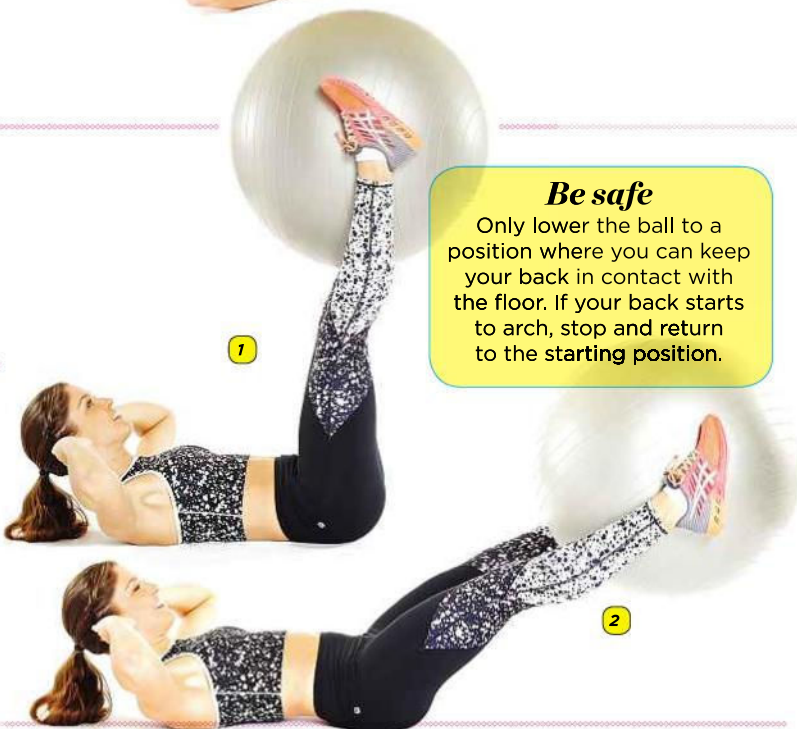
If this exercise gets too easy, lift both hands off the floor.

STABILITY BALL STRAIGHT-LEG LOWER

AREAS TRAINED: LOWER ABS, CORE AND LOWER BACK

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie on your back, extend your legs up to the ceiling and squeeze a Stability Ball in between your legs.
- ◆ Place your hands behind your head and lift your head off the floor.
- ◆ Slowly lower your legs to the floor.
- ◆ Return to the starting position.



Be safe

Only lower the ball to a position where you can keep your back in contact with the floor. If your back starts to arch, stop and return to the starting position.



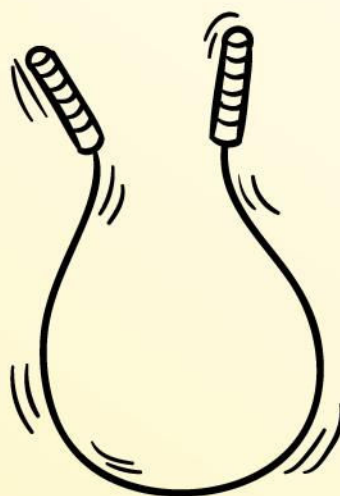
WHERE TO BUY: Top and bottoms: Model's own, Shoes: ASICS fuzeX trainers, www.asics.co.uk



Increase the intensity

Over the past few years, you might have noticed the rise in popularity of HIIT (high-intensity interval training), boot camp, Insanity and various other high-octane workouts. These classes push you hard – very hard – during the session, but they tend to be shorter than the more traditional 45- to 60-minute classes. Most of these programmes work around the same basic principle:

training outside of your comfort zone for a period of time, with little or no rest in-between exercises. In essence, they provide a short, sharp burst of exercise to get your muscles working and your heart pumping! They also have the added bonus that your body will continue to work hard, even after the session has finished, to recover from the ‘shock’ of the session, thus helping you increase your resting metabolic rate.



Your 7-day exercise plan

This week's plan of action

For this week's sessions, you'll need a timer. You can use your phone, or an app such as Gymboss. Set it up with two intervals: the first for 40 seconds and the second for 10 seconds. Give 100 per cent effort during the working (40 second) interval and use the

10-second interval to switch exercises. Your aim is to increase your heart rate and keep it high for 15 minutes. Before you start, run up the stairs twice, walking back down in-between, to warm up. Remember to stretch after each session.



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Perform each move for 40 seconds, then rest for 10 seconds. Rest for 1 minute at the end. Repeat the circuit	15 minutes of cardio	Rest	Perform each move for 40 seconds, then rest for 10 seconds. Rest for 1 minute at the end. Repeat the circuit	15 minutes of cardio	Perform each move for 40 seconds, then rest for 10 seconds. Rest for 1 minute at the end. Repeat the circuit	Rest

Circuit training

These moves will help improve both your strength and stamina

THREADING THE NEEDLE

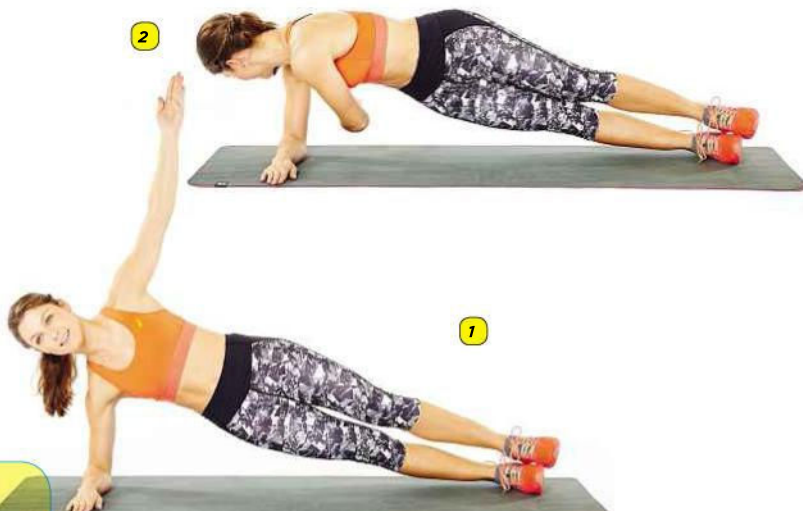
AREAS TRAINED: SIDES

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie on your side to form a straight line.
- ◆ Place your elbow directly underneath your shoulder, lift your hips off the floor and reach your top arm up to the ceiling (this is the starting position).
- ◆ Swing your top arm down and thread it through the gap between your body and the floor.
- ◆ Rotate back up to the starting position.
- ◆ Make sure you keep your tummy tight throughout the move.
- ◆ Complete one set before changing over to the other side.

Be safe

If this is too hard, keep your knees bent to make it easier.



SKI STEP TO CROSS BACK LUNGE

AREAS TRAINED: INNER THIGHS, OUTER THIGHS, BOTTOM AND SIDES

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand with your feet hip-width apart.
- ◆ Step sideways with one leg, crossing your other leg behind you.
- ◆ Bend both knees and touch the floor with your hand.
- ◆ Lift back up and repeat to the other side.
- ◆ Alternate between the two sides.

Be safe

To increase the intensity, you can jump from one leg to the other instead of stepping.



BENT OVER FLY

AREAS TRAINED: UPPER BACK AND SHOULDERS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Holding a weight in each hand, stand in a split stance, with one leg in front of the other.
- ◆ Bend forwards, keeping your back straight (this is the starting position).
- ◆ Keeping a slight bend in your elbows, lift your arms sideways until the weights are level with your shoulders.
- ◆ Slowly return your arms to the starting position.

Be safe

Keep your elbows at the same angle throughout the movement.



FORWARDS AND BACKWARDS BENCH JUMPS

AREAS TRAINED: FRONT THIGHS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Place a bench lengthways in front of you.
- ◆ Place your hands on the sides of the bench and step your legs backwards.
- ◆ Keep your bottom pointing up to the ceiling, with your tummy muscles tight.
- ◆ Jump forwards with both feet, until they are almost next to your hands.
- ◆ Jump backwards.
- ◆ Repeat as quickly as possible.



Be safe

If you find jumping too hard, step forwards and backwards instead.

MOUNTAIN CLIMBER

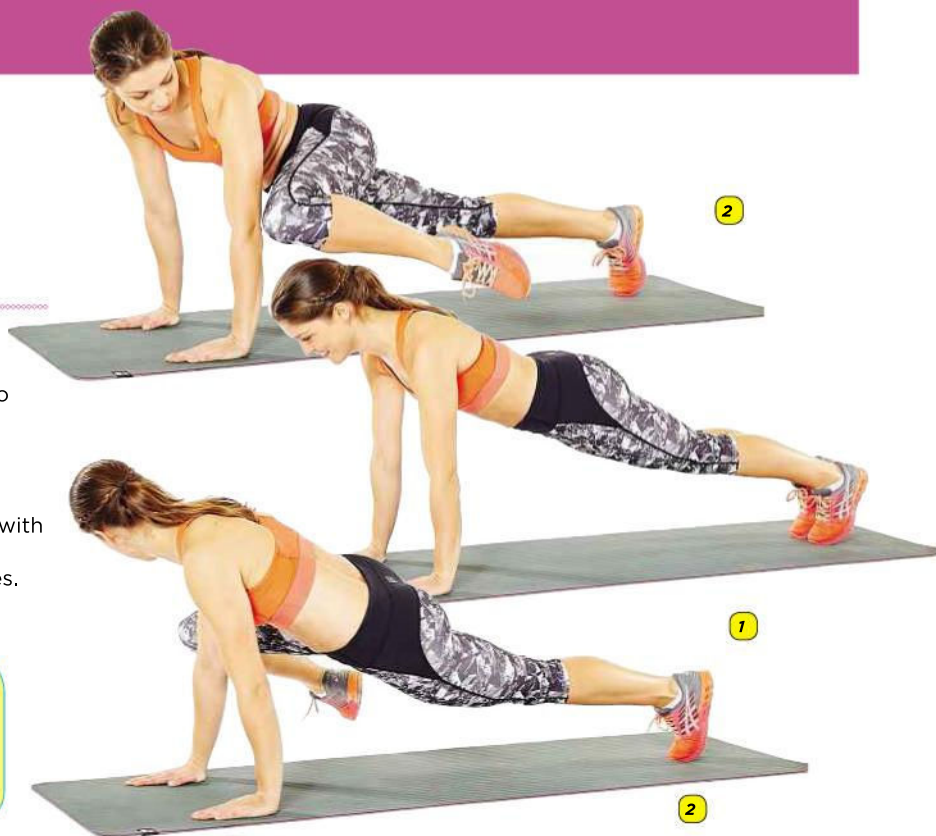
AREAS TRAINED: HIP FLEXORS, CORE AND SHOULDERS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Kneel down onto all fours.
- ◆ Lift your knees off the floor, into a straight-arm plank (this is the starting position).
- ◆ Bring one knee in towards your elbow.
- ◆ Push your leg back and repeat with the opposite leg.
- ◆ Alternate between the two sides.

Be safe

Don't arch your back. If you feel pain in your lower back, lift your hips slightly higher.



STRAIGHT ARM V-SIT ROTATION

AREAS TRAINED: SIDES, CORE AND BACK

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Sit on the floor with your knees bent.
- ◆ Place your heels on the floor.
- ◆ Lean back, until you feel tension in your stomach (this is the starting position).
- ◆ Extend your arms out in front of you.
- ◆ Slowly rotate your arms from side to side.

Be safe

Keep your tummy tight. If it gets too easy, hold a light weight in each hand.



WOOD CHOP

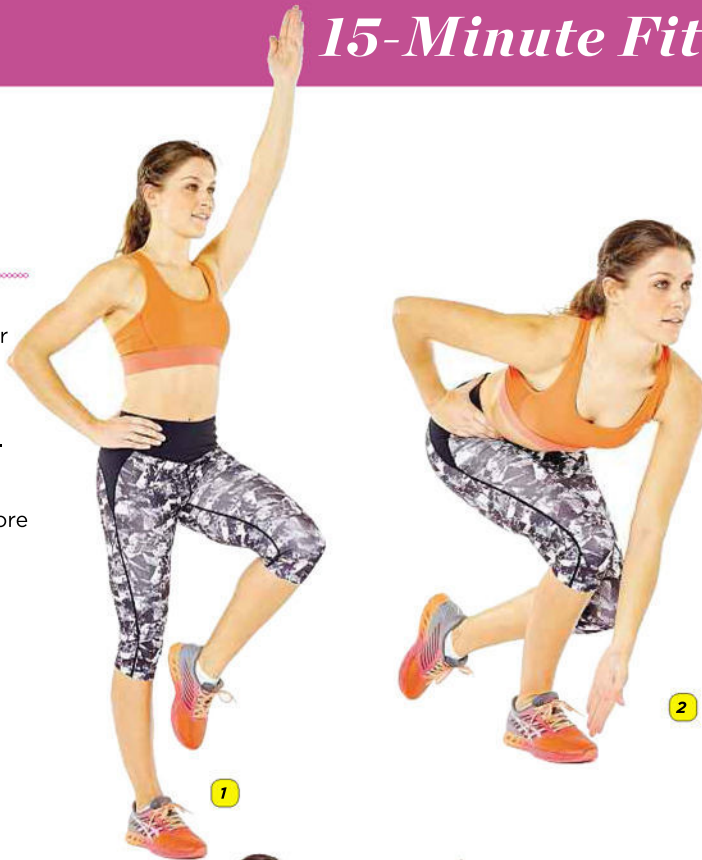
AREAS TRAINED: SIDES, BOTTOM AND FRONT THIGHS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand on one leg and extend your opposite arm up to the ceiling (this is the starting position).
- ◆ Bend your knee and reach your hand down to your standing foot.
- ◆ Return to the starting position, while keeping your balance.
- ◆ Complete one set on this leg before changing to the opposite side.

Be safe

Keep your tummy tight and don't curl your toes. If the exercise gets too easy, hold a light weight.



HEIGHT JUMPS

AREAS TRAINED: FRONT THIGHS, REAR THIGHS, BOTTOM AND CALF MUSCLES

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand with your feet comfortably apart.
- ◆ Bend your knees and swing your arms backwards.
- ◆ Jump up, swinging your arms forwards to help generate height.
- ◆ Land with soft knees.

Be safe

This improves explosive power, so over time you'll be able to jump higher. Always land with soft knees.



WHERE TO BUY: Top: ASICS fuzeX Bra, Bottoms: Crewroom No Fuss Crop, www.crewroom.co.uk;
Shoes: ASICS fuzeXtrainers, www.asics.co.uk



Super-charge your sessions!

Ever wondered why women tend to store fat around their tummies and thighs? It's all down to the two main female hormones, oestrogen and progesterone, which play a role in fat depositing. But all is not lost! While you still need to clean up your diet to help reduce the fat deposits around your middle, exercise will help to build and tone the underlying muscles, which will help you lose a few inches in that area.

On top of this, the more lean muscle you have, the more calories you'll burn at

rest and in your next cardio session. The key factor here is that you have to be consistent to increase your metabolic rate. For example, if you train today, your workout will increase your metabolic rate. The good news is that it can take between 24 and 48 hours to return to normal. If you train again within this period, your metabolic rate will rise again. As you can see, if you train regularly, you will gradually increase your metabolic rate because you never give it time to recover back to its original level. So keep at it – you're doing great!



Your 7-day exercise plan

This week's plan of action

This week is all about volume. By performing a high number of reps, you force your body to get all the muscle fibres in your legs and abs working. Don't stop when your brain tells you it's getting hard – when it feels difficult, it

means you're moving out of your comfort zone and that will make all the difference to your metabolic rate and body shape. Push to do the last few reps, or add an extra five reps if you don't find it challenging enough.



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Perform 20 reps of all 8 exercises	15 minutes of cardio	Rest	Perform 20 reps of all 8 exercises	15 minutes of cardio	Perform 20 reps of all 8 exercises	Rest

Super-charged abs and legs!

These tougher moves will help challenge you further

STAR SIDE PLANK

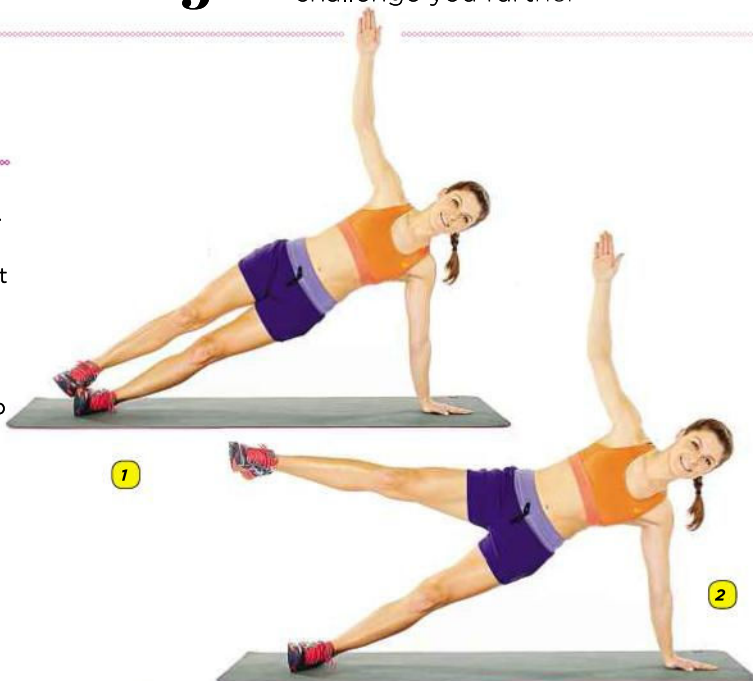
AREAS TRAINED: SIDES, INNER THIGHS AND OUTER THIGHS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie on the floor on one side, placing your hand directly underneath your shoulder.
- ◆ Extend your legs sideways, with your feet on top of one another.
- ◆ Lift your hip off the floor, to form a straight-arm side plank (this is the starting position).
- ◆ Lift your top foot up and extend your top arm to the ceiling, to form a star shape.
- ◆ Hold the position for 20 seconds.

