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WORKOUT GUIDE

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Workout Guide

Initial Phase

The fun is just beginning folks! Grab yourself a healthy, cold beverage and pay close attention to what's about to happen. Now that you have direction and know how to motivate yourself, the next phase in your transition is the inclusion of movement.

To reiterate, it is very important to NOT get sucked into the latest fitness craze and media hype. Sure, you might want results, but not at the expense of your well-being. Remember, you only get one body! Suffering an injury can set you back weeks, months or even years, which is no bueno amigo!

Eventually you can work your way up to a high-intensity regimen, but you must EARN that privilege. The bottom line is, ease your way into things and familiarize yourself with the proper starting procedure.

Starting Line

Instead of just knowing you are overweight or out of shape, you are actually going to find out exactly where you stand with starting dimensions. These would be known as biometrics.

This is a critical point that a lot of people overlook or miss, but is very important. Simply put, it's a statistical tracking system. When you find out your physical starting parameters, you can use these as references to monitor your progress as you go along. This will also tie into your goals and wellness vision that was addressed earlier.

You can get as basic or complex as you want with your assessments. If you are really detail-oriented and love data, get measurements of your arms, thighs, chest, hips, calves and neck. But all you really need for references are your weight, waist circumference and body fat percentage.

You may have heard of this assessment called body mass index, or BMI for short. It is a relationship of your height to your weight, and is often used in a clinical setting for quick reference. In reality, this reading is a bit misleading and unnecessary. People, who are short and muscular for example, tend to have a high BMI but are actually in shape.

If you were to do just one assessment, choose body fat percentage. Scale weight is great as a quick tracking number, but body fat percentage will give you the amount of lean muscle mass you have, which is the ultimate goal. Just for quick reference, here is a chart showing a range of body fat percentage.

Be aware that this is just an average reference. Your age will have a bit more to do with it. Older men and women, for example, require more body fat for proper function. But this chart will at least give you a ballpark idea of where you should be.

Body Mass Index Chart

CATEGORY	MEN	WOMEN
Essential Fat	2 to 5%	10 to 13%
Athletic	6 to 13%	14 to 20%
General Fitness	14 to 17%	21 to 24%
Average	18 to 24%	25 to 31%
Obese	Over 25%	Over 32%

If you feel comfortable taking your own measurements, that's fine, but it would probably be best to consult with a fitness professional who has a proven track record doing fitness assessments on clients.

Once you have your measurements, write them down and keep them in a safe place so you can refer to them on a regular basis. As a rule of thumb, recheck your assessments every four weeks.

90% Quality Rule

Before you start an actual program, you need to move properly. If you can't move properly, you have no business even picking up a weight. The best way to approach this situation is by getting a FMS movement screen by a trained instructor. The acronym "FMS" stands for Functional Movement System.

During a screen, the instructor will have you do a series of movements to assess your flexibility, core strength, range of motion, posture and balance. Data will be collected and a score will be reached based off the assessments you were put through.

You will be informed on areas of your body that need work and be given a series of corrective exercises to perform on a regular basis. Make sure to follow the instructions and do your exercises as directed! That's the only way you will be able to improve your weaknesses.

And remember, you should always strive for 90% quality or better with every lift you do. If you can't achieve 90% quality, then you are using loads that are out of your league. Drop the ego so you don't end up dropping the weights!

Just for the record, it is not mandatory to get a FMS screen before working out, but it's highly advisable! If you have really tight shoulders, for example, and are unable to raise your arms straight above your head, how do you expect to lift dumbbells through this pattern? If you get screened and are prescribed exercises to stretch tight areas and strengthen weak ones, you will be able to hoist dumbbells with grace and ease.

**BECAUSE THERE IS NOTHING BETTER LIKE THAT
FEELING AFTER A HARD WORKOUT**

Stretching

There has been a lot of debate floating around whether stretching is good, bad or ugly before a workout. Well, it could be any of the above, depending on the person doing it. Here's a quick visual for you to draw up in your mind that will maybe answer the question of it even being necessary.

Think about the process behind driving a car. When you first start it in the morning, you don't immediately press the accelerator to the floor and speed on down the highway. You first let it idle for a bit to warm up and make sure everything is functioning properly. Treat your body the exact same way.

But here's where it gets a little fuzzy. Certain experts will have you believe that stretching before a training session works against you because it tires or weakens your muscles, causing a loss of strength. That may be true, but it is very dependent on the WAY you stretch.

A lot of people are famous for doing static stretches before they work out. These are performed by pulling a body part to an end point of motion and holding it for a series of seconds.

For an example, move your right arm across the front of your chest and grasp your elbow with your left hand. Pull inward and you will feel a stretch on the outside of your upper right arm and shoulder. Hold for about 20 to 30 seconds. Congratulations! You just did a static stretch! Unfortunately, these are the exact stretches you should NOT do before a workout.

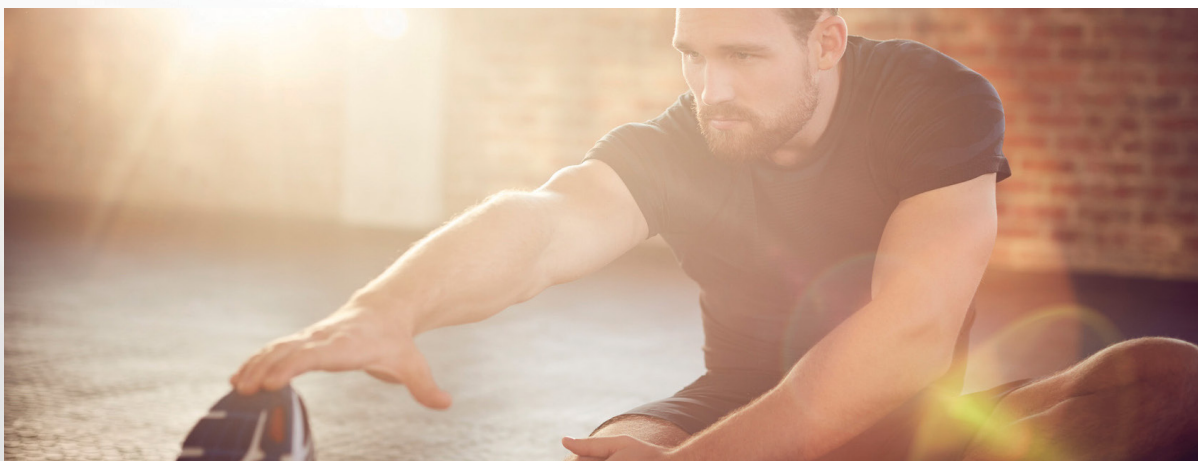
Just think about exercise for a second. You are constantly moving multiple joints and body parts in various angles and directions. Don't you think it would be a good idea to stretch the same way you are about to move? The answer is a resounding, YES!

