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SALOMON 

Contents June 2011



Editor's letter

If you always do the same thing in training, you'll get bored. That's why this month the *MF* team has been trying some new challenges.

Our deputy editor, Joe, who wouldn't know a try-line from a line-out, trained with top rugby side Wasps (p91). Feature writer Tarquin Cooper went freediving in the Red Sea (p81) - the blackout he experienced was a first too. And features editor Joel, whose biggest hand-power test to date involved a jar of pickled onions, entered a grip strength contest (p46). As for me, I tried weighted sled sprints during a workout with top 110m hurdler Andy Turner (p137). I wasn't very good but, thankfully, didn't blackout.

BodyPower offer

BodyPower, the UK's biggest fitness and nutrition expo, takes place at the NEC in Birmingham on 21st-22nd May. Quote MF2011 when booking your tickets at bodypowerexpo.co.uk to receive a £2 discount. And come and visit the *MF* stand while you're there!

Jon Lipsey Editor

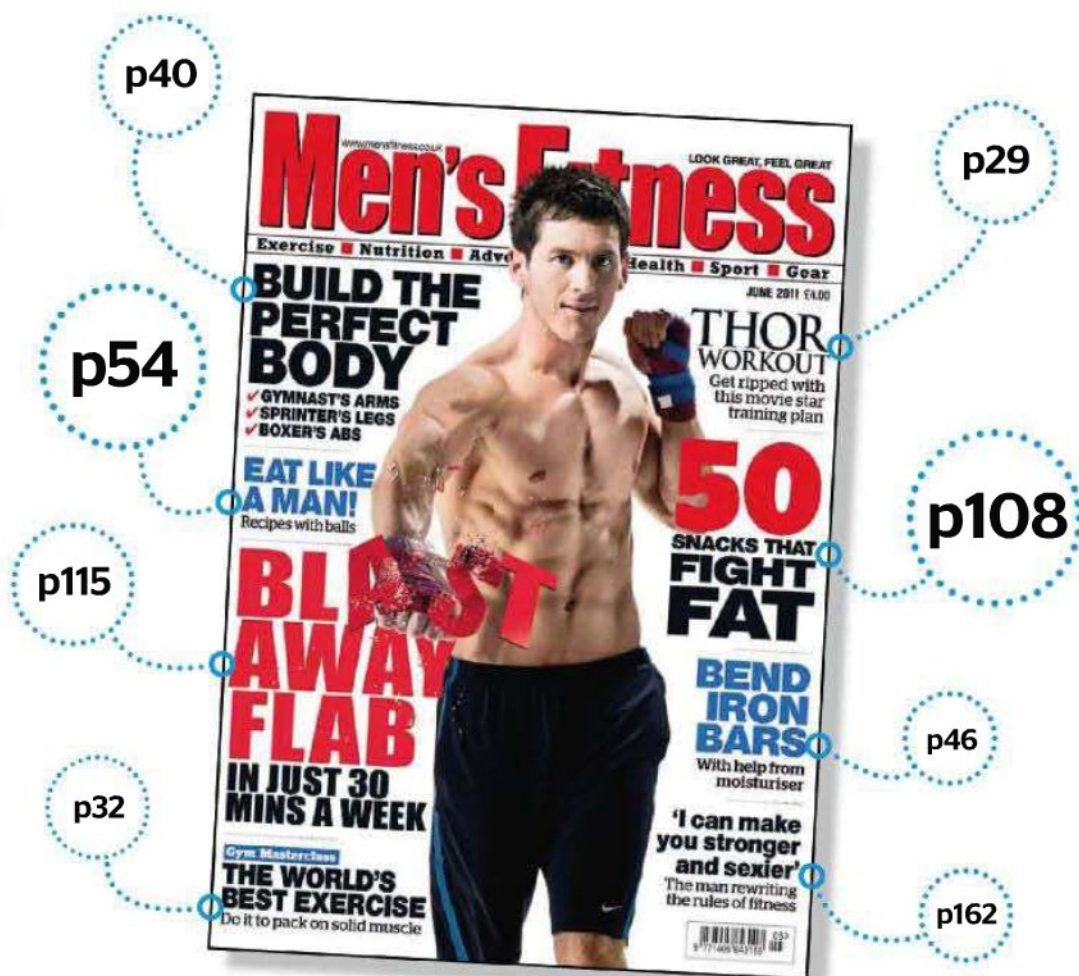
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See p124 or go to mensfitness.co.uk



On the cover



Photography **Glen Burrows** Model **Mark Brereton**@WATHletic
Make-up **Emma White Turle**

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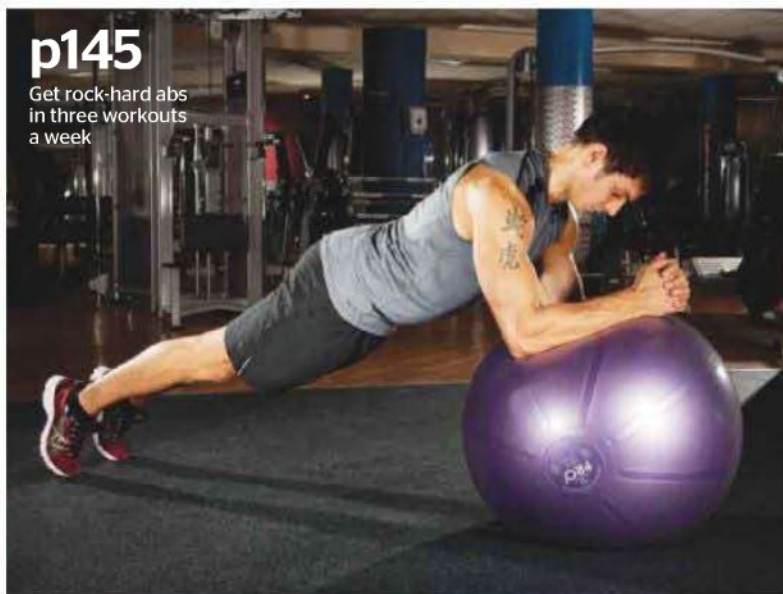
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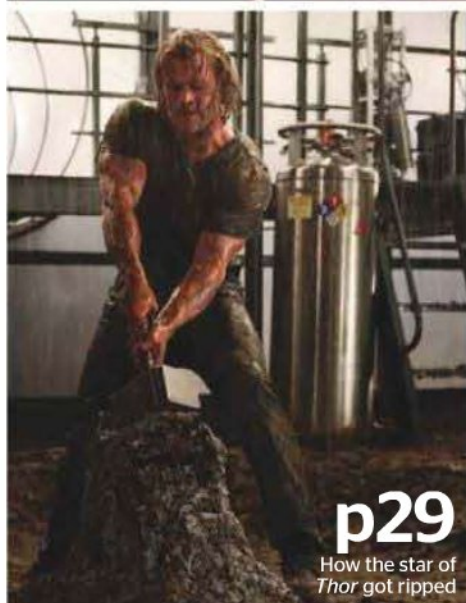
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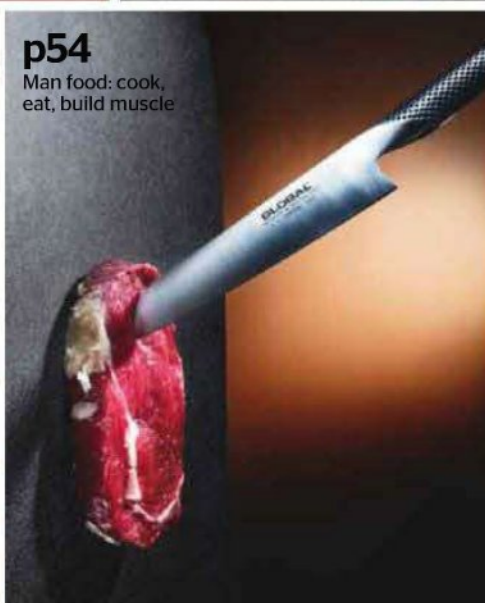
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The secret to building a crushing grip



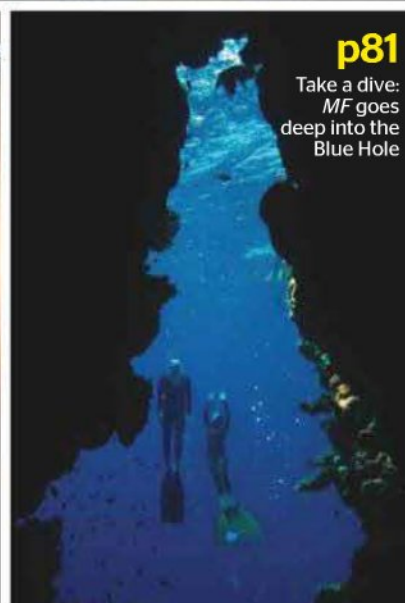
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Jean Paul
GAULTIER

"LE MALE"



The **MF**ers

The staff of *Men's Fitness* aren't happy unless they're working up a sweat. Here's what we've been doing this month



Joel, features editor

What I've been up to Embarking on a grip strength programme after being inspired by competing in Britain's Strongest Hands (see p48). You can train your grip almost every day without overdoing it and it's easy to do just about anywhere, so it's perfect to fit around a busy schedule.



Nick, digital editor

What I've been up to Learning how to flip on a snowboard at indoor freestyle snowboarding centre Woodward at Copper Mountain in Colorado. It's weird practising snowboard skills indoors, but doing flips on a trampoline and into a foam pit decreases your chances of losing your teeth when you try them off a jump in the funpark.



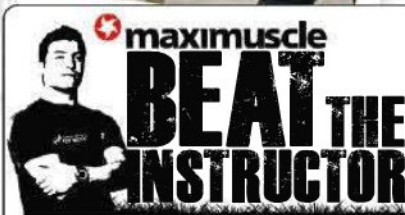
Ben, staff writer

What I've been up to Scoring the winning goal to secure promotion for my team in Brighton's Pitch Invasion five-a-side league. After a lengthy injury layoff, I used interval training to help rebuild my cardio and boost my acceleration over short distances. Playing box-to-box for 20-minute halves can be surprisingly tough, especially if you're constantly sprinting and changing direction.



Joe, deputy editor

What I've been up to Taking a combination of jabs, hooks, crosses, uppercuts and body shots in passing the PadBox level two boxing coach qualification at Peacock Gym in east London. An hour in the ring holding the pads is almost as much of a workout as actually throwing the punches.



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■ Your countdown to a fitter life

Tame your training demons

Does the sofa look particularly alluring? Is a lazy devil whispering in your ear? Overcome temptation and see off those gym-skipping excuses for good

1 I can't find the time

Time-poor men invariably give a lot of their time to other people, such as colleagues or friends, and sharing your goals with them can help them understand your motivations. 'Tell your boss what you're training for so he or she understands why you have to take your lunch break, or train with a friend so you mix your social life with your exercise,' says trainer Craig Bothwell (sohogyms.com). 'And remember you can easily make your day longer by getting up 45 minutes earlier to work out.'

2 I don't have enough money

Quitting your gym to survive George Osborne's cuts won't necessarily help your wallet, and it definitely won't help your waist. 'Examine your spending habits and you may be amazed by how much your little daily habits are really costing,' says trainer Chris Rogers (fitnessfirst.co.uk). 'I had one client who bought two takeout lattes a day at a weekly cost of £25 a week, or £100 per month - far more than a gym membership.' If money really is tight, some short sprints followed by bodyweight squats, lunges, press-ups and pull-ups don't cost a penny.

3 I get bored easily

Unless you share a gym with the Swedish women's volleyball team, doing the same workout week in, week out will inevitably lead to boredom. 'Book a session every six weeks with a trainer who can suggest a fresh, new and challenging regime,' says Rogers. 'This will ensure you shock your muscles into more growth, because your muscles need new stimulation to keep growing.'



4 I don't have the energy

Eat smarter. 'Reduce your portion sizes and eat small meals at regular intervals - think breakfast, snack, lunch, snack, dinner, snack - to provide more stable energy levels,' says nutritionist Lynn Clay (fitness-iq.co.uk). 'For each meal, combine a low glycaemic carbohydrate such as oats or wholegrain rice with a lean protein - eggs, meat or fish - to maintain energy. Snacks should be nuts, fruit or yoghurt.'

5 I can't see any improvements

If you're aiming to lose weight but the scales refuse to budge, don't get down. If you're training hard, it's likely you're replacing fat with muscle. 'To make sure you're heading in the right direction, measure your shoulders, chest, arms, belly and thighs,' says Bothwell. 'Do it at the same time each week, when you won't have a full stomach or a post-gym pump, and you'll see where you're getting bigger or leaner.'

'Tell yourself if you make five gym sessions you'll go out for dinner'

6 I always say 'I'll go tomorrow'

Discipline is crucial to achieving your goals, but a reward system can make a plan easier to stick to. 'Tell yourself if you make five gym sessions you'll go out for dinner, or if you miss training you have to do a double session the next day,' says Rogers. Analyse your laziness triggers too, so if Champions League matches make Tuesday night sessions a rush, do a lunchtime workout.

7 My muscles ache

Dividing your workout schedule into body-part components will help you to keep training, even if you're still sore from your last session. 'Split up sessions into chest and back, legs and abs, then arms and shoulders,' says Rogers. 'Even if your pecs are burning from last night's bench presses, you can still work your legs without adding to the soreness.'



Sleep well to stay well

A study of more than 14,000 people has found that one in eight Britons sleeps for fewer than six hours per night. If this includes you, you're putting your long-term health at risk. Research has shown that not getting enough sleep on a regular basis can increase the chances of diabetes, heart disease and obesity. Here's how to get a healthy eight hours of shuteye every night.



Avoid stimulants after 6pm

Caffeine and alcohol should be avoided in the evenings because they have a stimulant effect on the body that makes it hard to switch off come bedtime. Ditch coffee and cola for herbal tea or water.



Keep your bedroom dark

Artificial light will interfere with the production of hormones that make you sleepy. Keep electronic equipment away from the bed, and keep the room cool - too hot and you'll wake up sweaty and thirsty.



Have more sex

You read that right. An orgasm releases a cocktail of hormones in the brain, some of which make you dozy and help induce sleep. Some can help ease a headache as well, so there's no excuse not to...



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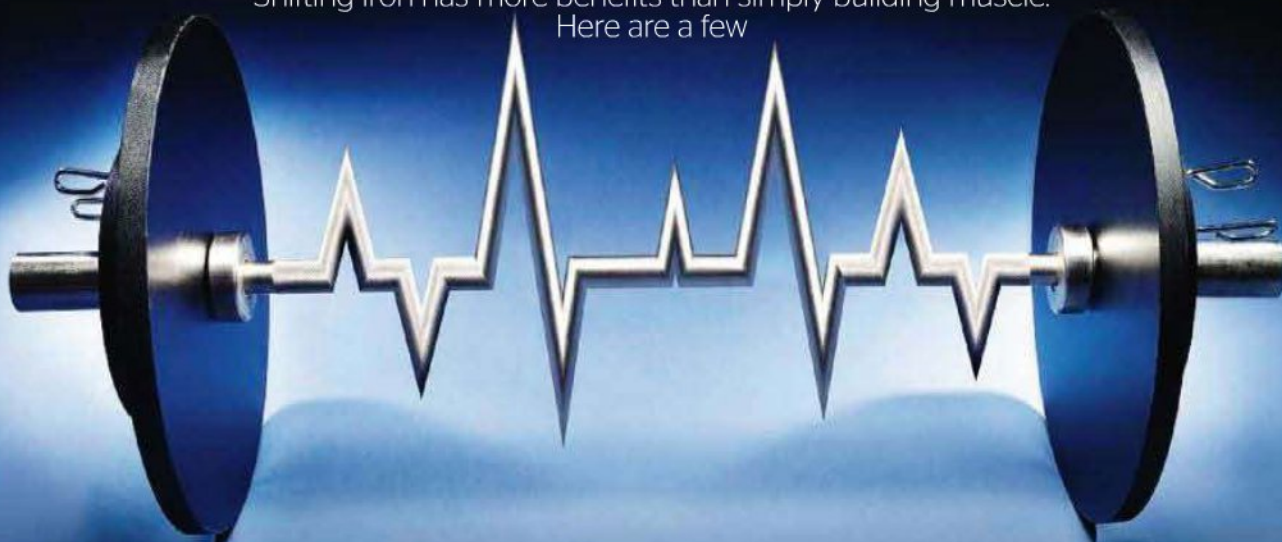
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Why you should ♥ weights

Shifting iron has more benefits than simply building muscle. Here are a few



Healthy heart

That's right - lifting weights makes your heart bigger and stronger, as well as your muscles. Doing resistance exercises three days a week, performing eight exercises for three sets of ten reps each session, results in increased blood flow and lower blood pressure post-workout compared to cardio exercise, according to a US study.

Less fat

For those still convinced that cardio is the best way to burn off the belly, consider this. 'Muscle is metabolically more active than fat so the more you have the more calories you'll burn - even when resting,' says trainer Dean Hodgkin (deanhodgkin.com). A study in *Human Biology* found that adding just 1.4kg of muscle increases your resting metabolic rate - the speed at which your body uses calories - by a huge seven per cent.

More sex

Add weight training to your routine and you'll be fighting off the girls as well as your gut. Research from the University of California proved that men who are more muscular than average have more sexual partners than their weak-limbed peers.

Strong bones

Lifting heavy metal will help you forge a skeleton of steel. That's because strength training pulls on your tendons, which connect your muscles to your bones, and this pressure forces your body to make your bones stronger and harder. A study published in the *Journal Of Applied Physiology* demonstrated that four months of strength training increased bone mineral content and could minimise the risk of osteoporosis or fractures.

Sporting success

Hammering out dumb-bell exercises will improve your rugby, squash or tennis skills, as well as your physique. 'Training with free weights improves proprioception [your sensory awareness of the position and movement of your limbs],' says Hodgkin. 'So you'll enjoy improved co-ordination when playing sport.' Less chance of a ball to the face? Thumbs up.

WORDS OF WISDOM Take inspiration from those who have been there and done it

'On occasions I have been big-headed. I think most people are when they get in the limelight. I call myself Big Head just to remind myself not to be.'

Brian Clough, football manager



'I play with a fear of letting people down. That's what motivates me.'

Jonny Wilkinson, rugby player and world record international points scorer

'All pressure is self-inflicted. It's about what you make of it or how you let it rub off on you.'

Lord Coe, former Olympian and head of the London 2012 Olympics committee

'Always forgive your enemies. Nothing annoys them so much.'

Oscar Wilde, Irish writer and poet

'If you're not failing every now and again, it's a sign you're not doing anything very innovative.'

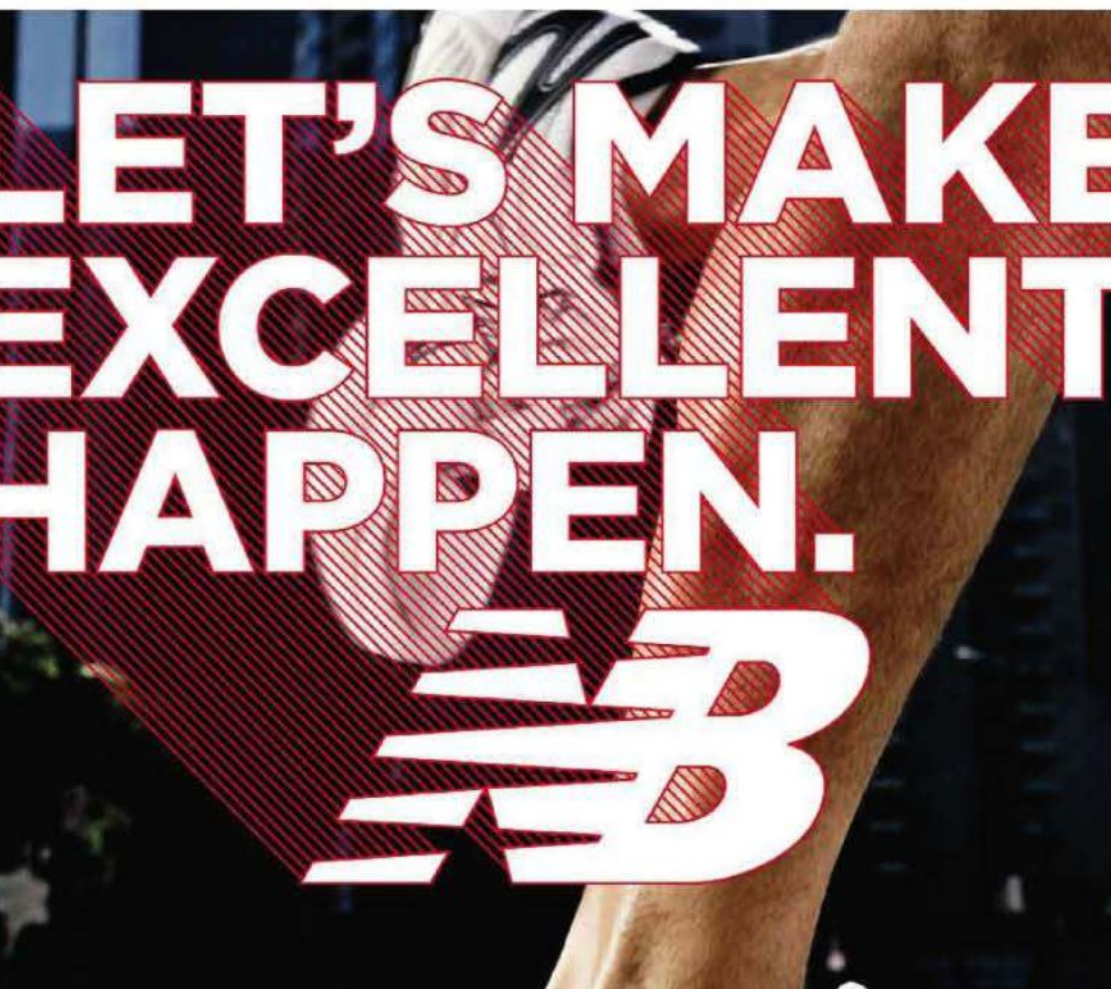
Woody Allen, American film-maker

'I think life is full of challenges and problems. I don't believe that anyone is perfect. We all make mistakes. It's not a bed of roses, and you have to work hard at it.'

Nigel Mansell, British former F1 world champion

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Boss the game like Van der Vaart

Spurs and Holland playmaker Rafael van der Vaart on how to control a match

Take a touch

'A good first touch gives you extra time to assess the situation and play the ball, so it's always important, especially if you're not the quickest player in the world or if your team plays a possession game.'

Create space

'Be aware of where the space is at all times. It's crucial to keep moving for your team-mates when you don't have the ball - and for them to keep moving for you when you do.'

Link up play

'Always try to play the ball in front of your striker, because it gives him a few seconds to think before he has to shoot.'

Practise technique

'You have to work on it every day, not just once a week. When I was young I used to kick a ball against a wall over and over again, trying to control it and turn with it to improve my technique.'

Learn when to shoot

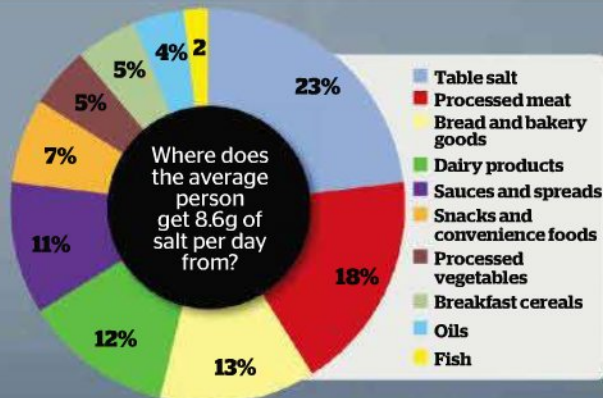
'It's only once you've played a lot of games that you develop a feeling for when to shoot from distance. For long-range shots you need to strike the ball hard and cleanly to get it to dip and swerve.'



Rafael van der Vaart wears the new Nike CTR360 Maestri II boot. For more info visit nike.com.

Stay off the salt

Despite years of government warnings to stick to 6g per day, we're still consuming too much salt. New research says we consume an average of 8.6g per day. Too much salt can contribute to a host of health problems, including high blood pressure, and cutting back to 6g a day could prevent 20,200 premature deaths per year, according to the Food Standards Agency.



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8 ways to recover faster

Come back bigger, stronger and fresher after every session with these post-workout recovery tips



1 Chill out

That doesn't mean kicking your trainers off, pouring a beer and settling down with a box set. Researchers recommend extreme temperature changes to repair damaged muscles, reduce swelling and flush out lactic acid. Try a five-minute jog or stretch, six minutes of alternating hot showers (37-43°C) and ice baths, six minutes of cycling, walking or stretching at low intensity, finishing with a final chilly two-minute ice bath.

2 Aim high

Although low glycaemic index (GI) foods help to maintain energy levels during the day, high-GI foods - such as white bread, watermelon and raisins -

are best straight after exercise because they release glucose into the blood.

3 Protein power

Have a combination of protein and carbs within 30 minutes of your workout. 'Carbs spike insulin levels in your blood, which shuttles protein into fatigued muscle cells,' says sports nutritionist Gavin Allinson (gavinallinson.com). 'Protein is essential for repairing these damaged muscle cells.' Studies recommend a carbohydrate/protein ratio of four to one.

4 Stretch it out

Finish your workout with a stretching routine to improve the elasticity of your muscles. 'Maintaining a stretch for 30

seconds will give you the maximum length gains to reduce tightness the next day,' says physiotherapist David Harris (wepphysio.co.uk). It will also flush out waste products. 'When you stretch a muscle it constricts vessels to squeeze out the excess lactic acid that causes stiffness.'

5 Pop your cherry

Before you start reminiscing about how you'll never get those days back, we mean cherry juice, because it contains high levels of antioxidant and anti-inflammatory compounds that enhance your recovery.

6 Get a rub-down

A post-exercise massage prevents delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS). 'Massage

'Extreme temperature changes will repair damaged muscles and reduce swelling'

relieves tension in muscles after weight training, which reduces pain,' explains Harris. A *British Journal Of Sports Medicine* study confirmed that a massage two hours after hamstring exercises reduced the intensity of soreness 48 hours later.

7 Roll with it

If you can't convince your girlfriend to hammer your hams, foam rollers are a useful self-massage tool. 'Rollers can be used to loosen tightness in the iliotibial band, calves and quads and stretch the spine out,' says Harris.

8 Hit the H₂O

Rehydrating is crucial. 'Your body requires extra water for two to three hours after exercise,' says Allinson. Loughborough University researchers recommend drinking 1.2 to 1.5 times the weight of fluid lost during exercise. Hit the scales before and after your session and drink the requisite amount.





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Sweet success

Is your sweet tooth ruining your fight against fat? Here's how to avoid piling on weight



Eat the whole thing

Fruit juice may seem an easy way to get one of your five a day, but eating a piece of whole fruit instead will mean fewer guilty strolls to the office vending machine. A study published in the journal *Appetite* showed that those who ate whole apples felt fuller for longer than those who drank apple juice.

Plan against snacks

Willpower alone isn't enough to prevent snacking, so draw up a plan of action. A Dutch report in the *International Journal Of Behavioural Nutrition And Physical Activity* showed that people who had specific tactics for moments of weakness - such as taking fruit or nuts to work to crush chocolate cravings - consumed fewer unhealthy snacks than those who just had good intentions.

Get some rye

Breakfasting on rye bread will stop you begging your workmates for biscuits by lunchtime. A study in

'Willpower alone isn't enough to prevent snacking'

Nutrition Journal showed that the fibre-rich bread suppressed appetite up to lunchtime more than normal bread. In fact, the effect even continued into the afternoon.

Remove the rubbish

Clear your desk of snacks: simply being near food will result in snacking. A study published in *Appetite* showed

that office workers who had chocolates on their desk ate 5.6 more per day than those whose temptations were kept on a shelf 2m away. And we'll still scoff nearby food, even if it tastes awful. Cinema-goers given double-sized boxes of stale popcorn ate 34 per cent more than those eating from normal-sized boxes, according to the *Journal Of Nutrition Education And Behaviour*.

Food for thought

A Yorkie bar may feel like a manly snack, but chocolate bars punch below their weight in the fight against mid-afternoon hunger. A report in the *British Journal Of Nutrition* showed that men who drank a liquid yoghurt as an afternoon snack felt less hungry before their next meal than those who ate a chocolate bar.

Gym Jargon

You hear these terms all the time when you're working out, but what do they really mean?

Intervals

This form of cardio training is based around alternating periods of high-intensity effort with lower-intensity recovery periods to increase fat-burning and cardiovascular fitness. It's not a break halfway through your session when you slip into the lobby for a glass of chardonnay.



Free weights

Dumb-bells, barbells, kettlebells - any weight that isn't attached to the floor or a machine. Despite the name, they can be very expensive. If you get poncy ones.

Abductors

Don't be paranoid - no-one's trying to kidnap you. These are muscles in your hips that are responsible for rotating your legs out and away from the body.



Glutes

The proper name for the muscles in your arse. They're actually the biggest and most powerful muscles you have.

Voluntary muscles

These muscles are attached to your bones and are responsible for movement. The other kind are involuntary muscles, such as your heart, which you have no control over. Cue hilarious joke from the ladies about how they can think of a muscle you have no control over.



WINNING



Jenson Button 2009
Formula One™ World Champion

**WHATEVER'S ON JENSON'S MIND
IT'S NOT DANDRUFF**

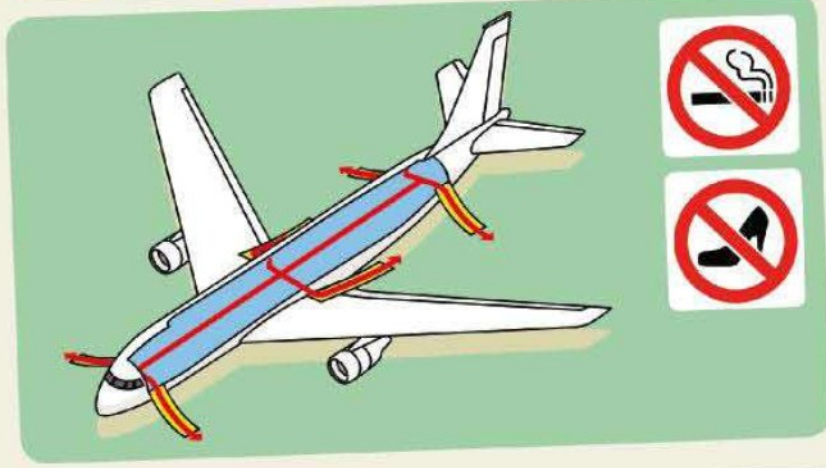
 **head &
shoulders**
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Banish jet lag

Arrive at your holiday destination wide awake and ready to go by following these tips



Reset your clock

Aligning your sleep patterns to the time zone of your destination in the days before your flight will help to minimise jet lag. A study in the journal *Sleep* recommends incrementally shifting your sleep schedule back or forward by one to two hours a day for three days before you fly. Your circadian rhythm (the body's natural 24-hour clock) will then adjust more smoothly to the time change so you're not stumbling around half-asleep for the first few days.