Be safe

If it's too hard, keep both feet together instead of raising your top leg.



STABILITY BALL SIDE LEG LIFT

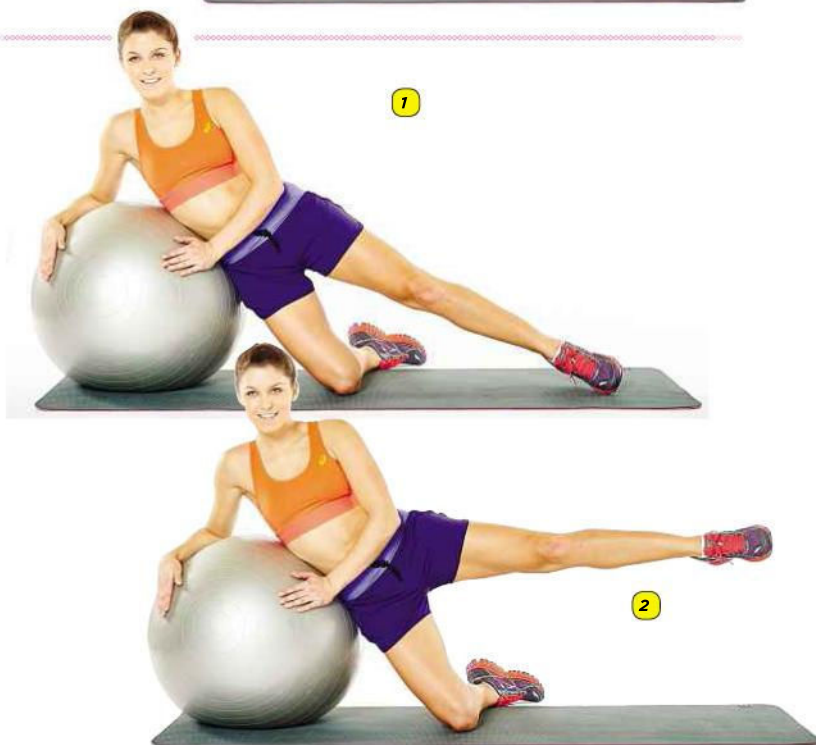
AREA TRAINED: BOTTOM

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Kneeling next to a Stability Ball, lean over it and extend your top leg sideways.
- ◆ Lift your leg up until it's level with your hip.
- ◆ Lower your leg until it touches the floor.
- ◆ Complete one set before changing over to the other side.

Be safe

Make sure you have a towel or mat underneath your supporting knee.



180 DEGREE SQUATS

AREAS TRAINED: THIGHS AND BOTTOM

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- ◆ Bend your knees to squat down.
- ◆ Keeping your back straight and looking forwards, lift up, push off with one leg and rotate 180 degrees.
- ◆ You should now be facing the opposite direction.
- ◆ Immediately squat down.
- ◆ Push off and repeat between the two sides.

Be safe

Make sure your knees don't cross over your toes and take care with the turn.



WEIGHTED SIDE LUNGE TO BALANCE

AREAS TRAINED: INNER THIGHS, OUTER THIGHS AND BOTTOM

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Balance on your left leg and hold a weight in your left hand.
- ◆ Step sideways with your right leg, bending at the knee and keeping your left leg straight.
- ◆ Push back up to the balancing position.
- ◆ Complete one set on the left before changing over to the right.

Be safe

Squeeze your bottom when you push up, to aid your balance.



SQUAT JUMP WITH SHOULDER PRESS

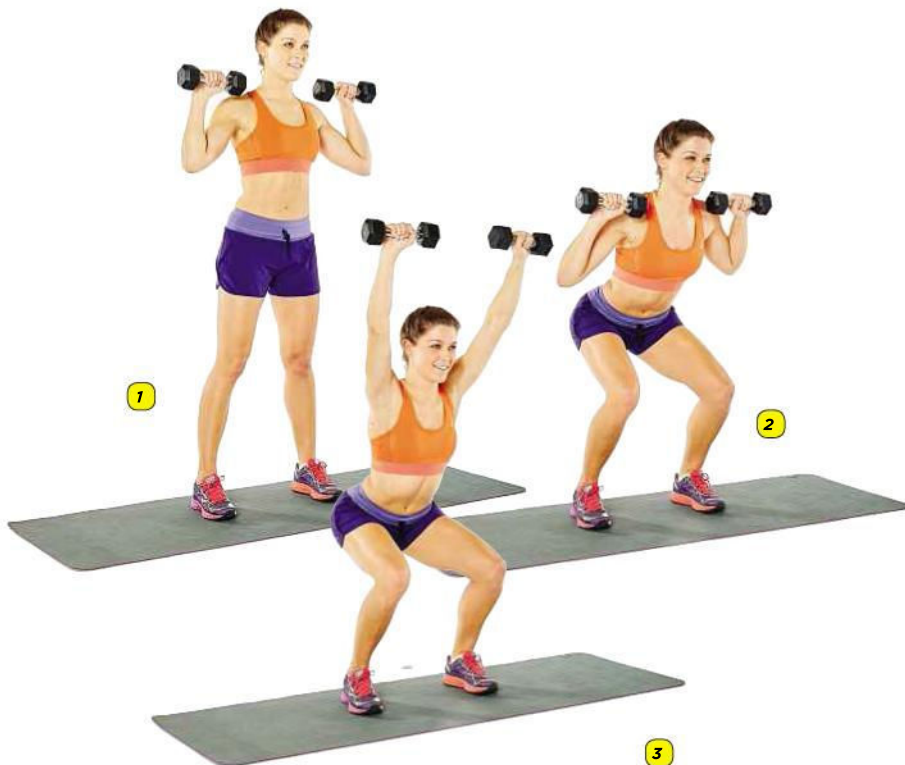
AREAS TRAINED: SHOULDERS, THIGHS, CORE AND EXPLOSIVE POWER

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- ◆ Hold a weight in each hand on your shoulders.
- ◆ Bend your knees and squat down.
- ◆ Jump up.
- ◆ Upon landing, extend your arms up to the ceiling.
- ◆ Lower your arms back to your shoulders and repeat the move.

Be safe

Use controlled movements and ensure good quality rather than speed.



SUPERMAN PLANK

AREAS TRAINED: CORE, BACK AND SHOULDERS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie on your stomach and place your elbows directly beneath your shoulders.
- ◆ Lift your body off the floor, while keeping your tummy tight (this is the starting position).
- ◆ While maintaining the plank position, extend one arm and the opposite leg, lifting it off the floor.
- ◆ Repeat on the other side.

Be safe

If you feel any pain or compression in your lower back, lift your hips slightly higher and pull your stomach muscles tighter.

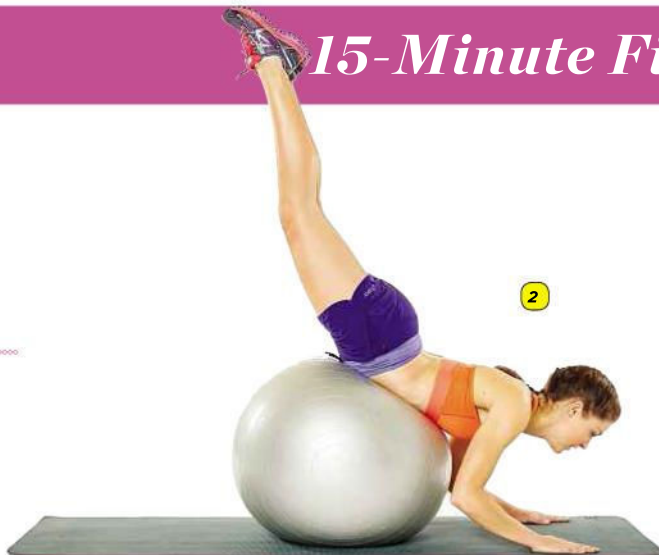


STABILITY BALL REVERSE BACK EXTENSIONS

AREA TRAINED: LOWER BACK

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie with your stomach on a Stability Ball.
- ◆ Place your hands securely on the floor.
- ◆ Raise both legs together off the floor, lifting them as high as you feel comfortable.
- ◆ Slowly lower with control.



Be safe

Make sure your movements are slow and controlled, especially on the return phase. This is when your muscles will be working hardest, if you are doing the move correctly.



SIDE TOP ELBOW TO TOP KNEE

AREAS TRAINED: SIDES

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie on your side, rolling slightly backwards onto the soft part of your bottom.
- ◆ Lift both legs off the floor and extend your legs out to 45 degrees.
- ◆ Tuck your knees in, so your top knee touches your top elbow.
- ◆ Complete one set on one side before changing over to the other side.



Be safe

Make sure you touch your elbow every time, as that last little effort will make a big difference to your muscle strength.



WHERE TO BUY: Top: ASICS fuzeX Bra, Bottoms: ASICS Woven 2 in 1 Short, www.asics.co.uk;
Shoes: Brooks Ghost 8, www.brooksrunning.com



Healthy habits

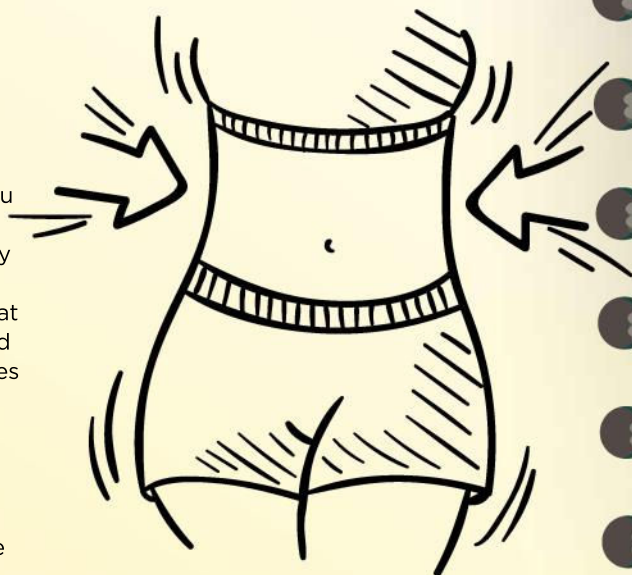
This week, we're following the same principles we learned in week six: work hard with little rest for 15 minutes, to boost calorie burning.

Most people think cardiovascular exercise is just running, walking, cycling and swimming, and although these are all cardio exercises, they are not the only options. Any exercise that increases your heart rate and then keeps it high over a period of time is cardio exercise. This week, we want to show you how you can still do cardio exercise in the comfort of your own home, without the

need for expensive equipment.

This is the eighth week, but please don't view it as the final week. You have created great new lifestyle habits, so to continue beyond this programme you can repeat the eight-week programme again, or simply choose the weeks you enjoyed the most and repeat them. You can even mix and match the different exercises to create your very own eight-week programme!

Most of all, feel proud of everything you have achieved and use this as motivation, as you continue to live by your newfound healthy habits.



Your 7-day exercise plan

This week's plan of action

The exercises this week are a little more challenging, so we've reduced the working time to 30 seconds, but kept the transition time at 10 seconds, to ensure your heart rate stays high. Focus on good form and

technique, to help prevent injuries. Aim to complete the eight-exercise circuit three times within 15 minutes. Keeping a cap on the total time will stop you from resting too long in-between exercises.



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Perform each exercise for 30 seconds, followed by 10 seconds of rest. Repeat the circuit three times. Aim to rest as little as possible, to keep your heart rate high	15 minutes of cardio	Rest	Perform each exercise for 30 seconds, followed by 10 seconds of rest. Repeat the circuit three times. Aim to rest as little as possible, to keep your heart rate high	15 minutes of cardio	Perform each exercise for 30 seconds, followed by 10 seconds of rest. Repeat the circuit three times. Aim to rest as little as possible, to keep your heart rate high	Rest

Raise your heart rate!

This energetic cardio workout will ensure you see great toning and fitness results

EXPLOSIVE GLUTE KICKS

AREAS TRAINED: REAR THIGHS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand with your knees together and place your hands on your bottom.
- ◆ Keep your back straight and your core muscles tight.
- ◆ Kick up your heels backwards, until they touch your hands on your bottom.
- ◆ Do the move quickly, without losing technique.

Be safe

If you can't get your heels up to your hands, make sure you regularly stretch your front thighs and hip flexors, as you might develop a muscle imbalance that can lead to knee problems.



BURPIES

GOOD FOR IMPROVING YOUR STAMINA

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand upright with your feet comfortably together.
- ◆ Bend down and place your hands on the floor, in front of your feet.
- ◆ Jump backwards with your feet, to form a press-up position.
- ◆ Jump your feet forwards again.
- ◆ To complete the move, jump back up to the starting position.



Be safe

Remember to breathe!

SPOTTY DOGS

GOOD FOR IMPROVING YOUR STAMINA

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand with your right leg in front of your left.
- ◆ Extend your right arm up to the ceiling and push the other arm backwards.
- ◆ Jump up and change your arms and legs around.
- ◆ Continue to change over as fast as possible.

Be safe

Keep an upright posture, with your tummy muscles tight.



STRAIGHT ARM PRESS-UP

AREAS TRAINED: REAR UPPER ARMS, CHEST, UPPER BACK AND SHOULDERS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Kneel on the floor.
- ◆ Place one hand directly beneath your shoulder on the floor and straighten the other arm out in front of you.
- ◆ Lower your body down to the floor, but don't rest.
- ◆ The arm next to your shoulder will do most of the work.
- ◆ Slowly push back up.
- ◆ Complete one set before changing arms.

Be safe

Keep your tummy muscles tight and aim to use the backs of your arms (triceps) to do most of the work. It will take a few attempts to get used to it.



JUMPING JACKS

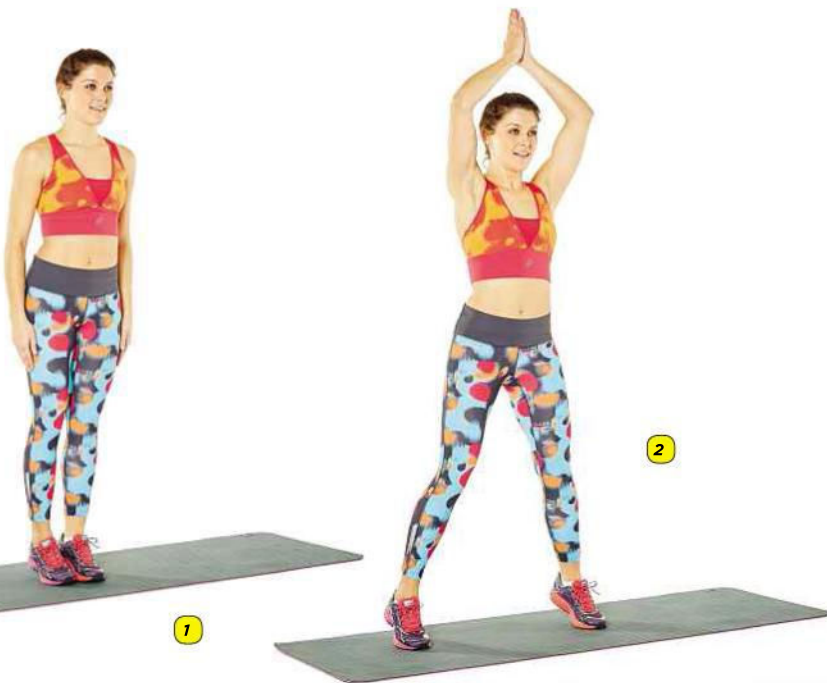
GOOD FOR IMPROVING YOUR STAMINA

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand comfortably with your arms next to your sides.
- ◆ Jump up, open your legs and clap your hands above your head.
- ◆ Land with your legs open and arms up.
- ◆ Jump up and return to the starting position.
- ◆ Continue as quickly as possible for one minute.

Be safe

Keep your knees soft when you land.