That brings up dynamic stretches. You probably see where this is going. Dynamic stretches are performed in motion. These are the ones you want to do before exercise because they acclimate your body to movement. They also do a great job of elevating your heart rate and raising your core body temperature.

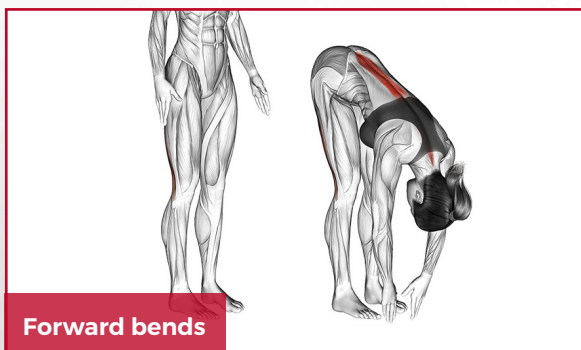
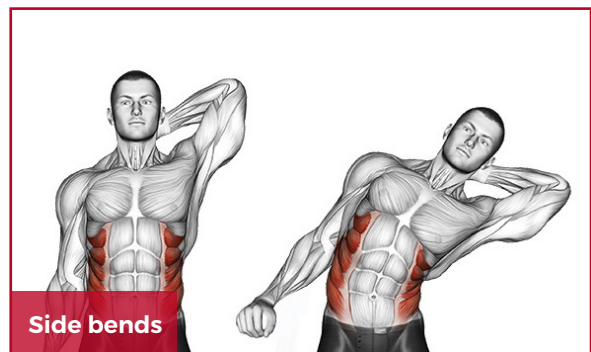
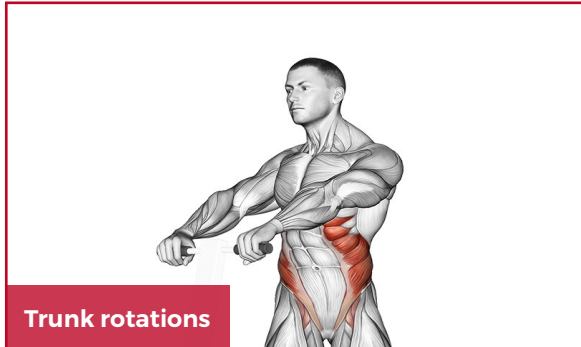
Save the static stretches for after your workout. They are better fit for this time frame because your muscles are warm and elastic, and they can bode well to reduce soreness.

All that being said, here are a few examples of dynamic stretches, just so you have a good grip on the situation. These will target all of your major muscles and joints, and that is always your goal.

Self-explanatory stretches: Arm Circles, Leg Swings And Shoulder Circles



Illustrations Of Dynamic Stretching Exercises



Take a quick minute right now and practice some of these dynamic stretches. After all, it's a good idea to get up and move every hour or two when you sit for long periods of time during the day. Not only does this improve your flexibility, but it also improves your cognitive function. Especially take that advice to work if you are confined to an office desk from sunrise to sundown!



Training Tactics

Now that you have a good warmup figured out, you need to choose what kind of workouts to do. This comes back to the 90% rule. You better not have forgotten already!

In historic times, the 90% rule was taken very, very seriously. Simply put, if you cannot perform a set of reps with 90% perfection or better, you need to stop and rest until you can. This forces you to focus on quality over quantity.

Workouts back then had meaning, structure and an end result in mind. People would practice instead of just work out, and they always had a goal to feel better when they finished than when they arrived at the gym. Follow this same plan of attack to a tee!

If you have witnessed anyone doing a really high-intensity program that forces you to do as many reps or rounds as possible in a short amount of time, you will know exactly what BAD quality looks like. Never sacrifice form for technique!

This type of high-volume training might yield fast results, but it can also yield fast trips to the emergency room or physical therapist's office. It is often reckless, dangerous and has no noble purpose. Sadly, it is often the work of the ego that drives people to keep pushing past physical and mental exhaustion.

This doesn't mean there is no time and place for being competitive or doing high-intensity exercise. But not when it's at the expense of good, crisp, clean, quality movement. And you have to earn your way to higher intensity training protocols.

Range of Motion (ROM)

It's only fitting that you learn a thing or two about form and progression before getting some workout examples to try out. At some time in your life you must've heard the phrase "full range of motion." This simply means always make sure to move a weight through the entire range your joints will allow.

Yes, your joints will be locking out. It used to be a pretty popular belief to never lock out your joints, but don't buy it. If you stop short of achieving full range of motion, your joints won't lock, but you also will not get the most benefit from the exercise you are doing. As long as you perform the movement correctly, you have nothing to fear.

Take barbell biceps curls, for example. Here are the instructions HOW to do the exercise and the reasoning WHY you should always use a full range of motion...

Hold the bar with an underhand, shoulder-width grip and stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Keep your abs tight, back straight and upper arms pressed to your sides.