See the light

Manipulating light and darkness during your flight can trick your body into adapting to a new circadian rhythm, according to a report by the Edinburgh Sleep Centre. It recommends switching your watch to your new time zone as soon as you board and then creating daylight or night-time when you want it, using an eye mask and your cabin light, to make your body believe you've already arrived. Just don't start stripping down to your trunks in the aisle.

Unwind on board

Lack of oxygen, uncomfortable seats and the dry air of the cabin will affect your joint flexibility, muscle efficiency and digestive system on top of jet lag, so you arrive feeling even groggy. The Edinburgh Sleep Centre recommends walking around and stretching regularly, eating light meals, limiting alcohol intake and drinking lots of water. Advice that we're sure you'll stick to after you get off the plane as well.

Keep your eyes open

As much as you might want to, avoid napping during your first day of arrival - it will hinder your body's ability to adapt to the new time zone. Sleep specialist Dr Chris Idzikowski advises travellers to spend daylight hours outdoors or in bright indoor light and save the sleeping for when it gets dark. Getting a solid four-hour chunk of sleep during the local night - called 'anchor sleep' - is crucial to resetting your body clock, according to Bupa.

Gym Crimes

What's got your goat in the gym this month? Email your crimes to joe_warner@dennis.co.uk



Roasted nuts Witnessed by Rhys

Crime 'I saw a man using the hair-dryer in the changing rooms to warm his pants up before popping them on.'

Verdict Guilty of roasting his chestnuts on an open dryer.



Scary staring Witnessed by Vaughn

Crime 'I was working out with a female friend and a couple of guys were staring at her like they'd never seen a woman before.'

Verdict Guilty of focusing on someone else's perfect form instead of their own.



Mirror, mirror Witnessed by Adam

Crime 'In my gym there's a huge tattooed guy who's always shaving in one of the sinks, really close to the mirror. Not only is this unhygienic, but I fail to grasp why he needs to do it naked.'

Verdict Guilty of a very public display of reflection.



We put gym crimes on trial in every edition of the MF podcast. Listen at mensfitness.co.uk/links/podcast

Tubes™

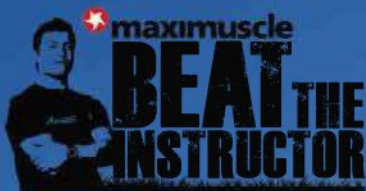
SOLE TECHNOLOGY



FEEL THE DIFFERENCE A MUCH MORE CUSHIONED RIDE

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BRITISH MILITARY
FITNESS
Feel alive outside

Men's Fitness

Beat your best

Enter MF's new circuit challenge to test your fitness against the Forces

How would you fare if you went head to head with the armed forces in a fitness face-off? *MF* is giving you the chance to find out with a series of events taking place across the country between June and August. The Maximuscle Beat The Instructor challenge will rate your strength and endurance in a military-style test, and is free to enter.

What is the Maximuscle BTI challenge?

The challenge is an outdoor circuit-style event involving a series of exercises performed against the clock. The aim is to complete the test faster than the time set by instructors from British Military Fitness, the country's biggest outdoor training group.

What's in the circuit?

The circuit (see box, opposite) comprises three rounds of bodyweight moves and shuttle runs, and will be overseen by BMF instructors.

Who can take the test?

The challenge is open to everyone

and is free to enter. To take part, simply go to beattheinstructor.co.uk and register your details.

Where can I take the challenge?

The Maximuscle Beat The Instructor tests will take place at 57 BMF sites across the UK this summer. When you register, you can select a date that suits you from a range of options.

What happens if I beat the time?

You can be very pleased with yourself. Your name will also go into the BTI Hall of Fame, and you'll receive a special T-shirt. The top

competitors will be invited to take part in the grand final, which takes place in September.

What if I don't beat the instructor's time?

Every time will be entered on a national leaderboard, and you can take the test more than once. You can use it to rate your fitness against the rest of the nation or to compete against your friends.



How to take part

Step 1 Enter your details

Entry to the event is free. Go to beattheinstructor.co.uk and enter your name, age and region.

Step 2 Choose a location

Choose a BTI test location and a date that suits you from the comprehensive list of options.

Step 3 We email you the details

Once you've selected a date you'll receive a confirmation email with all the information you need to take part. After you've taken the test, you'll receive another email informing you of your official time.

Sign up now at beattheinstructor.co.uk

Maximuscle Beat The Instructor test

Here's what you do against the clock

Do the following circuit three times as fast as you can. You can rest as much as you like, but you can't stop the clock when you pause for a breather.

1 Burpee Reps 20

- From standing, drop to the floor then jump both feet back.
- With your body straight, lower your chest to the floor. As it touches the floor, raise both hands.
- Simultaneously push back up and jump both feet forwards.
- Jump up so your feet leave the ground and clap your hands above your head.
- Land and go into the next rep.



2 Sit-up Reps 20

- Start on your back with your knees bent and touch the floor with both hands just behind your head.
- Contract your abs to raise your torso off the floor and bring your arms over to touch your toes.
- Return back to the start for one rep.



3 Press-up Reps 20

- Start with your arms straight and your body in a straight line from head to heels.
- Keeping your body straight, lower your chest to the floor.
- Once your chest touches the floor, lift both hands off the floor momentarily, then push yourself back up, keeping your body straight.



4 20m shuttle run Reps 3

- Run 20m, then lie flat on the floor with your hands off the floor.
- Run 20m back to the start, then lie flat on the floor with your hands off the floor. That's one rep.



Sign up now! Go to beattheinstructor.co.uk to find your nearest BTI venue.

**TIME
TO BEAT**
**10min
37sec**

THERE'S MORE TO LIFE THAN BEING IN CRUISE CONTROL. THAT'S WHY THE VOLVO S60 R-DESIGN IS HERE.



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Fuel consumption for the S60 R-Design in mpg (l/100 km): Urban 19.5 (14.5) – 55.4 (5.1), Extra Urban 38.7 (7.3) – 72.4 (3.9), Combined 28.5 (9.9) – 65.7 (4.3), CO2 emissions 231 – 114 g/km.

The best advice from the biggest names in fitness

Edited by Joe Warner

the Experts

A-list Trainer

Hammer time

Follow Hollywood star Chris Hemsworth's *Thor* workout and get into superhero shape this spring

When Thor, the Norse god of thunder, was adopted as a Marvel Comics hero, the character's powers - aside from his immortality - were his superhuman strength, speed and durability. So making the leap from page to screen would require someone whose physique was more fitting of a deity than a mere mortal. Step forward Australian actor Chris Hemsworth, who will play Thor in one of this year's most eagerly anticipated action movies.

'In the comic strip Thor looks to be around 500lb [227kg], so obviously that wasn't my goal, but it was very important for me to look the part and be as powerful as strong as I could while still maintaining that element of agility,' Hemsworth tells *MF*.

Norse code

The £93m-budget blockbuster, which is directed by Kenneth Branagh and hits UK cinemas on 27th April, sees Hemsworth play the titular hero - a powerful but arrogant warrior whose reckless actions reignite an ancient war. >

'It was exhausting, but I prefer to be training. I feel like I've earned that beer at the end of the week'



A bulked-up Hemsworth (with Anthony Hopkins) looks muscular in Thor's armour

As punishment Thor is forced to live among humans on Earth, and during his sentence he learns what makes a true hero when Loki, his adopted brother and arch-enemy, sends his dark forces to invade the planet.

To help him get into superhero shape, Hemsworth recruited the assistance of Michael Knight, director of Michigan-based personal trainers Art of Strength. 'Chris's regime was split into two parts,' says Knight. 'The first was a bodybuilder-type protocol focused on high-weight, low-rep moves designed to pack on maximum size, while the second was total-body circuits designed to shift his excess fat while maintaining muscle.'

Hemsworth admits getting into superhero shape was hard work. 'The kettlebell routines that Mike put me through were intense, partly because I'd never used them before but also because



Hemsworth needed the right physique to be a convincing Norse deity

Thor Workout Part 1

Build A-list muscle and definition with Chris Hemsworth's Thor workout. Follow this plan for eight weeks to pack on muscle

'These initial workouts followed a bodybuilding protocol where we would focus on one or two muscle groups per session and really hammer them with high weights for low reps,' says trainer Michael Knight. 'We'd maybe do chest and back together, with Chris doing four to six reps on the bench press, maxing out at 350lb [159kg] before dropping the weight to around 250lb [113kg] for eight to 12 reps. This strategy, combined with clean eating and protein shakes, got Chris bulked up to about 230lb [104kg].'

Week one

Sets 4 Reps 4-6

Week two

Sets 4 Reps 6-8

Week three

Sets 4 Reps 8-12

Week four

Sets 4 Reps 4-6

Repeat for weeks five to eight

Session one Chest and back

Bench press
Bent-over row
Weighted pull-up
Weighted dip

Session two Legs

Squat
Deadlift
Hamstring curl

Session three Arms

Weighted chin-up
Close-grip bench press



For the workout that got Hugh Jackman into shape to play Wolverine, see mensfitness.co.uk/links/wolverine



it's a heavy combination of cardio and weightlifting,' says the 27-year-old former *Home & Away* star. 'Most of my training previously was geared more around cardio - mainly boxing and Muay Thai, with some elements of weights. I hadn't

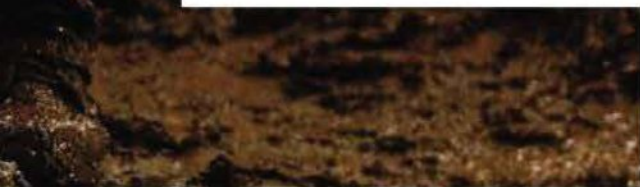
'It shows that if you're prepared to work hard you can get the results you've always wanted'

experienced kettlebells, but it's a great way to build functional strength.'

Blood and thunder

As if Hemsworth's training wasn't tough enough, he had to start the programme while filming another movie. 'When I started working with Chris he was doing 12-hour days on the set of *Red Dawn*, but he still had the time and energy to train for between 60 and 90 minutes five days a week after his shooting commitments were over,' says Knight. 'Above all, he has an amazing work ethic, always pushing himself further and harder. It shows that if you're prepared to work hard you can get the results you've always wanted.'

Hemsworth adds, 'It was certainly exhausting at times, but I prefer to be training than not. It gives me more energy and I just generally feel better about myself. I feel like I've earned that beer at the end of the week.'



Thor Workout Part 2

Cut fat and get lean with this four-week superhero workout

'Once Chris put on the muscle I needed to get him lean, which meant stripping away any fat he had accumulated during the first phase while maintaining all his newly built muscle,' says Knight. 'I did this by getting him to do this total-body circuit based around classic strongman moves, such as log presses, tyre flips, sledgehammers and prowler sprints, as well as circuits with kettlebells of varying weights.'

'This got Chris down to his fighting weight of 220lb [100kg] - and as you can see from the pictures, it was all muscle.'

Hemsworth adds that he kept a 'very close eye' on his diet. 'I was eating a lot of clean protein, fruit, vegetables and some carbs, as well as drinking four to five litres of water a day.'

CIRCUIT ONE Tabata

(20sec on/10sec off)

Double kettlebell squat
Four rounds



Snatch
Eight rounds



CIRCUIT TWO

Kettlebell swing

30sec two-hand, 30sec right-hand-only swings, 30sec left-hand-only swings, 30sec alternate swings



Clean

5 right, 5 left, 4 right, 4 left, 3 right, 3 left, 2 right, 2 left, 1 right, 1 left, then back up to 5 each side for a total of 60 reps with no rest



CIRCUIT THREE

Turkish get-up

5min continuous



Windmill
5 each side





Cardio expert
Tim Don

Why you should listen to him He's an Olympic triathlete and was the 2006 ITU triathlon world champion

Tim Don says...

Double up

Add brick sessions to your triathlon training and reap the rewards

CYou may be a strong runner, cyclist and swimmer, but that doesn't necessarily make you a good triathlete.

That's because you also need to be able to switch between the three disciplines with total ease. Most importantly, you have to keep performing even when your muscles are already tired.

That's why I do brick sessions in my training - and you should, too, because it will make you stronger and faster when racing. It's also a great session for burning fat, because it's so tough.

So what is a brick session? Simply, it involves two triathlon disciplines back-to-back, typically swimming then cycling or cycling then running (this is the order of disciplines in a triathlon).

A brick session is a brilliant way to simulate a race situation, when you'll be running with already-fatigued legs or starting to cycle when all your blood is still in your upper-body muscles from swimming. It hurts, and you need to get used to this feeling because that's how you're going to feel when you race. Here's everything **you need to know about brick sessions.**



Building blocks

* Why are brick sessions so valuable?

Starting a run or cycle when you're low on energy and have tired legs isn't easy, but training in these conditions will boost your muscles' ability to keep pushing when you're tired. Testing your muscles when they're fatigued makes them more efficient, and could take minutes off your race time.

* How will brick sessions improve my race time?

The more efficient your muscles get at moving between disciplines, the less time and energy you'll waste. These sessions improve your ability to pace yourself and learn when you need to hold back or when you can really put your foot down.

* How do I create a brick session?

It's not difficult - it just depends on the distance you'll be racing. Try to replicate the conditions you'll experience in a race, so when you face them for real your muscles are ready to go. If you do sprint distances, do a fast, race-distance cycle, then start running. If you do longer distances, you want to get your legs really fatigued before you start running. For example, I sometimes do a 100km ride then try to do a fast 8km run.

* Can I do these sessions in a gym?

Absolutely. You can do some hard kilometres on a stationary bike, then jump on to the treadmill. If you really want to feel the pain, do this session I love: 8min hard on the bike, then 1km run as fast as you can. Repeat this five times. Your legs will feel as though they weigh a tonne, just like in a race!

* What about swimming then cycling?

I do ten or 15 lots of 100m then jump on the bike for 5 x 5min (3min hard, 2min spin). But I appreciate this is hard if you don't have a bike by the side of your pool! One way to replicate race conditions is to do lightweight, high-rep upper-body weights, to get all the blood in your upper body, before jumping on the bike and going hell for leather.

Q+A

Ask Don

Got a question for our cardio expert?
Email mfexperts@dennis.co.uk

Q What's the greatest lesson about races you've learned over the course of your career?

A Never give up and always race to the line. You never know what might happen. Your opponent could twist an ankle, or his tri suit could split and fall off. You could be two minutes down at the end of the bike stage and still be in with a chance.

Q How much sleep should I be aiming for per night ahead of a big race?

A Sleep is important because it helps your body recover, but it can be hard to get a good sleep the night before a race. Try to get a few extra hours in the nights before the race so you're well rested before race day. If my race is in the afternoon I try to get an hour's kip after breakfast.



Q How do you avoid overtraining?

A I plan my training carefully and have been involved in triathlon training since the mid-1990s, so I'm experienced at knowing when I can push a bit harder or when I need to take a step back. It's also important to spend some quality time relaxing. I love to chill out with my baby daughter Matilda - it brings me back to the real world and allows me to realise the things that really matter.

Q What's the one bit of training kit you can't live without?

A Having the right kit that fits your size is more important than getting the latest and most expensive gadgets. Take my bike: I've just been fitted up for a new Specialized S-Works SL3 - I can't wait to start racing.

Q What is your post-race 'reward' food?

A If I have a good race I'll often go out for a nice steak and a good glass of red wine. Unless it's the end of the season, in which case I'll have the whole bottle!





Dr Kevin Currell talks...

Locker room refuelling

Muscle expert
Dr Kevin Currell

Why you should listen to him He's a senior performance nutritionist who works with Olympic athletes at the English Institute of Sport. For more see eis2win.co.uk

Eat smart and reap the muscle and fitness rewards

It doesn't matter how fast you think you can run or how heavy you think you can lift - if you don't give your body the right fuel to perform then you'll never reach your potential.

Eating the right things at the right time can make all the difference in achieving your goals, whether it's losing weight, adding muscle or getting fitter and faster.

Breakfast may be the most important meal of the day, but what you eat before and after training has a huge effect on how your body performs during your session and how quickly and efficiently you can recover afterwards, which will in turn dictate how well you will perform in your next workout. Here's what you should be eating - whether your workout is cardio- or weights-based - and why.



What to eat ...before training



Cardio

To get the most out of the session, your fuel tank needs to be fully stocked. If you've eaten a main meal within three hours of starting to train you're likely to have enough energy. If not, have a simple high-carb snack such as a bagel with cream cheese or a muffin within one hour of the start of the session and that should see you through.



Weights

You need some carbs if you are to have the energy to lift weights, but you also need some protein - especially sources containing the amino acid leucine, such as lentils or beef - in your system because this will help prevent too much muscle breakdown and mean your body can start repairing damaged tissue straight away. A good example would be wholegrain toast with cottage cheese about an hour before the session.

...during training



Cardio

If the session is shorter than an hour all you need to do is take on water to stay hydrated. If you train for longer then begin to consume some simple carbs in the form of energy gels or drinks, but only if you have tried them before - you don't want to upset your stomach.



Weights

All you need is water to keep you hydrated. A carb and protein shake towards the end of the session may help promote muscle repair and growth, but you won't need this if you can have a balanced meal soon after your shower.

...after training



Cardio and weights

As soon as you have finished training you need to take on some carbs and protein, typically in a ratio of four to one. After a hard session your muscles' energy stores are depleted: the carbs will replenish them while the protein will help rebuild the muscles to make them stronger ahead of the next session. Because your muscles are like a sponge after training, the sooner you can eat, the more of the nutrition they will soak up.

Q+A

Ask Dr Currell

Got a question for our nutrition expert?
Email mfexperts@dennis.co.uk

Q Everyone says nuts are healthy, but they're very high in calories. Should I avoid them when trying to lose weight?

A Absolutely not. You can view these calories as functional calories. The nutrients in nuts will help the body to function properly first and get stored as fat second. Research has shown that adding a handful of nuts to your diet each day can actually help reduce body weight.



Q Will skipping breakfast help me lose weight?

A No - just the opposite. Research has shown that eating a good-quality, low glycaemic index (GI) breakfast helps your body cope with other carbohydrates you put into the body later in the day. This means the body is better able to regulate the hormone insulin, your fat storage hormone. Doing this helps you to control your bodyweight.

Q What's the deal with meal-replacement products, such as protein bars? How often can I eat these instead of real meals?

A They're simply about convenience. If you're short on time, they'll give you what you need. But a real meal with protein, carbs and fresh veg will always be better for you.

Q How much milk is it safe to drink in a day? Are there any side effects of drinking too much?

A There are no health concerns over milk, no matter how much you drink. Milk is a good source of protein and minerals, especially calcium. However, it can be quite high in calories, especially the full-fat kind, so too much too often could result in weight gain.





Fight expert
Ross Pearson

Why you should listen to him

He was the *Ultimate Fighter* season nine winner, and has a professional record of 12 wins and 4 losses.

Ross Pearson says...

Wear down opponents

Build your endurance so you never get tired in a fight

I was pleased with my last fight, a win by unanimous decision over Spencer Fisher.

I'd injured my knee in the one before so I was worried about it going again, but we worked on it in training - rehabbing it, foam-rolling it, focusing on bodyweight moves. In the fight it didn't give me any trouble, and if I'd trusted it more I might have been able to knock Fisher out in the third. I knew I'd never finish him in the first - he's too tough - but I got to show my takedown defence, my skills from my back and my improved boxing.

Now I'm moving onward and upward. There are so many tough guys in the UFC you can't afford to take it easy.

Sets **3**
Time **60sec**
for all moves

1 Medicine ball ground and pound

► Stand above a grappling dummy, punchbag or mat, and throw a medicine ball into it as hard as possible. Twist your hips to mimic the action of throwing a solid punch while in someone's guard.

► Pick the ball up with your other hand and repeat.



Q+A

Ask Pearson

Got a question for our fight expert?
Email mfexperts@dennis.co.uk

Q Do you watch your upcoming opponents' fights to prepare?

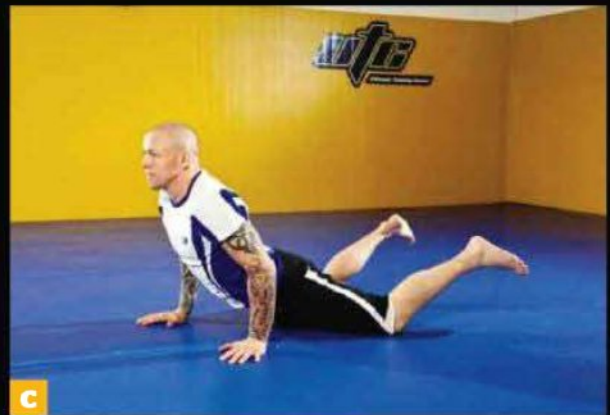
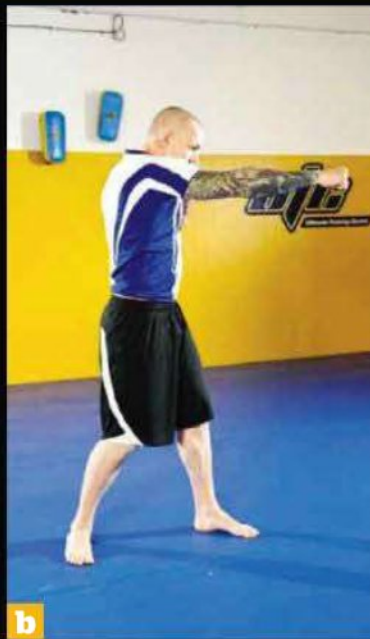
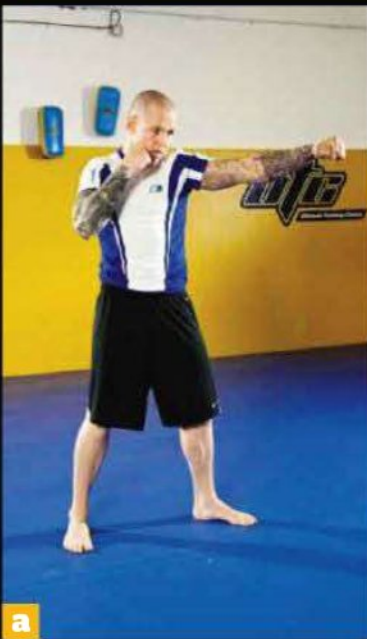
A Yep, I'll sit down at the start of my fight camp and we'll watch videos of the guy's previous fights. We'll use that to prepare for the camp, pick specific things to work on and come up with a plan. I don't watch them every night, though, and I'm not one of those guys who follows my opponents on Twitter or watches their interviews to find out everything about them. I go over any mistakes I've made in a fight that I've won too, although I manage to find a bit of time to celebrate as well.



Q You set a tough pace for your opponents in your fights. Have you ever been tired yourself?

A The most tired I've ever been was probably in my first fight, when I didn't know much wrestling. My opponent kept taking me down, and I just kept getting up and boxing him. He got the win in the end, but I ended up coming back stronger and I've always made conditioning a key part of my fight camps ever since. It doesn't matter how many moves you know - you need the conditioning to pull them off.

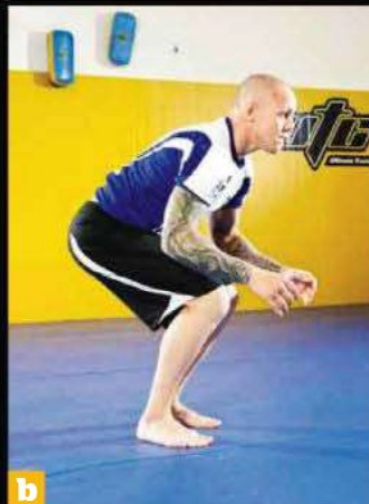
2 Punch and sprawl



- Throw a combination - a quick jab, cross, hook is ideal because you're unlikely to launch a longer combination than that in a fight.
- Immediately after the last punch, sprawl by dropping to your hips to the mat and keeping your chest up. Pop back up to your feet as fast as possible.
- As you get more comfortable with the move, turn as you sprawl - this makes it more difficult for you to be taken down.

3 Super burpee

- Drop into a press-up position, do a press-up and then jump back to your feet.
- As soon as you're on your feet, explode into a tuck jump, bringing your knees to your chest. Focus on height rather than just getting easy reps - it'll pay off in the ring.



Fight move Cross, hook, head kick

This twist on a classic move will give you the advantage in the Octagon

- With your left foot forward, throw a right cross by twisting at your hips and pivoting on the ball of your right foot, getting all your weight behind the punch.
- Throw a hook by twisting your hips the other way and bringing your elbow level with your shoulder.
- Twist your hips one more time to fire a full-power kick at your opponent's head or body. Your shin should connect, rather than the top of your foot.





The Ultimate Sporting Body

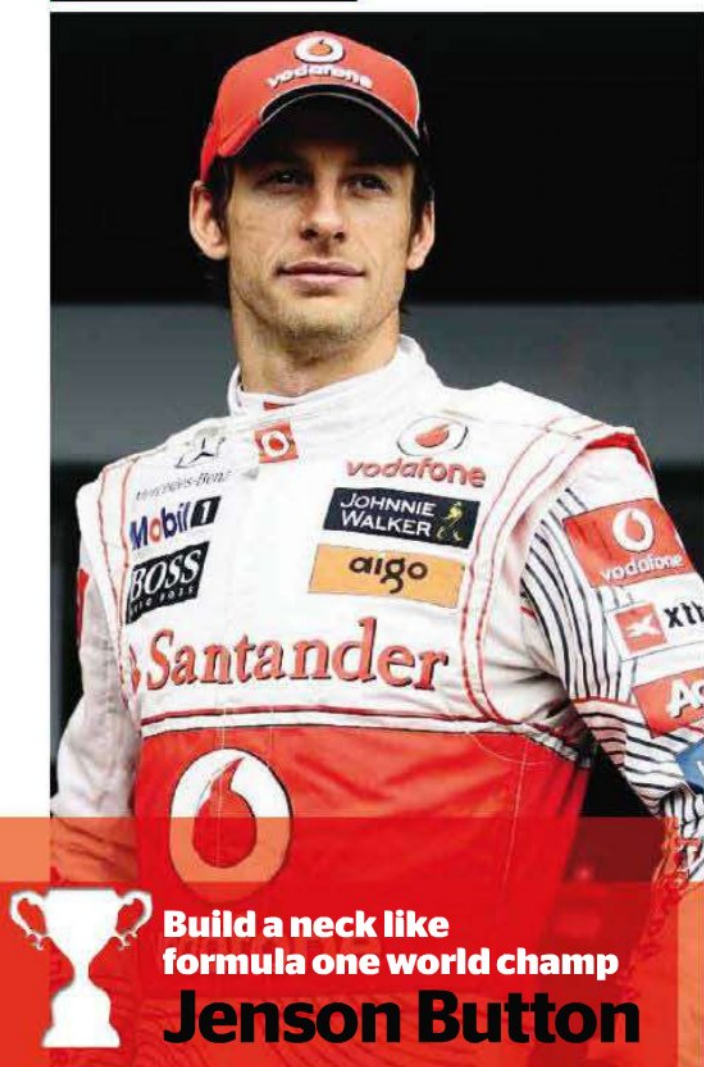
**Want a physique that's capable of anything?
We've consulted the finest athletes in the world
to build you a body that will be equally at home
in an F1 car or on a pommel horse**

Words **Joel Snape, Ben Ince, Jon Lipsey**
Photography **Danny Bird**

Sculpted shoulders and well-defined abs are all very nice, but the best test of a workout regime is whether it's giving you a body you can work with. If you train for performance, chances are you'll not only end up being able to run faster, hit harder, throw further and live better, but you'll also have a body that looks like an athlete's.

So how do you do it? We consulted some of the planet's finest sportsmen to find out how they build the body parts that they need most. Some things are specific to their sport - but some are universal and will help anyone build their fitness. Turn the page to start building a body that works for you. >





Build a neck like formula one world champ **Jenson Button**

Why it's important

F1 drivers endure high levels of G-force, so they need strong neck muscles to prevent their heads from being thrown around when they brake or corner. 'You're pulling five Gs, so it is very tough on your neck,' says Button, who was the 2009 formula one world champion. 'If someone who has never been in a racing car does one lap, they feel as if their head has fallen off.'

Even Button feels the strain at the start of the season. 'I did 105 laps on my first test day this year, which is a lot. My body felt great because I'd done so much training but that night I had a horrendous neckache because I'd been out of the car for a while.'

How to get it

Button's McLaren team uses a specially built contraption to build neck strength. 'We have a machine shaped like a tubular car,' says Button. 'You sit in it and put on a crash helmet that's connected to resistance. You then have to resist the weight, as if you were going round a corner. It also has a weight-loaded steering wheel so you get an arm workout at the same time.'

It's a useful simulator, but it can't replicate the demands of racing. 'When you're in a real car you're trying to drive it as well as keep your head up. You've also got the vibrations and the bumps, which cause lactic acid build-up.'

Top move Towel pull

If you haven't got a car-shaped resistance machine, a towel will do. 'I sit on a gym ball or on a bench with my trainer holding a towel round my head,' says Button. 'He pulls the towel towards him and I pull against it. We do 30 seconds on and 30 seconds off at different angles, or we do power work where it's one or two seconds as hard as he can pull.'

Jenson Button is a head&shoulders ambassador.