SUMO KETTLEBELL SWINGS

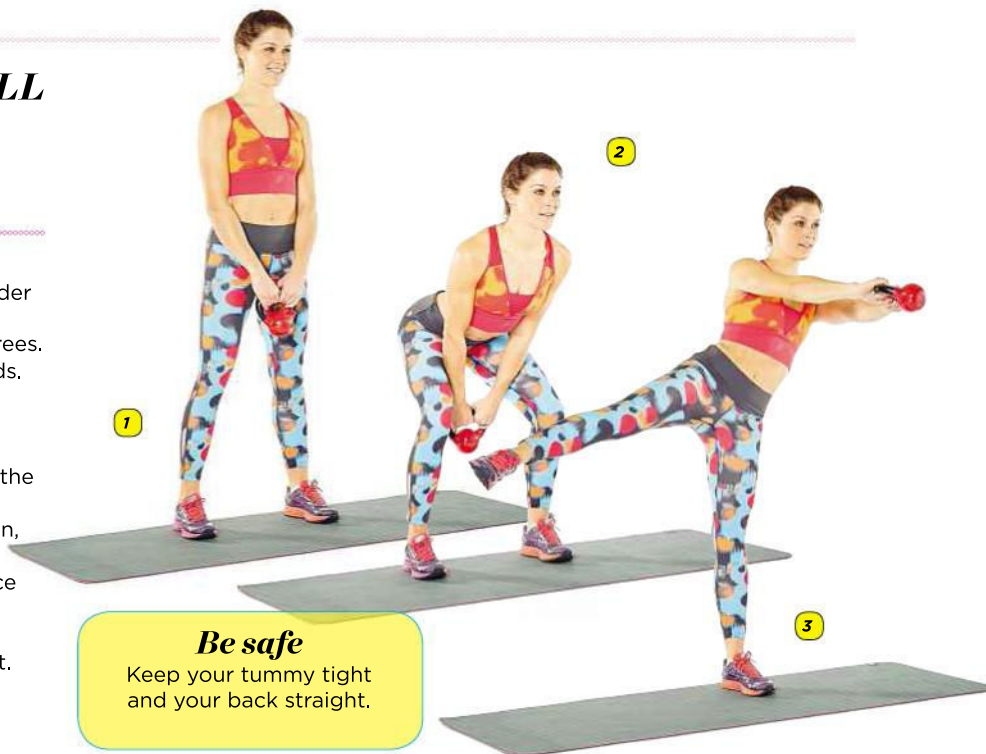
AREAS TRAINED: REAR THIGHS, REAR LOWER LEGS, BOTTOM AND SHOULDERS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand with your legs slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, with your toes turned out to 45 degrees.
- ◆ Hold a kettlebell with both hands.
- ◆ Bend your knees to perform a squat and swing the kettlebell backwards, between your legs.
- ◆ Straighten your legs and swing the kettlebell up to shoulder level.
- ◆ When you reach the top position, lift one leg sideways.
- ◆ As you lower the kettlebell, place your foot back on the floor.
- ◆ Repeat on the other side.
- ◆ Alternate between left and right.

Be safe

Keep your tummy tight and your back straight.



KETTLEBELL ROTATING LUNGE

AREAS TRAINED: CORE, BOTTOM, REAR THIGHS, REAR LOWER LEGS AND SHOULDERS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand on one leg, holding a kettlebell with both hands to your chest.
- ◆ Step forwards and bend both knees to perform a lunge.
- ◆ Push back to the starting position.
- ◆ Complete one set before changing over to the other side.

Be safe

Keep your tummy tight and don't lean forwards.



V-SIT FIGURE OF EIGHT

AREAS TRAINED: BACK, HIPS, STOMACH AND CORE

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Sit on the floor, with your knees bent and your feet raised off the ground, holding a kettlebell.
- ◆ Straighten one leg, then pass the kettlebell from the outside underneath your leg.
- ◆ Bend your knee again.
- ◆ Repeat on the opposite leg.
- ◆ Continue passing the kettlebell in a figure-of-eight around your thighs.



Be safe

Keep your back straight and your tummy muscles tight.



WHERE TO BUY: Top: ASICS fuzeX Layering Top, Bottoms: ASICS fuzeX Leggings, www.asics.co.uk; Shoes: Brooks Ghost 8, www.brooksrunning.com

Short workouts work!

You've lost the weight, now keep it off by continuing to make your future exercise sessions challenging



You've lost weight and you know that short workouts work. So what next? Keep the principle of short workouts in your training, and make sure you change your workouts around every four weeks, to prevent your body from getting used to what you are doing. You need to mix this up and add variety, in order to keep making progress and also prevent boredom.

Here are some ideas for short workouts that will help keep you in shape...

AN OUT-AND-BACK RUN

This is great fun, as you compete with yourself and you don't have to spend a long time exercising. Go out and run to a certain point for 10 minutes, then turn round and try to run back

home in less time – say, in nine minutes. The 'back' part of the run will challenge your fitness and you will be motivated to beat your time.

AN INTERVAL SESSION

A short interval session, where you work hard for one minute and then recover with a reduced speed for another minute, repeated several times, is a great way to increase overall calorie burn. You can apply this method to any cardio machine, such as the treadmill, cross-trainer, rower or stationary bike. Your fitness levels will increase and you'll burn more fat.

TRY FASTED CARDIO FIRST THING

If you're a morning person and you don't mind

exercising when you wake up, then doing some cardiovascular exercise before breakfast is thought to boost your metabolic rate for the rest of the day, so that you burn more calories overall. Just 20 minutes of brisk walking, jogging, running or using any cardio machine in the gym will work.

TOP TIP

When completing a workout where you are training at a high intensity for short bursts, always ensure you start with a proper warm-up.

SPRINT SESSIONS ON THE TREADMILL

This may sound scary and it isn't an easy session, but you will get rest periods. Start with a five-minute warm-up, to make sure you feel nice and warm before you begin. Sprint for up to 30 seconds, then step onto the siderails and rest for a minute to 90 seconds, then repeat the sprint again and repeat the rest period again. Do this five to six times. It's

‘YOUR FITNESS LEVELS WILL INCREASE AND YOU’LL BURN MORE FAT’

hard, but it works and the sprinting pace is great for burning belly fat, too.

MAKE SHORT WORKOUTS EFFECTIVE

Devise your own workouts and make sure they have higher intensities, where you work hard for set periods of time. If you do this, then that 15- or 20-minute session will be effective. Here’s an example of how to make a treadmill session effective for fat burning. This session, devised by personal trainer Jeff Archer from The Tonic Corporate Wellbeing (www.the-tonic.com), will enable you to blast your body on the treadmill in just 15 minutes and burn up to 200 calories. It’s short, sharp and highly effective – ideal for a lunchbreak.

For this training plan, you need to be familiar with the treadmill speeds that equate to the required effort level for each part of the routine. This may take a couple of attempts to establish and there is a suggestion of speeds you can begin with in the plan. The routine will work best if you calculate your own specific speeds and then increase the speeds for each level regularly as you

get fitter, so that the effort level for the final minute is always a maximum of 10 out of 10.

Spend a few minutes at an easy jogging speed before launching into the routine, just to make sure you’re fully warmed up. When you’ve finished the routine, spend a few minutes cooling down on a bike or cross-trainer, to help your muscles relax.

Time	Effort Level	Speed
1 min	5	5.5km/h
1 min	6	6.5km/h
1 min	7	7.5km/h
1 min	5	5.5km/h
1 min	6	6.5km/h
1 min	7	7.5km/h
1 min	8	8.0km/h
1 min	6	6.5km/h
1 min	7	7.5km/h
1 min	8	8.0km/h
1 min	9	8.5km/h
1 min	7	7.5km/h
1 min	8	8.0km/h
1 min	9	8.5km/h
1 min	10	9.0km/h

Above all, if you stick with short workouts, make sure you have periods working at a high intensity.





EAT SMART, LOOK GREAT!

- ✓ 20 best fat-burning foods
- ✓ Eat to beat stress - and feel better
- ✓ Healthy snacks and food portion guide
- ✓ Your complete eight-week meal plan
- ✓ Healthy protein fixes and hidden fats
- ✓ Mindful eating - how it can help
- ✓ Stop comfort eating today!





20 best fat burning foods

Whether it's foods that make you feel more full and help to prevent you from overeating, or foods that actually boost your metabolism, we reveal the best choices to help you lose weight and stay slim

If only there was a magic potion to melt away those extra pounds and keep them off for good! Unfortunately, no such thing exists and the only way to lose weight for good is through changing your diet. Fortunately, this isn't as difficult as we are often led to believe. It's simple – eat the food that grows naturally and avoid the food that doesn't. Stick to homemade over ready

meals, and choose the foods that fuel and nourish! There are three rules when it comes to successful weight loss, which are:

- 1 Don't go hungry**
- 2 Create a calorie deficit**
- 3 Eat protein – but don't ditch fat and carbohydrates!**

The truth is, whichever way you look at it, these three rules are non-negotiable! Confused? Don't be! Stock up on the following foods

and eat your way to a slimmer, healthier you...

QUINOA

It might look similar to cous cous, but quinoa is actually far superior. It contains almost three times the amount of (complete) protein and it's a complex carbohydrate to boot. This means it's perfect for padding out lunchtime salads and keeping tummy rumbles at bay well into the afternoon. Buy it ready cooked for speed and convenience.

AVOCADO

Poor old fat has been demonised for far too long. Not only do we need fat to burn fat, but it also keeps your brain happy and is the



king of satiety. One study, published in *Nutrition Journal*, proved that those who ate half an avocado with lunch were 40 per cent less hungry for two hours afterwards. But avocado isn't just for lunch – serve it with breakfast to help quell the mid-morning biscuit cravings!

LENTILS

Chewing a tablespoon of lentils takes some time – so imagine how long they take to digest! This is due to their high fibre content, so put simply, they will keep you fuller for longer. Lentils are a high-density, low-calorie food – making them weight-loss friendly. Not to mention they're also loaded with energy-producing iron – essential for those extra gym sessions!

BROWN RICE

An easy way to lower the GI of your meal and stabilise your blood sugar level is to simply swap fluffy, white rice for its nuttier counterpart. Brown rice is what your white rice used to look like before it was stripped of its fibrous hull. It's far fleshier than white rice when it comes to nutritional value, too, as it's rich in B vitamins and minerals, such as calcium, magnesium and potassium.

HOMEMADE SOUP

Perhaps you've heard that drinking water with your



meal will make you feel fuller, quicker. However, a study from Pennsylvania State University found that consuming the same amount of water within a soup with your meal, rather than as a drink, means you'll go on to eat less of that meal and less throughout the rest of the day! What better way to use up your leftover vegetables?

EGGS

Forget what you think you know about eggs. They are not responsible for high cholesterol, but they are nutrient powerhouses and one of the best sources of protein around, sitting up high on the Satiety Index scale. Hard-boiled eggs are the perfect, pre-packaged

snack – just keep the shell on until the last minute to avoid offending sensitive noses in the office!

LEAFY GREEN VEG

Kale, spinach, swiss chard and other dark green leafy veg are low in calories but packed with our friend, fibre. You can double (or triple) the size of your meal using leafy greens without doubling the amount of calories. You will, however, boost your body-friendly nutrient and antioxidant intake! Pack them into salads, melt them into pasta dishes, or shred and add to your stir-fries and curries.

GREEK YOGURT

Put the fruit-flavoured 'diet' yogurt down and get





yourself to the Greek! It may add a few more calories to the pot initially, but it has a higher protein content and far less sugar.

According to a 2015 study published in *Food Science And Nutrition*, you should aim to consume more of your calories from protein, in order to help with hunger control, preservation of muscle mass and gain better overall calorie-zapping powers. Try a few heaped tablespoons

topped with fresh fruit as a post-workout snack, to soothe your muscles and keep that 'after cardio' appetite at bay.

CHILLI PEPPERS

Hot herbs and spices are thermogenic. This means they cause thermogenesis – a process within the body that turns calories to heat and thus allows us to utilise them more quickly. Enough said – start spicing up dinners!

‘CINNAMON HELPS TO CONTROL BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS, WHICH IN TURN CAN CURB A SWEET TOOTH’

PORRIDGE

Yes, we should eat fewer carbohydrates if we want to lose an inch or two – but should we cut them out altogether? Absolutely not. Carbs are essential for optimal brain function and they provide energy – something you need if you want to make that HIIT session count! Stick to complex carbohydrates, such as porridge, to give you longer-lasting energy. Try a bowl of oats before bed to balance blood sugar levels and help you sleep soundly until morning. Their high phosphorus content (which you can super boost by adding a tablespoon of mixed seeds) also aids muscle recovery.

CINNAMON

This warming, sweet, super spice helps to control blood sugar levels, which in turn can curb a sweet tooth. Shake generously over your oats or yogurt in place of honey!

CHICKPEAS

Researchers in Australia asked a group of volunteers to add a serving of chickpeas to their daily diet for 12 consecutive weeks. Results showed that the participants ate less food – particularly grains – during this chickpea-fuelled three months! Make like our friends down under and add these knobbly legumes to



your stews and soups. Or blend with some good-quality olive oil, lemon juice and garlic, to whip up homemade hummus in a flash.

DARK CHOCOLATE

Chocolate for weight loss? Not quite. But denying yourself everything you enjoy won't work long term. Damage limitation is the key to this one – opt for a couple of squares of good-quality dark chocolate in the evening and you'll not only satisfy a sweet tooth, but you'll get the added benefits of heart-friendly flavonoids and cholesterol-lowering nutrients, too!

POPCORN

Ditch the crisps for this movie favourite and not only will you consume fewer calories, you'll also boost heart health and protect against age-related disease, thanks to the polyphenols and antioxidant properties of the mighty popped corn!

CHIA SEEDS

These trendy little seeds magically expand in water (and in your stomach!), so they keep you satisfied for hours. It's not really magic – it's lots of indigestible fibre! The nutritional profile of chia seeds shows that they are high in carbs, but because the majority of those carbs are fibre, you won't get the same insulin

spike that comes with your average high-carb food. Chuck them over your muesli or into a smoothie for a gut-filling fix.

COLD, BOILED SPUDS

When cooled, white, boiled potatoes develop large amounts of resistant starch – a substance similar to fibre – which keeps you full for an age. Slice your leftover boiled tatties and add to a frittata, for a filling brunch or hearty lunch.

XYLITOL

On the whole, artificial sweeteners should be avoided at all costs. Not only are they chemically loaded, but they also do nothing to stop sugar cravings, as they still wreak havoc on your blood sugar levels. However, xylitol – an extract from the South American stevia plant and a far more natural product than the name suggests – contains no calories at all, is 300 times sweeter than sugar, has absolutely no effect on blood sugar and even helps to whiten your teeth!

OILY FISH

Fish such as salmon, mackerel, trout and herring are renowned for their beneficial, anti-inflammatory healthy fats. They also contain iodine

– a nutrient essential for a properly functioning thyroid that in turn is responsible for the optimal running of your metabolism.

NUTS

The *British Journal of Nutrition* conducted a study in 2009, which found that those who ate the most unsaturated fatty acids had a lower body mass index and less fat around their middles. They found this was primarily because those eating more unsaturated fats were eating foods of a higher overall quality. Still a fat-phobe? Nuts also contain vitamin E, which can actually help to prevent a fatty plaque build-up in your arteries! Not to mention they taste great, too. Try adding 25g of mixed, unsalted nuts (not including peanuts) to your daily fruit snack, or top two oatcakes with a heaped teaspoon of almond or cashew nut butter.

CRUCIFEROUS VEG

Vegetables that take some chewing, such as broccoli, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts, are high in fibre and contain more protein than water-based salad vegetables. Try roasting them and adding to salads, or better yet, keep them raw and dunk in hummus!





Beat stress, *get leaner*

Stress can lead to weight gain and make you more likely to overeat. We reveal how to eat to beat stress

We live in an increasingly hectic world, and stress is an unwelcome fixture in many lives. Emotional stressors are something we have to deal with on a daily (or in some cases, hourly) basis, and we are frequently exposed to physical stressors, too. Alcohol, cigarettes, coffee, pollution, lack of exercise, over-exercising, poor sleep patterns and that inconvenient time of the month all add to the stress that is threatening to tip you over the edge and lead to low mood.

You might think stress is for the weak – that it's just a buzz word, something that can simply be palmed

off while you power through life. But high blood pressure, an aching back or neck, diarrhoea, dizzy spells, fatigue, weight loss/gain, insomnia, frequent colds and lack of concentration are all – among others – very real symptoms of a stressed body.

When the body is stressed, the small structures that control your hormones, known as the adrenal glands, go into overdrive, causing a rise in your metabolic rate along with a rampaging, hormone storm! For the body to try to counteract this, we 'use up' nutrients faster than we can replace them. Couple this with a typical 'pick me up' diet of sugary, carbohydrate-rich,

grab-and-go foods, and stress quickly gives way to anxiety, depression and illness.

Next time you're feeling the pressures of life, try ditching the wine and ice cream, and munch on the following stress-busting foods instead...

FISH

Fish is high in vitamin B12, which is essential for combating irritability, depression, anxiety and insomnia. B12 works in synergy with folic acid, so combine your fish with folate-rich spinach for a nutrient double whammy!

PAPAYA

Add this exotic fruit to your morning smoothie. Vitamin C



'OUR PROTEIN STORES ARE USED UP QUICKLY DURING PERIODS OF STRESS'

is used in large quantities by the adrenal glands, therefore long-term stress can result in a depletion of this immune-boosting antioxidant – hello frequent sniffles! Guava, strawberries and kiwi fruit also warrant a thumbs up.

PUMPKIN SEEDS

These nutty nibbles contain L-tryptophan, an essential amino acid that causes a boost in serotonin (the body's natural anti-depressant) and melatonin (our natural sleeping aid). As it's not produced within the body, we have to consume tryptophan-rich foods. Other sources are turkey and baked potatoes.