Bend your elbows to pull the bar up toward your chest until your palms face your body. Hold for a second as you squeeze your biceps forcefully then slowly lower the bar down. Stop when your arms are FULLY extended. Repeat for as many reps as desired.

Here is the trick to getting a full range of motion without compromising your joint integrity. Lower the weight slower than you raise it. The lowering portion is called the eccentric force, while the lifting portion is called concentric.

Two things make a lot of sense when it comes to lowering weights. If you do it fast, you will in turn lock your joints fast and cause possible damage. If you do it slow, you will spare your joints trauma and get more muscle activation.

A good rule of thumb is to follow a 1-to-2 ratio of concentric to eccentric force. For example, if it takes two seconds to lift a weight, lower it in four. You don't necessarily have to count with every rep. Just focus on lowering the weight slower than you lift it. But if it helps to count, then by all means do so.

Simply put, the connective tissue involved with an exercise adapts to the movement pattern it is put through. If you train a body part to only move a certain distance, it will get used to that distance. Then when it gets forced to move farther, disaster can happen.

Here is a practical example of why you should always move through a full range of motion. Go back to the biceps curl. If you stop short of locking out with every rep, your muscles and neighboring tissues will adapt to this range of motion.

The next time you play tennis and forcefully reach behind your body for a backhand slam, guess what happens? Your elbow goes into full extension and your biceps are only conditioned to go a certain distance. The best case scenario is you suffer a mild strain. The worst case scenario is you tear your biceps muscle in half and it folds up your arm like a broken rubber band.



Breathe Control

Before moving forward, you need to know about this little thing called breathing. It is an often overlooked, but vitally important aspect of exercise. Sad but true, there are millions of people who do it completely wrong, and in some cases don't do it all! They just simply hold their breath.

NEVER hold your breath! Focus on inhaling on the eccentric phase and exhaling on the concentric. An easy way to remember this is simply exhale when you exert force and inhale when you are winding up. To use the biceps curl example one more time, inhale as you lower the weight and exhale as you lift it.



Adaptation and Plateaus

The body has a magical way of adapting to its surroundings and the stresses deemed upon it on a daily basis. Adaptation is a good thing, but when it comes to making continued progress and physical gains it can become commonplace.

If you do a brand new workout, you can expect and enjoy positive changes in strength, balance and fitness for an extended period of time. But sooner or later, your body will adapt to the new battery of stressors you put it through and you will no longer make progress. In fitness circles, this is referred to as a plateau.

If you do the exact same workout for months and even years in a row, you will reach a certain point of fitness and that's it. And yes, there are people who have followed the exact same workout for years and years and years. If it makes you happy, then go for it. But just be aware, you can become very bored with this protocol and you will only make a certain amount of progress.

It makes a lot more sense to change your workouts completely every four to six weeks. This will give you enough time to make continued gains in size, strength and lung capacity, and not get burnt out.

The easiest way to change a workout is just simply do different exercises. You can still work the same muscle groups though. For example, if you do barbell bench presses for your chest for four weeks, change it to dumbbell incline presses for your next cycle.

Speaking of cycles, this is a good segue to talk about periodization. This training protocol is often deployed by serious athletes or people training for a specific event like a bodybuilding competition. It is based off of periods of time known as macrocycles, mesocycles and microcycles. Each one has a desired goal in mind.

A macrocycle is the largest span of time and can be 9 to 12 months down the road. Think in terms of your wellness vision in this case.

A mesocycle is a smaller block of time, usually in the neighborhood of three or four months and a microcycle is a one or two week increment.

Using these cycles can keep your workouts interesting and purposeful, and give you solid goals to aim for. Not to mention, they can be strategically placed to avoid adaptation.



SAID Principle

It's only fitting that the gears get shifted right to the SAID principle. This acronym stands for Specific Adaptation to Imposed Demands. Why is the SAID principle so important? It has relevance to adaptation, which was just laid out.

If you are thin and looking to add 20 lbs. of muscle to your frame, are you going to do cardio six days a week for 60 minutes? It's highly unlikely. Instead, you are going to take the necessary steps involved with adding 20 lbs. of muscle to your frame. THAT is where the SAID principle comes into play.

You need to train specifically for the event or end result you are looking to achieve. This is common with people who play sports, and in that sense, is known as sport-specific training.

If a basketball player wants to improve his vertical leap, he will build the muscles in his legs that are primary for jumping. But he will also do jumping drills because they are specific to his sport.

Now go back to the thin guy who wants to gain 20 lbs. The goal is to perform compound exercises that involve more than one joint and more than one muscle working in unison. This allows you to lift heavier weights and recruit more muscle fibers.

A lunge is a good example of a compound exercise. You activate your ankles, knees and hips all at the same time, causing you to work your calves, hamstrings, quadriceps and glutes simultaneously.

Keep the SAID principle in mind at all times and you will get better results through your training periods.

Cardio Training

The benefits of cardiovascular training are vast, on both a physical and mental level. Even the untrained ear has heard of its magical ability to promote weight loss, improve circulation and lung capacity, strengthen bones, reduce disease risk and lower blood pressure.

Cardio is also well known for its tendency to release these hormones called endorphins. Think of this as a “chi hit.” When endorphins are released, you go into a state of euphoria so to speak. You become happy, calm and feel satisfaction. These mental perks alone should be motivation enough for you to join the fun like so many others.

The million dollar question then becomes what is the best type of cardio? The short AND correct answer is, the best type is the one that you will do on a regular basis for an extended period of time.

It really all depends on your likes, dislikes, preferences and limitations. For example, if you had surgery on your knee a while back and impact is forbidden, running is not your best option. This also applies if you are obese. Excess weight equates to excess stress on your joints, which can lead to acute or chronic pain. Remember, safety always comes first!

In these cases, you'll be better served sticking with a non-impact form of cardio, such as cycling, elliptical training, arc training, swimming or compact climbing. With the exception of swimming, these activities are performed with your feet in a fixed position, which negates impact. While swimming, all you have is the resistance of the water, which is especially good if you have arthritis or other joint complications.