Visit facebook.com/whatsonamansmind



Build shoulders like world record-breaking swimmer

Liam Tancock

Why it's important

'Swimming is all about power-to-weight ratio,' says Tancock, who's broken the 50m backstroke world record three times, twice shaving milliseconds off his own time. 'You need strong, flexible shoulders to power you through the water, but you don't want them to be so big that they slow you down or affect your streamlined shape. So we don't do much hypertrophy - we work on staying strong and injury-free.'

How to get them

Tancock lays the foundations in the gym. 'In the off-season, we lift heavy, but for very few reps,' he says. 'We'll do a lot of weighted pull-ups, getting up to around 45kg for one or two reps - but even at that sort of weight the important thing is the intention to do the move fast, so that you're working on explosive power. As we get closer to the season we'll do more bodyweight work - say, pull-ups or press-ups in a circuit. I think my record for pull-ups is 32.'

Explosiveness is also key in the pool. 'I might go as fast as I can for 15m, swim at an easy pace for the rest of the length, and then explode again,' says Tancock. 'Or I might use a pull-buoy to really emphasise my shoulder movement.'

Top move Overhead medicine ball throw

'This is great for everything,' says Tancock. 'It's good for power, good for flexibility, and on a neuromuscular level it mimics the kind of explosiveness you need in a backstroke start almost perfectly.' Start holding a medicine ball between your feet, then arch up and back as you explosively throw the ball behind you. Go get the ball back, and repeat for another three or four reps.



Liam Tancock is a Speedo ambassador. For info about the Speedo range go to speedo.co.uk



**Build upper arms like
Olympic gymnast**

Daniel Keatings

Why it's important

'The pommel horse requires very strong upper arms, because you have to keep pushing down on it while you move around in circles for a minute and a half,' says European pommel horse champion Keatings. 'It's vital to be able to push and pull in every direction while supporting your weight or you'll risk injury.'

How to get them

'I train for around six hours a day,' says Keatings, 'at least an hour of

which I spend doing specific strength and conditioning training. This is usually lots of reps of basic exercises such as chin-ups, dips and press-ups using my own bodyweight, sometimes adding an extra 10-20kg to increase the difficulty. Generally I don't lift weights because my aim is always to build lean muscle without adding unnecessary bulk.' If you can't get to the gym every day, try putting a chin-up bar up in your house and doing a couple of reps every time you walk past it.'

Top move **Muscle-up**

This combination of pull-up and dip will build your biceps and triceps. 'Hang from a set of rings with straight arms,' says Keatings. 'Then pull yourself up explosively until your hands are by your chest in the bottom position of a dip. Push up until your arms are straight.' Many gym-goers will do these with a kick, but gymnasts perform the move with as little leg movement as possible.

Daniel Keatings uses sports nutrition brand Maximuscle to maximise his sporting performance. Follow his progress at maximuscle.com/daniel



**Build forearms like gold
medal-winning rower**

Andrew Hodge

Why it's important

'In our sport, if you lose control of the oar then you've lost control of the boat,' says Hodge, an Olympic and double world champion in the coxless pair with teammate Peter Reed. 'You get most of your drive through your legs, but your upper body has to be capable of handling the power that your legs are delivering.' Your forearms and grip are the last links in the chain - if they give out, you'll never be able to row your hardest.

How to get them

'We work on both power and endurance - the force we can deliver, and how to maintain it over the course of a race,' says Hodge. 'We do a steady-state test, which is maintaining the same power for half an hour. If you're a beginner, stick to a fairly low stroke rate, say 20 a minute, but make each one as hard as you can.' Finally, don't forget to balance out all the gripping and pulling you're doing. 'We work pushing movements as well.'

Top move **Bent-over row**

'This helps with the pull, which is the last bit of the drive phase in rowing,' says Hodge. 'It'll also help you to focus on keeping your core braced.' Pull the bar to your sternum, and keep your back straight as you bend forward at your hips.





Build a strong chest and back like England rugby player

Toby Flood

Why it's important

'In rugby your chest and back are the muscle groups that take the brunt of the blows,' says Flood. 'Whether you're rucking, mauling or tackling, a strong chest and back will give you stability, which helps to protect you during collisions.'

How to get them

'I spend around 40 per cent of my training time in the gym and the rest of it out on the pitch,' says Flood. 'I do two or three weights sessions a week, one of which will include explosive lifts like cleans to build power while another will feature speed-based exercises such as sled pushes. I also make sure that I get at least one session of hypertrophy for my upper body and one session for my lower body each week.'

Top moves **Dumb-bell chest press/ Weighted chin-up**

'For a strong back I recommend weighted chin-ups and pull-ups,' says Flood. 'Vary the sets and reps for the best results and switch between a wide grip and an underhand grip to target different areas of your back.'

To build a strong chest, try doing dumb-bell presses on a flat bench, as they allow you to use an increased range of motion whilst working each arm individually, improving stability in your shoulders.'

Toby Flood wears Nike Pro Combat base layers Hyperwarm and Hyperstrong as part of his training and playing kit. Visit nikestore.com/rugby.



Get abs like Olympic gold medal-winning boxer

James DeGale

Why it's important

'Strong abs will let you take a punch to the body, but that's not all,' says DeGale. 'They'll also let you get power into your own punches. It's really important to have a strong core so you can transfer the power that's coming from your legs and hips into a proper punch.'

How to get them

The humble crunch doesn't get a lot of love these days, but it's still a popular move among boxers. 'I do a lot of sit-ups, crunches, leg raises and bodyweight moves like that,' says DeGale. 'I also do a lot of press-ups and pull-ups, so you're keeping your core tight in all of them. And just hitting the bag is a good core workout.'

Top move **Medicine ball throw**

'This is one move I'll always do with my coach,' says DeGale. To do it, perform a crunch holding a medicine ball, and immediately throw it to a partner. When he throws it back, catch it and go into your next crunch.'



James DeGale trains and fights in Lonsdale gear (lonsdale.com)



Build quads like multi-Olympic gold winner

Chris Hoy

Why it's important

'The quads, along with your glutes, are the prime movers involved in cycling,' says Hoy. 'Depending on your discipline you'll look to develop your quads in different ways. So, for example, sprinters build as much strength and power as possible to help develop speed, while a road rider looks to develop muscular endurance.'

How to get them

'I usually do two to three sessions a week in the gym,' says Hoy. 'The main exercises I use are the squat and deadlift. My gym programme varies greatly depending on the time of year - the closer I get to competition, the fewer reps and the heavier weight I use. In the early season I would be looking to increase the number of reps and have a shorter recovery time between sets to aid muscle growth.'

On the bike, says Hoy, there's no need to get too fancy. 'Focus on specific on-the-bike strength work - for example, short hill sprints while seated in the saddle.'

Top move Squat

'The squat is often known as the king of leg exercises, and for good reason,' says Hoy. 'If I had to do only one exercise to help develop my quads, it would be the squat because when performed using the right technique it can produce impressive results.'

Sir Chris Hoy is an ambassador for Adidas



Build hamstrings, glutes and calves like 400m world silver medallist

Conrad Williams

Why it's important

'To be strong for running, you don't just need strong hamstrings,' says Williams, who picked up relay silver medals at both the 2009 world championships and the 2010 Europeans. 'You need your whole posterior chain to be strong, and you need that strength to last you through the whole season. A lot of our training off the track focuses on making sure that we don't have imbalances - it's about staying free of injury.'

How to get them

To stay strong and healthy year-round, periodisation is crucial. 'In the off-season we'll get a lot of reps in, not going that heavy,' says Williams. 'We'll strengthen the muscle with

volume and bodyweight moves like squats and lunges, and then put the loads up as we're closer to the season - going from ten reps a set down to threes. In season, we'll do everything in one day, doing three gym sessions and three track sessions a week. I'll run distances as short as ten or 30 metres in practice, and it's pretty rare that I'll go over 600m.'

Top move Hurdle jump

'Bounding and hurdles are pretty popular in our training camps,' says Williams. 'We might set up eight full-height hurdles in a row and jump over them two-footed. The secret is to keep your chest up, look up, and get your arms into the move.' It'll also work everything from your explosive power to your ankle stability.

Photography: Getty, britishcycling.org.uk. Conrad Williams is a Mitchum-sponsored UK athlete. The Mitchum anti-perspirant range is available nationwide (mitchum.co.uk)

GET A GRIP

Grip training can improve everything from your handshake to your sporting performance. *MF* meets the masters and competes for the title of Britain's Strongest Hands

Words **Joel Snape** Photography **Pete Webb** Illustration **Peter Crowther**





The pressure's on at the British Grip Championships

It's a sunny Saturday morning in Stafford. While I drink tea and tiptoe around gigantic dumb-bells, Laurence Shahlei, former builder and three-time finalist in the World's Strongest Man, is explaining why I really should moisturise. 'A lot of people think you should let your hands get rough and hard and horrible,' Shahlei says. 'But that's a myth. If you let big calluses build up, that just makes it easier for them to tear. You want to cut the ends off, file them down - basically, look after your hands.'

Why am I swapping skincare tips with the 2009 winner of England's Strongest Man in a medium-sized back garden in the west Midlands? Because this garden is actually the centre of the grip strength world. For one thing, it contains 'The Grip Factory' - an oversized shed full of specialised hand-strength equipment, old-time gripping memorabilia, and nails, wrenches and bars bent at improbable angles. For another, both garden and shed belong to David Horne, the gripping king of the modern era.

Before he organised the first official grip competition in 1991, Horne was a champion in armwrestling, tug of war and strongman events. Of the 18 British Grip Championships held since the inaugural event, he's won ten. He's a world record-holder in events such as the Half A Penny lift -

more on this later - and the inventor of half a dozen grip-training accessories that are now standard around the globe. His shed plays host to the British leg of the World's Strongest Hands competition, which is contested as far afield as Finland, Russia and South America. I'm here to compete in Britain's Strongest Hands, the first event of the season. Shaking hands with the other competitors is, as you'd imagine, terrifying.

'IF YOU LET BIG CALLUSES BUILD UP, THAT JUST MAKES IT EASIER FOR THEM TO TEAR'

Idol hands

Gripping may be relatively young as an organised sport, but hand strength has been a fundamental test of manliness almost since we developed opposable thumbs. The first event to emphasise pure grip-and-rip might was the 1910 World Championships of Card Tearing, which featured separate categories for 'Quartering',

'Speed' and 'Most Cards Torn'. In 1957 former Mr Universe Arnold Dyson took gold in the World Bar and Nail Breaking Championships.

Since the first British Grip Championships in 1991, the sport has evolved to attract people from a variety of disciplines. For Horne, this diversity of competitors is part of the sport's appeal. 'My dad was an aircraft fitter who'd never set foot in a gym, and he did very well in the early competitions,' he says. 'If you're a plumber, builder, brickie or plasterer, you couldn't compete with someone like Laurence Shahlei in the World's Strongest Man, but you can participate on an equal footing in gripping. It's one of those sports where drugs won't help you. Manual hand strength is ingrained in you over a long period of time.'

Each of the 16 entrants in today's competition has his own claim to fame. Max Thompson is a former British champion in iron bar bending. Climber Kris Wragg can do pinch-grip pull-ups on a wooden ceiling rafter. Richie Bevan, a strongman competitor, managed to lift 'The Blob' - a 22kg lump of metal that I can barely get my fingers around - the first time he touched it. David Horne's sons Jason and Alex are, respectively, the 2003 British amateur grip champion and 2009 British junior arm-wrestling champion. Horne's wife Elizabeth holds the world record for 'Most iron bars bent in one minute' and can tear a phonebook in half. Among the kit in the shed is a deformed frying pan that she 'rolled' for a demonstration. Meanwhile, I can do 12 pull-ups on a good day and sometimes struggle to get the tops off jars. Yes, I'm mildly intimidated.

Crush hour

Most grip competitions, including this one, test five fundamental categories of hand strength: crushing, supporting, pinch lift - 'That's basically what humans can do and monkeys can't,' says Horne - wrist strength and grip endurance. First up is crushing, tested by one of Horne's inventions, the Vulcan Hand Gripper - a solid steel nutcracker-style device that comes with a series of adjustable springs. When set with an elastic band, it's about as tough to close as the grippers you buy in Argos. When loaded with the stiff black-and-yellow 'Wasp' spring, only two or three people in the world can muscle it closed. In official competition, you set it at one of three predetermined widths - 20mm, 30mm or the width of a credit card - before squeezing it shut one-handed. The spring is moved up one notch at a time, and you can make your first attempt at any difficulty level you want.

Unlike powerlifting and Olympic weightlifting, where three attempts is the standard, grip competitions give you four. It can be difficult to tell how strong you are on any given day and factors such as humidity can play a big part. Bearing all this in mind, I start conservatively, but even though we're using the Vulcan set to 20mm (the easiest) it's all I can do to close it on level 5. The next-lowest competitor, Kris Wragg, gets it up to level 9, and I outweigh him by more than 10kg. Elizabeth Horne's personal best is level 12. David cranks it up to level 19, just a couple of notches below the world record.

Pinch perfect

I get the chance to redeem myself in the pinch lift, or Two Hands Pinch, in which you grip a pair of steel plates between your thumbs and fingers and lift as much weight as you can to hit a marker 40cm off the ground.

Shahlei makes the Two Hands Pinch look easy, flanked by Horne's gripping Hall of Fame



Closing the Vulcan will stress your whole body

'I CAN DO 12 PULL-UPS ON A GOOD DAY AND STRUGGLE TO GET THE TOPS OFF JARS. I'M MILDLY INTIMIDATED'





'Two Hands Pinch is really about thumb strength,' says Shahlei. It's about locking that thumb down onto your hand, which will really help your deadlifting. It's the main thing I'll train because it carries over best to strongman events.'

It also has one of the most hotly contested records. Horne has been battling for the record with American Jedd Johnson for years, and currently boasts a personal best of 116kg, three places below Johnson's 119kg in the world rankings. Because it's the easiest to lift big weights in, this is the most popular event in gripping - but it's also the easiest to shred your hands in.

The idea is to press as much skin as possible to the plate for friction, but this means that when things go wrong some of that skin is likely to go missing. On my final attempt, I lift 61kg, not very much short of my 75kg bodyweight. After everyone else has finished - I'm last again - I sneak in for a quick go at 66kg. The weight plummets out of my hands and takes a chunk of skin with it.

Wrist reward

Event three is a test of wrist strength using the Wrist Developer. This is another steel-sprung invention of Horne's, designed to mimic the sort of strength needed to bend a bar in half. The trick seems to be to take a deep breath and explode into the movement, rather than try to bend steadily. I go up steadily and finish at level 4 on the orange spring, a notch below my closest rival. The top end of the table battle it out on the more difficult gold spring until Nick McKinless, a professional



MF's Joel tries not to snap his forearms on the Wrist Developer

stuntman who has more than 50 film and TV credits, including *Sherlock Holmes* and *The Bourne Ultimatum*, emerges victorious.

'I got into gripping because I was a big Bruce Lee fan as a teenager - he was very into wrist strength,' says McKinless, who also lists boxing, explosives and 'precision driving' on his CV. 'I went on one of David's grip strength courses and we've trained together ever since. It can get quite geeky and intricate but that's a good thing on the whole, because it means that we're pushing the level up.'

Coining it

Event four, Half A Penny, is my time to shine. The idea is to grip a tiny steel half-circle - about the size of a 2p piece half-jammed into a coin slot - between thumb and forefinger, and use it to lift as much weight as possible. Surprisingly, this is one of the day's more functional events, even for those who don't deal with faulty vending machines every day. 'Pinch strength like this comes up a lot in climbing,' says Wragg.

It's an unforgiving lift; you've either developed the thumb-strength to lift the weight or you haven't. Maybe this is why it's also the event where I take my first scalp. I top out at 8.75kg and miss my last lift but so does Alex Horne, the junior armwrestling champion, so we're tied. Another competitor - Mark Martin-Dye, one of the few men in attendance who lifted more than his own bodyweight in the Two Hands Pinch - goes in too heavy on his first attempt and fails to make a single lift. I'm officially not bottom



'NICK MCKINLESS ONCE GLUED HIS HAND BACK TOGETHER TO FINISH A SESSION'

of the scoring table, for one event at least. It's an exhilarating feeling.

Let it rip

The euphoria is short-lived, since Horne's saved the most hand-shredding event for last. This is the Rim, which involves using four fingers to hold a one-sided handle. It's similar to trying to lift an Olympic weight plate by the edge, a feat beloved of old-time strongmen. It's also the event most likely to do you a serious injury - when the rim slips, there's almost no way to stop it yanking chunks of skin with it.

'Watch your little finger, that's what will go first,' says McKinless, who entered hand-strength legend after gluing his hand back together to finish a session after a rim-lift went wrong. 'I went to hospital and they didn't do a very good job of the stitches,' he says, 'so I Super Glued it back together myself. Super Glue's great because it doesn't scar - I carry it in my stunt bag all the time.'

Despite the warnings, I blast through my first two lifts - at 40 and 50kg respectively - and then decide that, since I've only got two attempts left, I'll go straight to 60kg. This is a huge tactical blunder. On my first attempt at 60kg I get a few centimetres away from the finish, only for the weight to slip from my hands and take a bit of skin with it. Alex Horne comes similarly unstuck on his final attempt, so if I'd only gone in with a more conservative effort - 55kg, or even 51kg - I'd have taken another point. As it is, my final effort slips out of my hands and

TOOLS OF THE TRADE



Wrist Developer

For beginners, easier than bending iron bars - and cheaper. Expect to have sore wrists for days, though.

GripTopz

A set of handles that attach to an Olympic loading pin to mimic various classic strongman feats. Apart from the Rim and Half A Penny, there's the 8mm Stub and the claw-grip-based Hub.

The Blob

A 22kg lump of metal that most people struggle to get their fingers around. Lifting it one-handed is a feat in itself.

Vulcan Hand Gripper

Horne's patented gripper, adjustable from 'easy' to 'completely impossible' via a variety of colour-coded springs.



ISOTONIC
PERFORMANCE
FUEL FOR THE
SWEAT LOVING,
ENERGY BURNING,
WILD ONES.

Lucozade

YES



McKinless does well on the Rim for a podium finish

'THERE ARE GUYS WHO ARE STRONG, BUT IF THEY CAN'T APPLY IT WITHOUT STRAPS, IT'S NO GOOD TO THEM'

I console myself with a tie, cementing me firmly in last place overall. Meanwhile, Shahlei lifts 100kg easily, knocking Horne into second place for the second time in the day. Horne still wins overall comfortably, though.

'David's been doing grip for 20 years, and he's been the best for as long as he's been doing it,' says McKinless, who ultimately edges into second place ahead of Shahlei. 'But as new people have come along it's been good for him, because it pushes him. He's getting better even now.' Horne himself seems more happy with the day than with his own victory. 'It was a great turnout,' he says. 'I love seeing new guys coming through, and these crazy feats of strength people can do. That's the wonderful thing about this sport.'

Though I'm mildly depressed about my bottom-of-the-table finish,

I finish my day at the Grip Factory with a new respect for the art of gripping. I'm also determined to improve my own hand strength – not because I'm going to get into the sport, but because I'm convinced it'll benefit me in everything from climbing to MMA fights. Or, as Shahlei puts it, 'It's the last link in the chain. There are guys out there who are seriously strong, but if they can't apply that strength without straps, it's no good to them.'

Finally, I'd like to have a crushing handshake of my own, although I'm sure I'd only use it in self-defence against other wannabe alpha males. I mention this to Shahlei and McKinless. 'Yeah, that sort of thing's bullshit,' says McKinless. 'It's ridiculous,' agrees Shahlei. 'But then again, it's nice to know that you can do it if you have to.'



Flat hands, strong thumbs: the key to success in the Pinch



Tearing your finger-webbing is an occupational hazard in the land of grip

DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME

Bending nails in half is a classic test of hand strength and fortitude. David Horne demonstrates how it's done

Wrap!

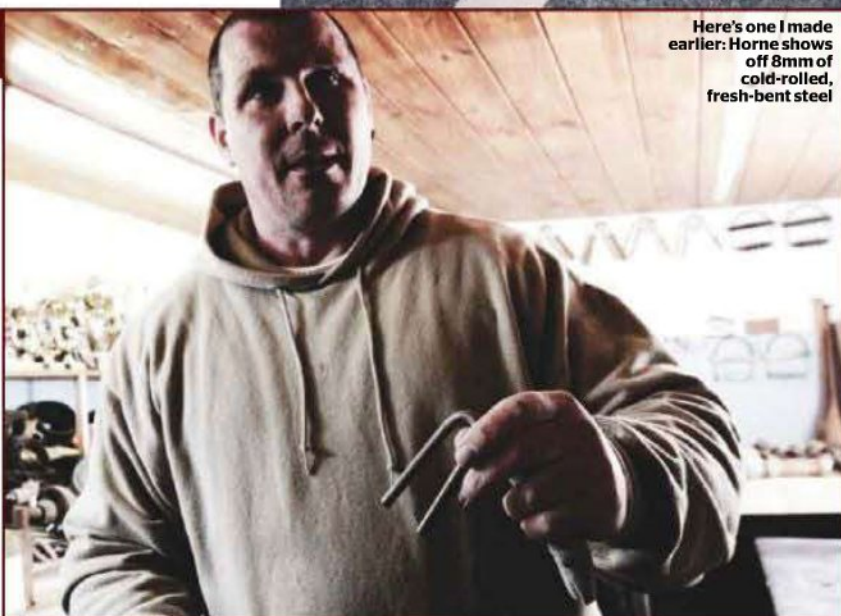
First, you'll want to wrap some fabric around the ends, leaving a centimetre or so of bare steel between the pieces.

Brace!

Grab the head of the nail with your weakest hand, brace the elbow of your strongest arm against your side and get ready to bend.

Bend!

Explode into the move, and keep bending. As the nail starts to bend, it'll heat up, making the rest of the process easier. Start with small nails and work your way up.



Here's one I made earlier: Horne shows off 8mm of cold-rolled, fresh-bent steel



To increase the strength of your grip, add the moves at mensfitness.co.uk/links/gripstrength to your workout



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MAN FOOD

Don't be confused in the kitchen.
It's easy to cook simple, tasty,
manly food that will help you
pack on lean muscle

Words **Joel Snape** Photography **Danny Bird**

Fact: you've been misled about cookery. Watch Heston Blumenthal or Jamie Oliver whip up a dinner party for ten, and you'd be forgiven for thinking that making anything more elaborate than a cheese sandwich is a mystifying ordeal involving farmer's markets, impenetrable French vocabulary and those tiny little blowtorches that for some reason you need for cooking peppers.

In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. The simplest, healthiest recipes are often the most delicious and can typically be whipped up with a handful of ingredients. Read on, and you'll never succumb to a frozen ready-meal again.





STEP 1 MEAT

We've started with steak for a couple of reasons. First, cooking is basically about managing heat, and cooking meat is one of the simplest ways to master this simple skill. Second, whether you cook it gently and lovingly in an elegant Le Creuset griddle pan or take it outside and whack it on the barbecue, red meat is a great source of creatine and protein - essentials for building muscle - along with vitamins B, D and selenium.

Half the battle is getting good-quality meat, which is richer in nutrients; the other half is making it delicious. Richard Turner, Michelin-starred chef and founder of the East London Steak Company, explains how to do both.

► 'Don't buy vacuum-packed if at all possible - it's usually a sign of large processing plants. Buy from a reputable butcher who keeps his beef on the bone, rather than off a supermarket shelf.'

► 'Grass-fed meat is always better than corn-fed, and free range is a must. For steak, dark colour is a good indication of quality and there should be a good level of fat marbling present. The meat shouldn't be bleeding.'

► 'The cooking process for any red meat is the same. Let it come up to room temperature before cooking, season it just before cooking and always cook in a smoking hot pan - flick in a drop of water, which should sizzle. Rest it for five to ten minutes in a warm place before serving.'

THE RECIPE ALL-STAR STEAK

Ingredients

350g steak

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

To make

1 Your aim should be to get a good char on the outside while keeping the meat juicy and tender inside - impossible with a thin piece of meat. Ideally your steak should be at least 4cm thick.

2 Take the meat out of the fridge ten minutes before cooking. Get the pan really hot and at the last minute season the meat well with sea salt and coarsely ground black pepper. Don't use any oil on the meat - if the pan is hot enough, the meat won't stick.

3. Put the steak in the pan, leave for a couple of minutes and then turn. Turn every couple of minutes until it's done the way you like it.

STEP 2 VEG

Vegetables should form the foundation of your diet – it's virtually impossible to eat too many. Apart from all their vitamins and antioxidants, they're stuffed with important phytochemicals that are difficult to get anywhere else. All you need to worry about is filling your plate with as much varied veg as you can handle. Jules Clancy, whose Stone Soup cooking course (thestonesoup.com) is devoted to idiot-proof five-item recipes, shows us the way.

► 'The easiest way to make veg tasty is to roast it. Peel and cut your veg, drizzle it with olive oil and sprinkle fresh thyme on top, then cover it with foil and bake at 160°C for 30 minutes. Finally, uncover it and keep cooking until it browns. This is perfect for broccoli, parsnips or sweet potatoes. Make sure all the chunks are roughly the same size so they cook evenly.'

► 'Steam vegetables such as kale or spinach in a deep pan with a lid. Wash your veg and throw it in. Add a couple of tablespoons of water to the pan, then put it on a low heat to cook your veg gently for about five minutes until it goes limp and bright green.'

► 'For a simple salad dressing, combine two teaspoons of extra virgin olive oil – a good fat – with one teaspoon of balsamic vinegar for sweetness. Alternatively, try three parts olive oil to one part each of red wine vinegar and wholegrain mustard.'

► 'For a super-simple way to cook broccoli, put two tablespoons of olive oil in a frying pan, add the florets, then cover the pan – this will fry it at the bottom and steam it at the top. After two minutes, stir in a knob of butter and cook for two more minutes or until tender.'

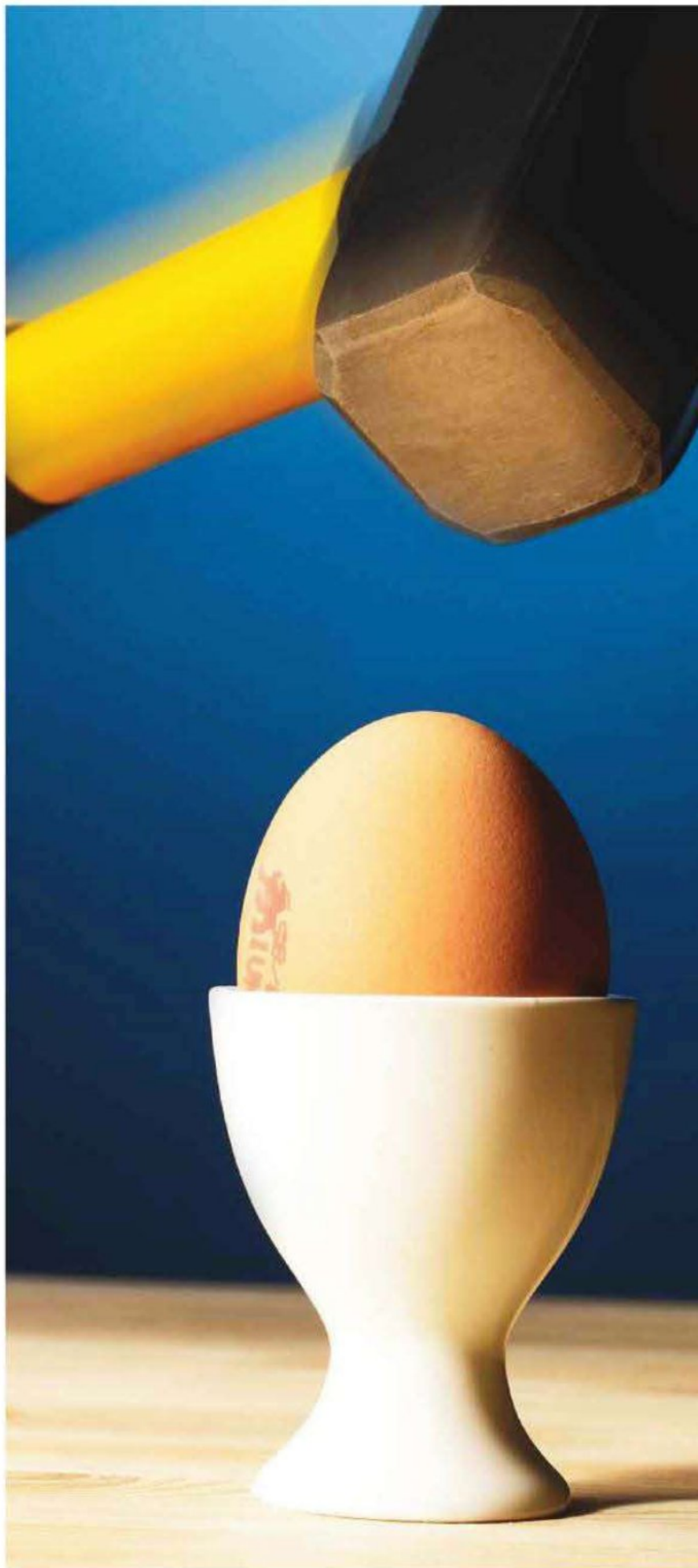
THE RECIPE VEGETABLE AND WHITE BEAN STEW

Ingredients

800g canned **cannellini beans**
800g canned chopped **tomatoes**
2-3 **courgettes**, chopped
2tbsp **paprika**
1 bag washed **baby spinach**

To make

- 1 Place the beans and liquid, tomato and juices, chopped courgettes and paprika into a large saucepan.
- 2 Bring to a simmer and cook, uncovered, for about ten minutes or until the courgettes are soft.
- 3 Add the spinach and continue to cook, stirring, until the spinach is just wilted.
- 4 Taste, season and serve drizzled generously with extra virgin olive oil.



STEP 3 EGGS

Packed with protein, high in vitamin D, versatile, tasty and cheap - the humble egg is one of the first things you should learn how to cook. You can buy them anywhere, cook them with virtually any bit of kitchen kit and eat them at any time of day. But even though they're so simple to cook, you can always improve your technique. Bill Staley of The Primal Palate (primal-palate.com) gives us the short version.

► 'The healthiest and simplest way of cooking eggs is to boil them. To get perfect hard-boiled eggs, put them in a saucepan of water and bring it to a boil on the stove, then boil for ten minutes. Then remove the eggs from the pan and run them under cold water.'