ALMONDS

Magnesium deficiency, a common side effect of stress, can magnify symptoms. Due to modern farming and processing, much of the food we consume is lacking in this vital mineral – therefore we have to try harder to include foods that are naturally rich in this disease-combating marvel. Nuts, in particular almonds, are rich in magnesium and should be included in small amounts, daily. During your

period, sex hormones fluctuate somewhat and this can result in a magnesium deficiency – combat this by snacking on magnesium-rich foods before the symptoms kick in!

SWISS CHARD

During periods of stress, we excrete more potassium than usual, which can lead to some pretty unpleasant side effects over time. Almost every organ, cell and tissue needs potassium in order to function optimally. It also aids smooth muscle contraction (including the muscles that control digestion, which is why stress and irritable bowels often go hand in hand). Dark leafy greens, such as swiss chard, can go some way in rectifying this.

TEA

Apparently there's a reason us highly stressed Brits stick the kettle on when things get too much. According to a study conducted by University College London, four cups of black tea per day may promote a feeling of calm and aid in de-stressing. If you find you're caffeine sensitive,

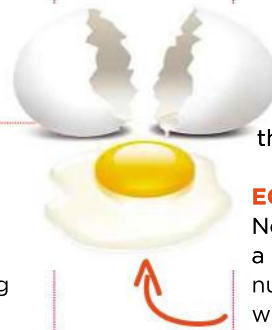
stick to herbal teas, such as chamomile, or try Pukka's Night Time tea for a soothing alternative. Probably best to avoid the biscuits, though!

EGGS

Not only are eggs rich in a whole host of valuable nutrients, including zinc, which is an essential immune booster, but they are also one of the best sources of protein around. Our protein stores are used up quickly during periods of stress and, considering protein is used in almost every function right down to cellular level, it's essential that stores are replenished regularly. Keep your emotional and physical wellbeing on the straight and narrow by including 20g protein (80g turkey or tuna) with each main meal and 10g protein (100g Greek yogurt or two small boiled eggs) as part of a healthy snack twice a day. Other sources of complete protein include meat, fish, dairy products and quinoa.

HONEY

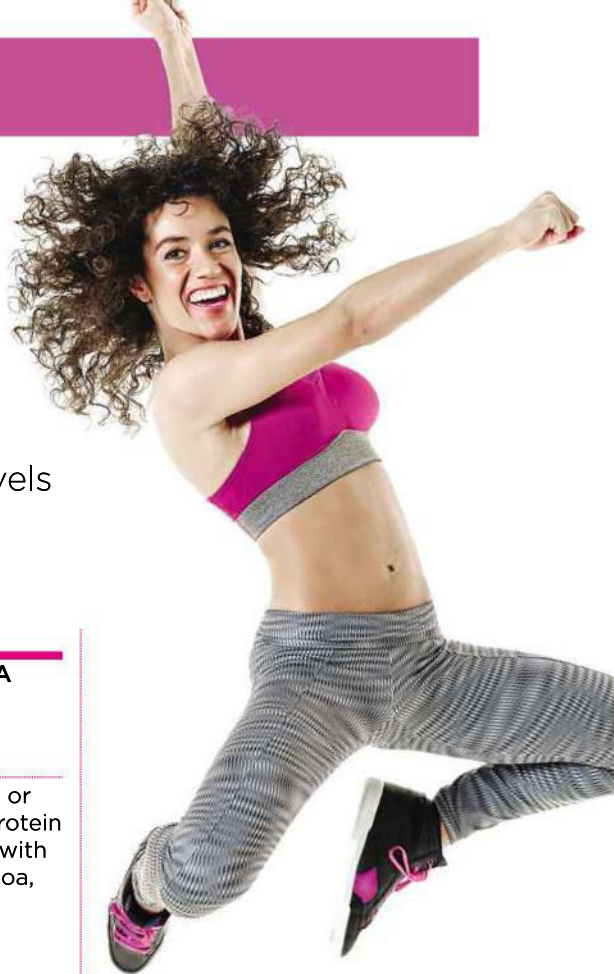
Sleep-inducing and tranquilising, honey truly is one of nature's best remedies. Try drizzling over your morning oats for breakfast or stirring into some warm milk for a blissful night's rest.



Energy on the go!

Boost your pre- or post-workout energy levels with these low-carb bites and beverages.

Words: Charlotte Buxton



9BAR SUPER SEEDS PEANUT

A gluten-free bar, ideal before or after a workout, with 9.9g protein and 276 calories.

Available in 16 flavours.

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STEALTH SUPER HYDRATION DRINK

Contains balanced electrolytes to keep you hydrated, plus nitric oxide modulators to protect the gut and drive hydration. 43 calories per serving.

www.secret-training.cc



PULSIN RASPBERRY & GOJI RAW CHOC BROWNIE

This delicious bar has just 216 calories and 4.8g protein.

A perfect breakfast treat, between-meal pick-me-up or dessert alternative.

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A delicious pre- or post-workout protein and energy hit, with oats, natural vanilla, rich cocoa, 9g protein and 252 calories. The perfect chocolate fix!

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A tasty protein fix, packed with the nutritional goodness of blanched almonds and walnuts. Each

pack contains 6.9g protein and 228 calories.

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WYLDSSON PROMIX TUBES

Delicious nuts, seeds and fruit in handy and hygienic packaging. Multiple flavours available.

Strawberry & Raspberry contains 246 calories and 9.3g protein.

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STEALTH REAL FRUIT ENERGY GEL

The taste of a smoothie and the energy of a gel. Contains multiple energy substrates,

with sticky rice starch and fructose. 87 calories per sachet.

www.secret-training.cc



It can be easy to underestimate the amount of calories you consume. Understanding food portions can help you keep the weight off

Even healthy foods can lead to weight gain if you eat more than you need. At the same time, you need to ensure you get enough fruit and vegetables, to stay healthy.

So, what makes up one portion of your five a day? The answer is 80g. But what does this actually look like? Here's a handy guide to food portion sizes...

Small-sized fresh fruit

A portion equals two or more, such as two plums, three apricots, seven strawberries or 14 cherries.

Medium-sized fresh fruit

A portion is one fruit, such as one apple, banana or pear.

Large fresh fruit

A portion is half a grapefruit,

one 5cm slice of melon, one large slice of pineapple or two 5cm slices of mango.

Dried fruit

A portion is 30g. This is roughly a heaped tablespoon of raisins or sultanas, two figs, three prunes or one handful of dried banana chips.

Fruit juice

A 150ml glass of unsweetened 100% juice. Only one glass counts towards your total five-a-day portions.

Green vegetables

Two broccoli spears, or four heaped tablespoons of cooked kale, spinach, spring greens or green beans count as one portion.

Cooked vegetables

Three heaped tablespoons of cooked veg, such as carrots

or peas, or eight cauliflower florets, count as one portion.

Salad vegetables

Three sticks of celery, a 5cm piece of cucumber, or seven cherry tomatoes count as one portion.

Tinned and frozen veg

Three heaped tablespoons count as a portion. For tinned, choose no added salt or sugar.

Pulses and beans

Three heaped tablespoons of beans, such as kidney beans, or chickpeas count as a portion each.

What about other foods?

Here are the NHS guidelines for the appropriate portion sizes for some healthy foods:

Lean meat or oily fish 80g (the size of a deck of cards).

White fish 150g (the size of a cheque book).

Pasta and rice 150g (the size of a tennis ball).

Potatoes 180g (the size of a computer mouse).

Cheese 30g (the size of a standard matchbox)

Butter 5g (a teaspoon).

Olive oil 11g (a tablespoon).

How much protein?

As a rule, 10 to 15 per cent of your total calories should come from protein. So, if you consume 2,000 calories a day, 200 should be from protein, or about 50g. Try to eat one gram of protein per one kilogram of body weight, or around 0.4 grams per pound.



YOUR 7-DAY MEAL PLAN

Top tip

Try matcha green tea powder, a known natural fat burner. Green tea extract is rich in catechins, which has thermogenic properties and promotes fat oxidation. Add a quarter or half a teaspoon to hot water and drink, stir into a pot of plain yogurt, or add to a smoothie.

Kick-start your weight loss!

This week is designed to boost metabolism. The focus is on protein-rich meals, with plenty of veg and some healthy fats. This will stop you feeling hungry, making it easier to stick to the plan.

Each day throughout the eight-week plan, remember to stay hydrated, opt for low-glycaemic carbs, include good fats (such as oily fish, nuts, seeds, olives and avocado), as these stimulate metabolism, and only snack when hungry – the snacks in the plan are suggestions. Don't snack if you're not hungry!

week 1	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
BREAKFAST	Fat-burning green smoothie Blend together a handful of spinach leaves, ¼ cucumber, ½ tsp matcha green tea powder, 100g chunks of pineapple (fresh or frozen), 1 scoop vanilla protein powder and 250ml water.	Overnight porridge The night before, soak 2 tbsp oats, 15g chia seeds and 15g flaxseeds in almond milk. Cook in the microwave or on the hob in the morning. Top with 50g blueberries.	Morning protein shake Blend a handful of spinach leaves, 1 orange, ½ banana, 1 scoop protein powder and almond milk until creamy.
LUNCH	2-egg omelette with 30g feta cheese and a large mixed salad.	Smoked mackerel fillet (120g) served with large handful of mixed lettuce leaves, ½ chopped cucumber, 2 chopped tomatoes and ½ chopped red pepper. Drizzle with 1 tsp olive oil and balsamic vinegar to taste.	Marinated salmon with salad Buy a pre-cooked marinated salmon fillet (100g). Serve with a large mixed salad and toss in ½ can cooked chickpeas.
DINNER	Pan-fried sea bass (150g) with 100g each of steamed broccoli, green beans and asparagus.	Chicken curry Heat 1 tsp coconut oil in a pan. Add 1 tsp Thai curry paste and ½ chopped onion, and stir-fry for 1 minute. Add 120g cubed chicken breast and 100ml chicken stock. Bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes or until cooked. Tip in 150g frozen mixed vegetables, cover and simmer for a further 5 minutes until cooked.	Cauliflower-fried rice Blitz ½ a small cauliflower in a food processor to form 'rice' pieces. Sauté in a little coconut oil with a chopped courgette, ½ onion, 1 garlic clove, and flavour with tamari soy sauce and a little sesame oil. Toss in 150g cooked prawns or tofu chunks to serve.
SNACKS	Bag of kale crisps, 2 oatcakes with 1 tsp nut butter.	½ avocado, CO YO matcha green tea yogurt.	UGG paleo muffin (www.uggfoods.com), 30g nuts.





OUR FAVOURITE RECIPE

CHICKEN CURRY















INGREDIENTS

- 1 tsp coconut oil
- 1 tsp Thai curry paste
- ½ onion, chopped
- 120g chicken breast, cubed
- 100ml chicken stock
- 150g frozen mixed vegetables

PREPARATION

Heat the coconut oil in a pan. Add the curry paste and onion, and stir-fry for 1 minute. Add the chicken breast and stock, bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes, or until cooked. Add the frozen vegetables, cover and simmer for a further 5 minutes until cooked through.



THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<p>Scrambled egg with smoked salmon Scramble 1 egg with 30g smoked salmon and a handful of spinach. Serve with a handful of cherry tomatoes and sliced cucumber.</p> 	<p>Chia bowl The night before, soak 2 tbsp chia seeds in 250ml almond milk. In the morning, blend with 100g fresh or frozen berries and serve with 1 tbsp Greek yogurt.</p> 	<p>Chocolate shake Blend together 1 banana, scoop of chocolate protein powder, ½ tsp maca powder (optional), 60g mixed frozen berries and almond milk.</p> 	<p>Berry fruit salad Mix together ½ cup each of blueberries and raspberries, plus 5 sliced strawberries. Top with 100g TOTAL 0% Greek yogurt.</p> 
<p>½ carton New Covent Garden Bean & Vegetable Soup Serve with 60g low-fat cottage cheese, ½ avocado and 2 oatcakes.</p> 	<p>100g cottage cheese served with a small baked sweet potato and large mixed salad.</p> 	<p>Ham and feta frittata Cook 2 beaten eggs in a pan with a little coconut oil. Scatter over 2 slices chopped wafer ham and 30g crumbled feta cheese. Place under the grill to brown the top. Serve with a large green salad.</p>	<p>Easy tuna salad Chop a little gem lettuce and mix with ½ chopped cucumber, ½ chopped red pepper, 2 sticks of celery, 30g walnuts and top with 150g drained tuna (in water). Drizzle with 1 tbsp plain yogurt and a little lemon juice.</p>
<p>Spicy turkey mince Heat 1 tsp coconut oil in a pan and add 150g extra-lean turkey mince with a spoonful of Thai red chilli paste, ½ can chopped tomatoes, ½ chopped red pepper and 4 sliced mushrooms. Cook for 10 minutes. Serve with a large mixed salad or steamed green vegetables.</p> 	<p>Pesto-baked cod Spread 1 tbsp pesto onto a 125g cod fillet. Bake in the oven for 10 minutes or until cooked. Serve with 100g each of cooked courgette, asparagus and broccoli.</p> 	<p>Chicken stir-fry Heat a little oil in a pan and stir-fry 150g chopped chicken breast for 2-3 minutes. Add a bag of stir-fry vegetables, a splash of sweet chilli sauce and soy sauce, and cook until the chicken is cooked through.</p> 	<p>120g lean steak Trim off any fat, grill, and serve with 100g each of steamed broccoli and cauliflower florets, and 100g carrots.</p> 
<p>Beetroot juice or Beet It shot, 30g trail mix.</p> 	<p>1 hard-boiled egg, ½ grapefruit.</p> 	<p>100g natural yogurt with ½ tsp matcha green tea powder, celery with 2 tsp nut butter.</p> 	<p>Protein shake (add ½ tsp matcha green tea powder), 2 oatcakes with 2 tsp nut butter.</p> 

YOUR 7-DAY MEAL PLAN

Top tip






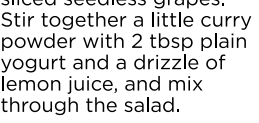

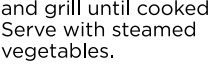




Make use of bags of frozen vegetables – simply blanch in a pan or steam, for a speedy addition to meals.



Keep it lean!

This week, we focus on lean protein, to help boost metabolism and support muscle recovery after exercise. Protein is also more satiating than fat or carbohydrate, so you're less likely to overeat.



week 2	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
BREAKFAST	Mushroom omelette Heat a little oil in a pan and sauté 4 sliced mushrooms. Pour in 2 beaten eggs and cook until lightly golden. Serve with 30g low-fat cottage cheese. 	Protein porridge Cook 3 tbsp porridge oats in water until soft. Stir in 1 scoop protein powder and 2 tbsp natural yogurt to serve. 	2 scrambled eggs with wilted spinach and chopped tomatoes. 
LUNCH	Quick bean chilli Place ½ chopped onion, a pinch of chilli flakes, ½ can mixed beans in chilli sauce, ½ can chopped tomatoes, ½ chopped red pepper and 1 chopped courgette in a pan, and simmer for 10 minutes until tender. Serve with green salad. 	100g lean roast beef slices served with large mixed salad. Mix a little horseradish sauce with plain yogurt and drizzle over the salad. 	Fruity chicken salad Mix together 1 sliced cooked chicken breast, ½ chopped cucumber, 1 chopped tomato, 2 chopped celery stalks, 1 chopped spring onion and a handful of sliced seedless grapes. Stir together a little curry powder with 2 tbsp plain yogurt and a drizzle of lemon juice, and mix through the salad. 
DINNER	Grilled cod fillet with baked sweet potato and a steamed bag of frozen broccoli and cauliflower florets, or a mixed salad. 	Turkey burgers with steamed green vegetables. Use 150g extra-lean turkey mince and flavour with garlic and onion. Shape into patties and grill until cooked. Serve with steamed vegetables. 	Olive-baked fish Spread 1 tbsp tapenade over 120g cod fillet. Grill for 10-15 minutes, or until cooked. Serve with steamed vegetables and 30g cooked brown rice. 
SNACKS	Protein shake, 2 tbsp low-fat cottage cheese with celery sticks. 	Handful of olives, 1 apple. 	2 tbsp cottage cheese with celery sticks, protein shake. 



OUR FAVOURITE RECIPE

FRUITY CHICKEN SALAD

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cooked chicken breast, sliced
- ½ cucumber
- 1 tomato
- 2 celery stalks
- 1 spring onion
- Handful seedless grapes, sliced
- Curry powder
- 2 tbsp plain yogurt
- Lemon juice

PREPARATION

Slice the cucumber, tomato, celery, spring onion and grapes, and mix with the chicken. In a separate bowl, stir together a little curry powder with the plain yogurt and a drizzle of lemon juice, and then stir the mixture through the salad.



THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Protein pancakes Mash together 1 small banana with 2 eggs and 1 scoop vanilla protein powder. Heat a little oil in a pan and drop in spoonfuls of the batter. Cook on each side until golden. Serve with a spoonful of natural yogurt.	Soaked muesli The night before, soak 40g muesli in almond milk in the fridge. In the morning, top with a handful of berries.	Matcha protein smoothie Blend together 100g frozen mango, 1 scoop vanilla protein powder, a handful of spinach leaves, 250ml coconut water and ½ tsp matcha green tea.	Spicy tofu scramble In a frying pan, sauté 100g chopped Cauldron plain tofu, 2 chopped spring onions, a pinch of chilli powder, ½ chopped red pepper and a handful of spinach leaves.
Seafood salad Mix 100g mixed cooked seafood with a little lemon juice and olive oil, and serve with a bag of mixed green leaves, ½ chopped red pepper, 4 cherry tomatoes and ½ chopped cucumber.	½ carton New Covent Garden Lentil & Bacon Soup , plus 1 boiled egg and 2 rice cakes.	Mixed bean salad Mix together ½ can mixed beans, 50g cooked sweetcorn, 1 chopped tomato, 2 chopped celery stalks, 1 little gem lettuce and ½ chopped avocado. Drizzle with lemon juice to serve.	Curry chicken salad Combine 120g chopped cooked chicken breast with 2 tbsp yogurt, 1 tsp mango chutney and 1 tsp curry powder. Serve with a mixed salad.
One-pot turkey chilli In a pan, add 120g lean turkey mince with ½ can mixed beans in chilli sauce and ½ can chopped tomatoes. Add a pinch of chilli powder to taste and 200g mixed frozen vegetables. Cover and simmer for 10-15 minutes, until the meat is cooked through.	Thai chicken kebabs Toss 150g cubed chicken breast in 1 tbsp Thai curry paste mixed with 1 tbsp coconut milk. Thread onto skewers with chunks of red pepper, red onion and button mushrooms. Grill until cooked and golden. Serve with steamed vegetables.	Salmon with pesto vegetable noodles Grill a salmon fillet until cooked. Use a spiraliser to make noodles from 1 carrot and 1 courgette. Sauté briefly in a pan with a little oil to soften, then toss in 1-2 tbsp prepared pesto. Serve with the salmon and a green salad.	Stir-fry tofu or prawns Stir-fry 150g tofu pieces or cooked prawns with a bag of mixed stir-fry vegetables, grated ginger, garlic and tamari soy sauce. Serve with 30g wholegrain rice.
30g sliced ham , handful of celery sticks and 2 tbsp hummus.	Ugg Muffin , 150g melon.	Hard boiled egg , ½ grapefruit.	Protein shake , 8 strawberries.

YOUR 7-DAY MEAL PLAN

Top tip

Try oats! Packed with slow-release carbohydrates and plenty of soluble fibre, they will sustain your energy levels through the day, helping you avoid slumps. Keep a packet of oatcakes in your bag and munch on them if you feel hungry.

Boost fibre

Including more fibre-rich foods in your diet will help to fill you up and stabilise your blood sugar levels, which in turn will help to curb those cravings!



week
3

BREAKFAST

MONDAY

100g low-fat Greek yogurt with 1 cup fresh berries and 2 tbsp low-sugar granola.



TUESDAY

Overnight muesli The night before, soak 2 tbsp gluten-free oats in water with 1 tbsp mixed seeds and 1 tsp ground flaxseed. In the morning, stir in 1 grated apple and top with a little plain yogurt.

WEDNESDAY

Berry protein shake Blend together 50g frozen berries, 1 banana, a handful of spinach leaves, 1 scoop protein powder and 250ml almond milk.



LUNCH

Tuna pita bread Fill 1 wholewheat pita with a mixture of 100g tuna in water (drained), 1 tbsp low-fat yogurt, and sliced lettuce and tomato. Serve with a mixed salad.



Pineapple chicken salad Mix together 120g shredded cooked chicken breast with 50g pineapple chunks, ¼ chopped avocado, spinach and watercress leaves, ½ can mixed beans and 2 chopped tomatoes.

Kale, chicken and quinoa salad Sprinkle 100g chopped kale with sea salt and 1 tbsp lemon juice, then massage together to wilt the kale. Add 100g shredded cooked chicken breast, 30g ready-to-eat quinoa, 1 chopped tomato, a handful of pitted olives and chopped red pepper.

DINNER

Meatballs with courgette noodles Form 150g extra-lean mince into balls. Lightly fry for 6-7 minutes in a pan until golden. Tip in a can of chopped tomatoes and simmer. Spiralise a courgette to form noodles and add to the pan. Accompany with salad.

Prawn stir-fry Pan fry a bag of stir-fry vegetables with soy sauce and a little chopped garlic. Add 120g cooked prawns to serve.



2 vegetable/tofu burgers with a small baked sweet potato and a large mixed salad.



SNACKS

2 oatcakes with 2 tbsp hummus, 1 hard-boiled egg.



1 bag of kale crisps, protein smoothie.



100g natural yogurt with handful of goji berries, 1 apple.





OUR FAVOURITE RECIPE

LAMB STEAK WITH MINTED CUCUMBER














INGREDIENTS

- Lean lamb steak
- Fresh mint, chopped
- ¼ cucumber, chopped
- Green beans
- 2 tbsp natural yogurt
- Broccoli
- Asparagus

PREPARATION

Grill the lamb steak for 6-7 minutes, until cooked. Mix the chopped cucumber with the natural yogurt and a handful of chopped fresh mint. Steam the green beans, broccoli and asparagus, and serve.



THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<p>Chia vanilla pudding The night before, soak 3 tbsp chia seeds with 250ml almond milk and 1 tbsp vanilla extract. In the morning, stir through a little plain yogurt to serve.</p> 	<p>Creamy pear green smoothie Blend together a handful of spinach, almond milk, 1 ripe pear and ½ tsp matcha green tea powder.</p> 	<p>Protein porridge Cook 3 tbsp porridge oats in water and stir in 1 tbsp protein powder. Top with a handful of berries.</p> 	<p>2 poached eggs with sautéed mushrooms and tomatoes.</p> 
<p>Goat's cheese omelette Beat 2 eggs and cook with 30g goat's cheese. Serve with a large mixed salad.</p> 	<p>Prawn, orange and avocado salad Chop a little gem lettuce and mix with ¼ chopped cucumber, ½ chopped avocado and 4 halved cherry tomatoes. Segment an orange, reserving the juice, then mix the juice with 1 tsp olive oil. Add the orange to the salad and drizzle over the dressing.</p> 	<p>Mixed bean salad Toss 1 can mixed beans with romaine lettuce, 50g cooked sweetcorn, chopped tomato and cucumber, and serve with 1 small pita bread.</p> 	<p>Grilled lamb steak with minted cucumber Grill a lean lamb steak for 6-7 minutes, until cooked through. Mix ¼ chopped cucumber with 2 tbsp natural yogurt and a handful of chopped fresh mint. Serve with steamed green beans, broccoli and asparagus.</p>
<p>Roasted salmon with lentils Roast 120g salmon fillet in the oven with a little olive oil for 10 minutes, or until tender. In a pan, sauté 2 chopped tomatoes with 2 chopped spring onions and ½ can cooked lentils, and serve with the salmon and salad.</p>	<p>2 bean burgers served with chopped mixed salad and a small sweet potato baked.</p> 	<p>Coconut chicken curry Sauté 120g chopped chicken breast with chopped red onion and garlic until golden. Add 1 tsp Thai curry paste, 150ml coconut milk, 1 chopped tomato and 100g green beans. Simmer until cooked. Serve with mixed salad.</p>	<p>Can of sardines or mackerel, 1 small sweet potato and mixed salad.</p> 
<p>2 tbsp hummus with vegetable sticks, ½ grapefruit.</p> 	<p>2 oatcakes with 2 tsp nut butter, 30g cashew nuts.</p> 	<p>½ grapefruit, 1 hard-boiled egg.</p> 	<p>100g mixed berries, 2 oatcakes with nut butter.</p> 

YOUR 7-DAY MEAL PLAN

Top tip













Great healthy fat options can be found in oily fish, avocado, nuts, seeds and olives.



HEALTHY FATS

Don't shun healthy fats if you want to feel great and lose weight! Certain fats, such as omega 3, found in oily fish, have been shown to boost fat burning – aim for three to four portions this week. Adding in some healthy fat also leaves you feeling fuller for longer and more satisfied after a meal.



week 4	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
BREAKFAST	Smoked salmon scramble Scramble 2 eggs with 30g smoked salmon. Serve with chopped tomatoes. 	Banana porridge Cook 3 tbsp oats in water, then stir in 1 chopped banana and 2 tbsp natural yogurt to serve. 	Yogurt with berries Top 150g 0% TOTAL Greek yogurt with 100g mixed berries and 1 tbsp seeds. 
LUNCH	Courgette feta salad Using a potato peeler, slice long strips from one courgette. Place in a bowl with a bag of mixed salad leaves and ½ chopped red pepper, 30g olives and 50g crumbled feta cheese. 	Salmon nuggets Cut 150g skinless salmon fillet into thick strips. Dip in egg and coat in ground almonds. Pan fry in a little coconut oil until golden. Serve with salad. 	Quinoa and prawn salad Mix 30g cooked quinoa with 100g cooked prawns, a handful of spinach leaves, chopped cucumber, tomato and red onion. Mix together a little lemon juice and olive oil, and pour over to serve. 
DINNER	Spiced mackerel Make 4-5 deep diagonal slashes into the skin of 2 mackerel fillets. Mix 2 tsp curry paste with a little olive oil and 1 tbsp lemon juice, and brush over the mackerel. Grill for 5-8 minutes until cooked through. Serve with a large mixed salad and 1 small sweet potato. 	Asian tofu Pan-fry 100g cubed tofu in a little coconut oil until golden. Add a 200g bag of stir-fry vegetables and 2 tbsp black bean sauce. Serve with 30g cooked rice. 	Minute steak Use a thin, minute beef steak and bash between clingfilm to flatten. Dust with a little flour and paprika, then pan-fry for 2-3 minutes each side. Serve with a small baked sweet potato and steamed vegetables. 
SNACKS	30g walnuts, 1 tbsp nut butter with 1 sliced apple. 	Handful of nuts, protein shake. 	Carrot sticks with 2 tbsp soft cheese, ½ grapefruit. 



OUR FAVOURITE RECIPE

SPICED MACKEREL











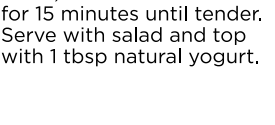
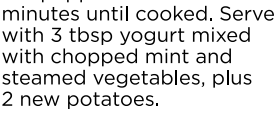




INGREDIENTS

- 2 mackerel fillets
- 2 tsp curry paste
- Olive oil
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- Mixed salad
- 1 small sweet potato, baked

PREPARATION

Make 4-5 deep diagonal slashes into the mackerel skin. Mix the curry paste, a little olive oil and the lemon juice together, then brush over the mackerel. Grill for 5-8 minutes, until cooked. Serve with a large mixed salad and the baked sweet potato.



THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Spicy scrambled eggs Scramble 2 eggs with a few chilli flakes. Serve with mixed vegetables and prepared salsa. 	Yogurt granola pot Spoon 150g Greek yogurt or coconut yogurt into a bowl. Top with 2 tbsp granola and 1 chopped pear. 	Matcha protein shake Blend together a handful of spinach leaves, ½ tsp matcha green tea powder, 1 banana, 1 kiwi fruit, a scoop of protein powder and water. 	2 scrambled eggs with grilled tomatoes and mushrooms. 
Hot smoked salmon salad Flake a cooked hot smoked salmon fillet into a bowl of mixed lettuce leaves, chopped tomatoes, beetroot, cucumber and olives. Drizzle with balsamic vinegar to taste. 	Mixed bean and vegetable soup Serve with 60g cottage cheese, a side salad and 2 oatcakes. 	Spicy baked eggs Sauté ½ onion in a pan with 400g can chopped tomatoes, a little tabasco sauce and ½ chopped red pepper for 5 minutes. Crack in two eggs, cover the pan and simmer for 5 minutes, until the eggs are cooked. Serve with a mixed salad. 	Bowl of New Covent Garden Lentil & Bacon Soup , a mixed salad, and 2 wholegrain rice cakes with nut butter. 
Grilled mustard chicken Place a chicken breast between clingfilm and bash until thin. Smear with Dijon mustard, then pan-fry on both sides until golden. Add a little chicken stock and crème fraîche and stir to make a sauce. Cover the pan and simmer for 5-6 minutes, until the chicken is cooked through. Serve with 30g cooked wholegrain rice and mixed salad. 	Baked fish with pesto Spread 1 tbsp pesto over a cod fillet. Grill for 8-10 minutes and serve with a selection of steamed vegetables. 	Quick chilli Add 120g extra-lean lamb or beef mince to a pan with ½ can kidney beans in chilli sauce and 150g mixed frozen vegetables. Pour in a little stock, cover and simmer for 15 minutes until tender. Serve with salad and top with 1 tbsp natural yogurt. 	Lamb kebabs Marinate 120g cubed lamb in 2 tsp sesame oil, 1 tsp honey, grated ginger and garlic. Thread onto skewers with cherry tomatoes and chunks of red pepper. Grill for 8-10 minutes until cooked. Serve with 3 tbsp yogurt mixed with chopped mint and steamed vegetables, plus 2 new potatoes. 
Small bowl of blueberries, protein smoothie. 	1 hard-boiled egg, celery sticks and 1 tbsp nut butter. 	1 apple, handful of beef jerky. 	8 strawberries, 2 tbsp cottage cheese with celery sticks. 

YOUR 7-DAY MEAL PLAN








Top tip

Try maca powder. Maca is an adrenal adaptogen herb, meaning it helps the body cope with stress. Available as a powder, add it to smoothies, porridge or desserts. Cinnamon also improves insulin function and balances blood sugar. It's delicious added to porridge, smoothies or stewed fruit.

Tackle stress

The stress hormone cortisol can increase food cravings, blood sugar imbalances and tummy fat. This week, include foods to help control those cravings and tackle stress.



week 5	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
BREAKFAST	Chocolate maca shake Blend 250ml almond milk, 1 tbsp raw cacao powder, 1 scoop of protein powder, a handful of spinach leaves, 1 tsp maca powder, a pinch of cinnamon and 1 banana.	Protein porridge Cook 30g oats in water. Stir in 1 tsp maca powder and 1 scoop vanilla protein powder. Top with 1 tbsp mixed seeds to serve. 	Matcha green tea chia pudding The night before, soak 2 tbsp chia seeds with ½ tsp matcha green tea powder, 250ml coconut milk and 1 tsp xylitol. In the morning, top with a handful of berries. 
LUNCH	Sardine salad Toss a can of sardines in tomato sauce into a mixed salad and serve with 2 oatcakes. 	Red pepper and halloumi skewers Mix the juice of ½ lemon with 1 tsp olive oil and chopped mint. Pour over chunks of red pepper and 50g cubed halloumi. Thread onto skewers and grill for 8 minutes. Serve with a green salad.	Lentil and egg salad Boil an egg for 6 minutes, then cool and peel. Tip ½ can of cooked lentils into a bowl with chopped little gem lettuce, 2 chopped spring onions, ½ chopped red pepper and 1 chopped tomato. Add to the egg and drizzle with balsamic vinegar.
DINNER	Meatballs with vegetable noodles Roll 120g extra-lean mince mixed with a little garlic into small balls. Use a spiraliser to make noodles from 1 carrot and 1 courgette. Sauté the meatballs in a little coconut oil until golden. Add ½ can chopped tomatoes and simmer for 5 minutes. Toss in the noodles and cook until soft.	Turkey laksa Sauté 2 tsp Thai curry paste in a pan with 120g cubed turkey meat for 1 minute. Add 250ml chicken stock and simmer for 5 minutes. Pour in 100ml coconut milk and a bag of mixed stir-fry vegetables. Simmer for 6-8 minutes until cooked through.	Grilled salmon Grill a 120g salmon fillet until cooked, and serve with steamed mixed vegetables and 30g cooked wholegrain rice. 
SNACKS	Stewed apple with cinnamon , 30g nuts. 	1 wedge of melon , 150g 0% Greek yogurt. 	30g cottage cheese with vegetable sticks , 1 apple. 



OUR FAVOURITE RECIPE

TURKEY LAKSA







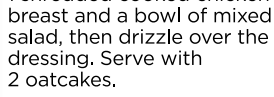


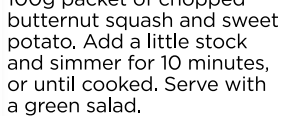






INGREDIENTS

- 2 tsp Thai curry paste
- 120g turkey meat, cubed
- 250ml chicken stock
- 100ml coconut milk
- 1 bag mixed stir-fry vegetables

PREPARATION

Sauté the Thai curry paste in a pan with the turkey meat for 1 minute. Add the chicken stock and simmer for 5 minutes. Pour in the coconut milk and the bag of mixed stir-fry vegetables. Simmer for 6-8 minutes, until cooked through.



THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
30g smoked salmon, $\frac{1}{2}$ avocado and 2 wholegrain rice cakes. 	Tofu scramble Mash 100g firm tofu with 2 chopped spring onions, a handful of spinach and a chopped tomato. Heat a little oil in a pan, then sauté for 4-5 minutes until cooked. 	Maca porridge Stir 1 tsp maca powder into 30g oats and cook in milk. Top with a spoonful of yogurt to serve. 	Berry oatly protein shake Blend together 250ml almond milk, a handful of mixed berries, 1 tbsp oats, 1 scoop protein powder and a dash of cinnamon. 
Quinoa and feta salad Toss together 30g cooked quinoa, 50g crumbled feta cheese, 2 chopped tomatoes, $\frac{1}{4}$ cucumber, 30g olives and $\frac{1}{2}$ chopped red pepper. 	Mayo prawn salad Mix 2 tsp mayonnaise with 100g cooked prawns and serve with a large mixed salad and 2 oatcakes. 	Chicken and mango salad Mix a little curry powder with 2 tbsp yogurt, 1 tbsp mango chutney and 1 tbsp lemon juice. Stir together 1 shredded cooked chicken breast and a bowl of mixed salad, then drizzle over the dressing. Serve with 2 oatcakes. 	Smoked salmon frittata Beat 2 eggs with 50g smoked salmon and a handful of frozen peas. Cook in a pan over a low heat for 10 minutes until cooked. Serve with salad. 
Cod provençal Pan-fry 120g cod fillet until cooked. Heat a 400g can of ratatouille and serve with salad. 	Lentil curry Heat a little oil in a pan and sauté $\frac{1}{2}$ chopped red onion with 2 tsp curry paste. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ can cooked lentils, $\frac{1}{2}$ can chopped tomatoes, 100g packet of chopped butternut squash and sweet potato. Add a little stock and simmer for 10 minutes, or until cooked. Serve with a green salad. 	Stir-fry tofu Stir-fry 150g tofu pieces with a bag of mixed stir-fry vegetables, grated ginger, garlic and tamari soy sauce. Serve with a side salad. 	Lamb with minted beans Season a 120g lean lamb steak. Pan-fry for 3-4 minutes on each side. Steam 100g each of green beans and broccoli, then toss in a little mint sauce. Serve with a side salad. 
Ugg muffin, bowl of berries. 	Stewed apple with cinnamon, protein shake. 	Bowl of berries, 1 hard-boiled egg. 	Bag of kale crisps, 1 apple with 2 tsp nut butter. 

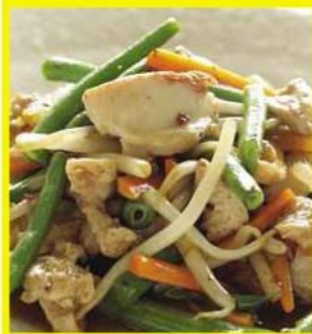
YOUR 7-DAY MEAL PLAN










Top tip

Eggs are a wonderful source of cheap, high-quality protein. Versatile and quick to cook, they are perfect for a speedy meal. You can also use protein powders, as they're easy and convenient when time is short – use them in breakfast smoothies or post-workout, to support recovery.

Muscle up

By now, you should be noticing improvements in your body shape and muscle tone. This week, to complement your exercise plan, we focus on building toned muscle, by including sufficient lean protein at each meal and snack.



week 6	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
BREAKFAST	Spinach scrambled eggs Scramble 2 eggs with a handful of chopped spinach and serve with 30g cottage cheese. 	Creamy protein tropical shake Blend together 250ml coconut milk or water, 100g pineapple, a handful of spinach leaves and ¼ avocado. 	Protein porridge Cook 30g oats in water, then stir in a scoop of protein powder and top with 2 tbsp yogurt and 30g berries. 
LUNCH	Tuna bean salad Toss together 100g canned butter beans, 100g drained tuna with a bag of mixed salad, a handful of cherry tomatoes and olives. Drizzle with lemon juice and olive oil to serve.	Beef wrap Spread a wholegrain wrap with a little mustard or hummus. Layer with slices of roast beef and lettuce. Roll up and serve with a large mixed salad.	½ carton of bean and vegetable soup Serve with 2 raw crackers and a mixed salad. 
DINNER	Curried chicken Heat 2 tsp curry paste with ½ chopped red onion and 120g cubed chicken breast. Sauté for 5 minutes, then add a bag of mixed vegetables and a can of chopped tomatoes. Simmer for 5-10 minutes until cooked through. Serve with 30g cooked rice.	Grilled soy fish Drizzle a salmon fillet with soy sauce. Grill for 5-6 minutes until cooked through. Serve with a selection of steamed vegetables and green salad. 	Turkey burgers with salsa and salad Mix together 120g lean turkey mince with a little onion and garlic, and shape into patties. Pan-fry for 6-8 minutes until cooked. Serve with a mixed salad and prepared salsa. 
SNACKS	2 tbsp cottage cheese with a slice of melon, 30g nuts. 	Bowl of berries with 100g Greek yogurt, 30g nuts. 	1 hard-boiled egg, Ugg muffin. 



OUR FAVOURITE RECIPE

COTTAGE CHEESE FRITTATA








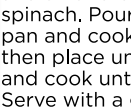








INGREDIENTS

- 2 eggs
- 30g cottage cheese
- Handful of spinach, chopped
- Green salad

PREPARATION

Beat together the eggs, then mix in the cottage cheese and chopped spinach. Pour into a frying pan and cook for 5 minutes, then place under the grill and cook until golden. Serve with the green salad.



THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
50g cottage cheese, 1 chopped tomato, a wedge of melon and 2 oatcakes. 	Cherry protein shake Blend together 100g frozen pitted cherries with 1 scoop protein powder and 250ml almond milk. 	2-egg omelette with chopped tomatoes and spinach. 	Banana protein pancakes Blend 1 banana with 1 egg and a scoop of protein powder. Heat a little oil in a frying pan and place spoonfuls of the batter in the pan. Cook until golden on each side. Serve with ½ cup blueberries and a spoonful of yogurt. 
2-egg omelette with 30g wafer ham. Serve with a mixed salad. 	Mackerel and beetroot salad Flake a hot smoked mackerel fillet into a large mixed salad, with 2 sliced cooked beetroots. Mix together 1 tsp horseradish sauce with 2 tbsp natural yogurt and drizzle over the salad. 	½ can lentil and bacon soup, salad and 1 sliced cooked chicken breast. 	Cottage cheese frittata Beat together 2 eggs, then mix in 30g cottage cheese and a handful of chopped spinach. Pour into a frying pan and cook for 5 minutes, then place under the grill and cook until golden. Serve with a green salad. 
Miso grilled cod Mix together 1 tbsp white miso paste with 1 tsp tamari soy sauce and 1 tsp mirin, then spread the mixture over a cod fillet. Place under the grill and cook through. Serve with steamed vegetables. 	Mince with rice Sauté 120g lean mince with ½ chopped red onion in a pan for 2-3 minutes to brown. Add ½ can chopped tomatoes, 200g mixed frozen vegetables and a dash of Worcestershire sauce to taste. Cover and cook for 10-15 minutes until cooked through. Serve with 30g cooked rice. 	Lamb tacos Sauté 100g lamb mince with ½ can chopped tomatoes, a pinch of chilli powder, chopped onion and garlic. Add a handful of frozen vegetables and cook through. Serve in 2 warmed taco shells and accompany with salad. 	Chicken with olives Sauté ½ chopped red onion with 120g chicken cut into strips for 2 minutes until golden. Add a can of chopped tomatoes and 30g black pitted olives. Simmer for 10-15 minutes until cooked. Serve with a mixed salad and 30g cooked quinoa. 
100g Greek yogurt with 1 tbsp goji berries, 30g nuts. 	2 tbsp hummus with carrot sticks, protein shake. 	1 pear, 30g nuts. 	Ugg muffin, 1 apple with 2 tsp nut butter. 

YOUR 7-DAY MEAL PLAN

Spice it up

Adding spices, such as chilli, to dishes is a great way to boost your metabolism, as well as adding more depth of flavour to your savoury dishes.



week
7

BREAKFAST

LUNCH

DINNER

SNACKS

MONDAY

Spicy scramble

Scramble 2 eggs with a dash of Tabasco sauce, plus chopped tomatoes and red pepper. Serve with 2 wholegrain rice cakes.



Grilled spicy sardines

Rub two gutted sardines with a little curry paste. Place on a tray and grill for 6-8 minutes, until cooked through and golden. Serve with a large mixed salad.



Minted lamb steak

Flatten a lamb steak with a rolling pin, brush with oil and pan-fry for 3-4 minutes each side, until cooked. Drizzle with a little mint sauce, and serve with steamed vegetables and salad.

2 oatcakes with 2 tsp nut butter, ½ grapefruit.



TUESDAY

Berry protein shake

Blend 100g frozen berries with 1 scoop protein powder, 250ml almond milk and a handful of spinach leaves.



Kale salad

Place 100g chopped kale into a bowl. Sprinkle with garlic salt and lemon juice, and massage the kale until it wilts. Toss in ½ can chickpeas, 30g feta cheese, a handful of cherry tomatoes and chopped cucumber.

Chilli fish tacos Slice a haddock fillet into thick chunks. Dust in a little flour mixed with chilli powder, then pan-fry on each side until golden. Spoon into two taco shells with lettuce and serve with mixed salad, ½ avocado and ½ can mixed cooked beans.

150g 0% TOTAL Greek Yogurt, 30g nuts.



WEDNESDAY

Oatmeal cinnamon pancakes

Combine 30g oats, 1 tsp cinnamon, 1 banana, ½ tsp baking powder and 1 egg in a blender. Add a little milk if needed, to create a thick batter. Heat a little coconut oil in a pan and fry the batter in batches. Top with a handful of blueberries and 2 tbsp natural yogurt.

Mixed bean tuna salad Toss 200g can cooked mixed beans with a mixed salad and 50g tuna (drained).



Chicken curry Sauté 1 cubed chicken breast in a pan with ½ chopped red chilli and 2 tsp curry paste, until golden. Add 200ml coconut milk, chopped sweet potato, red pepper and green beans, and sauté until cooked through. Serve with 30g cooked brown rice and salad.

30g goji berries, celery sticks with 2 tbsp hummus.





OUR FAVOURITE RECIPE

INDIAN CHICKEN SALAD

















INGREDIENTS

- Chicken breast
- Tandoori spice mix
- 1 tbsp mango
- chutney
- 2 tbsp natural yogurt
- Mixed salad

PREPARATION

Bash the chicken breast with a rolling pin to flatten. Rub with tandoori spice mix and griddle for 3-4 minutes on each side, until cooked. Mix the mango chutney and yogurt together, to form the dressing, then serve together with the mixed salad.






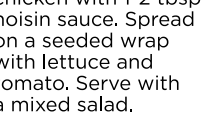

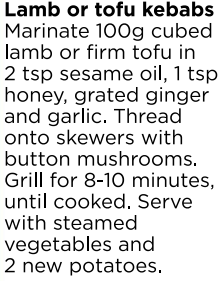





THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<p>2 slices smoked salmon, 1 poached egg and ¼ sliced avocado.</p> 	<p>Chocolate chia pudding The night before, soak 2 tbsp chia seeds in 250ml milk blended with 1 scoop chocolate protein powder. In the morning, top with a handful of blueberries to serve.</p> 	<p>Muesli 40g low-sugar muesli with almond milk, topped with a chopped apple.</p> 	<p>Green protein cleanse Blend together a handful of spinach or kale with 1 banana, 1 kiwi fruit, coconut water and 1 scoop protein powder.</p> 
<p>Grilled mackerel fillet Brush a mackerel fillet with a little Thai curry paste, then grill until cooked through. Serve with 30g cooked quinoa and mixed salad.</p> 	<p>2-egg omelette cooked with a pinch of chilli flakes and 30g goat's cheese. Serve with a mixed salad.</p> 	<p>Crayfish salad Mix 100g cooked crayfish in a little natural yogurt and Dijon mustard. Serve on top of a mixed salad.</p> 	<p>Indian chicken salad Bash a chicken breast with a rolling pin to flatten. Rub with tandoori spice mix and griddle for 3-4 minutes on each side, until cooked. Mix 1 tbsp mango chutney with 2 tbsp natural yogurt, and serve with salad topped with the dressing.</p> 
<p>Turkey burgers Make from 125g lean turkey mince (flavour with salt and pepper) and pan-fry or bake. Serve with steamed vegetables and 1 small sweet potato cut into wedges, then bake until crisp.</p> 	<p>Pan-fried cod with bacon Chop 2 slices of streaky bacon, then sauté in a pan until crisp. Remove from the pan, then pan-fry a 120g cod fillet on each side until cooked through. Serve with steamed broccoli and cauliflower florets.</p> 	<p>Turkey chilli mince In a pan, cook 120g turkey mince with ½ can mixed beans in chilli sauce and ½ can chopped tomatoes, until tender. Serve with steamed vegetables and a green salad.</p> 	<p>Asian seared tuna steak Drizzle a 150g tuna steak with a little sesame oil and tamari soy sauce, then pan-fry until cooked through. Serve with a large mixed salad and steamed vegetables.</p> 
<p>2 squares dark chocolate, 150g mixed berries.</p> 	<p>2 seeded crackers, 1 kiwi fruit with 100g 0% TOTAL Greek yogurt.</p> 	<p>Handful of mixed seeds, beef jerky.</p> 	<p>2 tbsp guacamole with 2 oatcakes, 1 apple.</p> 

YOUR 7-DAY MEAL PLAN

Treat and celebrate!

This week, we include a few treats to keep you motivated. We also increase the carbs a little, to help you transition into a long-term healthy eating lifestyle.



week 8	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
BREAKFAST	<p>½ pink grapefruit, 1 soft-boiled egg and 1 slice wholemeal or gluten-free toast.</p> 	<p>Chocolate protein shake Blend together 250ml almond milk, a handful of baby spinach, 1 banana, 1 tbsp raw cacao powder and a scoop of chocolate protein powder.</p> 	<p>150g 0% TOTAL Greek yogurt, topped with 30g chopped nuts and 100g mixed berries.</p> 
LUNCH	<p>2-egg omelette with 2 slices of chopped bacon. Serve with a large mixed salad.</p> 	<p>Hoisin wrap Mix 100g shredded cooked chicken with 1-2 tbsp hoisin sauce. Spread on a seeded wrap with lettuce and tomato. Serve with a mixed salad.</p> 	<p>Chickpea and tuna salad Toss together 100g drained tuna with ½ can chickpeas and mixed salad. Drizzle with 1 tsp olive oil and lemon juice.</p> 
DINNER	<p>Lamb or tofu kebabs Marinate 100g cubed lamb or firm tofu in 2 tsp sesame oil, 1 tsp honey, grated ginger and garlic. Thread onto skewers with button mushrooms. Grill for 8-10 minutes, until cooked. Serve with steamed vegetables and 2 new potatoes.</p> 	<p>Oriental cod Place a cod fillet on a piece of parchment and drizzle with soy sauce, rice wine and a little honey. Seal and steam for 10 minutes, until cooked. Meanwhile, stir-fry a bag of mixed vegetables.</p> 	<p>Stuffed peppers Halve a red pepper and deseed. Bake in the oven for 10 minutes. Mix together 30g cooked rice, 1 chopped tomato, 2 tsp pesto and 2 tsp Parmesan cheese, then stuff into the pepper halves. Bake for 10 minutes to heat through and serve with a mixed salad.</p> 
SNACKS	<p>2 squares of dark chocolate, kale crisps.</p> 	<p>Nakd bar, 150g plain yogurt with a handful of blueberries.</p> 	<p>30g trail mix, 2 oatcakes with 2 tsp nut butter.</p> 



OUR FAVOURITE RECIPE

GRILLED STEAK WITH MUSTARD DRESSING

















INGREDIENTS

- 1 tsp olive oil
- ¼ tsp mustard
- 1 tsp vinegar
- Drizzle of honey
- 100g steak
- Mixed salad
- 1 cooked beetroot, sliced
- Green beans, steamed
- Handful of cherry tomatoes

PREPARATION

Mix the olive oil, mustard, vinegar and honey to form the dressing. Season the steak and brush with a little olive oil, then grill until cooked. Slice and serve on mixed salad, plus the beetroot, steamed green beans and tomatoes. Drizzle with the dressing to serve.



THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Ugg Muffin , ½ grapefruit. 	Overnight muesli The night before, soak 40g low-sugar muesli in almond milk. In the morning, top with 1 chopped apple to serve. 	1 toasted seeded bagel with low-fat soft cheese. Serve with 1 slice melon. 	2 scrambled eggs with 30g smoked salmon and grilled mushrooms. 
Smoked mackerel fillet served with a large mixed salad and 2 new potatoes with 1 tbsp mayonnaise. 	Turkey with rye Serve 120g sliced cooked turkey breast with 1 slice rye bread, ¼ avocado, 1 sliced tomato and mixed salad leaves. 	½ carton New Covent Garden Bean & Vegetable soup Serve with a large mixed salad and 2 oatcakes. 	Rice and chickpea salad Mix 50g cooked rice with ½ can chickpeas and 30g goat's cheese. Serve with a mixed salad. 
Vegetable chilli Simmer ½ can chopped tomatoes, ½ can mixed beans, ½ chopped onion, 1 chopped courgette and 1 chopped red pepper in a pan, along with a pinch of chilli powder and paprika. Add a little stock if needed. Serve with 30g cooked quinoa. 	Egg-fried quinoa Sauté 50g cooked quinoa in a pan with ½ chopped red onion and 200g frozen mixed vegetables. Stir in 2 beaten eggs, and continue stirring until cooked through. Serve with salad. 	Grilled steak with mustard dressing Mix together 1 tsp olive oil, ¼ tsp mustard, 1 tsp vinegar and a drizzle of honey. Season 100g steak and brush with olive oil. Grill the steak until cooked. Slice and serve on a bed of mixed salad, plus 1 sliced beetroot, a handful of steamed green beans and a handful of cherry tomatoes. Drizzle with the dressing to serve. 	Chicken or tofu and vegetable stir-fry Stir-fry 120g diced chicken breast or chunks of tofu with a handful of sliced mushrooms, baby sweetcorns, sugar snap peas, carrot and broccoli florets. Season with tamari soy sauce, garlic, chilli and ginger. Serve with 3 tbsp rice. 
Handful of grapes , bag of kale crisps. 	Vegetable sticks with 2 tbsp hummus , slice of watermelon. 	1 apple , 30g nuts. 	150g plain yogurt with handful of blueberries , protein shake. 