The underlying message is make sure to choose a form of cardio that is fun. The same goes with weight training. If you do not like what you do, it's going to be really tough to stay motivated. The last thing your workouts should feel like is work. You want to be happy and get into a flow instead of feeling anguish and anxiety.

As far as placement of cardio in your program goes, this once again reverts back to the SAID principle. If you are specifically trying to lose weight, you might want to dedicate three to five days to cardio training. If you are known as a “hardgainer,” then you might want to stick to more limited amounts with less intensity.

On the other side of the coin, if you have lofty goals, such as losing 10 or more pounds, you might want to amp your cardio up a notch. This would be a good time to include interval training in your program.

Interval training, also known as High Intensity Interval training (HIIT), has become somewhat of a buzzword and for good reason. It is performed by alternating your pace back and forth between high and low intensity for the duration of your session.

Instead of getting a “nice” calorie burn during your workout, you end up getting a GREAT calorie burn as well as boosting your metabolism into orbit for several hours later. This bodes well for faster weight loss.

Since you are going at a higher intensity, make your sessions short when you first start out. You can achieve favorable results in as little as 15 to 20 minutes. Gradually add time as you develop higher lung capacity and get into better shape.

As a basic rule of thumb, follow a 1-to-2 ratio of high to low intensity. For example, run for 30 seconds, walk for 60 and repeat.



Spot Reducing

Before moving forward, you need to know about this thing called “spot reduction” or “spot reducing.” You’ve probably seen at least one infomercial in your life, where some ab gadget gives you amazing weight loss results in your abdomen or “your money back!” This theory is known as spot reduction.

Regardless if it is your stomach, arms, legs or ankles, it is anatomically impossible to shed weight in one area of your body. Sorry to disappoint you, but you need to know the facts.

This means performing dozens and dozens of crunches every day might get you decently strong abs, but it will do very little for that layer of adipose tissue covering them up.

Pay attention to someone who is going through a major weight loss. Aside from their stomach looking smaller, they will likely have a thinner face and neck. It’s highly unlikely that they did a bunch of neck rolls and head tilts to make that happen. It was all due to weight loss through the entire body as a whole.

This doesn’t mean you can’t tone a particular area. You just need to follow the right measures to achieve a desired result. Take the arms for example. Focus on doing weight training exercises like dips, pushups and curls, but also include cardio in your program as well to blast fat throughout your entire body.

Workout Plans

OK, the long-awaited time has come. Below are three workout examples - one is a beginner workout performed 3 days a week, the second is a 4-day plan for intermediates and the last is a 6-day plan for more advanced people. Pick your poison and train with a smile on your face.

Beginner Workout

When first starting out, you are much better suited for a program that won't make you vomit or cause you so much physical pain that you have to limp out of the gym when you are done. A basic plan that targets all of your major muscle groups is a good idea at this point. Here is a schematic to follow.

- ✔ Aim for six to eight exercises that target all of your major muscle groups, such as chest presses, military presses, back rows, triceps pushdowns, biceps curls, squats and bicycle crunches.
- ✔ Do a moderate amount of reps for each exercise. You want to get to a point where you feel worked, but not pulverized. As a general rule of thumb, 8 to 12 reps is a good starting point.
- ✔ Perform three or four sets. Let fatigue be your guide here. If you reel off three sets and feel you still have gas in the tank, do one more.
- ✔ Rest for 60 seconds between your sets. If you feel you can recover faster, then shorten your breaks. Always remember the 90% rule!
- ✔ Choose between horizontal or vertical loading. Horizontal loading is doing an entire series of sets for one exercise, moving to the next exercise, and then following this pattern all the way to the end of your workout.

Vertical loading would be performing one exercise for one body part, then doing a different exercise for another body part and moving to the next and the next and the next until you've completed them all.

Then start from the top and go back down the list again until you've achieved your desired amount of sets per exercise. It would be as if you were following them vertically written on a page.

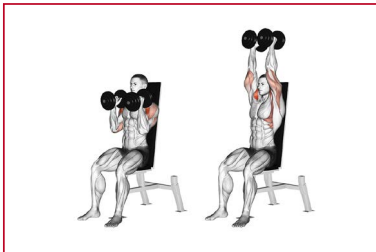
- ✔ Work out three days a week on nonconsecutive days.

Intermediate Workout

If you have a bit of experience and want to turn your efforts up a notch, here is a 4-day plan that should satisfy your itch. You will be working the same three muscle groups on Monday and Thursday and the same three muscle groups on Tuesday and Friday. This gives you two full rest days between working the same groups. And feel free to change the days you do this program if it better fits your schedule.

Start out light and increase weight with each subsequent set. Wherever you see two sets of 10 reps in a series, perform breakdown sets. This is where you lift a lighter load immediately following a set and take a very short rest break or do not rest at all. It's up to you how you go about it.

Mon and Thur - Shoulders/Triceps/Biceps/Abs.

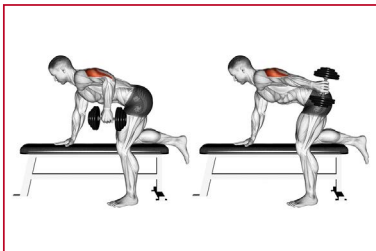


Shoulders:

Dumbbell Military Press: 15, 12, 10, 8, 6, 10, 10 reps

Barbell Shrugs: 12, 10, 8, 6, 10, 10 reps

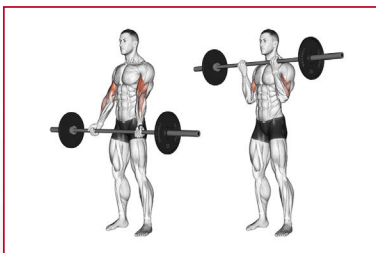
Dumbbell Lateral Raises: 10-12, 10-12, 10-12 reps



Triceps:

Weighted Dips: 12, 10, 8, 6, 10, 10 reps

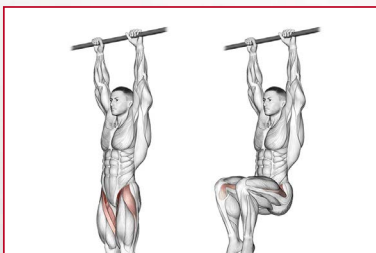
Dumbbell Triceps Kickbacks: 10, 8, 6, 10, 10 reps



Biceps:

Barbell EZ-bar Curls: 12, 10, 8, 6, 10, 10 reps

Dumbbell Incline Hammer Curls: 10, 8, 6, 10, 10 reps



Abs:

Hanging Knee Raises: 15 to 20 reps.