► 'For frying, use coconut oil - it's one of the healthiest oils there is and tastes amazing. Heat a pan to medium-low heat. Add 1tsp coconut oil and swirl it around to coat the pan evenly. Crack the eggs into the pan and cook until a spatula can be slid under the edge. Flip them and cook for an additional minute or two, then serve.'

► 'Poaching is slightly trickier, but I always get good results this way: crack your egg into a non-stick pan with 1tsp coconut oil, cook it for 30 seconds, then pour a little bit of water into the pan and cover it with a lid. Steam the egg until it's fully cooked. This is great with vegetables.'

THE RECIPE PRIMAL SCRAMBLE

Ingredients

½tbsp **coconut oil**
3-4 **eggs**
1 **broccoli** head, cut into florets
1 **onion**, chopped
1 **green pepper**, chopped
½ **avocado**
1 **tomato**

To make

- 1** Heat the oil in a frying pan over medium heat.
- 2** Add the onions and green peppers, fry for a minute or two, then add the broccoli and sauté for a couple of minutes.
- 3** While the veg is cooking, beat your eggs in a bowl. When the vegetables are slightly tender, add the eggs to the frying pan. Occasionally stir and scrape the eggs from the frying pan to scramble them.
- 4** Take the pan off the heat while there's still some liquid left in the eggs - this will cook off in the heat of the pan. Serve with the tomatoes and avocado.



THE ONE-MINUTE MENU

The easy way to eat healthy every day

1 Once you've got the hang of cooking meat and veg, cook enough on Sunday for the week. Aim to cook all the meat medium-rare, so that when you heat it up in the microwave it will taste good without being dry or rubbery. Add seasoning as you cook.

2 Roast a whole tray of vegetables - sweet potatoes, squash and broccoli are all good candidates - and then divide them into sealable bags.

3 Leave enough in the fridge for Monday and Tuesday, and throw the rest in the freezer. Each day, move a portion into the fridge so it's ready for the next day.



For more manly recipes including a tasty side dish for the steak, go to mensfitness.co.uk/links/manfood

STEP 4 FISH

Cooking fish can be intimidating - many people don't have the first clue how to prepare it. However, as Sébastien Noël of paleodietlifestyle.com explains, it doesn't have to be intimidating. 'Grilling or baking a whole fish isn't very hard once you've done it once. Cooking the fish with the bones will make it taste better, and whole fish are cheaper, fresher and easier to buy wild-caught.' That means they'll contain higher levels of important omega 3s, so it's win-win. Noël explains how to cook them like a pro.

► 'The best fish to cook whole are salmon and trout. They naturally have a lot of fat and will be more forgiving if you overcook them a bit. Sea bass is another good choice. All the gutting, scaling and removing gills should be handled by your fishmonger.'

► 'Put the fish in a snug-fitting dish so the cooking juices can stay on the fish while cooking. Interesting flavours can be built by putting vegetables under the fish and inside the cavity while cooking. Think lemon slices, fennel, garlic, onion, parsley, carrots, thyme and rosemary.'

► 'A good rule is to be delicate in the cooking process, so you want to go longer and slower. The recipe below is for grilled trout, but if you wanted to bake it instead, you could put it in an oven at 200°C for 35 to 40 minutes, or until the meat falls off the bone.'

THE RECIPE PERFECT TROUT

Ingredients

1 whole trout, scaled, gutted and cleaned
 1 bunch fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped
 1 bunch fresh dill, chopped
 2 lemons, one sliced and the other halved, a little zest removed
 Salt and pepper
 Butter or coconut oil

To make

- 1 Preheat your grill to 200°C.
- 2 Slash the sides of your fish about eight times on each side with a knife so that the butter or oil can make its way in. Rub the trout with butter or oil and season with salt and pepper.
- 3 Stuff the cavity (the hole created when the fish is cleaned) with the parsley, dill and lemon slices.
- 4 Put the fish on a baking rack on top of a pan. Sprinkle the lemon zest on top of the fish and add generous knobs of butter - if you're using it - to form a golden crust. Put the lemon halves on the baking tray.
- 5 Grill about 15 cm away from the heat source for about six minutes on each side.
- 6 Squeeze the grilled lemons on the fish before serving. 



Alistair Brownlee

Born 23rd April 1988

The first triathlete ever to be world champion at junior (2006), under-23 (2008) and senior (2009) levels. He has already represented Great Britain at the Olympics, coming 12th in Beijing, but since then he has stepped up to world-class level and is a genuine gold medal hope for 2012.





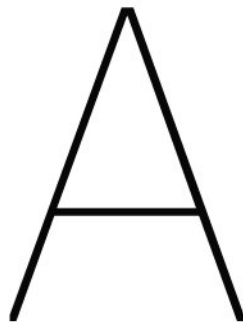
TWO BROTHERS **ONE** **GOLD**

Alistair and Jonny Brownlee are among the world's best triathletes. As both brothers progress steadily towards seemingly inevitable Olympic success, *MF* charts their rise

Words **James Witts**
Photography **Tom Miles**

Jonny Brownlee
Born 30th April 1990

The younger Brownlee is challenging his brother's dominance, winning the under-23 world championship and the senior sprint tri title in 2010. After his impressive second place in the London leg of the 2010 world series, he's tipped to reach the very top of the sport.



Alistair and Jonathan Brownlee are as close as you'd expect any pair of brothers to be. As well as living together, they both study at university in Leeds and share many of the same interests. What makes them unique is that one of those interests is the triathlon gold medal at London 2012.

Alistair, 23, is the only triathlete in history to

win junior, under-23 and senior world championships, while 20-year-old Jonny is a former European junior champion and the current under-23 world champion. They're among Great Britain's top medal prospects for 2012 – and yet, as their father Keith says, 'They're more interested in beating each other than the rest of the world'.

That rivalry came to a head in Hyde Park in July 2010, in a race that was both the London leg of the ITU Dextro World Championship Series and a test of the 2012 Olympic triathlon venue. Both Alistair and Jonny were challenging for the lead when the elder brother – who was then the reigning ITU world champion – hit the wall. While Jonny went on to take silver, Alistair dropped off the pace, then came into the finish chute staggering and swaying, his ghostly pallor and empty stare indicative of an athlete whose final drop of energy had drained away. Although he had won his previous six World Series races, he stumbled over the line in tenth.

'It's typical that I've enjoyed many successful races but the only one live on TV, that happens,' says Alistair. 'Still, I received as much positive press from that as when I do well.'

Despite his disappointment, Alistair indeed received praise for his undiminished spirit, even though his body reached its end point. The Brownlee brothers' reputation for tenacity and determination is the reason commentators and peers are suggesting the Brownlees will be challenging not only at London, but Rio 2016 and beyond.

'I know that with 5km to go, Alistair will always be there,' says current world champion, Spain's Javier Gómez, while the current Olympic champion, Germany's Jan Frodeno, says Jonny 'represents the future of triathlon'.

Sporting genes

The Brownlees were born and raised in Dewsbury, southwest of Leeds, with sporting success in their DNA. 'Mum used to swim at national level and Dad ran cross-country for Britain,' says Jonny. 'They're both doctors now.' They've since moved to Bramhope, a small village just north of Leeds chosen for its suitability for tri training. 'We're surrounded by countryside – it's the perfect place to bike and run,' Alistair says.

The family trait of competing in individual rather than team sports, despite growing up in an area defined by football and rugby, rubbed off on the brothers. 'We used to play a lot of table tennis,' says Alistair.

'I dabbled with team sports at school but I didn't enjoy them. I was useless at anything to do with a ball, although Jonny wasn't too bad and we both still follow rugby league.'

When the boys began frequenting the local swimming pool, it soon became clear they weren't there for bombing or dunking – the goal was to become faster and stronger. This was the first step towards elite competition and a top-level, yet good-humoured, rivalry.

'I joined a swim squad,' says Alistair. 'And Jonny copied me. Then I went running with a run group. And Jonny copied me. Soon after I began biking... and so did Jonny!'

'We've followed similar plans,' Jonny admits. 'I suppose at times it could have been annoying [for Alistair].'

'It got irritating – Jonny followed me to the bike routes, to the run routes,' Alistair says, laughing. 'But I'm proud that what's worked for me has worked for Jonny too.'

'We've followed similar plans,' admits Jonny. 'I suppose at times it could have been annoying for Alistair'

Both recorded junior success at individual sports: Alistair took silver at the Junior English Cross-Country Championships, while Jonny won the Yorkshire championships at backstroke. Alistair credits their multisport strength to this early focus on single events rather than trying to juggle three disciplines.

'We had an advantage that we didn't have input from tri coaches when we were young,' he says. 'We didn't know the limits of training and how we should train. There were no restrictions.'

Hill start

For the Brownlees, no sporting endeavour symbolised that lack of restriction quite like fell running. It may not get much recognition outside its heartlands in the north of England, but fell running has a rich history of teaching runners fortitude, self-reliance and obduracy as they conquer peaks in vests and flimsy shorts.

It's also a nursery for young athletes who could one day transfer their skills to multi-discipline sports such as triathlon. 'It's certainly true that there have been a lot of fell-runners who have gone on to do well in triathlon,' says their current coach Jack Maitland, himself a former British champion fell runner. 'And Alistair and Jonny used to do a lot fell running, largely because of the area in which they grew up.'

Alistair and Jonny are highly regarded in fell-running circles, and their success in the sport mirrors their joint progress in the past few years. Alistair won the Chevin

Alistair is hoping to follow his 12th place in Beijing in 2008 with gold in 2012



Current Olympic champion Jan Frodeno says Jonny is 'the future of triathlon'

Chase – an 11km Boxing Day trail and fell race around Guiseley, West Yorkshire – in 2005, 2007, 2008 and 2009, with Jonny second in all except the first of those races. Alistair finished 2009 strongly, with victory in the Auld Lang Syne race in Penistone Hill Country Park, near Bradford, with Jonny again in second place. Although in 2010 Alistair's participation was curtailed by a stress fracture and flu, Jonny couldn't take advantage, coming second again.

Three wishes

It was Alistair's and Jonny's uncle, Simon Hearnshaw, who ensured that fell running would remain a sideshow. A regular on the triathlon scene, Hearnshaw introduced the Brownlees to a sport that would push them to the limits.

'We entered one of the Milk Series triathlons when I was 12 and Al was 14,' says Jonny, referring to a national junior series, 'and did well. After that, we knew this was the sport we both wanted to be in. We just loved the combination of disciplines. And we still do.'

Alistair caught the attention of the British Triathlon Federation and was placed on the Regional Development Squad, which saw him training at the elite triathlon training centre at Leeds Metropolitan University. It wasn't long before Jonny joined him and the pair were put under the guidance of Maitland and Malcolm Brown, who still coach them today.

Despite the boys' obvious talent, there was much work to be done. 'You don't develop into a world-class triathlete in a year or two,' says Maitland. 'It takes eight, nine, maybe ten years to get to that level. Alistair and Jonny are where they are because they've been in a good programme for that long.'

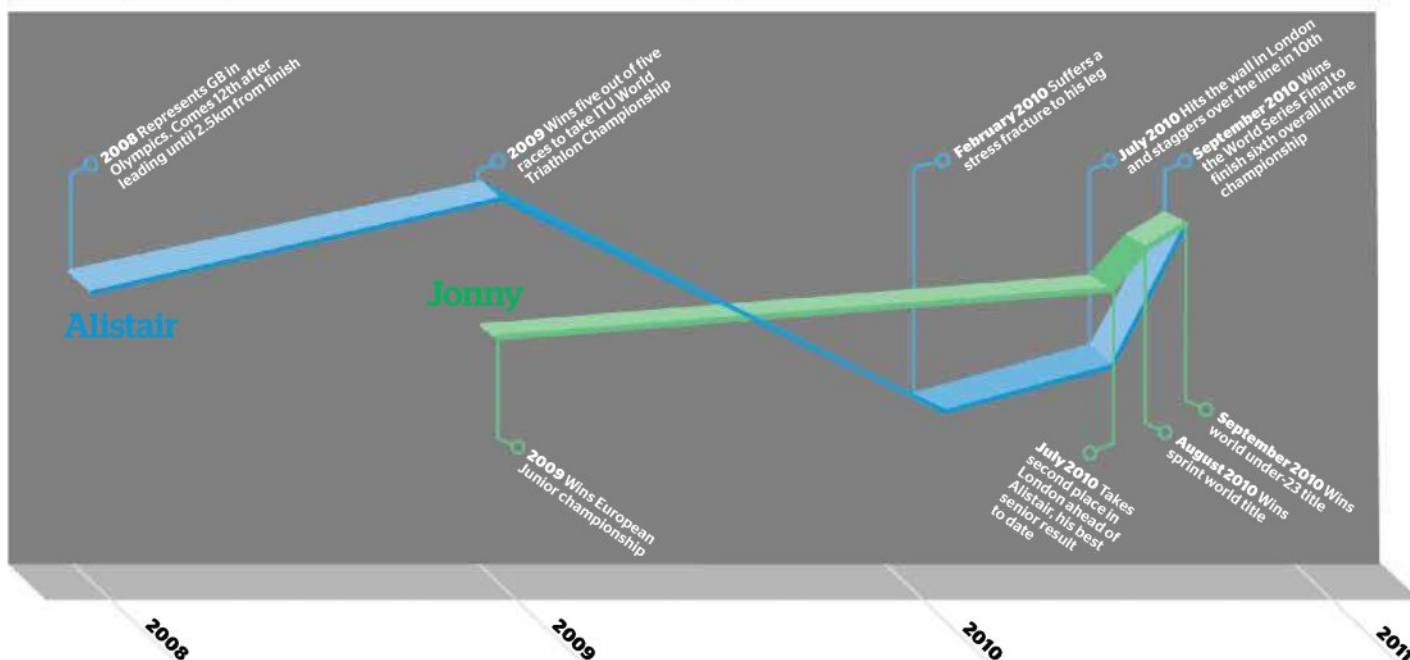
Weekend trips to the velodrome and run days in the Yorkshire Dales became the



The brothers developed their running strength on the fells of northern England

Sibling rivalry

How the Brownlee brothers' careers have progressed



Brotherly love: Alistair (right) and Jonny keep each other company in the 2010 Paris triathlon

Brownlee vs Brownlee

They live, train and race together, so how well do they know each other?

Favourite race?

Jonny on Alistair 'Al will say Lausanne where he won his first world junior title. If you race well somewhere, you usually like it. He likes Kitzbühel in Austria as well, though he had a bad race there last year.'

Alistair 'Madrid. The only race in the series that suits an all-round triathlete. It's a hard, hilly bike. And hot, which makes it interesting for racing.'

Alistair on Jonny 'Kitzbühel.'

Jonny 'I like racing in France.'

Favourite post-training meal?

Jonny on Alistair 'Al likes chocolate a lot. But he'll eat anything.'

Alistair 'I love chocolate and chocolate cake with custard.'

Alistair on Jonny 'Hot chocolate with maybe a biscuit.'

Jonny 'I'm normally so hungry I'll have anything. But I do like quick things like pasta as well as a Sunday lunch.'

Favourite training location?

Jonny on Alistair 'Yorkshire.'

Alistair 'Yorkshire.'

Alistair on Jonny 'Yorkshire.'

Jonny 'Yorkshire.'

Sporting heroes?

Jonny on Alistair 'Al might say Lance Armstrong and Haile Gebrselassie, but I don't think he really has any.'

Alistair 'I'm not massive on heroes. Though I grew up watching people like [five-time triathlon world champion] Simon Lessing, Armstrong, Gebrselassie...'

Alistair on Jonny 'The same as me.'

Jonny 'Leeds United players and Lance Armstrong, Roger Federer... People at the top who stay at the top.'



norm for the Brownlees. Their success has been built on a training regime that Brown and Maitland gradually built up to the current average of 30-35 hours each week.

'We train seven days a week, every week,' says Alistair. 'An easy day consists of a 90-minute swim, an hour run and an hour's cycling.' Demonstrating their dedication to success, they fit this regime around their studies. Jonny is in his final year studying history at Leeds University ('I'm on for a 2:1,' he says), while Alistair is working towards a Masters in finance at Leeds Met. It's hard to believe they find the time to eat and sleep.

Triple threats

So has an almost identical upbringing and training programme produced identical Olympic medal prospects? 'They

'We train seven days a week, every week. An easy day consists of a 90-minute swim, an hour run and an hour's cycling'

have different strengths and different development needs,' says Brown. 'Obviously Alistair's ahead of Jonny at the moment. Alistair's done outstandingly well in his transition from juniors to seniors, and for Jonny the next two years will be critical.

Jonny really will have to be the best in the world to beat Alistair. But they're both close to where they need to be before 2012.'

The brothers represent the new wave of triathletes who display no weakness in any of the sport's three disciplines. Traditionally the world's best triathletes were not quite elite-level in one of the three so added the other two to their repertoire, but triathlon's growing maturity, increased participation and influx of money from Lottery funding and sponsorship has moulded powerful holistic triathletes.

'Although running's our real strength we're both strong swimmers and bikers,' says Alistair. 'I'm more of a natural runner than Jonny, but he's a bit more robust all round. I'm probably better on the bike but that's because I'm a bit more



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– Richard Whitehead, GB Paralympian,
200m World Champion and
Marathon World Record Holder.



REPLENISHES **4** MINERALS
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aerobic. Jonny's more anaerobic and is good at swimming. If we were to run for 400m or ride for a minute Jonny would probably be better than me. But if we were to do longer stuff I'd do better.'

'Maybe I have a little more natural speed,' agrees Jonny. 'Al's an incredible endurance athlete, though he's not lacking in speed either. He can train hard day after day after day, whereas I might need a rest day after a really hard session. He's got a couple of years on me so that helps.'

Tactically they adopt the same bullish attitude: get to the front and drive on. Because of the technique of 'drafting' when cycling - riding in someone's slipstream, so saving energy - it's rare that anyone races into a huge lead on the bike leg, so the run is almost always competitive. That's where the Brownlees' sub-30-minute 10km times prove extremely useful.

First among equals

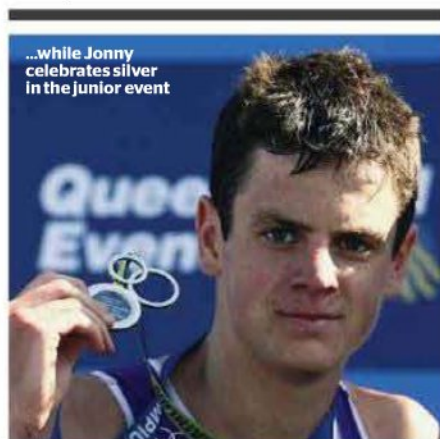
Now, though, comes the acid test of their brotherly love. Because of the two-year age difference, historically they've been kept apart. That gap has created a natural hierarchy: Al fastest, Jonny just behind. But with many pundits saying Jonny is stronger than Al at the same age, do they perceive any cracks in their familial bond?

'Not really,' says Jonny. 'We talk a lot through the race. If either of us were to drop a bottle, they would take the other's spare one. Before the race we spend a lot of time in the hotel together. Sometimes we'll go to a race and he'll forget his drink powder or something, so he'll use mine. We help each other.'

Alistair agrees. 'As an athlete it's more about the pressure you put on yourself. You know whether you've put in the effort during training, and it's putting it



'It would be a dream to win Olympic gold,' says Jonny. 'But I would want Alistair to take silver, just behind me'



together that can add the pressure. You've invested so much in the performance.'

We'll find out soon enough, though the brothers will follow diverse race schedules in 2011. Alistair's success at senior level means he's already amassed ranking points to ensure he's in the GB team to contend the two 2011 Olympic qualifiers at the London and Beijing legs of the ITU Dextro World Series in August and September. 'For me 2011 is all about London,' says Alistair. 'I'd like to go for the world title again but I have to ensure I'm at my peak for those races.'

Jonny's relative inexperience means he doesn't have that luxury. He's not guaranteed to be one of the six GB men racing the qualifiers, so he'll have to compete in other ITU events around the globe in search of those points. 'I haven't confirmed my calendar yet. It's a tricky balance, though, because I've still got my final exams to take.'

The brothers will also race occasionally for French club EC Sartrouville, the team they helped win the French Grand Prix Series in 2010. But looming over every session and every race will be their chances of becoming Britain's first triathlon Olympic medallists.

'It would be a dream to win Olympic gold,' says Jonny. 'But I would want Alistair to take silver, just behind me.'

And as if that wasn't a frightening enough prospect for their competitors, there's a third brother, Edward, who although not yet a triathlete is said to be a 'promising' swimmer and runner. It's just possible that the podium in Rio in 2016 will be entirely a family affair. **GE**, one of the worldwide sponsors of the London 2012 Olympic Games, is the Elite Partner of the British Triathlon team. See ge.com/olympicgames

Multiple masters

The Brownlee brothers don't have a weakness in any tri discipline - but if you do, here are their tips for improving

	SWIMMING	CYCLING	RUNNING	TRANSITIONS
Alistair	'Improve your feel for the water by practising the "fist drill". Close your hand with your thumb on top, then swim but really feel the catch of the water coming from the forearm.'	'Time spent getting used to clipless pedals is well worth it. You may hit the deck a few times to begin with, but you'll not only feel more like a triathlete, you'll be more efficient, too.'	'Be tactical with pacing - adapt it to the individual race. I push hard for the first half of the run and try to lose my opposition, but sometimes I hold back and wait for that final kilometre before pushing on for the win.'	'As you approach the second transition - about the last 500m or so of the bike leg - shift down a gear and spin out your legs. This will prepare your legs for the run.'
Jonny	'Set off at a good pace, but not so much that you blow up. Try to settle into a rhythm, and stay out of trouble of the pack. There are often arms and legs flailing about, which can be unnerving if you're not a strong swimmer.'	'During the winter, mountain biking is a good way to improve fitness and bike-handling skills. It also gives you a greater awareness of the impact of choosing the right gears.'	'Practise high knee drills. This will not only help you run with a longer stride, but will also encourage you to run on your forefoot, which will lead to greater efficiency and more speed.'	'Make sure you're in a low gear when you come out of the transition stage. Leaving T1 in a high gear, combined with the shift of bloodflow when you go from swim to bike, is a surefire way to end up on the ground.'



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you're wearing gloves. It's light and compact enough that it won't slow you down on the trails either. For extra motivation you can use the Virtual Partner function to challenge personal bests on familiar routes - racing against a Mario Kart-style 'ghost bike' that digitally depicts your goal speed versus your current speed. garmin.com/uk



With a **15-hour battery life** this gives you plenty of juice for lengthy rides

Pack leaders

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Buyer's guide

Intended use

'As with most items of kit, there are different designs for different activities,' says mountaineering instructor Alec Roberts (guidedmountain.co.uk). 'The type of pack you need will depend on the length of your trip, the terrain you'll be covering, the weather conditions and what season it is.'

Good fit

'A proper fit along the length of the back is vital for comfort. Try on a bag before buying it, preferably with some weight in. Choose something simple, reliable and robust, with a good amount of well-designed padding for your hips and shoulders.'

Strapping

'Avoid rucksacks with unnecessary zips, buckles or straps - they're just another thing that can go wrong. It's important to check how easily the buckles slide off because they can be a pain to replace if you lose them, especially halfway through a trip.'

Pack smart

'Being organised is key. As a general rule, pack waterproofs at the top, cameras in external pockets and your map and compass in the lid pocket. Hard objects should be cushioned with clothing, especially if they'll come into contact with your body. It's always worth using an additional rucksack liner or dry-bag, too, and make sure any liquids are securely sealed.'

Salomon Sky 38 £95

Getting to the kit at the bottom of your pack can be tricky when you're halfway up a mountain. The Salomon Sky has a zipped side that runs the length of the pack, giving you easy access to all your stuff in seconds. A sleek design, minimal strapping and a slightly smaller capacity than the other packs here all contribute to its low weight.

Capacity 38 litres

Weight 0.89kg



salomon.com/uk

Berghaus Arete 45 £65

The Arete has a number of useful features, including large, glove-friendly buckles and an integrated distress whistle that you'll hopefully never have to use. It also comes at a very reasonable price if you're planning a trip on a budget. Unfortunately, it's let down by a complete lack of any external pockets, which makes accessing your gear mid-expedition extremely impractical.

Capacity 45 litres

Weight 0.95kg



berghaus.com

Osprey Talon 44 £100

Housing a three-litre hydration bladder, this stylish, lightweight pack will keep you well lubricated whether you're trekking, riding or adventure racing. An aluminium frame rail helps to control the load, distributing weight evenly across your back for a comfortable fit. The addition of trekking pole loops, ice axe holders and tow loops adds to its multi-activity versatility too.

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Karrimor X-Lite 45+10 £110

As the name suggests, the X-Lite is extremely light for its size, making it ideal for running, biking or any kind of race where every gram matters. While a removable Fformat back support can be inserted into the pack to provide added stability, for longer expeditions it offers very little padding or cushioning for your back and shoulders.

Capacity 55 litres
Weight 1.34kg



karrimor.com

The North Face Terra 55 £120

If you're carrying a heavy load for days on end, having a comfortable, robust pack is a must. The Terra comes with chunky lower back padding and a weight-spreading hip belt that helps to relieve the pressure on your aching shoulders. This extra protection adds to the overall pack weight, but for most expeditions it's a sacrifice worth making.

Capacity 55 litres
Weight 1.82kg



uk.thenorthface.com

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Gregory Z55 £140

With its thick padding from top to bottom and a dual-density foam lumbar pad that transfers the bulk of the weight to your hips, this pack offers great support for your back. It will keep you cool, too, thanks to a Jet Stream Ventilation system that sits slightly away from your back to improve air circulation. The only drawbacks are an abundance of unnecessary straps and buckles and its above-average price.

Capacity 55 litres
Weight 1.71kg



gregorypacks.co.uk



We've reviewed more expedition packs at mensfitness.co.uk/links/packitin



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Sunwise Waterloo GS £76.99

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sunwise.co.uk

Best for
water
sports

Oakley Radar £175

These lightweight sunglasses have specialised frame geometry that creates a cool airflow across your face while you run. The lenses are polarised, which means they're designed to block out the glare from flat surfaces such as pavements, while the half-rim frame maximises your peripheral vision, helping you keep an eye out for traffic in urban areas.

uk.oakley.com

Best for
running

Animal Nolo £44.99

Build quality and comfort is key with budget sunglasses. With stress-resistant nylon frames the Nolos are lightweight and flexible, but hard-wearing enough to be used for action sports such as snowboarding and mountain biking. And despite the budget price, they provide 100 per cent UV protection.

animal.co.uk

Best for
value

Best for
cycling

Adidas Evil Eye Half Rim Pro £169

These versatile cycle specs can handle everything from rugged mountain trails to gruelling road races and freestyle BMX. A special temple design sits snugly under your helmet, while adjustable nose and temple pads provide optimal grip, even on fast downhill sections. An innovative lens lock system allows for quick and easy lens changing.

sportsshadesonline.com

Best for
style

Rip Curl Bells £90

With sleek, wrap-around arms and bold, black rims, these striking shades are guaranteed to get you noticed this summer. But they've also got substance to back up the style, with high-quality lenses that are polarised to reduce glare and keep your eyes fully protected from the sun. You'll be grateful for the strong moulded hinges if you accidentally drop, sit or tread on them.

surfdome.com



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*Research completed at London South Bank University 2009



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Lab Series is on a mission to make you look younger. It started with last year's Max LS face cream, and now it's added an overnight renewal serum and an eye product to the shiny-bottled line up. The overnight cream uses ingredients such as acetylglucosamine and caffeine to take advantage of your skin's high overnight cell renewal rate. The Instant Eye Lift contains wheat protein to tighten up skin around your eyes.

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WHAT'S NEW

King of Shaves Azor 5

If the Azor 5 were a footballer, it would be a mercurial player who has responded well to the manager insisting that it stops partying and starts delivering every Saturday. As a result it's sharper than ever, thanks to the new Nano blades, and it's more consistent - the Endurium coating on said blades makes them last longer. Back of the net.

£6.99

Available nationwide



Shave tip

'If you've got ingrown hairs, lightly massage the affected areas with your thumbs in a circular motion,' says shaving expert Mark Sproston (shavedoctor.co.uk). 'Never extract ingrown hairs using tweezers.'

ON TEST

Aftershave balms

Use these balms to extinguish the flames of post-shave burn



Chanel Blue

£34 for 90ml

Everything about this product is impressive. The glass bottle and pump action dispenser are classy, as is the subtly fragranced thick white balm. Sadly the price is also formidable.

 chanel.com



Wilkinson Sword Sensitive

£5.09 for 100ml

This is so busy trying to avoid irritation - it's alcohol-free, virtually odourless and non-greasy - that it feels a bit thin and insipid.

 boots.com



L'Oréal Men Expert Hydra Energetic

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 loreal.co.uk



BOSS Orange Man

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 debenhams.co.uk



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CALL TO ARMS



**EXERCISE 1
BURPEE**



**EXERCISE 2
SIT-UP**

The best fitness challenges test different areas of your fitness, offer exciting twists on conventional exercises and make you feel you've achieved something by completing them. The new Maximuscle Beat The Instructor (BTI) challenge ticks all those boxes.

It was designed by British Military Fitness (BMF), the biggest provider of outdoor fitness classes in the UK, and you can take the challenge at any of the 57 parks around the UK in which BMF runs classes. To book a test slot, register at the beattheinstructor.co.uk – you don't need to be a BMF member to have a go.

When I arrive at my local park to do the challenge I'm greeted by BMF instructor Jim Preece, who will be my timekeeper and referee. 'It's all about explosive power and upper-body strength,' Preece says as I do a quick warm-up and sip some Maximuscle Maxipower to help me through the challenge.

'It's three rounds of 20 burpees, 20 sit-ups, 20 press-ups and three 30m shuttle runs, which you do for time,' he says, before explaining the rousing twists they've included. 'After every burpee and press-up you have to take your hands off the floor.' This means the burpees are really burpee press-ups – and I love press-ups.

Each 30m shuttle run is broken up into two 15m lengths with cones at either end. When you reach a cone, you drop down to the floor as if you're doing an MMA sprawl, taking your hands off the ground before you get up and run back.