Energy on the go!

Ensure optimum recovery after your workout, with these protein-packed snacks. Words: Charlotte Buxton



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www.eatnatural.co.uk



THE PROTEIN WORKS PROTEIN FLAPJACK LUXE BARS

Made from a low-GI super-grain blend, cold pressed flaxseed, infused with natural flavours and topped with granola. 268 calories and 19.3g protein.

www.theproteinworks.com

NAKD COCOA CRUNCH



These tasty bars are packed with protein, to keep you fuller for longer. Each has 105 calories and 5.5g protein. Available in Sainsbury's, Waitrose, Tesco, Holland & Barrett, Morrisons, Asda, Ocado and Boots.

naturalbalancefoods.co.uk/nakd/

MULTIPOWER 55G PROTEIN SHAKE

This supplies your body with important proteins and nutrients, to build muscle after a workout. 450 calories per 500ml bottle.

www.multipower.com



KINETICA MILK PROTEIN

A fat- and gluten-free milkshake, delivering 27g protein per 330ml bottle and only 170 calories. Available in Strawberry, Banana and Vanilla Caramel flavours.

www.kineticasports.com



PURITION WHOLE FOOD PROTEIN SHAKE

Ideal breakfast smoothie, post-exercise recovery or pre-workout fuel. Strawberry contains 231 calories and 19.7g protein per serving.

www.purition.co.uk



USN DIET WHEY ISOLEAN

Supports lean muscle goals with 25g high-quality whey protein. Flavours include Cookies & Cream and Strawberry Cheesecake.

www.usn.co.uk



PULSIN WHEY PROTEIN CONCENTRATE

At 82 per cent protein, this is premium whey at great value. Perfect to consume post-exercise, or to simply boost your protein intake.

www.pulsin.co.uk



Hidden culprits in food

Knowing the sugar and salt content of foods, and how to read food labels, is a good way to manage your weight

You know sweets and chocolate contain high amounts of sugar, but you may be surprised by some other foods that contain high levels of sugar. It can be frustrating when you realise you're eating more than you think, especially when you're trying to be healthy. Here are a few to watch out for...

- **Raisins** Contain 59g of sugar per 100g.
- **Dried fruits, such as dates** Contain 15g of sugar in four dates.
- **Tomato ketchup** Contains 7g of sugar per 30g.
- **Tomato-based pasta sauce** Contains approx

11.5g of sugar.

- **1 carton of fruit juice** Contains 10.5g of sugar per 250ml.
- **Granola cereal** Contains 12.4g of sugar per 45g.
- **Breakfast bars** Contain 12g of sugar per 37g bar.

How to cut back on sugar

- Choose water or unsweetened fruit juice instead of sugary, fizzy drinks and juice drinks. Remember to dilute fruit juice for children.
- If you like fizzy drinks, try diluting fruit juice with sparkling water.
- Swap cakes or biscuits for a scone or some malt loaf with low-fat spread.
- If you take sugar in hot

drinks or add sugar to cereal, gradually reduce the amount, until you can cut it out altogether.

- Check nutrition labels to help pick foods with less added sugar.
- Choose wholegrain breakfast cereals, but not those coated with sugar or honey.

How to read food labels

Use these guidelines when reading labels, to check whether a product is high in fat, sugars and salt:

Total fat

- **High in fat:** more than 17.5g per 100g.
- **Low in fat:** 3g or less per 100g.

Saturated fat ('saturates')

- **High in saturated fat:** more than 5g per 100g.
- **Low in saturated fat:** 1.5g or less per 100g.

Sugars

- **High in sugars:** more than 22.5g per 100g.
- **Low in sugars:** 5g or less per 100g.

Salt

The amount of salt is calculated by determining the total sodium in a product (both naturally occurring and from additives) and multiplying it by 2.5.

- **High in salt:** more than 1.5g per 100g.
- **Low in salt:** 0.3g or less per 100g.

'CHOOSE WATER OR UNSWEETENED JUICE INSTEAD OF FIZZY DRINKS'

A close-up photograph of a woman with blonde hair, seen in profile from the nose down. She is holding a whole orange in her right hand and bringing it close to her face, as if smelling it. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting. The title 'Lose weight with mindful eating' is overlaid on the image in a large, blue, italicized serif font.

Lose weight with mindful eating

Mindful eating is an effective approach to weight loss, as it involves engaging your brain and thinking about your food while you are eating it. Here's how it can help you get your eating habits under control

Many of us can follow a diet or weight-loss plan for a period of time, before we start feeling restricted. Then we resort back to our old eating habits, which often involve overeating when we're stressed or eating purely for enjoyment, rather than because we're hungry. Mindful eating is a useful way to help prevent you from overeating and it will almost certainly improve your relationship with food.

So what is it exactly? Mindfulness is a practice with its roots in ancient meditation and was discovered more recently in a modern sense by Jon Kabat-Zim, who

founded the Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts in the Seventies. More recently, Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) was developed in the Nineties by Professor Mark Williams, John Teasdale and Zindel Segal, with the aim of helping those who were suffering from depression.

MINDFULNESS EXPLAINED

Mindfulness means being in the present moment and focusing on that moment. It's about switching off negative self-talk and inner chatter that can hold you back, and avoiding the temptation to dwell on the past or worry about the future. Put simply, it's about

focusing on how things look, feel and smell in the present moment.

When it comes to food, mindfulness can be an effective way of controlling the amount you eat. Rather than gulping down food quickly, because you're distracted or you're not thinking of the food you're eating, mindful eating is about savouring every mouthful, being aware of how it tastes and when your body is starting to feel full.

To do this, you need to focus on the food in front of you. Many of us lead busy lives, and we tend to grab snacks and meals when we can, often in front of a computer screen at work, or while watching TV. Eating

EATING WHEN YOU'RE BUSY IS BEST AVOIDED, AS YOU'LL GULP FOOD DOWN IN A HURRY

becomes almost secondary to the task you're focusing on or the programme you're watching. As you're less aware of what you're eating, because you're distracted by something else, you're less likely to be thinking about whether or not you're feeling full and more likely to absent-mindedly eat everything on the plate, just because it's in front of you.

Eating when you're busy is best avoided, as you'll gulp food down in a hurry, regardless of whether you need all of it or not. Try to eat when you're not busy and without the TV on. This will give you a chance to focus on the food you're eating. Ask yourself how every mouthful tastes, chew slowly and think about the texture of the food.

THINK AHEAD

The practice of mindful eating can be applied before you even start putting food on your plate. Think carefully before you prepare your food. Ask yourself how hungry you are and how much you need. If you're the kind of person who eats everything on their plate, because you hate the thought of wasting food, then consider using a

smaller plate if you're not too hungry.

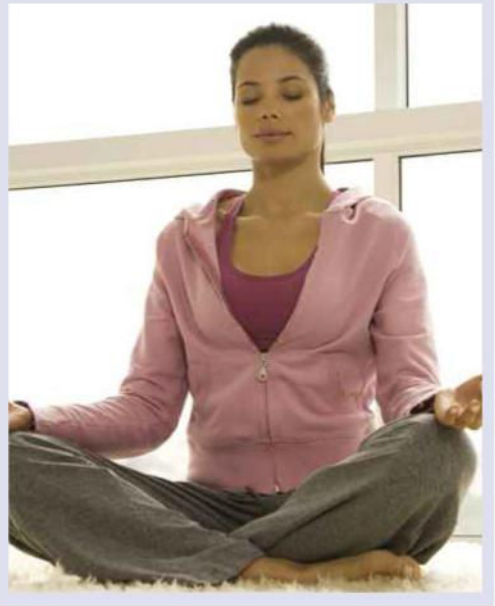
Before you load food onto a plate because it's breakfast or lunchtime, check in with your body. Don't just eat out of habit, or because it's lunchtime. Ask yourself if you're genuinely hungry.

Many of us have complex issues with food and often rely on it to self-medicate for comfort when we're stressed. Sometimes it's tempting to overeat when we have something to celebrate, or we may use food to help us unwind. We enjoy it at the time, but afterwards it's easy to feel guilty. If you're a comfort eater and rely on food to cope with stress, you could try meditation techniques to calm down instead.

Mindfulness Meditation is now well respected by the medical profession, because it works. Various studies have proven its effectiveness. In one US study, participants in an eight-week mindfulness-based stress reduction group had significantly less stress and anxiety than their counterparts. Similarly, it has been used as a treatment for those with recurring depression and has been proven to reduce recurrence rate by up to 50 per cent.

How to practice mindfulness meditation

Find a quiet room or space where you won't be disturbed. Or you can try it when you're going for a walk or even a run, but try to exercise in a quiet area, such as a park away from noisy traffic. Remember, it's about being in the moment, so look around you. Notice your surroundings, and focus purely on what you see, hear and smell, and on your breathing. Another option is to work around the whole body, starting with your upper body and working your way down. Start with the shoulders; tense and relax them, elevating them up and down, while taking six breaths in and six breaths out. Do the same with the rest of the muscles in your body, working your way down to your feet. While you're concentrating on tensing and relaxing, and breathing in and out, you'll be able to switch off other thoughts. It takes practice, but try it and you'll soon see that it works.



Master your eating habits



Be in control of what you eat and how often, and the weight you've lost will stay off. Here's how to adopt a sound and healthy approach to food

You now know from personal experience that exercise can help boost weight loss, but don't underestimate the importance of a healthy diet, as well. Experts believe it's 75 per cent diet and 25 per cent exercise in order to lose weight and keep it off. More than 700 weight-loss studies showed that people who get the best results for weight loss are those who watch what they eat. And remember, it's much easier to cut calories than burn them off. It would take you around 20 minutes of running to burn off 200 calories – by comparison, it would take you around two minutes

to eat a chocolate bar containing around that amount of calories or more! It's always easier to watch what you eat, so long as you're not being too strict.

At the same time, remember that exercise is an important part of weight loss. If you diet and don't do any exercise, you might be losing lean muscle tissue and bone density, not just fat. Weight-bearing exercise, such as resistance training, will increase your ratio of lean muscle tissue, and muscle is more metabolically active, which means you'll burn more fat even at rest.

Try to keep your blood sugar levels stable by eating five to six smaller meals

throughout the day, rather than going for long periods without eating. Each snack should be about 200 calories, and contain lean protein and healthy, slow-releasing carbohydrates. Make sure you keep your energy levels stable, as you'll be less likely to crave sugary foods and overeat if you feel satisfied and energised. Here are some top foods and snacks to boost your energy levels...

● Porridge with a sprinkling of nuts or seeds

A great way to kick-start your day, as oats are high in calcium, potassium, magnesium, vitamin E, B vitamins and protein. So, as well as helping improve



your skin, oats are brilliant if you're feeling tired.

● **Almonds, walnuts or Brazil nuts**

A palmful makes the perfect power snack. A study published in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* suggested that almonds can help increase vitamin E levels and red blood cells, and also lower cholesterol levels. Vitamin E is a powerful antioxidant

● **Wholemeal bagel and banana**

Quick, easy and very effective. Bananas are rich in potassium and fibre, as well as vitamin C and vitamin B6, which can help boost immunity and support heart health.

● **Sweet potato**

Even better for energy than a regular potato, try it straight out of the skin, or mash it up and serve with

'TRY TO KEEP YOUR BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS STABLE BY EATING FIVE TO SIX SMALLER MEALS THROUGHOUT THE DAY'

and almonds are also thought to help reduce the risk of developing colon cancer. Brazil nuts are high in selenium, which can support your immune system and also help to regulate thyroid levels, which can in turn boost weight loss. Walnuts are a good source of healthy fat and are rich in omega-3, which can aid brain and joint health.

● **Fresh fruit**

Eat with a spoonful of low-fat, low-sugar yogurt and a sprinkling of seeds. The protein in the seeds and the yogurt will slow the energy release of the fruit, keeping you going.

some roast chicken and roasted vegetables.

● **Eggs**

With a combination of healthy fats, energy-boosting B vitamins and some vitamin D, eggs boost brain efficiency and provide clean protein energy, as well as a host of nutrients. A boiled egg and soldiers is a great breakfast or snack, or an omelette and salad is a great meal for energy.

● **A chicken or turkey wholemeal sandwich**

This contains plenty of slow-release and lasting energy, plus there is minimum fat content, so it won't slow you down.

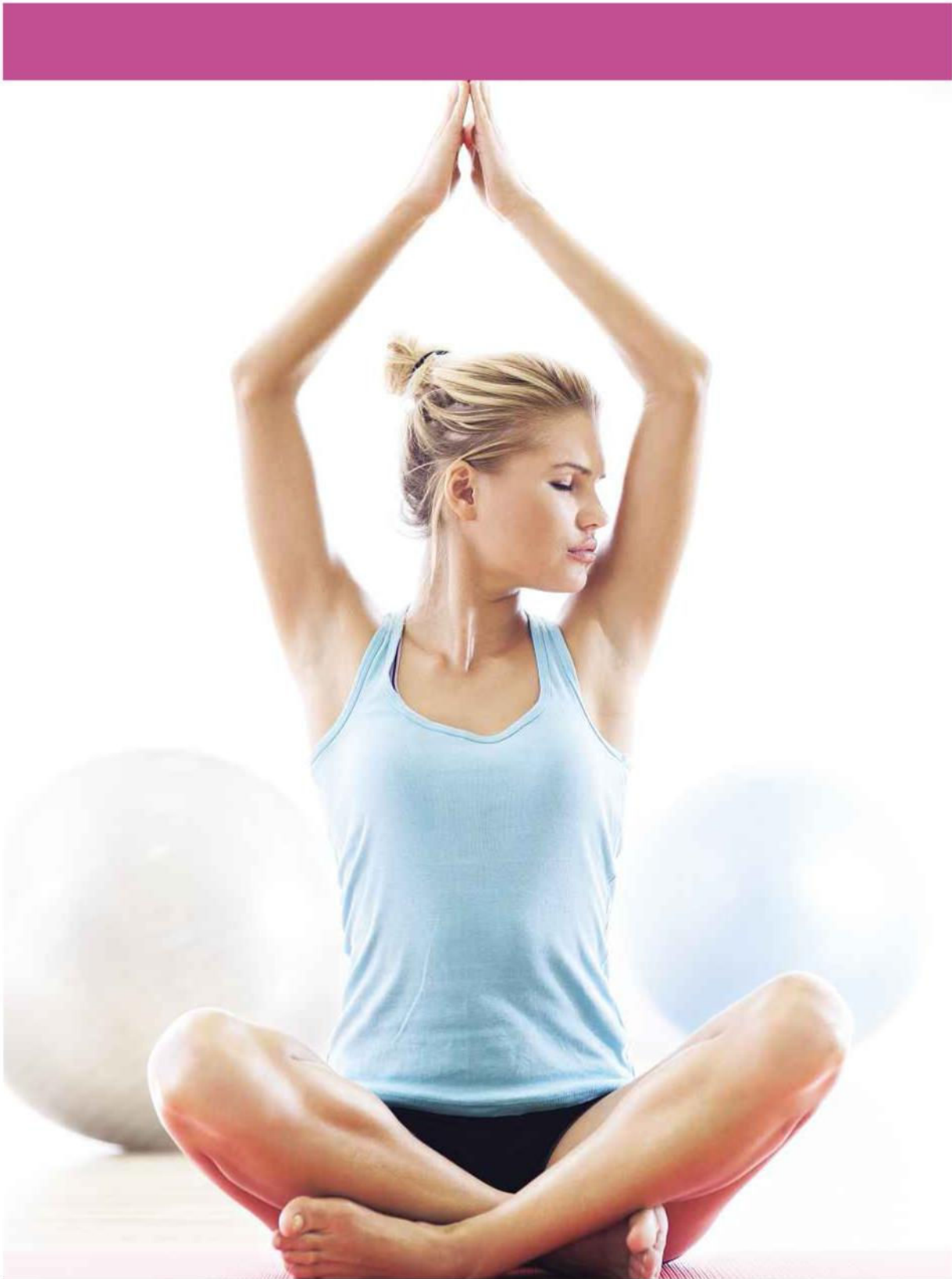


Juicing solution

If you feel you don't always get your daily intake of fruit and veg, try juicing. The nutrients in juicing will help boost your energy levels and make you feel revitalised.

Some experts believe the nutrients in juices can help with skin conditions, such as eczema and psoriasis. Juicing may also help you lose weight, as the vegetables should fill you up (provided you use the right ingredients and don't add too much fruit). Juicing can aid digestion, as the ingredients contain enzymes, which help with digestion and prevent your metabolism from getting sluggish. Juicing enables you to add a wider variety of vegetables to your diet. Many of us tend to eat the same foods, but when juicing, you may add vegetables that you wouldn't normally choose to eat.