Side Plank Dips: 15 to 20 reps

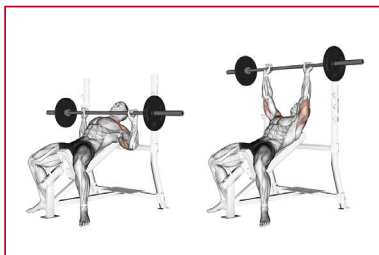
Bicycle Crunches: 15 to 20 reps

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Perform each ab exercise after completing each set of weight training exercises. Follow this sequence all the way through. For example, do hanging knee raises after you've completed your military presses. Then do side plank dips after your shrugs and perform bicycle crunches after your lateral raises.

Continue this pattern through the rest of your workout. When you finish the last set of the last routine, you will have done two sets of ab exercises for each region of your midsection. At this point, perform an ab circuit by doing all three of the ab exercises back to back to back with no rest.

Tues and Fri - Chest/Back/Legs.

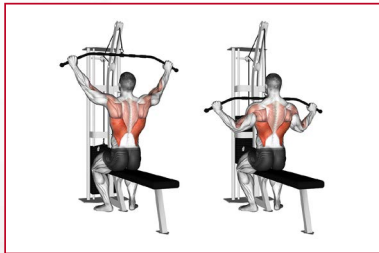


Chest:

Barbell Incline Press: 15, 12, 10, 8, 6, 10, 10 reps

Dumbbell Bench Press: 12, 10, 8, 6, 10, 10 reps

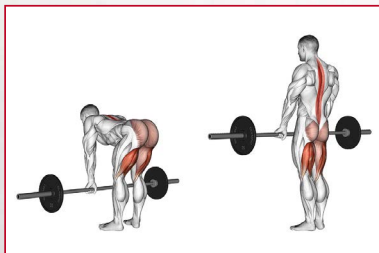
Dumbbell Flys: 10-12, 10-12, 10-12 reps



Back:

Wide-grip Lat Pulldowns: 12, 10, 8, 6, 10, 10 reps

Dumbbell One-arm Rows: 10, 8, 6, 10, 10 reps



Legs:

Barbell Deadlifts: 12, 10, 8, 6, 10, 10 reps

Dumbbell Walking Lunges: 10, 8, 6, 10, 10 reps

Advanced Workout

This program consists of six days of weight training. The focus is on two different muscle groups a day. For most of the workout, these will be opposing muscles, such as chest/back and triceps/biceps. Working opposing muscles is an old-school strategy deployed by bodybuilders and strongmen that helps create symmetry and ensures that you have a balanced physique.

Do chest/back on Monday, triceps/biceps on Tuesday, and shoulders/legs on Wednesday. Then, repeat the three-day scheme in that same order on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Take Sunday off to go golfing.

Once you have gone through the week, start the cycle off again on Monday, this time with tris and bis. Continue to follow the same pattern... tris/bis, shoulders/legs, and chest/back, on consecutive days. Your muscle groups will get two full days of rest, three times in a row, then six days of rest. Here is a 4-week schematic so it's easier to see...

Week 1

Monday: Chest/Back
Tuesday: Tris/Bis
Wednesday: Shoulders/Legs
Thursday: Chest/Back
Friday: Tris/Bi
Saturday: Shoulders/Legs

Week 2

Monday: Tris/Bis
Tuesday: Shoulders/Legs
Wednesday: Chest/Back
Thursday: Tris/Bis
Friday: Shoulders/Legs
Saturday: Chest/Back

Week 3

Monday: Shoulders/Legs
Tuesday: Chest/Back
Wednesday: Tris/Bis
Thursday: Shoulders/Legs
Friday: Chest/Back
Saturday: Tris/Bis

Week 4

Monday: Chest/Back
Tuesday: Tris/Bis
Wednesday: Shoulders/Legs
Thursday: Chest/Back
Friday: Tris/Bis
Saturday: Shoulders/Legs

Now that you've established what muscles to do and on what days, you need to know how to set up your reps, sets and exercises. Here is a pattern to follow...

Perform three exercises per muscle group

1st exercise: 15, 12, 10, 8, 6, 10, 10.reps
2nd exercise: 12, 10, 8, 6, 10, 10 reps
3rd exercise: 10, 8, 6, 10, 10 reps

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Before moving on, you need to know which exercises to do. Your objective with this, and any workout, is to maximize muscle recruitment. The best way to obtain that is by doing compound exercises.

Compound exercises work a focus muscle and one or more other muscles. Being that you have multiple muscles working in concert, you are able to maximize muscle fiber recruitment, leading to heavier weights being lifted and more size being gained.

You may also have heard these exercises referred to as "multi-joint exercises" because they activate more than one joint. If you can, do compound exercises across the board for each muscle group. For example, squats, step-ups and lunges all qualify as compound exercises for your legs and make good additions to your workout.

If you include isolation exercises, do them last. Isolation exercises zero in on one muscle and they activate single joints. If you do them first, you will tire yourself out and not be able to push hard with your compound movements.

Here is an example routine of exercises to perform...