PRESSING CONCERNS

I shuffle over to the start point and take a few deep breaths as Preece get his stopwatch ready. He counts down from three and then shouts at me to start. I hammer through the first three burpees, but forget to take my hands off the ground as I drop to the floor during the fourth one, which means Preece

doesn't count it. And to make matters worse, it takes me another couple of burpees to start getting the form right again. It's clearly advisable to practise them before you take the challenge.

I move on to the sit-ups, which seem almost easy after the burpees. But they aren't. 'During each rep your hands have to touch the floor behind your head then

'THE THIRD ROUND IS HELL. MY MUSCLES ARE BURNING'

your feet,' Preece tells me as I lose more time doing a couple of half sit-ups. 'Take deep controlled breaths – it'll help you get oxygen to your muscles for the press-ups.'

Form-wise the press-ups are the easiest of the bunch and I fly through them and into the shuttle runs. I try to use the runs to recover but the muscle-sapping sprawls at the end of each length limit their usefulness.

MF's Nick Hutchings was the first civilian to take on the military-inspired Maximuscle Beat The Instructor Challenge. Here's what he made of it



**EXERCISE 3
PRESS-UP**



**EXERCISE 4
SHUTTLE RUN**

During the second round I have to take a break after every ten reps. 'Just take a couple of deep breaths, standing up so you can get the most amount of oxygen into your system, then get back to work,' says Preece. 'The sooner you get through it, the sooner you can rest!'

FINAL COUNTDOWN

The third and final round is hell. My muscles are burning fiercely during every rep and I can't complete more than five in a row. I do, however, find a burst of energy for the final shuttle runs and finish in 10min 22sec. 'Great time,' says Preece as I flop down on the grass. 'But you could shave a fair few seconds off that.' As I swig a Cyclone recovery shake, I want to believe him – I'm pretty sure I could have banged out a few more reps between breaks and run a bit faster during the shuttles so I'll certainly be back to have another crack, I just need to lie down for a few days first.

These Maximuscle products will improve your performance during the BTI challenge and help you recover better afterwards.

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Edited by Chris Miller

Live life in the fit lane

Into the deep

Freediving crushes your lungs to the size of an orange and can cause blackouts and deadly narcotic trances. *MF*'s Tarquin Cooper tries a sport that's literally breathtaking

I stare down into a dark blue void. Beneath me in the fabled Blue Hole lies a sheer underwater coral cliff that plunges 100m to the bottom of the sea. It's utterly peaceful.

Face down in the water, the only sound I can hear is my own breathing. I gently lift my head and inhale as if inflating my entire body. Then with one swift movement I plunge my head down and immerse myself in another world.

Awaiting me is an experience freedivers liken to a kind of nirvana. But after only a few metres I get the feeling I signed up for the wrong gig. My ears start popping, my lungs want to explode and the surface seems very far away. This is my baptism into the strangely alluring world of freediving, the sport of diving as deeply as possible on a single breath.

Take a dive

Minimalist and extreme, freediving appeals to purists because it requires no scuba gear, no decompression stops. It's just you, a pair of fins and the sea - although having superhuman lungs helps.

British freediver Sara Campbell runs courses in Dahab, amid the backpackers, beach bums and Bedouin tribesmen on Egypt's Sinai peninsula. Campbell isn't just an instructor; she's one of the world's best freedivers. In 2007, she astonished the freediving world by breaking three diving world records in 48 hours, just nine months after taking up the sport. In 2009 she set a world record in the 'constant weight' category that still stands, diving to 96m using just a monofin for propulsion.

'My ears start popping, my lungs want to explode and the surface seems very far away'

'It's such an amazing feeling,' she says. 'It's like falling through space.'

Treasure chest

Freediving is both an ancient art and a very modern pursuit, practised thousands of years ago by pearl fishermen and now, by some of the world's most extreme athletes. Viewers of the BBC's *Human Planet* may recall the amazing feats of the Bajau people, who dive with homemade spears and wooden goggles to depths of 20m for up to five minutes. One of the best divers, Sulbin, has confounded medical experts by smoking like a chimney, claiming it helps to relax his chest. Today, the top freedivers are reaching depths of over 100m unaided and over 200m when descending on a weighted sled (see the box 'Breaking Free' on p86). Unlike Sulbin, however, these athletes use traditional means of relaxation before a dive such as yoga.

For Campbell, yoga is how she came to the sport. She was initially teaching yoga in Dahab when someone suggested she might give freediving a go. She's never looked

back. When I meet her, I get a couple of shocks. The first is her size - at 1.5m (4ft 11in) she's tiny. The other is harder to get past.

'Sorry mate, but from now on, absolutely no alcohol or caffeine. It's also important to dive on an empty stomach. So no breakfast either.'

This is not good news. On the morning of the dive I watch forlornly as Dan, the photographer, avails himself of the breakfast bar while I try in vain to keep my stomach silent with just a spoonful of natural yoghurt and a fruit tea. Over two days Campbell's agreed to try to get me to a depth of 20m.

Nothing but mammals

Before going to the sea, we head to the hotel pool for a physiology lesson. Campbell explains that the human body is adapted to coping with long underwater forays because we share some of the attributes of other sea-going mammals such as dolphins.

'It's called the mammalian reflex,' she says. 'It's something

'All sense of time disappears and I stare at shadows, ignoring the urge to breathe'

MF's Tarquin joins Sara Campbell in a bit of pre-dive yoga to relax the body



Tarquin's impressive training performance makes him wonder if he's a natural



that hasn't evolved since we left the sea millions of years ago. Put your head in a bucket of cold water and your heart rate will slow down.' This instinctive mechanism to lower the pulse when the body knows it is in water means less demand for oxygen. It's this that allows divers to stay underwater for long periods.

The body also starts directing blood away from the extremities such as feet and hands towards the vital organs. This process, called vasoconstriction, is what keeps humans alive when they're suffering from hypothermia. The spleen also releases red blood

Death in the deep

Although the human body can adapt to diving down to 100m or more, there is still plenty of danger lurking in the depths

The biggest battle for freedivers is against the pressure. The average volume of the human lungs is around five litres. At a depth of 20m pressure compresses the lungs to a third of their natural size. At 100m they're crushed to the size of an orange. The heart slows to as low as 25 beats per minute and a kind of narcosis caused from the pressurised carbon dioxide and nitrogen can set in, known as 'rapture of the deep'. It sends divers into a kind of trance from which some may never return.

But the biggest danger area is from 5m to the surface. This is where the pressure difference is at its greatest, causing Shallow Water Blackout - loss of consciousness due to hypoxia (oxygen deprivation). This is why the golden rule of the sport is to never dive alone. Less severe results of hypoxia are leg convulsions after a dive, known in the sport as 'doing the samba'.

Despite the demands diving places on the body, most diving deaths are caused by equipment failure during 'no limits' records. In 2002 the French freediver Audrey Mestre died when her ascending balloon failed to work after reaching 171m. The same fate befell the former world record holder Loïc Leferme, who died in 2007 during a training dive.

cells which carry oxygen, helping us to stay down for longer.

But your body will find it hard to react in this way if you're stressed or panicking. Freedivers need to attain a Zen-like inner calm before they start to hold their breath, so Campbell gives me a yoga lesson to help me breathe deeply and lower my pulse. Only then do I put on a mask and get into the water for a breath-hold test.

Save your breath

With Campbell right beside me, stopwatch at the ready, I inhale as deeply as possible and concentrate on nothing. All sense of time

disappears and I stare at shadows dancing on the pool's floor. As instructed, I ignore the first urge to breathe - it's a desire to expel carbon dioxide, not a need for oxygen. I disregard the contractions in my stomach as well, which is my body attempting to pump oxygen around when it isn't getting any.

'You're doing really well,' I hear Campbell say, sounding very far away.

I know I've been down here without breathing for a long time. I'm guessing three minutes at least. It's hurting now and I'm fighting to maintain control. And then I

can't take it any longer. Bubbles cascade from my mouth and I burst up through the surface.

'Very impressive,' Campbell says. 'Four minutes ten.'

I can't believe it. Over lunch (I'm only allowed the salad) a dangerous thought takes seed in my mind. Maybe I'm a natural?

In the afternoon, it's quickly dispelled.

Hole new world

We pile into a car and journey north along a dusty dirt track, squeezed between the Red Sea and Sinai's crumbling mountains,



'I stop to admire the coral. It's beautiful. I feel, for a moment, that I don't need to breathe at all'

for a few kilometres until we reach the natural wonder of the Blue Hole. The coral lagoon's depth makes it an ideal freediving site. But among scuba divers, it is known as the 'divers' cemetery' because at least 60 people have perished here after going too deep. The surrounding cliffs bear their epitaphs. One, from five months ago, reads: 'Have a fun dive'.

Campbell helps me into the gear, which is highly specialist. The wetsuit is much lighter and more figure-hugging than a regular diving or triathlon suit. The fins are huge, as long as my legs. My weight belt sits on my hips, not my waist, so as not to constrict breathing, while the mask sits very close to my face. All this is to ensure I am as hydro-dynamic as possible.

We practise technique and do some warm-up dives until time to go for a maximum depth. Preparing is counter-intuitive. I need to psyche myself up yet achieve the state of mind of a Buddhist monk.

'Don't think about how it works,' Campbell says. 'You must just let the dive happen.'

I take a deep breath and go for it.

Out of my depth

One wide sweep of the arms sends me on my way downwards, then a determined kick sends me accelerating into the deep of the Blue Hole. One hand is on my nose, continually forcing air through my ear canal to equalise the pressure.

I pass 5m. At 10m the pressure is double what it is at the surface; my lungs are half their normal size. But descending is now easier because I have negative buoyancy - I'm sinking, slowly at first, then faster with every metre gained. I see the 20m marker. I grab the rope, spin around and with one hard downward pull, send myself back towards the surface.

And that's when it nearly goes pear-shaped. I lose all sense of urgency and experience a strange feeling of euphoria, like I'm stoned. I stop to admire the coral wall and marvel at how the shards of light streak down from the surface. It's beautiful. I feel, for a moment, that I don't need to breathe at all.

Then I see Campbell diving towards me, frantically waving her arms as if to hurry me up. Suddenly, I snap out of it and remember that I am a long way down and do need to breathe after all. Now.

I thrust towards the surface. With 10m still to go my stomach starts contracting and I'm desperate to breathe. Up, up, up - and then I hit the surface with a huge splash and an even bigger gasp of precious air.

It's suddenly very bright, then just as suddenly starts to get dark. The next thing I know, someone is shouting my name repeatedly from close quarters.

'Tarquin! Tarquin!'

I open my eyes to find Campbell staring into them while firmly holding my limp body upright.

'Tarquin! Can you hear me?'

'Um... yeah,' I manage to splutter. 'What?'

'You realise you just blacked out?'

Fade to black

Despite my performance in training, when it came to the real dive I lasted 51 seconds before resurfacing and briefly losing consciousness.

When Campbell and I are back at the beachside bar for a debrief, a beer and some much-needed real food, she explains that blackouts aren't uncommon and that men get them more often than women.

'Why's that?' I ask, assuming there must be a physiological explanation, maybe something to do with body size or testosterone.

Campbell laughs knowingly. 'Because you're boys! But don't worry, you're a real freediver now.'

Personal coaching sessions with Sara Campbell are available from £175 a day. For details visit sarafreediver.com or call 079 4900 5944. Return flights from British airports to Sharm El Sheikh start at around £200.

Following this year's political unrest in Egypt, the Government's advice is that the Red Sea resorts are calm but to monitor the situation before travelling. Check fco.gov.uk.

Breaking free

Freediving has various strictly defined disciplines. Here's an explanation - and the astonishing world records in each category



No Limits

Divers descend and ascend using weights and balloons.

World record 214m **Herbert Nitsch** (Austria)



Constant Weight

The most common discipline. Divers descend and ascend using fins or a monofin.

World record 124m **Herbert Nitsch**



Constant Weight Without Fins

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World record 101m

William Trubridge (New Zealand)



Free Immersion

Divers pull themselves up and down on a rope.

World record 120m **Herbert Nitsch**



Dynamic with Fins

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World record 265m

Dave Mullins (New Zealand)



Static Apnoea

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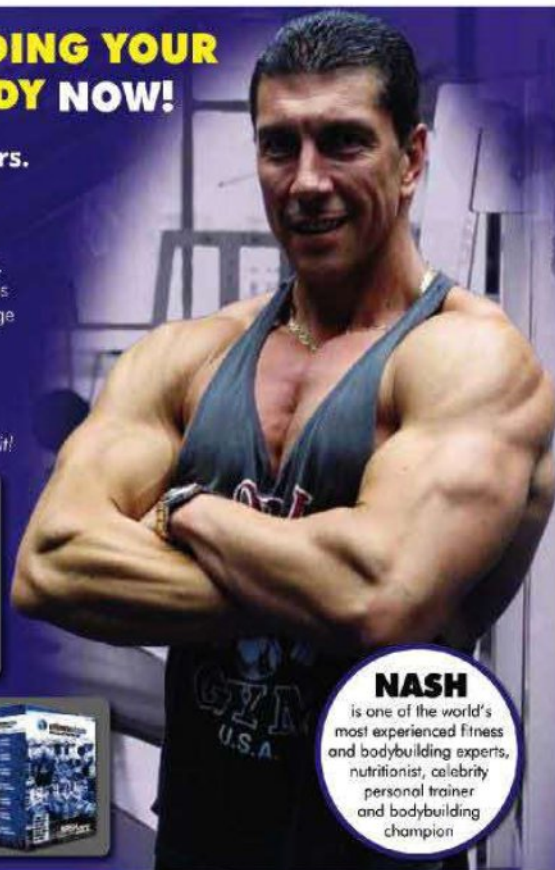
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(1) First in the V-Max technology trio is Mammoth's use of 'high-specification foam'.

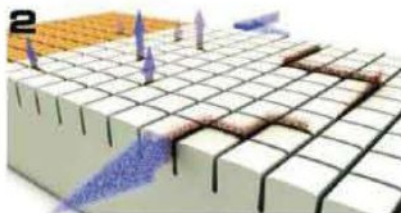


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(2) Secondly, cooling air-flow channels between the castellations allow the mattress to shed excess heat and moisture, so you do not get hot and sweaty in the Summer months.



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5 great British cycling climbs

Test yourself on some of the toughest and most scenic ascents in the UK

Words Ben Ince

1 Honister Pass Buttermere, Cumbria

This climb through the stunning natural amphitheatre of Buttermere Fell will take your breath away in more ways than one. After weaving around some huge boulders you'll cross a stone bridge, which leads to a challenging 20 per cent gradient stretch. This is followed by multiple sections of sadistic 25 per cent gradient, before you eventually arrive, exhausted, at the summit.



2 Winnats Pass Castleton, Derbyshire

Huge, grassy limestone formations line the narrow road at the start of this winding climb, before you hit a vast gorge with grass-lined banks that frame you in its centre. Beautiful as the landscape is, it offers no respite from the lung-busting 20 per cent gradient, which remains constant even as the banks decline towards the summit.



3 Buttertubs Pass Swaledale, Yorkshire Dales

Riding the south side of Buttertubs Pass is challenge enough for most men, but for those with serious stamina, the north side offers a truly monstrous climb. Winding its way past 20m-deep limestone potholes, the route funnels you into a devilishly twisty section with a 25 per cent gradient, followed by a brief downhill respite before a final 20 per cent climb that'll sap any remaining energy from your aching legs.



4 Cheddar Gorge Cheddar, Somerset

Cheddar Gorge is a beautiful landscape that's also great fun to ride, with wide roads and a manageable ascent that make it perfect for beginners. Huge rock faces provide a satisfyingly epic backdrop as you sweat through the route's steepest section. Once this has been conquered, the ride gets progressively easier and faster till you reach the grandstand hilltop finish.



5 Bealach na Bà Applecross, Highlands

Strictly for experienced riders, this extreme climb is arguably the toughest in Britain. It winds perilously through the highland wilderness, ascending to the Bealach na Bà pass at a punishing 20 per cent gradient. Your legs will beg for mercy long before you reach the zenith - a series of hairpin bends that snake past crashing waterfalls before finally arriving at the finish. This is not for the faint-hearted and only to be ridden in optimum weather.



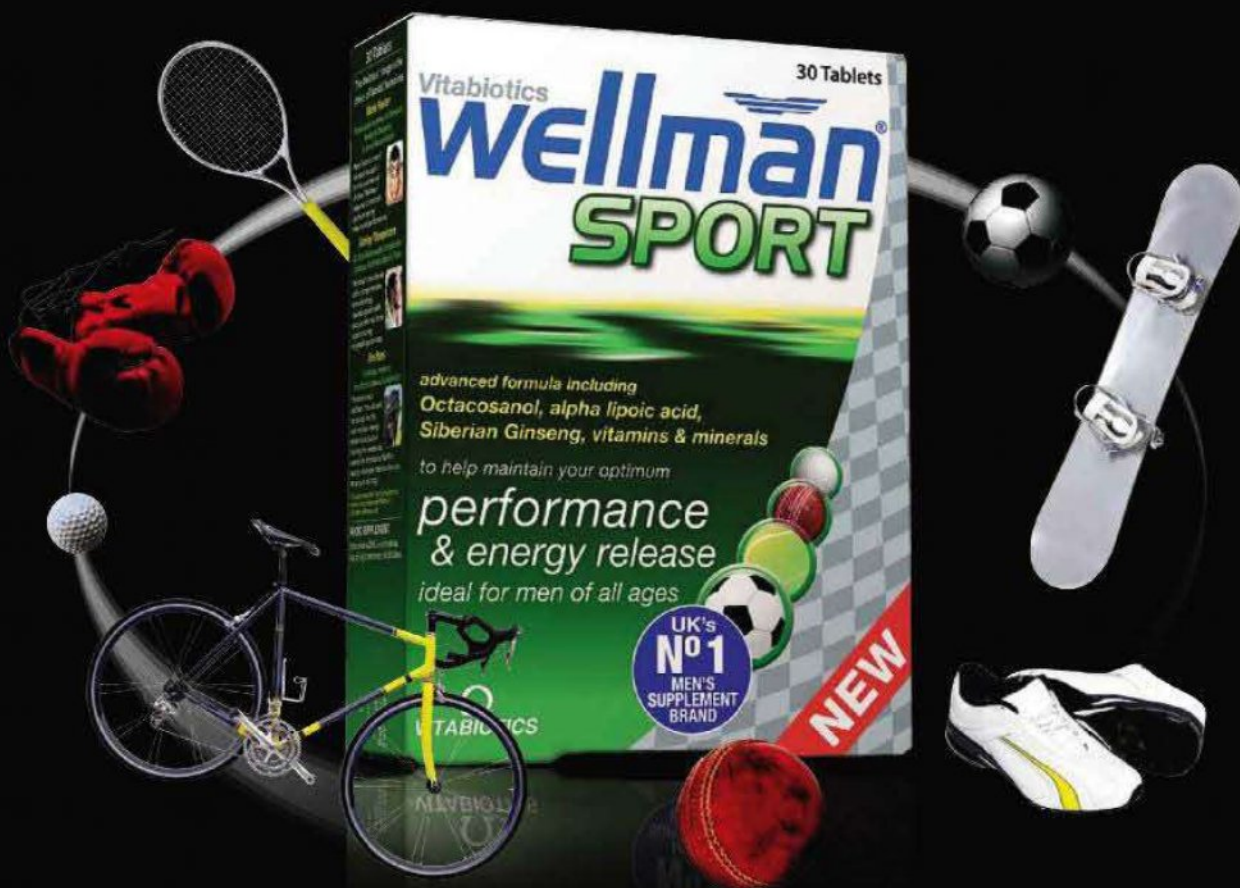
Taken from *100 Greatest Cycling Climbs: A Road Cyclist's Guide To Britain's Hills* by Simon Warren, available from Amazon and other good booksellers.



We've uncovered three of the best European climbs at mensfitness.co.uk/links/ontheup

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The harder they SCRUM

London Wasps are one of Europe's top rugby union sides. *MF*'s Joe Warner joins them for a day of fitness tests and learns the painful way just what it takes to make the grade



Photography Tom Miles

At school I preferred round balls to oval ones. There's always a safe haven on the football or cricket pitch where less talented souls can hide - left back or third man. But there's no such sanctuary in rugby union. If you don't have some impressive physical attribute - whether it's size, speed or strength - you get found out fast.

So although I've never really played the game, being decidedly average in height, weight, pace and strength I've always assumed that I wouldn't be a great, let alone good, rugby player.

Now I have the proof: cold, hard numbers in the form of times and distances. I've just finished a fitness assessment with the professionals from London Wasps, including England international flanker Tom Rees, alongside some amateur players from west London club side Staines.

These boys are here thanks to sports nutrition company Maximuscle which, together with Wasps' fitness coaches, is providing them with all the training tips and supplements they need to try and bridge the gap between part-time players and amateur all-stars. And me? It appears I am here to demonstrate just how average the Average Joe really is.

Fat chance

The first test of the day goes well for me because no physical exertion is involved. It's a simple body fat assessment.

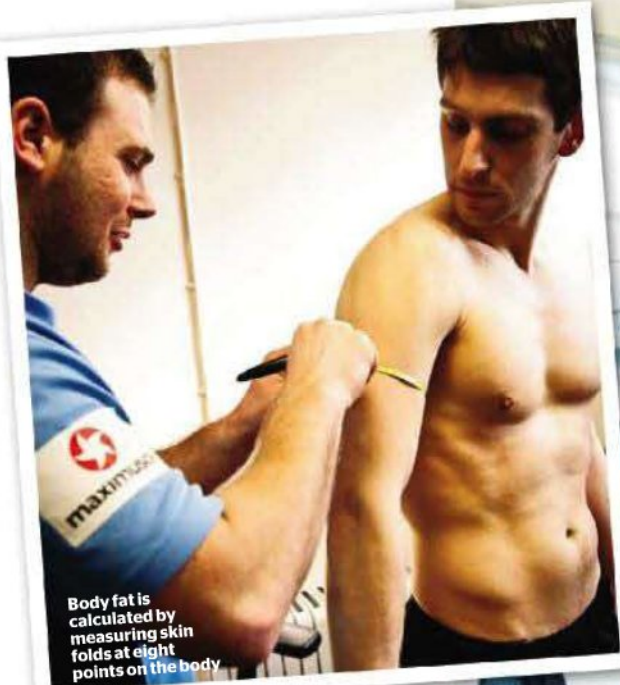
'We take player measurements every four weeks to make sure they are where they need to be,' says Huw Davies, Wasps' head



MF's Joe was inspired by the fearsome sight of the Wasps squad training

strength and conditioning coach. 'Too much body fat will slow them down so all the players know what their upper limit should be and must work to stay well within their target range.'

Measurements are taken from eight sites on the body, with the totals added up in millimetres. 'A little body fat is essential



Body fat is calculated by measuring skin folds at eight points on the body

but carrying too much can really take its toll over the course of an 80-minute match,' says Rees. 'The back row lads need to be between 65mm and 70mm, while some of the fastest guys are naturally very lean and come in around 60mm. Everyone must be under 100mm. It's not a stat to live and die by, but it's a useful monitoring tool.'

My skin folds add up to 63mm on my 71kg frame, a body-fat percentage a shade under ten per cent, which makes me the leanest of all the amateurs but still lardier than most of the pros. While there's not much fat on me, there's not much muscle either so I don't let this early success go to my head.

Lift off

With the easiest test done, the hard work begins with vertical jumps. 'This test is the best predictor of the explosive power you can produce,' says Davies. 'Power output and explosiveness are two of the key attributes needed by rugby pros.'

With Rees helping the Staines lads I turn to Michael Mayhew, the 100kg Wasps hooker, for some last-gasp advice. 'It's important you descend into a half-squat and then snap your hips forward as you jump to get the maximum distance off the floor,' he says. 'And try to make it a smooth and controlled as possible. Don't force it.'

I do as I'm told but my leap is anything but fluid and I can only muster 37.5cm. To put this into context, the top performer from Staines manages 49.3cm, while the Wasps back three are expected to get above 75cm. The only guy



MF's Joe tries to follow the expert advice but only manages a vertical jump of 37.5cm



...while front row forward Mayhew effortlessly out-jumps him

Wasps' Michael Mayhew achieves impressive distance with the medicine ball



I beat is a Staines front-rower, but at 100kg-plus, he's built for more destructive purposes than jumping.

'You'll improve at this quite quickly by adding some heavy squats to your training programme, to improve strength and power, as well as some box jumps and other plyometric moves to improve your explosiveness,' says Davies.

Big balls

Next up is kneeling medicine ball throws, which test the upper-body explosive power that is vital for pushing off opponents. Rees tells me to snap my hips forward to generate power and not rely on my chest and arms. 'Don't rock back too much. Keep your movement short and sharp to generate explosiveness.'

I watch as everyone else has a go. The pros launch the huge 10kg

weight forward like it's a football: for most, it sails past the 6m mark and gets near 7m. When I'm up, I launch the really-quiet-heavy ball with all my might. It lands 4.25m from where I'm kneeling - a full metre shorter than anyone else's throw.

'Guys - does anyone have any advice for this?' I ask in desperation. 'Yeah, try throwing the fucking thing,' is the response from one of the pros, followed by immediate laughter from everyone else. Except me. I try again. It's the exact same distance.

'Don't worry, mate,' says Rees. 'You're not built for power. Let's head to the track and see whether you are built for speed.' I already know the answer but he's so optimistic I don't want to let him down.

Sprint school

Next up, the 10m and 40m sprints but first I must put on what can only be described as a GPS bra. The fabric wraps around my back to support a small device over my chest that will monitor my speed and heart rate over the rest of the session.

The key when sprinting, says Rees, is to stay low for as long as possible and pump my arms to drive my legs to get to my top speed quickly and efficiently. 'And try to stay as relaxed as possible,' he adds.

My first 10m run is clocked at 2.15sec. The quickest players at Wasps are expected to get close to 1.8sec, and a couple of the Staines players make the grade. Rees tells me to relax. 'It will make you more efficient, which is the key to accelerating quickly,' he says. It works, a bit, and I finish in 2.07sec. Better, but still frankly pedestrian.

I fare better in the 40m. My aim is to go under six seconds, which I manage on my second go - just, with 5.99sec. It's only one second slower than the average Wasps back row forward, although over such a short distance the difference is huge. Even if I was powerful enough to bring a player down, by the time I'd made my move he'd be long gone.

Final exam

It's time for the final drill. I'm already feeling pretty useless and now I

Wasps and England flanker Tom Rees talks training



'I launch the heavy ball with all my might. It lands a full metre shorter than anyone else's throw'

discover they have saved the worst for last: the anaerobic fitness test.

'This is a really tough because you have to work maximally throughout,' says Davies. 'This creates a lot of lactate, so you'll be gasping for breath and likely feel pretty sick at the same time.' Why am I doing this again? 'Rugby, like many sports, is all about short bursts of all-out effort followed by a quick rest, then all-out again,' he says. 'This is a great way to assess your current anaerobic fitness level and see how game-ready you are.'

I turn to Rees for more advice. 'We do this early on in pre-season, then again near the end to measure our improvement,' he says. 'It's seven minutes of hell - there's not much more I can tell you. It's going to hurt so just get it done fast.'

Results Physical condition

Player	Body mass (kg)	Skin folds (mm)	Body fat %
Wasps back row	109.2	49.8	8.7
Wasps front row	118	80.8	11.5
Wasps back three	100	42.9	8.2
Wasps half-back	100	42.9	8.2
Wasps centre	92	47.5	8.5
MF	71.2	63.7	9.9

We start lying face down on the grass on the try line. On the whistle we must push up onto our feet, sprint 5m to a cone, go around it, and then run backwards to the try line before dropping until our chests hit the grass.

From there we push back up, sprint 10m then back, hit the ground again, then push up and sprint a final 20m, around a cone, then back to the goal line. That's one rep. We're going to do one rep, rest 30 seconds, two reps, rest, two reps, rest, FOUR REPS, rest, then a single final rep.

The clock starts at the beginning of the each rep and stops once we cross the try line. The times of all reps are added out to give a total score in seconds.

'That time would be world-class for a prop forward,' my timer tells me after my second set of sprints. 'Really? Wow, that's great,' I splutter. My heart is pounding so hard in my ribcage that it hurts, and my lungs feel as though I have just inhaled a bucket of sand. But it's all worth it because I've just posted a world-class time.

It's only halfway through the next set of reps I realise he's royally taking the piss. Prop forwards are, of course, the heaviest and slowest players on the field. I want to give him both barrels but I'm now lying flat on my back desperately trying to get enough air into my lungs. He just stands there laughing. One rep is OK. Two are horrible. Four feels an extended bout of torture.

Hell on turf

It eventually ends, but the results aren't pretty. My anaerobic fitness score is 300 seconds - exactly five minutes. I already know that's not good because only one of the amateur players finishes behind me.

'The back three, half-backs and centres should score around the 230 to 235 mark,' says Rees. 'I hover around 240. The difference between my score and yours may not sound much, but an extra

Joe's performance in the 40m sprint reaches the standard of 'just about acceptable'



'My heart is pounding so hard it hurts and I feel as though I've just inhaled a bucket of sand'

minute is a massive gap. If we go anywhere above about 270 then we'll be back in the gym for extra conditioning sessions.'

Davies chips in with some good news and bad news for me. 'It's quite easy to get better at this test, but you'll need to do a lot of all-

out intensity sprinting to improve your anaerobic fitness levels.'

It takes me a good ten minutes to get my breath back and for the sick feeling to subside. I've always considered myself fairly fit, with decent speed, strength and power. But today has been a real eye-opener. Not because I got whipped by some professional athletes - that was a given - but because I was nowhere near the level of the guys from Staines. They all have nine-to-five jobs and have to fit training around busy lives, but they excelled in the tests.

I get the Tube back to work down in the dumps. I thought I trained pretty hard but it turns out I need much more intensity to get significantly stronger or faster. Time to shake things up, I think to myself. I'm going to train like a pro. Hit a local track for sprint sessions, lift weights until I am blue in the face, and do that bastard anaerobic fitness test once a week.

Then I remember how much it hurt. I'll start tomorrow. Or maybe next week. Or maybe I'll just stick to football. 