Where possible, choose organic fruit and veg, and start gradually – add in small amounts of greenery at first, such as celery, fennel and cucumber. If you're not keen on vegetables, try to dilute them and mask the taste with fruit, such as a banana or a handful of blueberries. Keep an eye on portion size though – you wouldn't eat two bananas in one sitting, so don't double up on ingredients just because you're juicing! If you're juicing after a workout, you could add a scoop of protein powder or a tablespoon of natural yogurt, to aid recovery.



BEAT STRESS, STAY SLIM

- ☑ The benefits of yoga for stress relief
- ☑ 15-minute relaxation yoga workout
- ☑ Reduce your stress levels – today



The benefits of yoga

Great for stress busting, improving flexibility and making you look leaner and fitter, even short bursts of regular yoga will have benefits



BURN MORE FAT

When it comes to burning fat, we don't tend to think of yoga as an obvious choice. But the right type of yoga can get you working up a good sweat and burning more calories than you might imagine. If you want to try yoga to burn fat and get lean, the more strenuous types of yoga include Vinyasa, Ashtanga and Power yoga, all of which are more energetic. Vinyasa yoga is made up of a series of sun salutations that you work through quickly, which means you won't have time

to recover in-between each pose and your heart rate will rise, leading to a higher metabolic rate. Ashtanga yoga is a series of non-stop poses that lasts for 90 minutes. Similarly, Bikram yoga, also known as hot yoga, lasts for 90 minutes, but is performed in a room with a temperature of more than 100 degrees. Both can boost weight loss and you'll feel like you're working hard during the class.



IMPROVE TONE AND SHAPE

Yoga will help you tone up as well as

lose weight, as many of the moves involve supporting your own body weight, which effectively means using your body weight as resistance, instead of dumbbells. Vinyasa yoga involves holding certain poses for long periods of time, which means your heart and lungs will be working harder to deliver fuel and oxygen to your muscles. Even the more gentle forms of yoga, such as Hatha yoga, can help with weight loss, and of course it can also improve your



'THE RIGHT TYPE OF YOGA CAN GET YOU WORKING UP A GOOD SWEAT AND BURNING CALORIES'

posture, making you look taller and leaner.



REDUCE INJURY RISK

When you're doing high-intensity interval training sessions, or any session where you're exercising for a shorter period of time and working very hard, you may find your muscles feel stiff and tight afterwards if you don't stretch properly. And even if you do stretch at the end of a workout, regular cardiovascular workouts can still cause you to get stiff. Yoga will improve your flexibility and therefore reduce your injury risk. Many injuries occur because you ask your body to move in a position that it's not

used to. Joints may not have the range of movement or the stability (control) needed to get you into the correct position, which means your injury risk can increase. Yoga will help improve flexibility and strength around the joints.

If you want to get lean and toned, you may want to choose yoga over more strenuous types of strength training. When you do classic strength exercises, such as deadlifts or squats with weights, there is a greater risk of injury (as you are doing them with weights) if your technique isn't spot on. With yoga, injury risk can be lower.

Choosing the right form of yoga for you

You can do the exercises over the page in the comfort of your home, or on a yoga mat in the gym. However, if you can spare an hour a week to do a yoga class, you'll reap the benefits. Good yoga classes for beginners include Hatha yoga, which is a gentle, slower-paced class; Iyengar yoga, which focuses on detail and is slow paced; and Kripalu yoga, which is also gentle with slow movements.

If you would like a more strenuous class, Ashtanga or Power yoga may be better suited to you, but bear in mind that some of the above, slower classes will give you more time to get used to the various poses.

BOOST RECOVERY

Yoga can also help you recover faster from your workout sessions. This is because it can flush out toxins, such as lactic acid, which build up in the body during exercise. A study that was published in *The Journal Of Strength & Conditioning Research* in November 2014 revealed that a single bout of yoga appeared to reduce muscle soreness in women.



BETTER BALANCE

Yoga often involves doing poses such as tree pose, where you stand on one leg, and some moves throw you away from your centre of gravity, which strengthens the ligaments in the knees and ankles. This can improve your balance and prevent injury. Better balance is also useful during certain cardiovascular exercise, such as running, where you are effectively hopping from one foot to the other. The

better your balance when you run, the more efficient you will become as a runner.



BETTER SLEEP

Many people who practise yoga regularly report better sleep patterns. If you've managed to calm your mind during a yoga class, you will feel more relaxed and will be more likely to get to sleep.



15-minute yoga

Yoga can improve your flexibility, as well as help you unwind, feel less stressed, and improve your strength and balance. Here's a 15-minute yoga session you can do anywhere.

Make sure you are warm before you try these poses... brisk walking, jogging on the spot or using one of the cardio machines in the gym, such as the treadmill or cross-trainer, to warm up for five minutes is ideal. Hold each pose for 30 seconds to one minute and repeat the sequence twice.

TREE POSE

AREAS STRETCHED: INNER AND OUTER THIGHS, HIP FLEXORS, BOTTOM, CORE

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand on one leg, press your hands firmly together in front of your chest and release the tension in your shoulders.
- ◆ Draw the other leg up and place the sole of your foot against your standing leg's inner thigh or calf.
- ◆ Keep your pelvis in a neutral position.
- ◆ Lengthen your tailbone towards the floor.
- ◆ Firmly press the sole of your bent leg against your standing leg, while resisting the pressure with your standing leg.
- ◆ Focus on a point in front of you to aid balance.

Be safe

Only lift your leg as high as feels comfortable. Placing your foot lower down your leg is fine.



DOWNWARD-FACING DOG

AREAS STRETCHED: SHOULDERS, ARMS, REAR THIGHS, CALVES

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Kneel on the floor, placing your hands shoulder-width apart.
- ◆ Lift your knees off the floor, pushing your sit bones up to the ceiling and elongating your spine.
- ◆ Press your heels into the floor.
- ◆ Contract your thighs and try to straighten your legs.
- ◆ Position your head in-between your arms.



Be safe

Don't over stretch and be careful if you have high blood pressure.

LOW LUNGE POSE

AREAS STRETCHED: FRONT THIGHS, HIP FLEXORS, STOMACH MUSCLES

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Kneel down on a mat.
- ◆ Step one leg forwards and place it in-between your hands.
- ◆ Lower the knee of your back leg to the floor and rest the top of your foot on the floor.
- ◆ Inhale and lift your torso to an upright position.
- ◆ Extend your arms up towards the ceiling.
- ◆ Tilt your head upwards.
- ◆ Hold the position for one minute.
- ◆ Return to the downward-facing dog and repeat with the other leg.

Be safe

If your back knee hurts, place a towel underneath it.



WIDE-LEGGED FORWARD BEND

AREAS STRETCHED: BOTTOM, REAR THIGHS, INNER THIGHS, DEEPER BACK MUSCLES

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Stand with your feet three to four feet apart.
- ◆ Keep your feet parallel to each other.
- ◆ Lengthen your spine and contract your stomach muscles.
- ◆ Bend forwards from your hips.
- ◆ Place your hands on the floor in line with your shoulders.
- ◆ Ensure you keep your back straight.

Be safe

Be careful if you have lower back issues.



COBRA POSE

AREAS STRETCHED: DEEPER
BACK MUSCLES, BOTTOM,
CHEST, STOMACH, SHOULDERS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Lie on your stomach on the floor.
- ◆ Bend your elbows and place your hands flat on the floor, next to your chest.
- ◆ Push your pubis, thighs and tops of your feet into the floor.
- ◆ Lift your chest off the floor, pushing your hands into the floor.
- ◆ Push your shoulders down and back, and elongate your neck while looking slightly up.
- ◆ Hold for 15 to 30 seconds.



Be safe

Be careful if you have back problems. Only lift within a comfortable range of motion.



BOUND ANGLE POSE

AREAS STRETCHED: HIPS

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Sit with your legs straight out in front of you, exhale, bend your knees, pull your heels towards your pelvis, then drop your knees out to the sides and pull the soles of your feet together.
- ◆ Bring your heels as close to your pelvis as you can. With the first and second finger and thumb, grasp the big toe of each foot.
- ◆ Always keep the outer edges of the feet firmly on the floor.
- ◆ Hold the ankle or shin if you can't grasp the toes.



Be safe

Never force your knees down.

PIGEON

AREA STRETCHED: GLUTES

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Place your hands shoulder-width apart with your legs behind you.
- ◆ Slide your left knee forwards, towards your left hand.
- ◆ Slide the other leg back as far as your hips will allow.
- ◆ Keep your hips square to the floor, facing forwards, with a slight external rotation of the bent leg.
- ◆ Keep your upper body upright.
- ◆ If this feels easy, then lean forwards and rest on your forearms to make the stretch more intense.
- ◆ Repeat on the other side.



Be safe

Only stretch as far as feels comfortable.

CHILD'S POSE

AREA STRETCHED: BACK

TECHNIQUE

- ◆ Kneel on the floor.
- ◆ Touch your big toes together and sit on your heels, then separate your knees about as wide as your hips.
- ◆ Exhale and lay your torso down between your thighs.
- ◆ Lengthen your tailbone away from the back of the pelvis.

Be safe

Don't tense your stomach muscles too much, as it will prevent you from stretching.



How to reduce your stress levels

You may be exercising hard and watching your food intake, but if you don't combat stress, you might find it hard to achieve your fitness goals. Here's how you can banish stress...

Stress can make you gain weight. How? Firstly, you'll be more tempted to overeat and snack on unhealthy treats. Secondly, when you are in a stressful situation, your brain tells your cells to release a burst of adrenaline, so you can fight or run from the 'danger' it perceives you to be in. You also get a surge of cortisol, which tells your body to replenish energy, and this can make you very hungry. Your body will continue to release cortisol while you remain stressed, so prolonged periods of stress can have a significant effect on your waistline.

Thirdly, being stressed or overly concerned about an

issue can interfere with your sleep, which can change the hormone balance in your body. This in turn can increase hunger. Leptin is a hormone that signals when you are full, and when you don't get enough sleep, the release of leptin slows down. Sleep deprivation also causes your body to release ghrelin, the hunger hormone. So lack of sleep through stress, or being unable to switch off your mind, can mean you'll overeat and your body will naturally want to store more fat.

So how can you get your stress levels under control, so you can lose weight and get fit? Yoga or meditation will help, but there are other things you can do that will

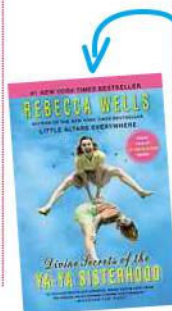
also make a difference. Reducing sugar and caffeine intake can help, as these can affect your mood and will do little to reduce your stress levels. See page 94 for a list of top stress-busting foods.

SWITCH OFF YOUR BRAIN BEFORE BEDTIME

Try to switch your brain off at night. Read a good book (avoiding anything too extreme, such as a horror story!), so you have a chance to distract yourself from the day's events before you go to sleep.

CLEAR THE CLUTTER

Make sure your bedroom is tidy and free from mess. Leave technology out of the bedroom. Switch your



phone off, and put tablets and laptops away. Pick up any stray items of clothing on the floor, or towels you meant to put away earlier. Make sure your bedroom offers the calmest possible environment and is a sanctuary where you can truly relax.

SHUT THOSE BLINDS

Try to make your room cave dark, so you can sleep well. Switch off anything that brings light into the room, like mobile or portable phones that charge overnight. Draw the curtains or shut the blinds as tightly as possible.

JUST SAY NO

If your stress is caused by others expecting too much from you, either at home or at work, set some boundaries. Don't be the first to volunteer to take on new tasks or projects at work, especially if you've already got a lot on your plate. If someone asks you to do something and you genuinely think it will add more stress and pressure, say no. Be polite. Just be honest. We are so conditioned to doing what others want, but in the end, it can make us stressed and miserable.

GO OUTSIDE

Get plenty of fresh air. The mental health charity Mind recommends outdoor

exercise as a great way of improving your mood, as being outside is a natural mood booster. If you have a stressful job, always take some time at lunch to go for a walk and get some fresh air, even if it's only for 10 or 15 minutes.

BREATHE DEEPLY

It sounds so simple, but it works. All you need to do is inhale deeply through your nose, and then gently exhale through your mouth. Make sure you are sitting up straight as you do this.

Deep breathing in this way can reduce the effects of stress, by slowing your

WATCH CHEERFUL TV, SLEEP WELL

Avoid horror films or graphic scenes of violence before bedtime, as this can increase your heart rate and your stress levels. If you like to watch TV before bed, watching a comedy show is a much better choice.

SHARE THE LOAD

Find a friend or trusted confidante to whom you can unload and get your stress out from time to time. You may need to do the same for them, too!

MAKE A TO-DO LIST

If you're stressed because you have so much going

MAKE SURE YOUR BEDROOM OFFERS THE CALMEST POSSIBLE ENVIRONMENT

heart rate and lowering your blood pressure.

KEEP A STRESS DIARY

Get some perspective, by making a note of anything that happens that stresses you out during the day. Then maybe, over the course of a week or two, you can give some thought to how you can eliminate or control those stressors. It might mean being more assertive and learning to say no, or avoiding certain situations that add stress.

on and so many tasks to complete, make a to-do list for the next day before you go to bed, so you're less likely to lie awake worrying about everything you've got to get done. Prioritise the tasks on that list the next day and make sure you only do the important tasks first. Closing your mailbox and web browser for an hour or two while you complete the most important tasks will help you get them done more easily.



You've done it!

You look and feel great! So how do you create permanent habits to make exercise part of your life for good?

You've done the workouts and followed the meal plan; now make sure you maintain your new figure. So, how can you ensure the weight doesn't creep on again? The first thing to consider is how much better you feel. You've probably found being fitter has boosted your confidence in all areas of life. Here's how you can maintain that positive outlook – as well as the figure you've worked hard to achieve...

● **Make exercise part of your daily routine** Do something active every day, even if it's just for 10 minutes. This could mean going for a walk at lunchtime or walking to the station rather than driving. The more active

you are, the more calories you'll burn and also the more empowered you'll feel.

● **Set yourself a new goal** Many people who lose weight do it to look good for a special occasion, such as a wedding. The deadline they have gives them a focus, but once this passes, they relax and the weight can creep back on. Set yourself small, regular goals to stay motivated – anything from losing another half a stone to running your first 5K.

● **Make goals specific**

Choose a goal and make it SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-framed. That way, you'll know when you've reached it. So, if you want to run 5K, for example, set a date you want to achieve it – perhaps eight or 10 weeks from now. Make sure it's achievable, in that you're giving yourself enough time to train. Each week, you'll see yourself able to run further, which will motivate you.

● **Make it meaningful** Your goal must mean something to you. And it must be *your* goal, not something that someone else has suggested would be good for you. If you want to complete your first triathlon, for instance, what would achieving this mean to you? How would it make your life better? For some, the motivation to get fit comes from knowing they will be able to run around with their kids. Make sure your goal means something to you.

● **Watch what you eat** As the saying goes, you can't out-exercise a bad diet. If you train hard but eat too much, or eat the wrong foods, the weight will eventually creep back on. Stick to healthy choices (using the meal plans in this guide for ideas) and have a cheat day just once a week.

'DO SOMETHING ACTIVE EVERY DAY, EVEN IF IT'S JUST 10 MINUTES. THE MORE ACTIVE YOU ARE, THE MORE EMPOWERED YOU'LL FEEL'

8 ways to stay motivated

Stay in shape! Keep up the motivation to exercise and make that fantastic new figure permanent with our top tips...



1 Train with a friend

We're social creatures, and fitness experts believe that training with others means we're more likely to push ourselves a bit harder and carry on for longer during a training session. It's also harder to cancel a session when you've planned to train with a friend, as you don't want to let them down.

2 Try something new

You've got in shape but you don't have to stick with the same exercise sessions. The body will progress if it is continually required to adapt to a change in duration or intensity or if you try an activity that is completely different that it finds challenging. Swapping swimming for running or vice versa, is the way to keep progressing.

3 Find role models

Don't feel like exercising? Find examples of toned women you admire, and use

them for inspiration. Think about how good they look when you feel tempted to miss a session.

4 Make it varied

Never stick to the same exercise routine for more than a month – otherwise you're guaranteed to get bored. Try new exercises regularly.

5 Remember it feels good

Like being in shape? When you feel tempted to skip a session, remind yourself how your life has changed and improved and how your confidence has soared as a result of your new body shape. Then look at old photos of the former you when you were carrying more weight. How did you feel about yourself then?



How was your body confidence? Presumably you feel much more confident now, right? Keep it that way and don't lose focus.

6 Count your blessings

Not everyone is healthy and able to exercise. Remind yourself how fortunate you are to have your health and mobility. You're in a position where you can continue to be responsible for how you look and feel. You're in control.

7 Write down your goals

Once you've identified what your new fitness goal is – whether it's to run a 10K by the autumn or complete your first triathlon, write it down and keep reading it. There is evidence to suggest that writing down a goal or a task to be done makes us more committed to achieving it. Make sure you include a realistic deadline.

8 Reward yourself

But not with food. When you reach a milestone or achieve a new level of fitness, treat yourself to a spa day or a new dress or a pair of jeans that you love. Make sure the treat is tempting enough to keep you motivated to keep on exercising though.

‘THE BODY WILL KEEP PROGRESSING IF IT IS CONTINUALLY REQUIRED TO ADAPT’



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