Chest/Back:

Barbell Bench Press
Dumbbell Pullovers
Cable Flys
Weighted Pull-ups
Bent-over EZ-bar Rows
Weighted Back Extensions

Tris/Bis:

Dumbbell Overhead Triceps Extensions
EZ-bar Skullcrushers
Rope Pushdowns
Barbell Curls
Dumbbell Twist Curls
Preacher Bench Dumbbell Concentration Curls

Shoulders/Legs:

Dumbbell Military Press
EZ-bar Upright Rows
Dumbbell Front Raises
Back Squats
Dumbbell Step-ups
Dumbbell Alternating Reverse Lunges



Join a Gym or set one up at Home?

A lot of people differ when it comes to going to a gym or working out at home. Motives for this decision range from being self-conscious to convenience factors to economic issues. In reality, there really is no right or wrong answer. As with fitness in general, it really all depends on your personal preferences. You may see the value in having both a membership and home gym.

“The Gym”

When it comes to the gym scene, fitness tools have evolved, fitness programs have come and gone, and technology has advanced to the point where all you need to do to get access is swipe a card at the front door.

No matter how you slice it, none of that stuff even matters if it weren't for one common thread-members. Without members you have no gym and you have no reason for trends and fads to come and go.

If you are in fear of being judged or ridiculed by these members, you have a better chance of getting hit by a meteorite. Uncommon to popular belief, gyms are not as intimidating as you may think.

On the average, people are more concerned about looking at themselves in all those glistening mirrors than they are looking at you. That doesn't mean you're not worth looking at though. It just means you should not let fear of judgment be a deciding factor in joining a gym.

Base your decision off of more realistic factors like cost of memberships, distance to your home or office, amenities and offerings included with a membership.

Also, when you first join a gym, the front desk person or whoever you encounter should be very accommodating and professional. If they are anything short of this, do not waste your time. It shows bad customer service and that's the last thing you want to deal with on a daily basis.



Additionally, they should set you up with a free tour and possibly a free training session to get familiar with the equipment and how to use it. Take advantage of any offering they are willing to give you, but don't get carried away.

Be aware that membership fees will vary greatly from gym to gym. One with a pool, spa, basketball court, sauna, hot tub, yoga room, towel service and underground parking is going to be a lot more expensive. These types of gyms often have a multitude of classes included in the price of the membership, which is a good perk.

Aside from the price, the cleanliness of a gym is something you do not want to overlook. You may actually be better off paying more for a membership if the gym is spotless and has good cleaning practices. You sure don't want to be subjected to sweat and filth when you're cranking out reps on a weight bench.

You may also be interested in seeking out a personal trainer at a gym, which can be a very good idea, especially when just starting out. They can help you dial in your goals and create workout plans specifically geared to your needs and wants.

One last thought on the gym scene. Don't join one based only on its proximity to your house. Instead, think about your work situation. If you have a gym that's right across the street from your place of employment, it might be a better option to join that one.

Then you can bring your workout clothes with you and hop right in there when you finish your day. Or go there first thing in the morning and shoot right over to work afterward. This will also give you less of a chance to make excuses why you shouldn't go to the gym.

Home Gym Set-up

Nothing really beats the convenience of having a home gym. In all honesty, it's advantageous to have one even if you get a membership. A time will come where you are unable to make it to the gym and you'll regret not having a place to train.

This will especially hold true in the winter if you live in a cold weather climate. No amount of snow, sleet or freezing rain can ever be used as an excuse to deprive you of your workout.

Really, the only disadvantage with a home gym is the startup costs. But when you compare it to a year's worth of membership fees at a gym and all the incidentals that accrue, it usually balances out. And, this is a one-time investment that can last many years down the round.

You can get as fancy or basic as you want, but at the very least, invest in full length mirrors on at least one wall. Yes it's true, you'll spot people checking themselves out all the time in a public gym, but that's not why the mirrors are there. They help ensure that you are using proper form.

If you can't see yourself, you may think you are doing an exercise correctly, but are not. If you CAN see yourself, you will know if your form is off from the start and be able to make proper adjustments.

Ceiling fans are good options to include, especially if you live in a warm climate. Not only do they cool you off, but they circulate air, making it easier to breathe and recover between sets.

Make sure to pay attention to your surroundings though. If you have a fan going, and are about to jump rope or do an overhead press, you don't want to hit it. The fan always wins!

Aside from the aesthetics, you have to figure out what equipment you want. Just as you can get fancy and elaborate with the design of your gym, you can also do the same with your equipment choices.

Times have changed over the past decade. Fitness trends have slowly and surely gone in more of a minimalist direction.

In the big picture, you want to harvest tools that will allow you to target all of your muscles efficiently whilst also getting an adequate amount of cardiovascular training—all while keeping as much open space as possible.



Tools like dumbbells, kettlebells, suspension trainers, medicine balls, battle ropes, barbells with weight plates, pull-up bars, sleds, tires, sandbags, Indian clubs, jump ropes and gliding discs make great options.

A speed bag and heavy bag are also fun tools that afford you the ability to get in better shape while also getting out some pent up aggression.



Traveling and Working Out

Regardless if it's for business, pleasure or mourning, a time will come where you have to travel and stay at a temporary location. In some cases, people don't care too much about working out or watching their diet when they are out of town. However, it's highly advisable that you do.

If you choose to take a few days or week off, you can jeopardize your progress and make it hard to get back on track once you get home. And it's never fun to start from scratch after a long layoff.

Regardless if you are staying in a hotel, motel, fancy house, cottage, cabin or barn, it should be a priority to stay true to your body and find a way to exercise. And when you're out of town, you can't just assume you'll have a nice gym to dip into at will.

That being said, you've already been given a few workouts, but it's only fitting that you get one more. Call this an insurance policy just in case you are faced with a road trip and want to stay in peak condition.

This workout consists of three weight training and three cardio days. All you need to execute it is the weight of your body and some household items. Perform your weight training and cardio workouts on alternating days of each other.