Results Physical performance

Player	Vertical jump (cm)	Med ball throw (m)	10m (sec)	40m (sec)	Anaerobic (sec)
Wasps back row	65	6.75	1.9	5.4	240
Wasps front row	55	7	2	5.7	255
Wasps back three	75	6.75	1.8	5	235
Wasps half-back	65	6	1.85	5.2	230
Wasps centre	65	6.25	1.85	5.1	235
MF	37.5	4.25	2.07	5.99	300



To see a video of **MF** getting stuck in to Wasps' rugby training go to mensfitness.co.uk/links/stinger

Staines RFC players use Maximuscle to optimise their sports performance. Follow their progress at maximuscle.com/staines

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Occupation: Global exploratory adventures



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- 3 Cycle Vietnam. 15 days £1,105
- 4 Cuban Highlights Ride. 8 days £769
- 5 Jebel Sahro Ride, Morocco (pictured). 8 days £599

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Name: Discover Adventure

Occupation: Cycle tour organisers

We organise and run a wide range of cycle challenges throughout the year, from short four-day rides from London to Paris to longer 13-day trips cycling from Land's End to John O'Groats. New for 2011 is our Charity Etape Cycle, which involves tackling a stage of this year's Tour de France in central France over two days. We offer full support on all trips with an experienced cycling crew, mechanics, cooks and leaders. Registration fees start from £99. We also operate a UK-based training weekend where you can check your fitness and boost your confidence.



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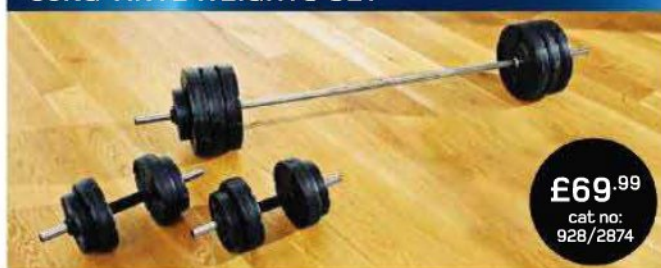


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Salmon is also an excellent muscle-building food, full of high-quality protein and a host of essential amino acids. Here are a few additions that will make this nutritious fish even healthier.

Broccoli

How much? 1 handful

Broccoli is high in chromium, which helps to build muscle, reduce body fat and produce energy. It's also a great source of bone-strengthening vitamin K.

New potatoes

How many? 6

Potatoes contain starch, which increases the calories burned after a meal and keeps you feeling full by slowing down the digestion process.

Pesto

How much? 1 tbsp

The olive oil and pine nuts in pesto contain mono- and polyunsaturated fats, which reduce appetite and help to break down fat stored in the body.



Quick tip

Choose organic Pacific salmon rather than Atlantic salmon for much higher levels of omega 3 fatty acids

Lemon juice

How much? 1 tbsp

Lemon juice helps to control your blood sugar levels, which prevents fat storage and stops you craving sugary food.

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Read the label

Your monthly A-to-Z guide to the jargon of supplements

Aa

Vitamin A

This vitamin plays a crucial role in preserving your eyesight, encouraging bone and cell growth, maintaining skin health and powering your immune system. It's naturally found in carrots, sweet potato and pumpkin.

'Antioxidants protect cells from the effects of oxidation'

Alpha lipoic acid

A fatty acid found in every body cell that converts glucose into energy. As an antioxidant (see below), it also attacks cell-damaging free radicals. It's naturally found in most foods, but especially in kidneys, liver, spinach and broccoli.

Amino acids

These are molecules made from elements of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen. Amino acids are the building blocks of all proteins and come in two forms: non-essential, which can be manufactured by your body; and essential, which can't and must be consumed in the diet.

Anabolic

This refers to the process of tissue growth, specifically muscle growth. From the Greek meaning 'upward' and 'throw', anabolic is the opposite of catabolic, which is tissue breakdown.

Antioxidant

A molecule that protects cells from the effects of oxidation. Oxidation is a natural chemical reaction, but releases harmful by-products called free radicals, which have been linked to cancer and heart disease. Antioxidants include betacarotene, lycopene and vitamins A, C and E.

Aspartame

An artificial sweetener (also known as E951) found in many sports drinks. It's been linked to serious medical conditions including brain tumours, but the European Food Safety Authority says it's safe to consume 40mg per kg of bodyweight a day.



Pimp my protein

Add these to your protein shakes for a nutritional boost

Blueberries

When you exercise hard, your body produces molecules called free radicals that can cause damage to healthy cells. **Blueberries contain an abundance of antioxidants that directly combat free radicals** and contain anti-inflammatory properties that are vital to quick recovery. Add a handful of fresh or frozen berries to your post-workout smoothie.



Brazil nuts

Chuckling some nuts into the blender will give you an extra protein kick, but that's not all. Brazil nuts are also high in healthy fats and are packed with selenium and zinc, both of which play pivotal roles in the production of testosterone, which is vital for muscle growth and fat loss.



Flaxseeds

Flaxseeds are high in fibre, which will help you stay feeling full, but more importantly **contain high amounts of the essential fatty acid omega 3 - a type of fat that plays a crucial role in reducing body fat levels**, as well as promoting heart health.



What supp? Your sports supplement questions answered

Q Which supplements are most vital for someone wanting to add a lot of lean muscle?



A To build muscle you must first be training, eating and resting sufficiently. Only then should you consider improving your odds by adding supplements.

'A general multivitamin and a plant or fish oil high in essential fatty acids would be the first thing to add,' says Myprotein.com's Laurent Bannock. 'You should then focus on recovery, or post-

workout, supplements because this can have a bigger impact in lean mass gains.

'Branched-chain amino acids, or BCAAs, are beneficial because they prevent muscle breakdown and encourage growth. Creatine gives your muscles more energy so you can lift heavier for longer, while whey protein provides quick-release protein to rebuild and repair damaged muscles fast.'



To find out how creatine can help your fitness go to mensfitness.co.uk/links/creatine



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2 Eggs are just over ten per cent fat, but nearly all of it is found in the yolk - **the albumen, or white, is less than 0.05 per cent fat.**

3 Eggs are a **great source of choline**, which is an important nutrient for brain function and health.

4 A recent US Government study found that **a 60g egg contains 0.33g of bone-strengthening vitamin D**, which accounts for 41 per cent of your RDA and is 64 per cent higher than was previously thought.

5 While eggs contain dietary cholesterol, recent research has found that the amount of saturated fat we eat has more of an effect on raising blood cholesterol levels than cholesterol-rich foods do. In addition, **eggs contain a compound called lecithin, which can help to lower cholesterol levels** by reducing its absorption into the blood.

6 To check if an egg is fresh, place it in a bowl of water. **If it lies on its side it's fresh.** If it stands up and bobs slightly it's a little old but still edible. If it floats it's rotten and should be binned.

7 Hens that produce omega 3-enhanced eggs are raised on a diet of canola, linseed and flaxseed. **Omega 3 essential fatty acids help to reduce inflammation** and the risk of cardiovascular disease.

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Cashew nuts

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Many people avoid eating cashew nuts because of their high fat content. But don't let that put you off - about 75 per cent of the fat in cashew nuts is of the unsaturated variety, including heart-healthy oleic acid.

A Spanish study published in the journal *Obesity* found that people who eat nuts at least twice a week are up to 30 per cent less likely to put on weight than those who don't. Cashew nuts are also a great post-workout snack - as well as muscle-building protein, they provide magnesium and

copper, which help reduce muscle inflammation after a workout.

Quick tip Cashews don't have to be eaten on their own - you can add a handful to stir-fries, salads and even coleslaw.



Drinking green tea can help you lose fat. Check out our taste test at mensfitness.co.uk/links/gogreen

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ZERO is a drink intended for training and not endurance racing where a high carbohydrate intake is required. For more on a high carbohydrate strategy go to www.highfive.co.uk

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*Peer-reviewed study conducted in the Faculty of Biomedical and Life Science, University of Glasgow. This double-blind, crossover study involved 22 recreationally active participants exercising at a moderate-intensity for 60min. The average increase in the total amount of fat oxidised (burned) during the exercise bout was $41.4 \pm 10.4\%$ (mean $\pm$ standard error) when compared to a leading commercially available 6.6% carbohydrate sports drink. The study was conducted after an overnight fast, with exercise conducted early morning. The average value for increases in fat oxidation may vary (go up or down) between individuals, when ZERO is compared with different sports drinks of varying carbohydrate concentration or with other variables such as time of day exercise undertaken and food consumed prior to exercise. ZERO is not intended as a weight loss product. It is a low calorie electrolyte sports drink, which can be used as part of a weight management program involving regular exercise and a balanced diet with restricted calorie intake. ZERO can be used for train-low race-high strategies - see website. Energy - 0.23Kcal per 100ml when mixed 1 tablet per 750ml. Tube makes 15 litres when mixed one tablet/750ml.



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EatFit Fat Loss

Top tip

Eat yoghurt to fight fat

Natural yoghurt's high protein content makes it a great muscle-building food, but it also has benefits for fat loss, according to new research.

In the study, carried out by Curtin University of Technology in Australia, overweight participants were fed three and five servings a day of dairy products including natural yoghurt as part of a low-calorie diet for 12 weeks. The results showed that **subjects who ate five daily servings of dairy recorded higher mean levels of weight loss** than those who ate three.

This supports previous research from the UK, which found that the high levels of calcium in dairy products discouraged fat storage by helping it pass through the body undigested.

Nutrition Q&A

Dr Sarah Schenker is a nutritionist at the British Nutrition Foundation and an accredited sports dietitian.



Q I've been told cinnamon helps you lose fat. Is this true?

A Studies have shown that cinnamon contains compounds that improve insulin sensitivity. In practical terms, this means that eating cinnamon will help reduce the blood sugar spikes you get after eating sugary foods and the subsequent crashes that make you feel hungry. A number of studies have also found that even a small amount of cinnamon can reduce the glycaemic index of a meal by up to 29 per cent - which means your body takes longer to use the food's energy and doesn't store it as fat - while eating 6g (roughly 2tsp) of cinnamon per day can also lower bad LDL cholesterol and triglycerides.



For more tips, see mensfitness.co.uk/links/fatlossfood



Fat-blasting mango smoothie

Whizz up some fruit and yoghurt for a sweet, healthy smoothie

What you will need 

Why you should drink it 

1 mango

1 orange

Handful of raspberries

2tbsp natural yoghurt

Mango

Low in calories, mangos also provide a healthy dose of vitamin B6, which boosts your metabolism and helps to reduce sugar and carb cravings.

Orange

The high level of dietary fibre in oranges will keep you feeling full for longer. They're also packed with immunity-boosting vitamin C.

Natural yoghurt

Natural yoghurt is full of protein, which helps to curb appetite and reduce snacking between meals.

Raspberry

The high calcium content in raspberries will boost your metabolism to help you burn fat more efficiently.



Words Ben Ince Photography Danny Bird, Julian Velasquez, packshotfactory.co.uk, Shutterstock

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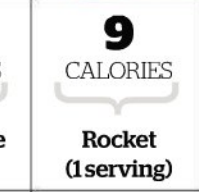
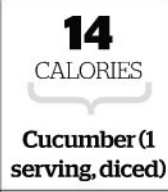
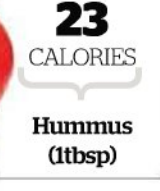
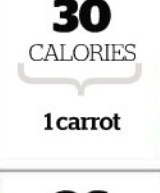
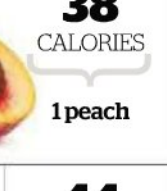
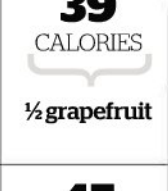
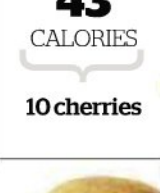
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50 snacks for 50 calories or fewer

Next time you're hungry, try one (or more) of these low-cal options

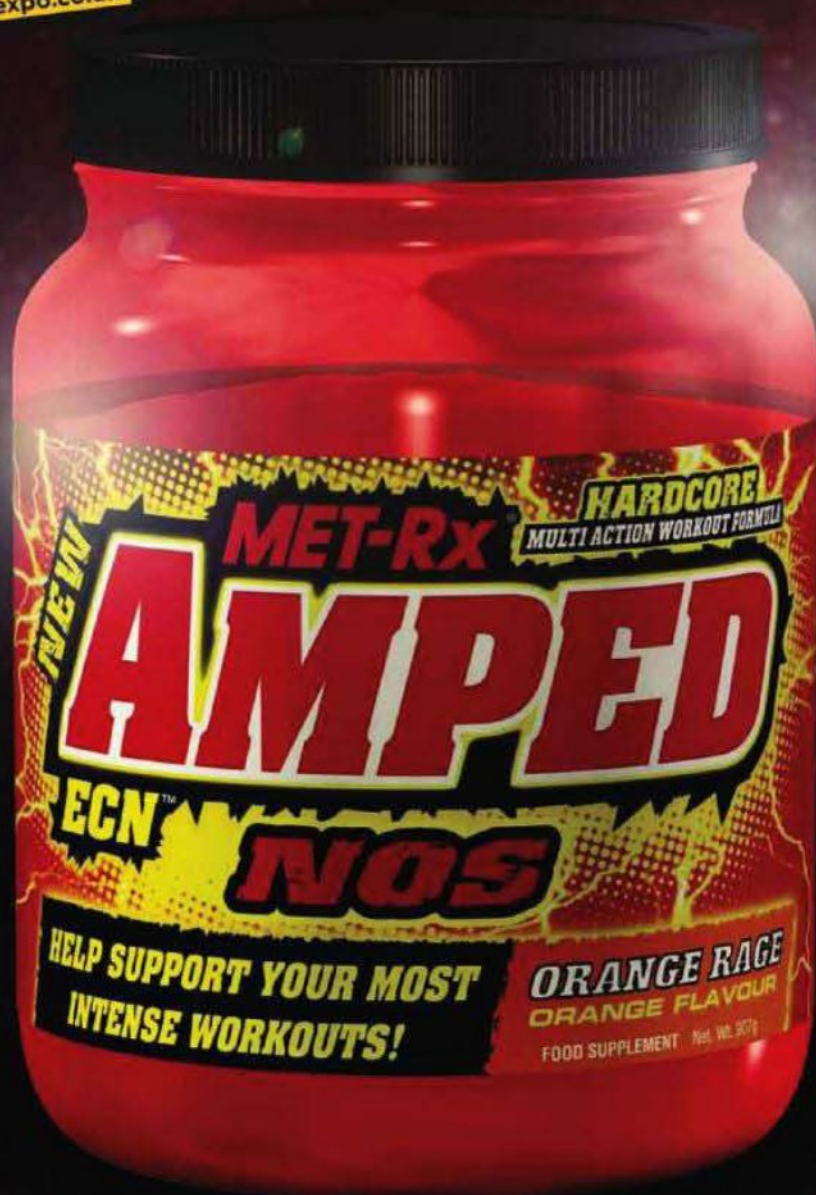
1 CALORIE 1 radish 	2 CALORIES Bell pepper (1 slice, raw) 	3 CALORIES Cauliflower (1 floret) 	4 CALORIES 1 strawberry 	5 CALORIES 1 spring onion 	6 CALORIES Celery (1 stalk) 	7 CALORIES Spinach (1 serving, fresh) 
8 CALORIES 1 dill pickle 	9 CALORIES Rocket (1 serving) 	10 CALORIES Romaine lettuce (1 serving) 	11 CALORIES Bean sprouts (small serving) 	12 CALORIES Asparagus (4 spears, cooked) 	13 CALORIES Broccoli (1 floret) 	14 CALORIES Cucumber (1 serving, diced) 
15 CALORIES Mushrooms (1 serving, raw) 	16 CALORIES 1 gherkin 	17 CALORIES 1 apricot 	18 CALORIES Courgette (1 serving, diced) 	19 CALORIES Cabbage (1 serving) 	20 CALORIES 1 egg white 	21 CALORIES Parmesan cheese (1tbsp) 
22 CALORIES 1 tomato 	23 CALORIES Hummus (1tbsp) 	24 CALORIES Honeydew melon (1 slice) 	25 CALORIES 1 onion 	26 CALORIES 5 olives 	27 CALORIES 1 plum 	28 CALORIES Pineapple (1 slice) 
29 CALORIES 1 star fruit 	30 CALORIES 1 carrot 	31 CALORIES Plain popcorn (1 serving) 	32 CALORIES Leeks (1 serving, cooked) 	33 CALORIES Sprouts (small serving) 	34 CALORIES Mangetout (small serving) 	35 CALORIES 10 grapes 
36 CALORIES Okra (1 serving) 	37 CALORIES ½ apple 	38 CALORIES 1 peach 	39 CALORIES ½ grapefruit 	40 CALORIES Green beans (1 serving) 	41 CALORIES Tomato juice (1 serving) 	42 CALORIES Raisins (1 small packet) 
43 CALORIES 10 cherries 	44 CALORIES 1 tangerine 	45 CALORIES Oysters (6 medium raw) 	46 CALORIES Sauerkraut (1 serving) 	47 CALORIES 1 kiwi 	48 CALORIES Watermelon (1 serving, cubed) 	49 CALORIES Kale (1 serving) 
50 CALORIES Beetroot (1 serving, canned) 						



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Making your best even better



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Follow this plan to pack on muscle

Tip of the month

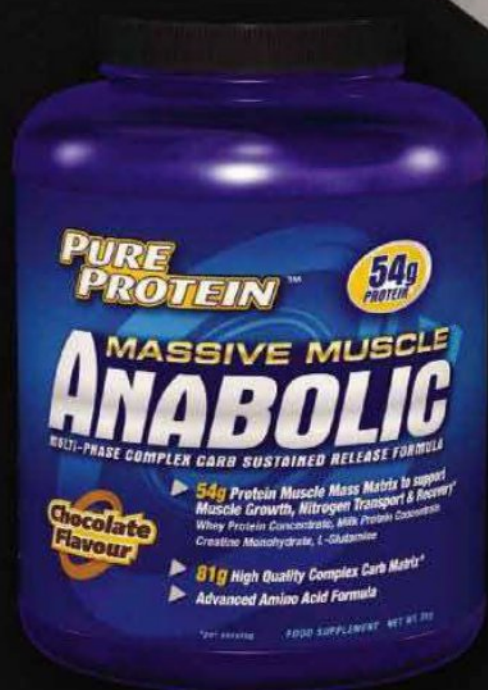
Failure is an option

And a good one, too
- it'll get you fitter

Using a spotter when you train can make your sessions more productive because it helps you to lift to failure safely. That's a good thing, because going to failure will make you use more energy both during and after your session, according to a study in the *Journal Of Exercise Physiology*.

Half the subjects in the study lifted 50 per cent of their one-rep maximum weight but stopped before they reached failure. The others lifted various percentages of their one-rep max but always went to failure. Results showed that the latter group experienced 'significantly greater' aerobic and anaerobic energy output.

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Follow 'The Master'

JC Santana is one of the world's leading strength and conditioning coaches. This training plan, designed exclusively for *MF*, will get you fighting fit in double-quick time

'M'y job,' says JC Santana, 'is to allow you to hurt a lot without freaking out.

This may seem like a strange statement from a man who's spent decades working with Olympians, soldiers and fighters - from four-weight boxing champ Roberto Duran to leading MMA welterweight Thiago Alves - in his Florida facility, the Institute of Human Performance (ihpfit.com). These are people who are used to pushing themselves seriously hard without complaining. But, as *MF* has just found out, it isn't.

MF is at one of Santana's MMA Strength and Conditioning seminars at London's Urban Kings gym, and after one round of his Super Legs circuit - a nonstop blend of squats, lunges and jumps - all the personal trainers and pro fighters in attendance are already breathing hard. The high-school wrestlers Santana trains will do six rounds nonstop.

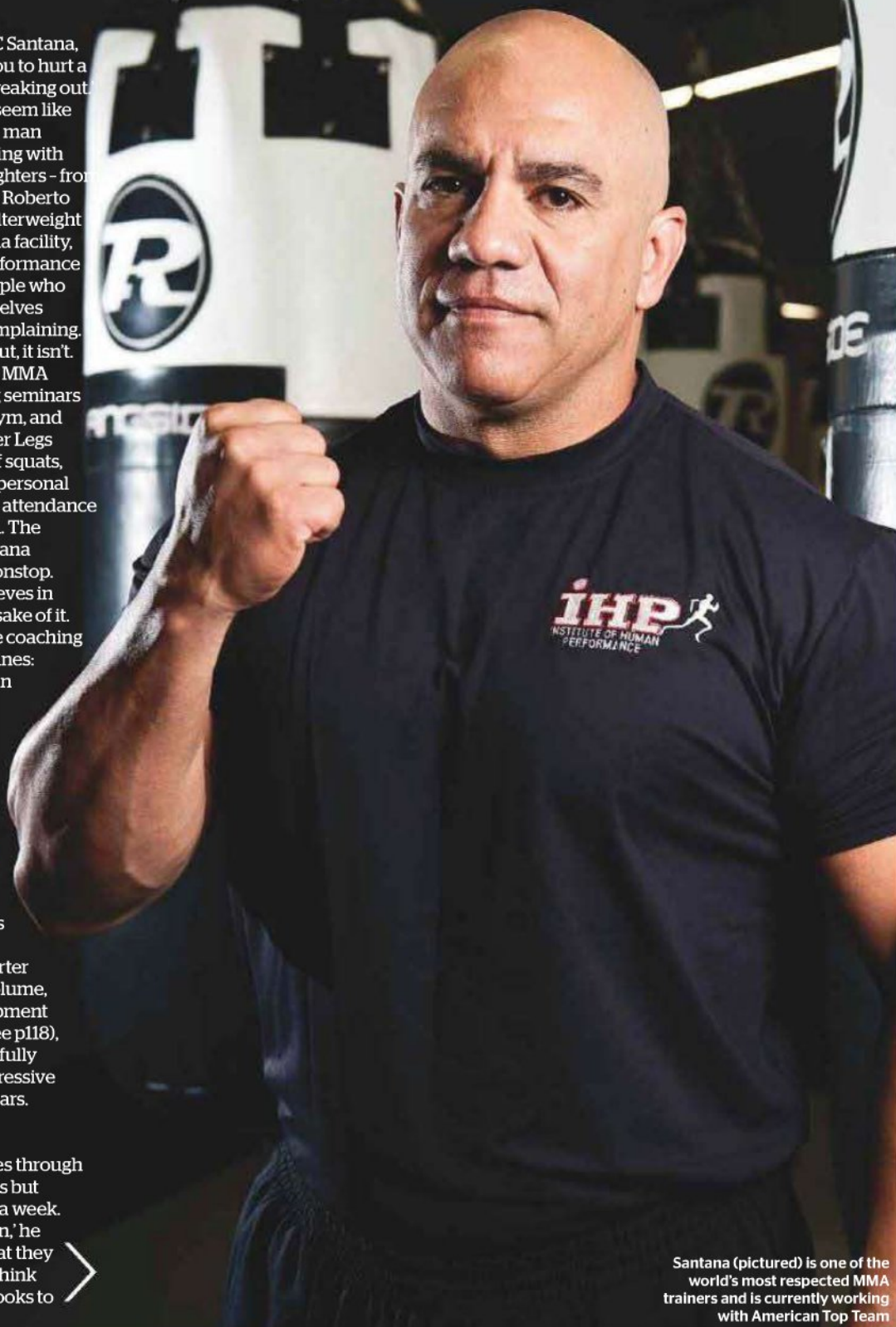
It's not that Santana believes in brutal training just for the sake of it. In fact, he professes to hate coaching assumptions along those lines: 'more is always better', 'train

'I tell my athletes that they can go beyond what they think are their limits'

hard every session', 'there's no gain without pain'. If he can get results with shorter sessions or less training volume, he will - hence the development of his press-up protocol (see p118), with which he has successfully increased the already impressive bench-press stats of NFL stars.

Curtain call

Santana will put his athletes through punishing training sessions but usually limits them to one a week. 'I call it touching the curtain,' he says. 'I'll tell my athletes that they can go beyond what they think are their limits, that what looks to



Santana (pictured) is one of the world's most respected MMA trainers and is currently working with American Top Team

them like a brick wall is actually a curtain. The fastest adaptation you can make is to your pain tolerance. Get through that and you'll be surprised what's possible.'

MMA fighters in particular are constantly pushing back the boundaries of what's possible, and Santana has responded with ever more inventive training methods. Before Jeff Monson's UFC heavyweight title fight with the gigantic Tim Sylvia in 2006, the coach had Monson weaving under a PVC pipe with a boxing glove mounted on the end to recreate Sylvia's huge reach.

Submission control

Santana also advocates training isometric strength - the ability to contract your muscles and then hold them in place - to let fighters hold on to decisive submission moves for longer. In fact, he seems mystified that nobody else is doing it. 'Imagine knowing that you can squeeze down on a choke for two minutes without blowing your arms out,' he says. He'll often get his athletes to hang from one of his custom-made slings and grip trainers for up to two full minutes, occasionally squeezing to mimic finishing the submission.

More recently, since Jon Fitch battered BJ Penn with 111 punches in three minutes of ground and pound at UFC 127, Santana has set this as the minimum that his athletes should be able to manage. 'They don't have to be big shots, but it's having the ability to throw 180 assaults at somebody's face in five minutes,' he says. 'That's the "cardio" you need for fighting. It's not about running.' In the seminar, we mimic this by going through up to 60 reps of movements with resistance bands in 45 seconds, pushing ourselves hard and ending up exhausted. He's right - it's very different from running.

Another aspect of MMA training that's often neglected is making the transition from dealing with a weighted Olympic bar and tackling a live, squirming opponent. Santana, for instance, doesn't really care if his 70kg fighters can deadlift 200kg. 'You're never going to do that in a fight! I want you to be able to lift and slam another 70kg fighter a dozen times over three rounds if you need to.' That's why, not long after the start of the seminar, we're deadlifting, squatting



and even power-cleaning our fellow attendees. Even when they make it easier by linking their own hands together to form a 'handle', lifting them is surprisingly tough.

Fight food

Santana rounds off the day by talking about his approach to nutrition, which is like the rest of his philosophy - simple and effective. 'I don't count shit,' he says. 'I keep healthy food in my house and avoid the

'You're never going to deadlift 200kg in a fight! I want you to lift and slam another fighter'

bad stuff. The only bread I have is Ezekiel bread [a high-protein, lower-carb bread made from sprouted wholegrains], which I keep in the freezer and defrost when I want some. It's like having a gun in the house

One minute to a better bench

Santana uses this protocol to improve his NFL players' bench press numbers. Try to do all the reps without stopping - when you can manage that, do two circuits back to back. Try it once a week.

1 Rotational press-up

Perform a press-up in which one shoulder reaches full depth while the other stays upright. Do ten each side.



2 Shuffle press-up

Shuffle your hands a step to the left and perform a press-up, then shuffle to the right and press-up. That's two reps: do 20 in total.





Santana tailors regular exercises, such as the lunge, to MMA fighting



The deadlift - much harder when you're lifting another human



Doing inverted rows with a partner works your grip as well as your back

- if using it is a two or three-step process, you've got time to think things through.'

His approach to pre-, during and post-workout nutrition couldn't be simpler. 'I make a 300-calorie shake with about 30g of protein in it,' he says, 'and I drink a third before my workout, a third during, and the rest after.' He seems baffled that some MMA athletes let themselves go between fights. 'You don't have to prove that you're a badass,' he points out. 'We know that already. You need to prove that you're a *professional* badass, that you can do what you need to outside the gym.'

3 Diamond press-up

Put your hands close together on the floor so your forefingers and thumbs form a diamond and perform 20 press-ups.



4 Explosive press-up

Descend into a press-up, then explode upwards, aiming to push off the ground a few centimetres. You can clap if you want, but it's not necessary. Do ten reps.



THE FIGHT CIRCUIT

Just 15 minutes with JC Santana's customisable fight circuit will torch fat and send your cardio through the roof

This is a selection of the conditioning exercises that Santana prescribes for his fighters. They'll get used to them during the strength phase of their training, then put them together in a variety of circuits designed to mimic the intensity and duration of a real fight as closely as possible.

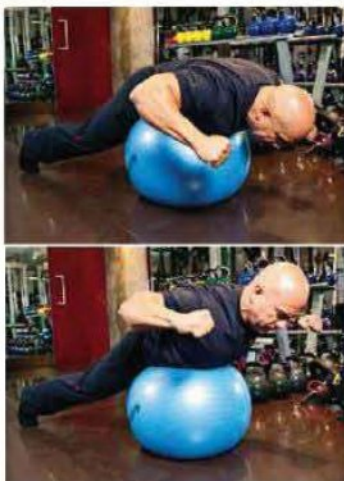
'I don't want you losing a decision and going, "Man, I could have fought two more rounds",' says Santana. 'I want you winning and then collapsing if you have to.' If you're a fighter, these moves will mimic some of the situations you'll find yourself in - but if you're not, they'll still whip you into shape in record time.



1 Gym ball hyper

► Lie with your stomach on a gym ball and your feet on the floor.

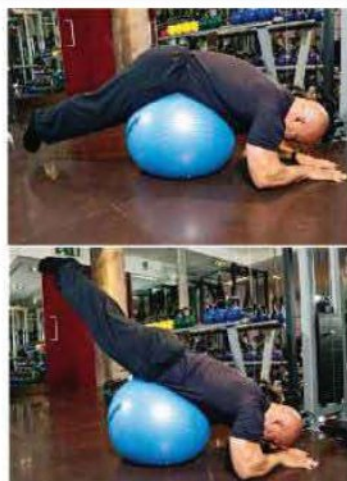
► Raise and lower your upper body under control, keeping your core braced.



2 Gym ball reverse hyper

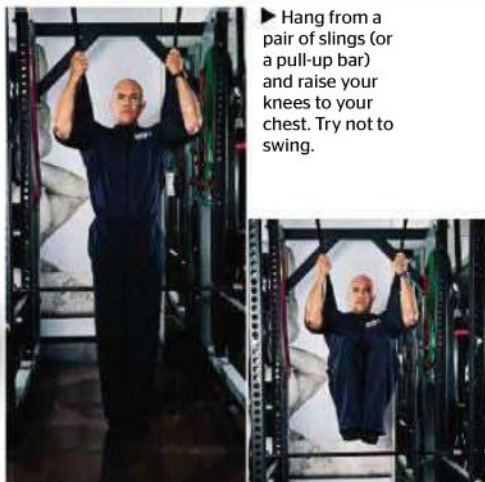
► Lie with your stomach on a gym ball and your forearms on the floor, taking most of your weight.