This may seem a bit intense, but you'll be fine as long as you start off easy and always choose safe over dangerous.

As opposed to the last workouts, the exercises here will be laid out with more detail because they are a little more complex. Plus you will find some helpful tips. So without any further ado, here you go...



Historical Push-ups - 5 sets of 15 with 45-to-60-sec rest breaks.

Historical push-ups are true and correct push-ups that people used to do in historical times. On a side note, people back then were lean, defined, had great posture and a low incidence of injury.

Begin in a front leaning rest (plank) position with your hands placed shoulder-width apart and your feet together. Tighten your abs and maintain a straight line from the back of your head to your heels as you bend your elbows and lower yourself down.

Make sure to keep your arms in close to your sides and try to get your chin to touch the floor or ground. Remember, these are historical push-ups. Steadily push yourself back up in a smooth motion until your arms are fully extended and repeat.

If you are unable to perform a set of clean reps without your butt sagging and raising, place your hands on a chair or bench. There is nothing wrong with a regression to keep your form good and body out of harm's way..

Decline Push-ups - 5 sets of 15 with 45-to-60-sec rest breaks.

Decline push-ups are performed with your feet elevated on a prop and your hands on the floor. It's not the other way around, uncommon to popular belief.

Follow the exact same rules as historical push-ups and choose a prop that is not too extreme. The higher your feet are elevated, the harder the push-ups will be. A small step stool would work just fine. If you're a stud, use a bed, chair or table.

Backbend Push-ups - 5 sets of 15 with 45-to-60-sec rest breaks.

This push-up variation is akin to a yoga pose known as a full wheel. In layman's terms, it's often referred to as a backbend. You are going to include the backbend into a reverse push-up so to speak. Here's how it's done...

Lie on your back with your knees bent, and feet and hands flat on the floor. Your hands should be right by your ears with your fingers pointing toward your shoulders. In one smooth motion, raise your hips off the ground and extend your arms and legs as much as possible while arching your back.

Once you have gone as far as you can, slowly lower yourself back down and repeat. As an added bonus, backbend push-ups strengthen your wrists and improve the flexibility in your arms, core and shoulders.

Pike Push-ups - 4 sets of 10 to 12 with 30-to-45-sec rest breaks.

This last push-up variation pleasantly targets your shoulders, upper back and even obliques on the sides of your ribcage.

Assume a front leaning position as if you were going to do a historical push-up and lift your butt in the air. Push your weight toward your heels and fix your gaze back at your toes.

Your head should be between your arms at this point and your body should be at about a 90-degree angle. Maintain this position with your body as you bend your elbows to lower yourself down. Aim the top of your head toward the floor and stop when it is within about an inch. Push yourself back to the starting point and repeat.



Dips - 4 sets of 10 to 12 with 30-to-45-sec rest breaks.

Any time you extend or straighten your arm, you activate the large muscles on the upper back side called the triceps, which you should already know. Push-ups do a good job of targeting these muscles, but dips do an even better job.

You will need a chair or sturdy, stationary object like a park bench to do these. Sit on the edge of the chair with your hands gripping the sides. Step your feet out so you have clearance between the back of your body and the chair.

Lower yourself down by bending your elbows and stop when your upper arms become parallel to the floor. Push yourself back up in a steady motion until your arms are fully extended and repeat.

For a more challenging variation, extend your legs out straight and ground your heels into the floor with your toes pointing toward the sky. You also have the option of placing your hands on the front edge of the chair.

Lateral Single-leg Step Squats - 4 sets of 10 to 12 with 30-to-45-sec rest breaks.

All squats target the major muscles in the lower body, which include the glutes, hamstrings, quadriceps and calves. A lateral single leg step squat places a little more emphasis on the glutes and it also challenges your balance.

You will need a prop to do this exercise, such as one or more thick books, a small stool or cinderblock.

Stand with your right foot on the prop and left foot spaced a little more than a shoulder-width away. Keep your elbows bent and hands tucked into your chest, and lower yourself down by bending your knees. Stop when your thighs become parallel to the floor and rise back up.

Press your weight down into your foot and lift your left foot off the floor. Bend your left knee and stop when your thigh becomes parallel to the floor. You should be balancing on your right leg at this point. Step back out into your starting position, repeat for a set of reps and switch sides.

If you want to add more weight to this exercise, thread a towel through a full gallon water jug and carefully position it on your upper back. Let the ends of the towel dangle over your chest and grasp each end with your hands.

A gallon jug weighs 8 lbs. when full. Feel free to use a few of them if you are a stud and can handle the extra resistance. Or you can empty the fluid and add sand, gravel or small rocks.

**DON'T STOP WHEN IT HURTS,
STOP WHEN YOU ARE DONE.**



Reverse Lunges - 4 sets of 10 to 12 reps with 30-to-45-sec rest breaks.

Reverse lunges will recruit your lower body muscles with a little different emphasis. They make good closers when you are finishing a leg workout.

Stand with your feet together, fix your gaze on the horizon and place your hands on your hips. Take a big step back with your right foot and lower yourself down by bending both knees. Stop when your left thigh is parallel to the floor and both knees form 90-degree angles.

Step back to the starting position and repeat with your left leg. Continue to alternate back and forth until you reach your rep range. And just so you know, one rep is achieved when you have lunged with both legs.

Make sure to keep your torso vertical throughout the whole movement. You do not want to hinge at the hips or arch your back. Also, never let your back knee touch the floor.

If you want more resistance, hold water jugs at your sides or hold the towel with the jugs across your upper back.



Core Superset - 4 sets of 15 to 20 reps with 30-to-45-sec rest breaks.

Every exercise described in this workout targets the core in one way or another. But, the core superset specifically targets all the muscles that surround the midsection of the body, which include the rectus abdominis, obliques and erector spinae.