► Raise your legs until they're in line with your upper body, then lower them to the floor.



6 Hanging knee raise

► Hang from a pair of slings (or a pull-up bar) and raise your knees to your chest. Try not to swing.



7 Reaching lunge

► Holding a medicine ball, step forward into a lunge, and reach forward until you touch the ground with the ball.

► Don't let your front knee move ahead of your toes. Step back and repeat on the other leg.



11 Lateral reaching lunge

► Holding a medicine ball in both hands, lunge to the side and touch the ball to the floor.

► Repeat to the other side.

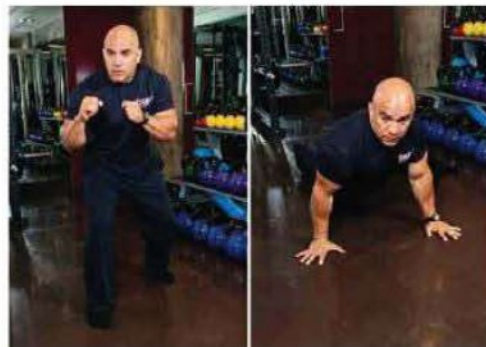


12 Sprawl

► From a fighting stance, kick your feet backwards and drop your hips as low as possible towards the ground, catching yourself

on your hands.

► Jump back up to your fighting stance, then repeat.



To try one of Santana's dumb-bell complexes go to mensfitness.co.uk/links/santana

How to do the workout

► Pick ten moves that you like or that you can do in your gym. Try to choose a balance of pushing, pulling and hip flexing moves.

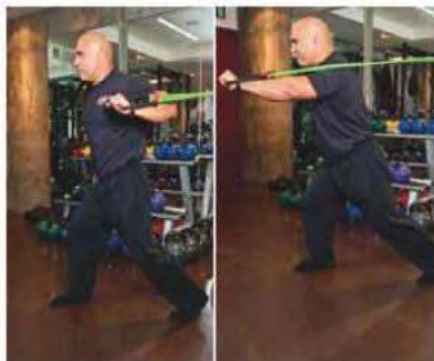
► Do each move for 30 seconds, at the highest intensity you can manage. Allow yourself 15 seconds to switch between moves.

► Do all ten moves nonstop, then rest for one minute – the length between rounds in an MMA fight. Repeat for two more rounds.

3 Band chest press

► Stand with one foot ahead of the other as if you're about to throw a punch.

► Hold a band secured to something in your rear hand and 'punch' forwards. Switch hands with each set.



4 Alternating band pull

► Stand bent at the hips, holding a resistance band (or cable attachment) in each hand.

► Pull the band with one hand and then the other, trying to bring the band to your chest.



5 Recline pull

► Hang from a bar – or, if you've got them a pair of thick handles – with your heels on the floor and your body in a straight line.

► Pull yourself up until your chest is in line with the handles, then lower yourself again. Depending on the size of handle, you may need to use a thumbless grip.



8 One-arm plank

► Get into the top position of a press-up and lift one hand off the ground, keeping both hips an equal distance from the floor.

► Hold this for 30 seconds.
► Either switch hands halfway through or change which hand you're using between sets.



9 Band rotation

► Standing with a resistance band or cable held in both hands – the resistance should be pulling you to one side –

perform rotations.

► Don't try to turn more than about 45° and keep your hips still if possible to work your core.



10 Medicine ball press-up

► With one hand on a medicine ball and the other on the ground, do a press-up.

► Pass the ball to the other hand and repeat.



13 Cable woodchop

► Stand with your feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, holding a cable attachment.

► Chop across your body from high to low. For an extra challenge, do this with a thick grip. Alternate sides each set.



14 One-leg anterior reach

► Stand on one leg and raise the opposite hand. Bend at the hips and touch your toes with

your raised hand.

► Don't let your rear leg move behind your standing leg.



15 Reverse cable woodchop

► Stand with your feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, holding a cable attachment in both hands.

► Chop across your body from low to high. For an extra challenge, do this with a thick grip. Alternate sides each set.





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Shoulder press

No-one ever got admiring looks for having narrow shoulders. Develop the classic V-shape with this bulk-building upper-body move

'The shoulder press is a massively important upper-body lift for any guy looking for visible size and power gains,' says Dean Hodgkin, a fitness expert and three-time world karate champion (deanhodgkin.com). **It's a compound exercise, which means it uses multiple muscle groups.** In this case these are your arms, your shoulders and the small but important stabilising muscles, and because you stand up you also work your core hard. Improving on the shoulder press will also make you stronger when you bench press.'

How to do it

- With your feet shoulder-width apart, position a bar on your upper chest, gripping it with hands just wider than shoulder-width apart.
- Keep your chest upright and your core muscles braced.
- Press the bar directly upwards until your arms are extended overhead.
- During the lifting phase, keep your core locked and don't tilt your hips forward.
- Stare forward throughout the exercise.
- Lower the bar back down to your chest and repeat.



TARGETS



Shoulders,
triceps, core

Steel yourself

'The first rep will be the toughest because there's no bounce effect from the elasticity of the muscles,' says Hodgkin. 'Don't get put off and lose the mental battle. Dig deep for the first rep and the rest will be a little easier.'

Turn over

For three moves that will improve your shoulder press



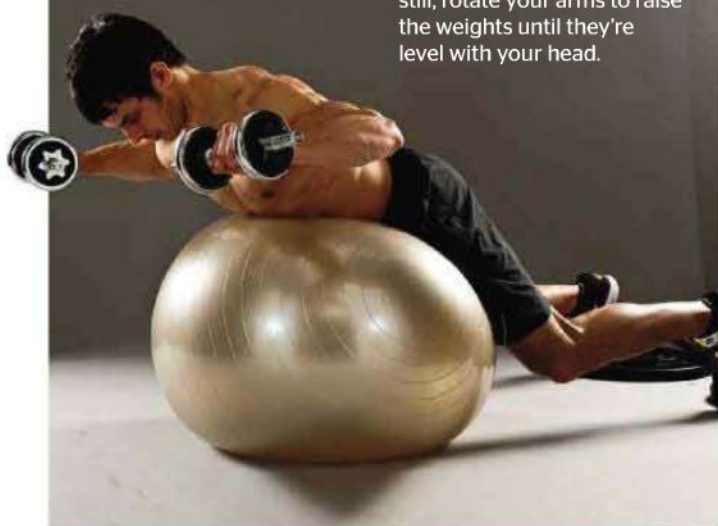
Three moves to boost your shoulder press

Gym ball row and rotation

This exercise hits your rotator cuff muscles. If these are strong you'll be able to lift far more weight in the shoulder press.

How to do it

- Lie with your chest on a gym ball with a dumbbell in each hand.
- Lift the weights until your forearms are at 90° to your head, with your palms facing downwards.
- Keeping your upper arms still, rotate your arms to raise the weights until they're level with your head.



Prone shoulder press

This beginner-friendly move targets the rear deltoids and traps, making it a great move to build strength in the key muscles involved in the shoulder press.

How to do it

- Lie with your core on a gym ball with a dumbbell in each hand.
- Raise your arms so your hands are level with your head and your elbows are bent at 90°.
- Extend your arms out and in front of you, pause briefly, then slowly return to the start.



One-arm standing kettlebell press

Using a kettlebell, with its uneven weight distribution, causes greater engagement of your core muscles as you try to counter-balance the shifting load. Stronger core muscles will enable you to lift more on a wide range of exercises.

How to do it

- Hold a kettlebell in front of your chest, with your palm facing your chest and your arm close to your body.
- Contract your stomach muscles, glutes and lats to improve your stability.
- Press the kettlebell up by extending your elbow and rotate your arm so your palm faces forward.
- Keep your forearm vertical as you raise and lower the kettlebell.



For more shoulder-building moves go to mensfitness.co.uk/links/bouldershoulders

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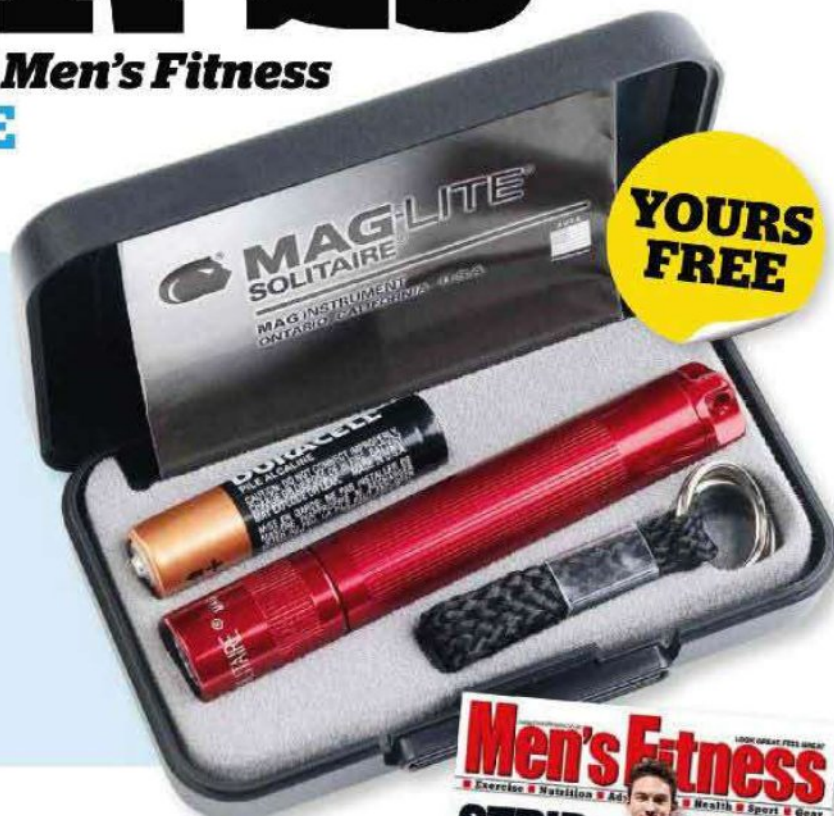
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Expert timing

Tempo is a widely neglected training variable, but it's vital if you want to add muscle

How many times do you power through your set, banging out the reps as fast as you can so that you can get your workout done and dusted quickly?

This approach can be beneficial if you're an experienced lifter who wants to build explosive power – fast reps train your muscles to contract quickly, resulting in maximum power output – but if you want to build bigger muscles, then you're going to need to spend some time thinking about tempo.

Tempo trap

Tempo is the speed at which you lift and lower the weight during each rep. The longer you take over each rep, the harder your muscles must work to manage and control the load. The duration of the rep is known as 'time under tension' (TUT). The longer the TUT, the greater the damage to your muscle fibres, which your body subsequently has to repair, resulting in bigger and stronger muscles.

'For strength and conditioning coaches, tempo is another tool just like sets, reps, weight and even exercise selection that is utilised to maximise gains,' says strength and conditioning coach Chris Ross (strength2perform.co.uk). 'But most guys ignore tempo because they don't recognise or

sets in less than 40 seconds, then start with a "two-second up, two-second down" approach for sets of ten reps. This should be enough of a change to result in a significant increase in muscle mass. You can then stick to this tempo and up the weight, or alter it to a "two-second up, four-second down" approach.'

Injury free

Performing each rep in a slow and controlled fashion has an additional benefit: injury prevention. 'Fast and explosive reps shift the stress from the muscles to the connective tissues, such as ligaments and tendons, and this is how injuries can occur in inexperienced lifters who don't know correct form,' says Nash Jovic, director of Ultimate Shape (nashjovic.com).

'Resistance training should be focused on high intensity, perfect form and maximum time under tension, because this will guarantee muscle growth while minimising your exposure to injury.'

Big returns

If you really want to build bigger muscles, you may need to leave your ego at the door. 'Many guys automatically go for the heaviest weights, but it's often more than they

At a glance Tempo

- Tempo is the speed at which you perform a rep.

- The slower the tempo, the longer your muscles are exposed to the stress of managing the weight. The duration of a rep is called the 'time under tension'.

- The more damage you can do to your muscles during a session, the bigger and stronger they will grow back.

- Performing each rep very quickly can help build explosive power, but only if you maintain perfect form throughout.

'While it's important to lift heavy to build muscle, it's more significant to go a little lighter but dramatically increase the time under tension. This will have a far more beneficial effect than going a bit heavier but only for a really short period of time.'

Keep it simple

Finally, if you're unsure of how fast or slowly you should be lifting each rep, Ross makes it simple. 'Ask yourself what you're training for,' he says. 'If you want to train for speed, lift quickly. For maximal strength, lift heavy. For maximal size, lift less heavy but slower. For improved endurance capacity, lift lighter for longer. It's that simple.'

'For strength and conditioning coaches, tempo is another tool – just like sets, reps and weight'

appreciate its importance. You can elicit completely different physiological adaptations by completing the same sets, reps and weight but by varying the tempo.'

So what is the right TUT when trying to add muscular size? 'Research shows that to achieve optimal mass your muscles need to be under tension for between 40 and 70 seconds per set,' says trainer Gavin Walsh. 'If you currently perform quick reps and complete

can comfortably manage so they end up cranking out each rep as fast as possible,' says Walsh. 'But as a result they use momentum to lift it, rather than placing all the workload on the target muscle group, which would be the most efficient way to make them grow.'

The solution? Decrease the weight. 'To ensure you're nailing the correct tempo on every rep of your set you'll probably have to reduce the weight a bit,' says Ross.



Name: Jacobs Ladder**Occupation: The cardio machine that torches calories**

Jacobs Ladder is a cardio machine specifically designed for anyone new to fitness, fitness enthusiasts, athletes and professionals. It is the easiest machine to work out hard on! Its unique design places the user at a 40° angle in order to take stress off of the lower back.

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Burn more calories

Study after study confirms that exercise using both the arms and legs requires more energy expenditure, and therefore burns more calories, than exercises using just the arms or the legs. That's why Jacobs Ladder can offer exercisers a superb cardiovascular workout in a relatively short amount of time and why it's used by universities and professional sports teams.

Aerobically, Jacobs Ladder increases heart rate quicker than other machines and results in increased VO₂ max levels. While traditional cardio machines are well-suited for the recreational athlete, Jacobs Ladder was designed to offer an improved method for in-season, pre-season and post-season workouts.



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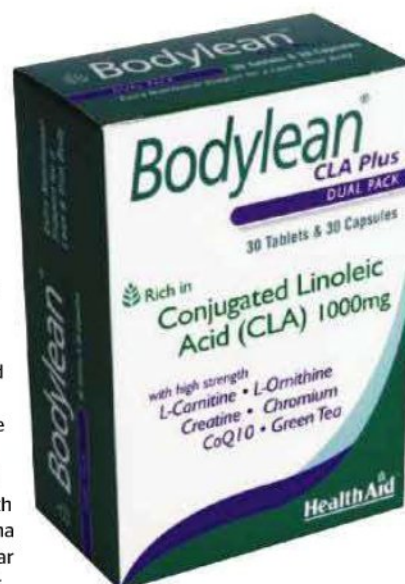
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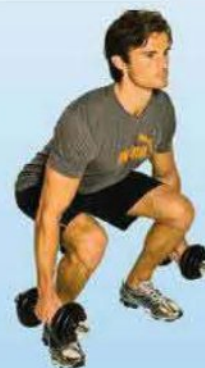


Whole body

START

1 Dumb-bell squat

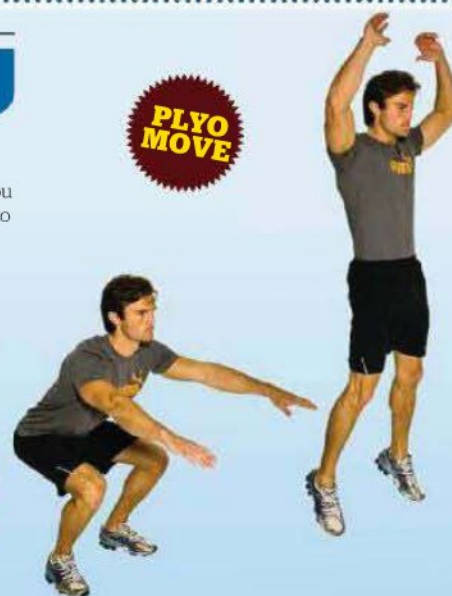
Keeping your back upright, lower until your thighs are parallel to the floor, making sure your knees stay in line with your toes.



2 Jump squat

Sink into a squat, then explode upwards. When you land, go straight into the next rep.

PLYO MOVE



Fit tip
Once you've mastered the jump squat and jump lunge (see 6, over), boost their effect by doing them holding dumb-bells.

Explosive device

Use plyometric moves to fire up your training sessions

If you're struggling for workout motivation, doing a plyometric session - exercises that involve fast, explosive power movements - is a good way of ramping up your enthusiasm. That's because performing big movements at speed will engage your brain, as well as giving your muscles a new stimulus. They'll make you better at sporty, explosive moves and target your muscle fibres with most growth potential.

Before you perform each move, do an exercise that targets the same body part. This fires up the target muscle fibres so they're responsive when you do the plyometric move. Just make sure you don't exhaust the target area when you're doing the warm-up. You perform fewer plyometric reps than you do for normal sets because you're training for power rather than strength endurance.

How to do this workout

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
How many workouts should I do per week?	3	3-4	4
How long will each session take?	14min	26min	44min
How many circuits per workout?	2	3	4
How many reps for non-plyometric moves?	8	10	12
How many reps for plyometric moves?	5	6	7
How much rest should I take between circuits?	1min	2min	2min

3 Gym ball chest press

Lie with your upper back on the ball and press the dumb-bells directly up, then lower them under control.



Turn over for the moves in the rest of the workout >>>


**PLYO
MOVE**

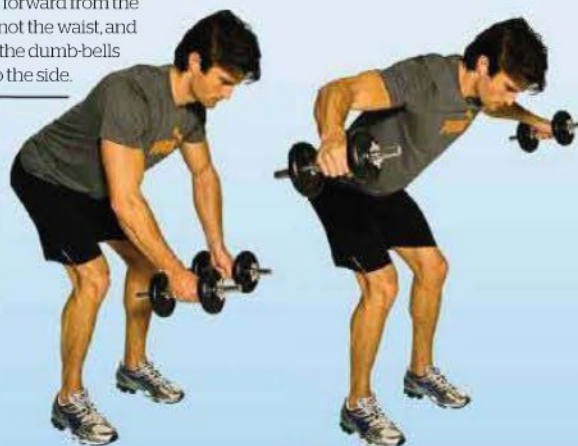
4 Jump press-up

Lower your chest to the floor then explode up so that your hands leave the floor. Absorb the impact on landing and go straight into the next rep.



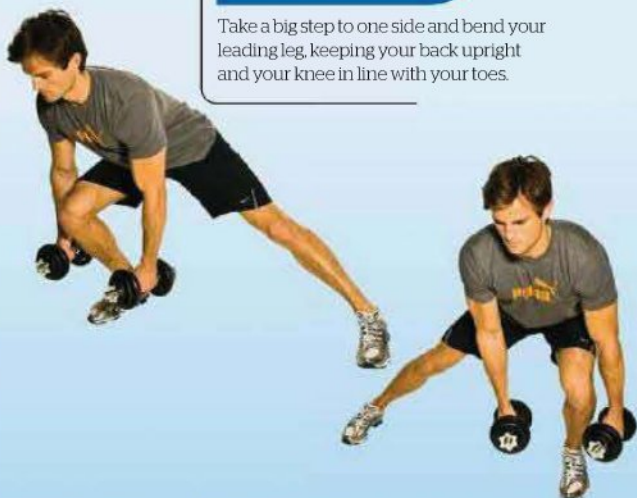
7 Dumb-bell reverse flye

Bend forward from the hips, not the waist, and raise the dumb-bells out to the side.



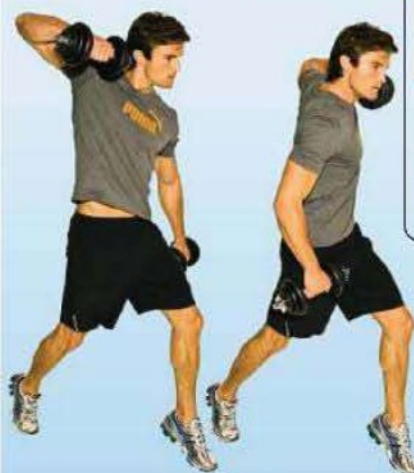
5 Dumb-bell side lunge

Take a big step to one side and bend your leading leg, keeping your back upright and your knee in line with your toes.



8 Dumb-bell plyometric one-arm high pull

Get into a split stance with the dumb-bells hanging down. Explosively pull one up to your chest, then lower it back to the start. Alternate sides with each rep.


**PLYO
MOVE**

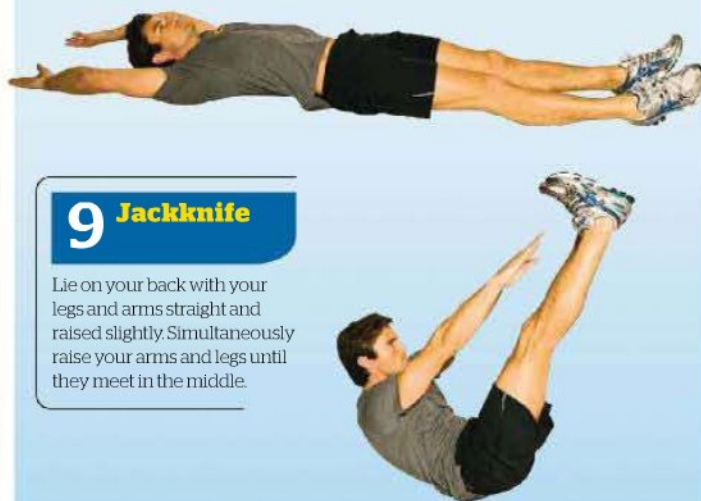
6 Jump lunge

Step forward into a lunge then jump up, swap legs in the air and land in a lunge on the opposite side.


**PLYO
MOVE**

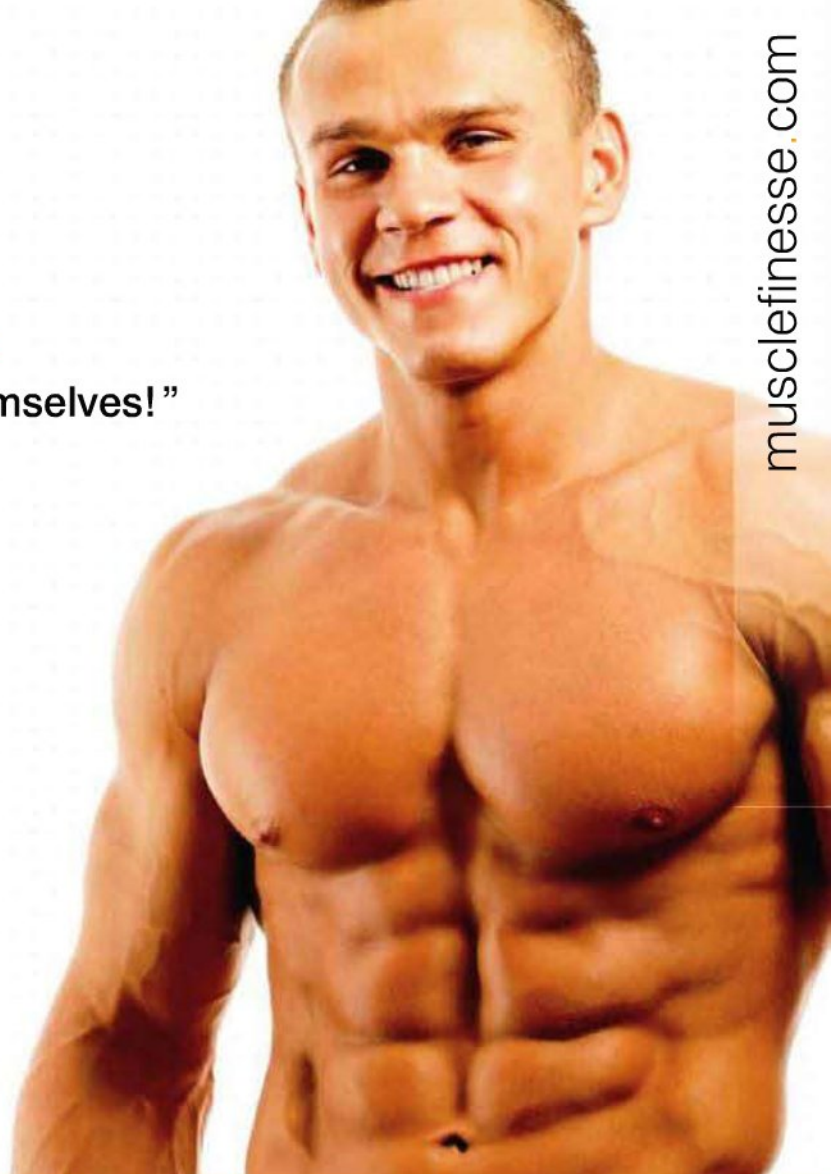
9 Jackknife

Lie on your back with your legs and arms straight and raised slightly. Simultaneously raise your arms and legs until they meet in the middle.



You'll find more home workouts at mensfitness.co.uk/links/trainathome

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'Nothing tests your all-round cardio capabilities more than a triathlon'

Turn over to start your eight-week sprint triathlon training plan

What is a sprint triathlon?

It's a shorter version of the classic multi-sport race. A standard sprint tri starts with a 750m swim, which can take place in a pool or open water. At the end of the swim is the first transition zone (T1), where the 20km bike stage begins. This ends at the second transition zone (T2), where you begin the final stage, a 5km run. This is the standard sprint tri distance, which is half that of the Olympic-distance race, but the distances can vary slightly depending on the course.

What skills does a sprint triathlon require?

The sprint triathlon requires physical endurance, strength and the ability to pace yourself correctly. 'There's no point in recording your

quickest ever swim leg if you run out of gas during the run,' says coach Mike Redshaw of thetriflife.com.

A triathlon actually has five stages including the transitions. It's vital to switch disciplines efficiently, which means being organised at setting up your kit in the transition areas - including your bike, cycling helmet and shoes, and running trainers. 'You should rehearse the transitions both physically and mentally before race day,' says Redshaw.

Why should I do one?

Whether you're experienced in individual running, cycling or swimming races or new to events, nothing tests your all-round cardio capabilities more than a triathlon. 'It prevents the monotony of doing the same type of races all year round,

and allows you to make giant strides of improvement in disciplines you might normally avoid,' says Redshaw. 'It's also a great stepping stone into the multi-discipline world and longer endurance events, such as the Olympic distance and Ironman races.'

How fit do I need to be before starting this training plan?

This eight-week programme has been designed for someone relatively active who is able to do each of the following: swim 400 metres continuously; cycle 16km on a bike comfortably; and run 5km. 'Don't worry if you can't do these three distances back to back - that's what this training plan is designed to help you achieve,' says Redshaw.

SPRINT TRIATHLON DISCIPLINES



750m swim



20km bike



5km run

Sprint triathlon training plan

Get tri-ready with our eight-week training guide from Mike Redshaw at thetrilife.com

Warm up
Before each session warm up with 10min of gentle exercise. Warm down for 5min afterwards.

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	Rest	Cycle 15min at level 3, 30min at level 5, 2min at level 3, 15min at level 7. Keep the cadence at 85-90rpm.	Swim 3x200m at level 3, 100m FS and 100m HU and repeat. Swim 100m, 200m, 300m, 300m, 200m, 100m at level 6. Rest briefly between all reps.	Run 6x4min intervals at level 7 with 1min at level 2 between reps.	Swim 3x200m at level 3. Then swim 100m SA and 100m KB , then repeat. Then swim 8x100m level 7. Rest briefly between all reps.	Cycle for 1hr 30min at level 3 but with 3x20min bursts at level 6. Keep the cadence at 80-85rpm.	Run 10min at level 2, 10min at level 5, 10min at level 7.
2	Rest	As Tuesday week 1.	As Wednesday week 1.	Run 7x4min intervals at level 6-7 with 1min at level 2 between reps.	As Friday week 1, but swim 10x100m at level 7.	Cycle for 1hr 45min at level 3 but with 3x20min bursts at level 6. Keep the cadence at 80-85rpm.	Run 10min at level 2, 15min at level 5, 10min at level 7.
3	Rest	As Tuesday week 1, but cycle for 20min at level 7.	As Wednesday week 1.	Run 8x4min intervals at level 7 with 1min at level 2 between reps.	As Friday week 1, but swim 12x100m at level 7.	Cycle for 2hr at level 3 but with 3x20min bursts at level 6. Keep the cadence at 80-90rpm.	Run 10min at level 2, 15min at level 5, 15min at level 7.
4	Rest	Hill reps Find an incline of 6-8% that takes 4-5min. Do 3 reps at level 7, then 3 reps at level 9. Keep the cadence at 75-80rpm. Recover for 4-5min at level 2 between reps.	As Wednesday week 1 but swim 200m, 300m, 500m, 300m, 200m at level 6.	As Thursday week 3.	As Friday week 3.	As Saturday week 3.	As Sunday week 3.
5	Rest	As Tuesday week 4.	As Wednesday week 4.	Run 5x4min intervals at level 7 with 1min at level 2 between reps.	As Friday week 1, but swim 7x100m at level 7.	Cycle for 1hr at level 3 but with 1x20min burst at level 6. Keep the cadence at 80-90rpm. Then run 10min at level 4.	Run 15min at level 3, 15min at level 6.
6	Rest	As Tuesday week 4.	As Wednesday week 4.	Run 10x2min intervals at level 8-9 with 1min at level 2 between reps.	As Friday week 1, but swim 750m continuously at level 7.	Cycle 30min at level 7, 5min at level 2, 30min at level 9. Then run 11min at level 4 (out) then 9min at level 6 (back).	Run 20min at level 2, 15min at level 5, 15min at level 7.
7	Rest	As Tuesday week 4 but do all reps at level 9.	As Wednesday week 1.	Run 12x2min intervals at level 9 with 1min at level 2 between reps.	As Friday week 3.	As Saturday week 6.	As Sunday week 6.
8	Rest	Hill reps Find an incline of 6-8% that takes 1min. Do 5 reps at level 9. Keep the cadence at 75-80rpm. Recover for 4-5min at level 2 between reps.	Swim 2x200m at level 3. Then swim 100m, 200m, 300m, 300m, 200m, 100m at level 6.	Cycle 10x1min at level 7, with 1min at level 2 between reps. Then run 9min at level 4 (out) then 7min at level 6 (back).	Swim 3x200m at level 3, then 8x100m at level 7.	Run 20min at level 3 but with 3x15sec sprints at level 6.	RACE DAY

Effort levels

- 1-3 Easy up to a gentle pace
- 4-5 Able to have a conversation
- 6-7 Getting out of breath
- 8-9 Can't talk, uncomfortable
- 10 Flat-out sprint

Front crawl drills

- SA** Single arm swimming (two strokes one arm, two strokes the other arm, repeat)
- KB** Use a kick board
- FS** Swim with clenched fists, catching the water with your forearms
- HU** Swim six strokes, then lift your head a little to 'sight' (look where you're going)

Overgearing

If you can't find an appropriate hill for hill reps, do overgearing instead. This means cycling in a higher gear than is comfortable. Find a gear that feels comfortable and sustainable (level 5), then go two clicks into a harder gear for level 7 or three clicks for level 9. Keep the cadence at 75-80rpm.