You will be able to do this with star sit-ups and back extensions. If you remember from earlier, breakdown sets were discussed. Supersets are similar in the fact that you go from one exercise to another. But, you do two different body parts and with no rest in between. Take your rest break after you have completed the superset.

Star Sit-up

Lie flat on your back with your arms out at your sides in a “T” shape and legs spaced apart in a “Y” shape. Press your left hand into the floor and lift your torso at an angle toward your left as you simultaneously lift your left leg. Reach across your body with your right hand and try to touch your toes.

Your left forearm and hand should be flat on the floor at this point. Once you have touched your toes, slowly lower yourself all the way back to the floor and switch sides. Continue to alternate back and forth until you’ve hit the required number of reps per side.

When you rotate your body in the air, make sure your back is off the floor. You don’t want to just reach for your toes with your hand because that would cause no ab recruitment whatsoever.

Back Extension

The most comfortable way to do back extensions is with a bed. Lie across it on your stomach with your hips right on the edge. This will allow you to bend. Place your hands on the sides of your head and lower your upper body down as far as possible.

Lift yourself back up by engaging the muscles in your lower back and repeat. If you have a travel partner, have them grasp your lower legs to keep you more stable.



Cardio

Now it's time to get to the cardio portion of the workout. This will be short and sweet. You will need to go outside because it involves running. However, if you are lucky enough to find a decent treadmill at your disposal, then feel free to climb aboard.

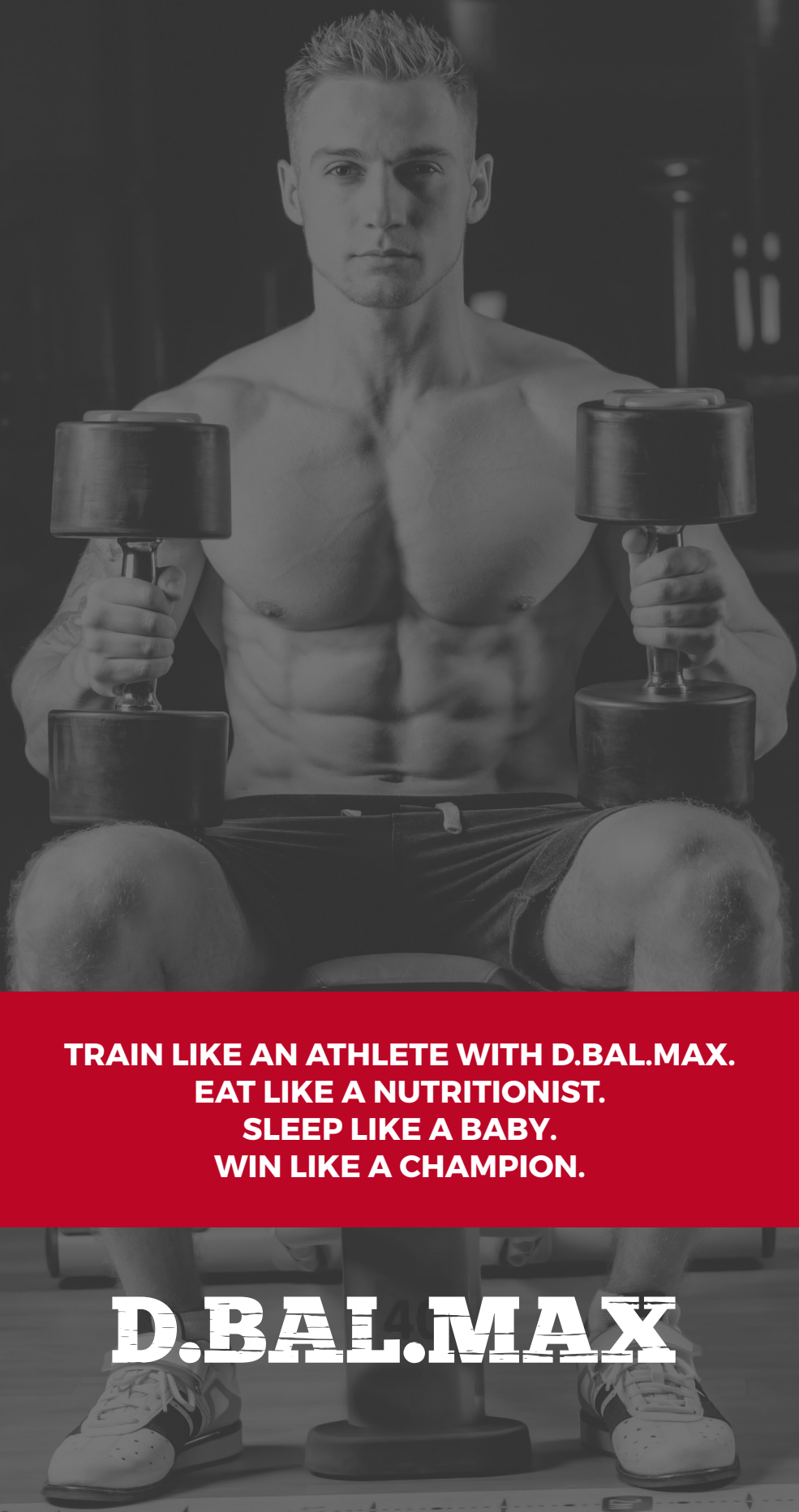
Start off walking for two minutes then jog lightly for four. This will be your warmup. Then alternate between one minute of running at about 75 percent maximum effort and two minutes of jogging. Perform 4-to-6 intervals and finish with a light 5-minute jog to cool down. Your entire cardio session will last a mere 20 to 30 minutes.

Summarization

Great job! You are well on your way to getting your body dialed in. And now that you have a good understanding of working out, it's time to bridge the gap with your diet. Up next is the Nutrition Guide. Don't groan. You know how important a healthy diet is to your overall wellbeing.

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**WHEN YOU
FEEL LIKE
QUITTING,
THINK ABOUT
WHY YOU
STARTED.**



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