Get racing Gear your training towards one or more of these classic events



Toshiba Windsor Triathlon

June, Windsor, Berkshire
The BTA's Event of the Year seven times, this is run against a backdrop of Windsor Castle, Eton College and the River Thames, taking in 900 years of British history. 750m swim, 30km bike, 5km run
humanrace.co.uk



Blenheim Triathlon

June, Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire
Its stunning location in the grounds of Blenheim Palace - including a lake swim - has made this one of the most popular triathlons in Britain. 750m swim, 19.3km bike, 5.2km run
theblenheimtriathlon.com



London Triathlon

July, London
This is the world's biggest triathlon and as iconic as they come, with a route that takes in all the sights of the capital, including Big Ben, Tower Bridge and the London Eye. 750m swim, 20km bike, 5km run
thelondontriathlon.co.uk



BananaMan Triathlon

July, Dorney Lake, Eton, Berkshire
MF has teamed up with Human Race to stage the 2011 BananaMan, which includes relay and time-trial options, at the 2012 Olympic rowing venue. 800m swim, 30km bike, 7.5km run
humanrace.co.uk



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Leaps and bounds

Top hurdler Andy Turner on how training helps him take things in his stride on and off the track

'You pretty much know the letter is coming,' says British 110m hurdler Andy Turner. 'I hoped they might give me the benefit of the doubt, but it wasn't to be. It made my life a lot harder. And I didn't like the fact that people who used to believe in me no longer did. I wanted to prove to them, and to myself, that I still had it.'

The letter Turner is referring to is the one he got from UK Athletics at the end of 2008 telling him he would no longer be receiving Lottery funding. For many athletes, getting that news at the age of 28 would instigate a downward spiral in their career and a gradual drift into competing at progressively obscure race meetings. But not

'I love training. I even love the feeling when I feel sick and I can taste blood'

for Turner, who responded to the setback by doing what he has always done: working hard.

'I love training,' he says. 'I even love the feeling when I'm absolutely smashed and I feel sick and I can taste blood.'

His perseverance paid off. In 2010 it was victory rather than blood he was tasting when he won gold at the European Championships and the Commonwealth Games. And Turner thinks he can get even better, as he told *MF* when we joined him for a session at his Lee Valley training base.

After losing his Lottery funding in 2008, Turner fought back to win European and Commonwealth gold



Words Jon Lipsey Photography Tom Miles, Getty



Andy Turner

Age 30

Height 1.82m **Weight** 77kg

Achievements

- Gold medallist, 110m hurdles, 2010 European Athletics Championship
- Gold medallist, 110m hurdles, 2010 Commonwealth Games
- Gold medallist, 110m hurdles, 2009 European Team Championship



Turner's workout

1 Weighted sled drag

Sets 4-5

Distance 20-30m

- Go from a three-point start with one hand on the floor.
 - Accelerate from a low position to upright, pumping your hands to help drive your legs.
- Turner says** 'I use this to work on my start. It gets you firing at the start of the session. Try to keep your stride length normal, rather than taking small steps.'

How's training going?

I feel like I'm getting better with age. A biomechanist who analysed my races recently said there's nobody in the world who runs faster than me between the hurdles.

Is your technique unrivalled as well?

It's smooth, which is all very well, but I'm in the air too long. It's graceful, but not sharp enough. I need to take off further away from the hurdle and land closer to it on the other side and get my legs faster over the hurdle.

Earlier this year you ran 20.9sec indoors for the 200m, which at the time was the fastest by a British runner in 2011. Were you surprised?

I've always been quick on the flat. That 200m final was my fourth race that weekend. My coach said if it had been my second or third I would have run 20.6sec, which outdoors equates to 20.2 or 20.3, which is not far off making a final [at a major championship].

'I've beaten some of the sprinters and they don't like it very much'

What do the 200m guys say?

I've beaten some of the sprinters here [at Lee Valley] and they don't like it very much.

What would happen if a flat sprinter tried to run the hurdles?

The likes of [100m specialist] Dwain Chambers wouldn't even make the finish line. Some of those guys have no flexibility. Actually Dwain's surprising, because he has good flexibility, but Simeon Williamson [who also runs the 100m], one of my

training partners, wouldn't make the finish line. I don't think any of those boys would run particularly well.

What's the key to running a good hurdles race?

You need self-belief. If your training is going well, you learn not to panic. You need to trust in how you're running but one mistake in hurdles can cost you the race. And they fight back. They're 3ft 6in [106.7cm] high and they've got weight on them as well.

Sprinters often try to psych each other out. Do you get involved in any of that?

No, but I used to. People could psych me out. A friend of mine walked in my lane, spat in my lane, stuff like that. Straight away he'd beaten me. There are so many athletes that will try to get in your head, but they're the weak ones, the ones doubting their own ability. I do my talking on the track. There's



2 Power clean

Sets 5 Reps 5

- Start in a deadlift position: back straight while holding the bar on the ground with hands wider than shoulder-width apart.
 - Lift the weight explosively so it goes up vertically.
 - As it gets to shoulder height, duck under the bar to 'catch' it with upturned palms.
- Turner says** 'Linford Christie once said to me that if he was only allowed to do one gym exercise it would be cleans, because of the way they build explosive power.'



3 Single-leg bound

Reps 4 each leg

- Set out five hurdles at two-metre intervals.
 - Using one foot, jump over the first hurdle, land on the same foot, take a small step, staying on that foot and jump over the next hurdle to repeat that pattern.
- Turner says** 'This exercise builds explosive power but also control. There's no point in having serious power if you can't control it.'



a young hurdler coming through the ranks who tries to psych me out, but he can't beat me that way. I'm seasoned in this game.

What are your hopes for the year?

I'm looking to the Olympics in 2012 so this year is a transition year, but I'm still hoping to run a personal best.

How do you avoid getting carried away about 2012?

It's easy at the moment because I could get injured tomorrow and my season's finished. I've got to focus on the world championships this year. But London is always in the back of your mind.

Does that make you paranoid about injuries?

Slightly. But I train a lot smarter than I used to train. I used to go all out every session, but now that I'm 30 I need to get quality rather than quantity.

4 Box jump

Reps 10-15

- Stand with the box in front of you.
- Sink into a half squat, then explode up to land on the box with both feet.

Turner says 'Box jumps are good for developing explosive power. I've done them up to 5ft (1.52m) high, but that was with a walk up. But be careful, because if you hit the box it'll take a chunk out of your shin.'

**5 Medicine ball throw**

Sets 2 Reps 15-20

- Hold a D-grip medicine ball in both hands.
- Sink into a half squat, then explode up to throw the ball in the air as high as you can.
- Let it drop, then retrieve it and perform the next rep.

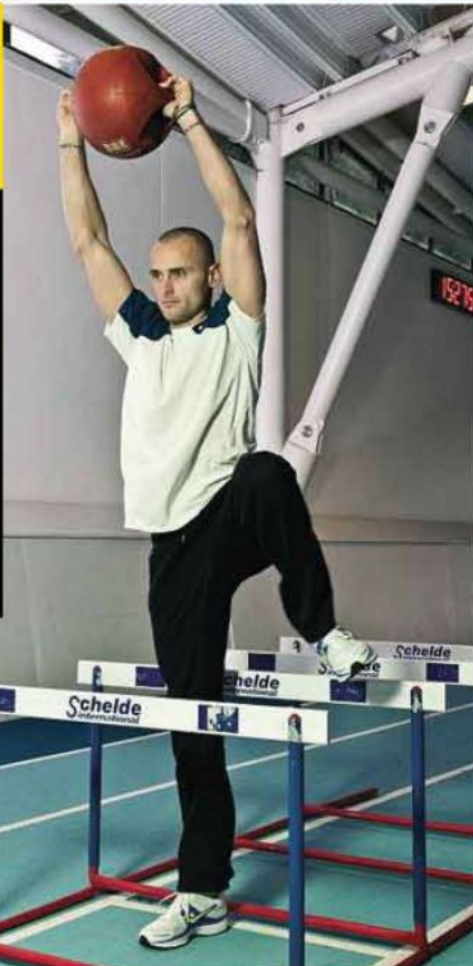
Turner says 'This helps you when you're coming out of the blocks because you're generating power from a low position.'

**6 Hurdle walkover with medicine ball**

Reps 10

- Set up a series of hurdles close together.
- Hold a medicine ball above your head and step over the first hurdle, making sure your hips remain facing forwards and you keep your trailing leg in as tight as possible.

Turner says 'This develops your hip strength, which is very important for getting up and over the hurdles quickly. To make it harder, hold the medicine ball out in front of you.'

**7 Dragon flag**

Sets 3 Reps 15

- Lie on a bench with your hands gripping the sides by your ears.
- Contract your abs to raise your legs off the bench until they're vertical, then lower slowly under control.

Turner says 'This is a killer. I hate it but it's much better than doing sit-ups for building abdominal strength. Make sure you don't lower too quickly or you won't get the benefit.'



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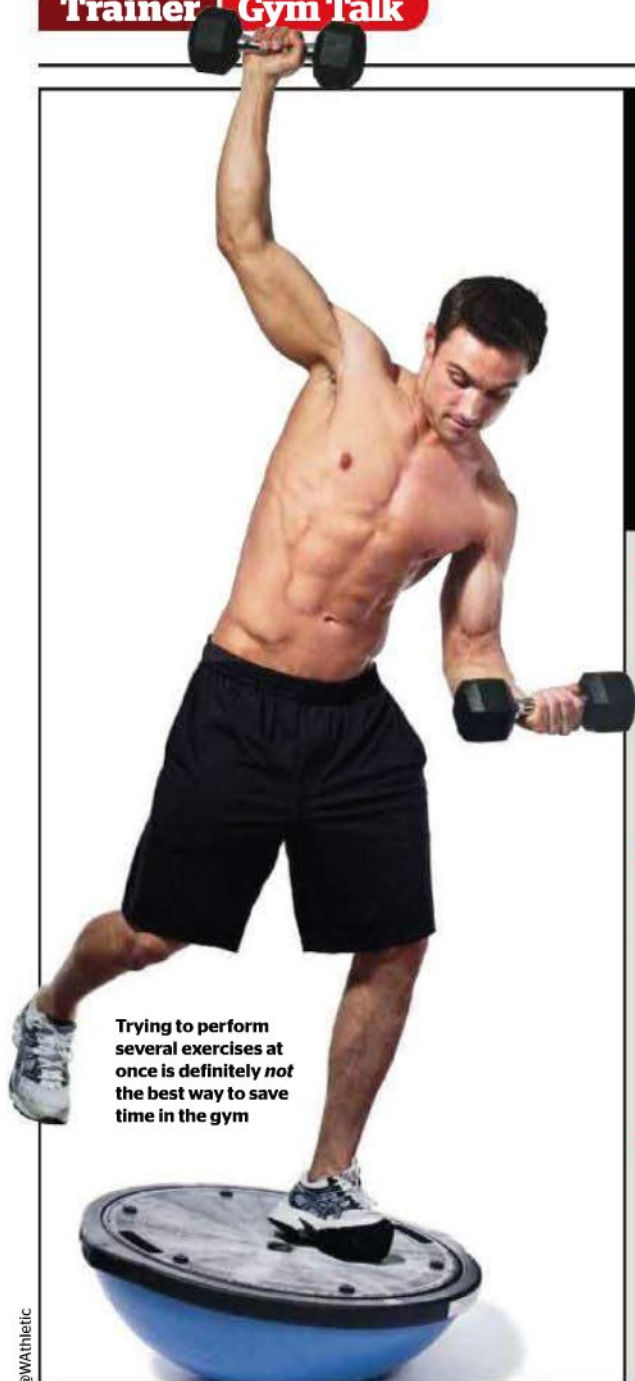
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Trying to perform several exercises at once is definitely **not** the best way to save time in the gym

Time-saving training

It's the Holy Grail of exercise - how do you get a better training effect in less time? We put it to the experts

The Panel



John Penny
Reebok Gym



Jack Lovett
Spartan Performance



Sean Keefe
Strength & Performance

Question 1
What's the minimum time I should spend on my workout?

A full-body workout needn't be longer than 30 minutes if you work out hard and efficiently.

Fat loss can be stimulated by 15- to 25-minute sessions of metabolic resistance training. For strength or muscle development I'd recommend a minimum of 30 minutes.

You can get a total-body session done in 30 minutes if you train hard and keep rest times short.

Question 2
What type of workouts should I do?

Compound strength and resistance moves that target several muscle groups at once, such as squats, push-ups and pull-ups.

Strength workouts that focus on compound lifts such as cleans and deadlifts. Increasing maximal strength has a positive effect across almost every facet of fitness.

Lifting multiple, low-rep sets with heavy weights will enable you to build muscle and develop functional strength.

Question 3
What's your top time-saving tip?

Plan the length of your rest periods between sets and stick to them. Avoid any unnecessary chatting.

Train in a facility with a results-oriented atmosphere where phones are switched off. Leave your distractions at the door and immerse yourself in your workout.

If gym time is short, don't waste it on endless stretching and foam rolling. Instead, buy a foam roller for home use and save it for a non-training day.

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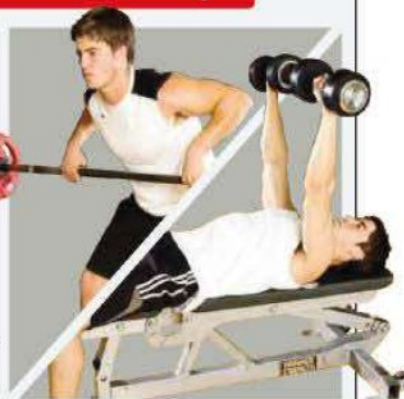


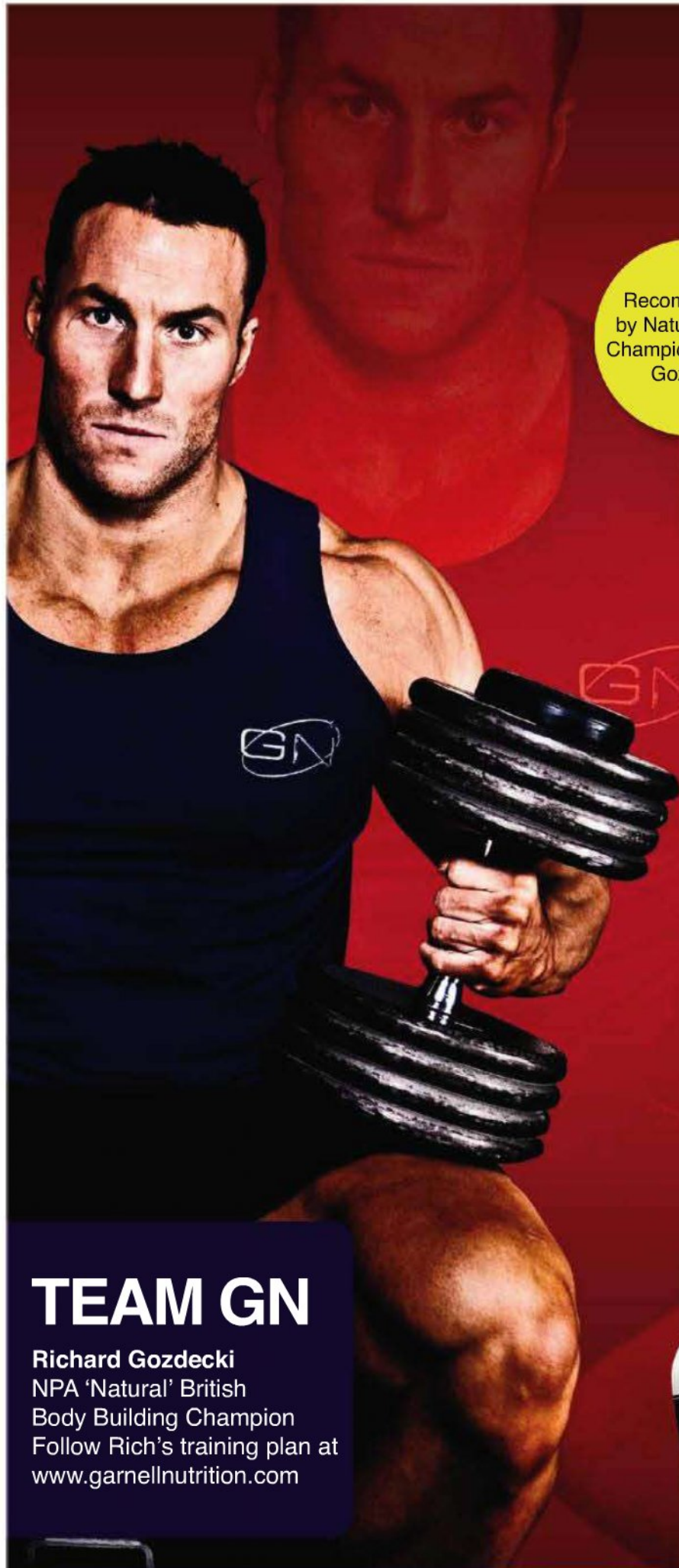
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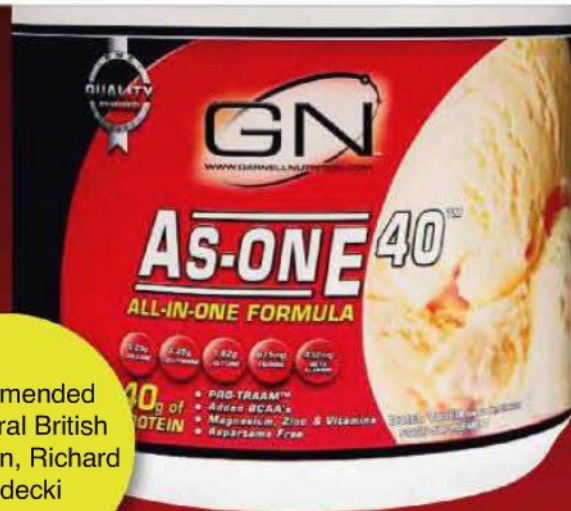
Superset for efficiency

Doing supersets - two exercises performed back to back - is a more efficient way of training than doing conventional sets, according to the *Journal Of Strength And Conditioning Research*. When researchers measured volume load (weight lifted multiplied by repetitions) for a ten-minute bench press and pull session, they found those who did conventional sets shifted 'significantly less' iron than those who used supersets.





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PUSH YOURSELF

Building muscles is simple: push them to the limit, then let them recover before pushing them again

Workout plans don't get much simpler than this. There are three sessions per week: the first is built around pushing movements, the second on pulling movements, while the third is an all-out assault on your abs. The result? Big, strong, functional muscles and a rock-solid six-pack. What are you waiting for?

Build strength and stability

Pack on muscle

Sculpt a six-pack

How to do it



Timing Workouts should take about 30 minutes, including the warm-up.



Warm-up Spend five minutes doing bodyweight moves such as press-ups, squats and lunges.



Weight Choose a weight that allows you to complete all your reps but no more.

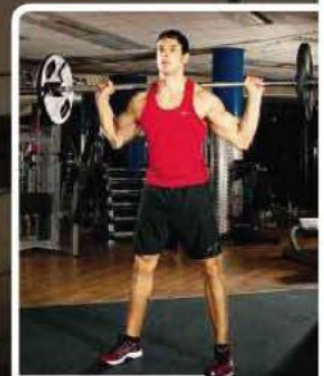


Tempo Take one second to lift the weight, pause, then take three seconds to lower.

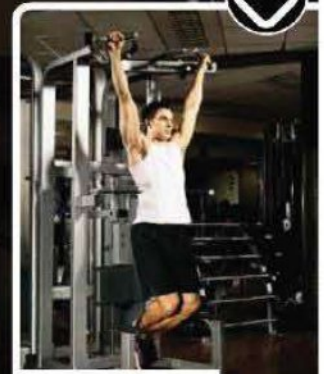


Rest Rest for 30-45 seconds between sets and for one minute between exercises.

What you do



Monday Pushing moves p146



Wednesday Pulling moves p148

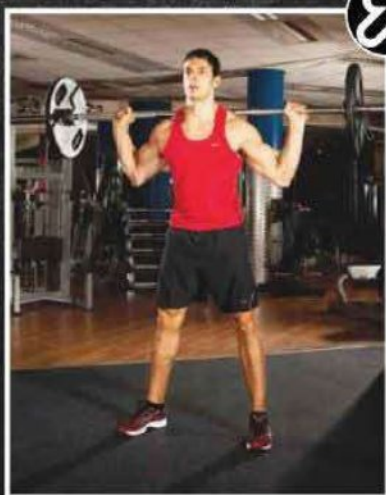
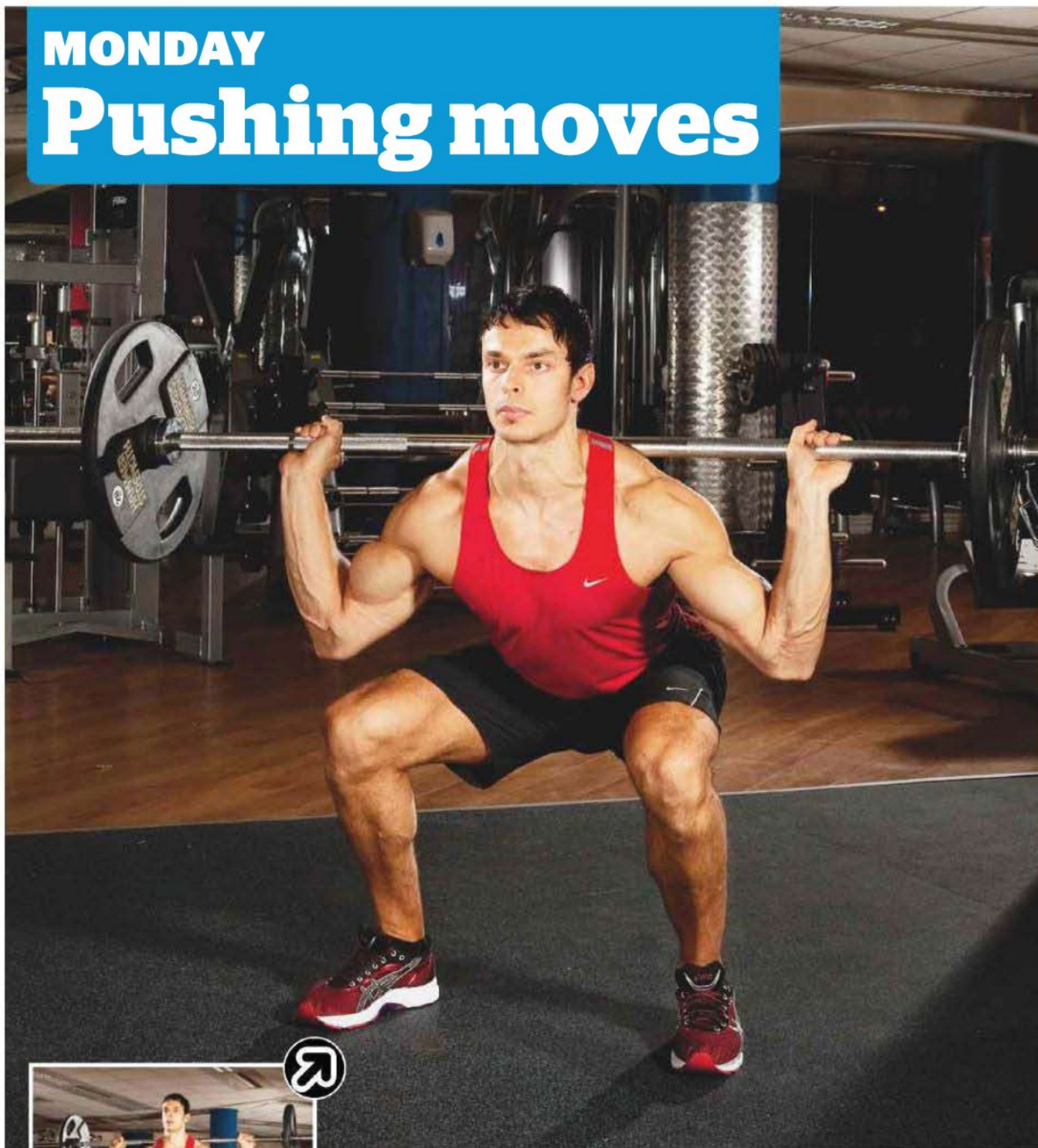


Friday Abs and core p150

Turn over for the first of your three workouts >>>

MONDAY

Pushing moves



1 Squat Sets 3 Reps 8

Targets **Legs, glutes, core**

The session starts with the king of muscle-building moves, the squat. Performing this big move when you're fresh means you can go heavy on the weight and prime your body with the growth hormones needed to pack on new muscle. Make sure you warm up first by doing some squats with just your bodyweight or some light weights.

- Stand with feet shoulder-width apart with the bar resting across your traps.
- Keeping your chest up, a natural arch in your back and your core braced, squat down until your thighs are parallel to the ground.
- Remember to keep your knees in line with your toes.



2 Bench press

Sets 3 Reps 8

Targets Chest, shoulders, triceps

The best move for sculpting a big chest. Doing two big moves back to back will produce lots of muscle-building hormones.

- Lie flat on a bench with your feet planted on the floor.
- Hold the bar with a shoulder-width overhand grip.
- Keeping your glutes and upper back against the bench, slowly lower the bar to your chest before pushing back up.
- Don't lock out your arms.

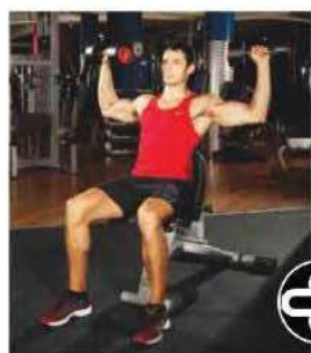
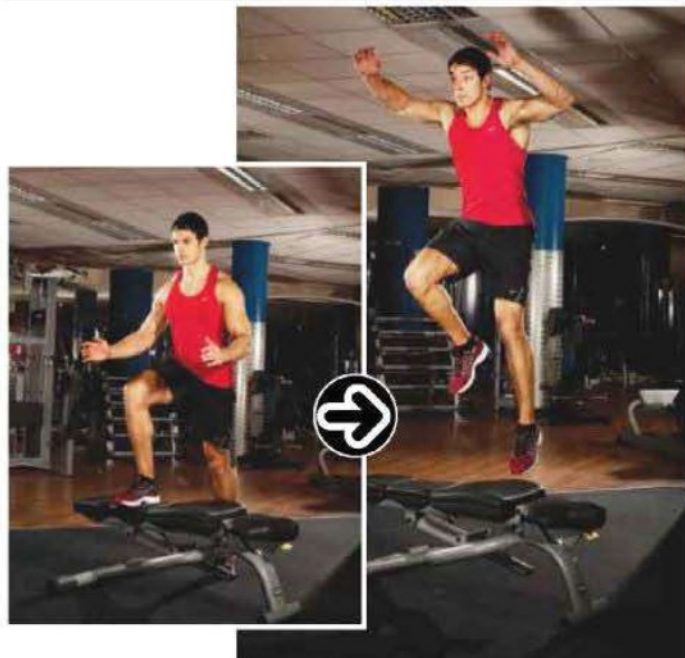


3 Step-up jump Sets 3 Reps 12

Targets Legs, glutes, core

Performing these explosive jumps will work your fast-twitch muscles fibres, which respond well to growth stimulus, while also firing up your heart rate to help mobilise fat stores for burning.

- Stand in front of a box or bench that's between ankle and knee height.
- Squat slightly then power up explosively to land with both feet on the box.
- Step back down and repeat.



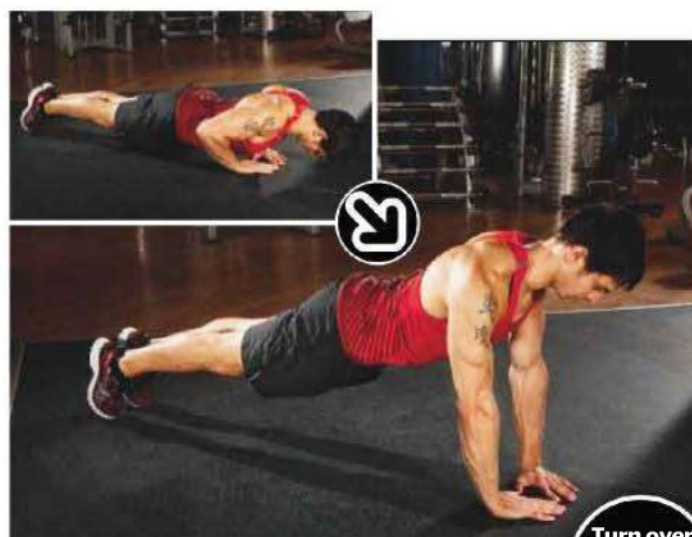
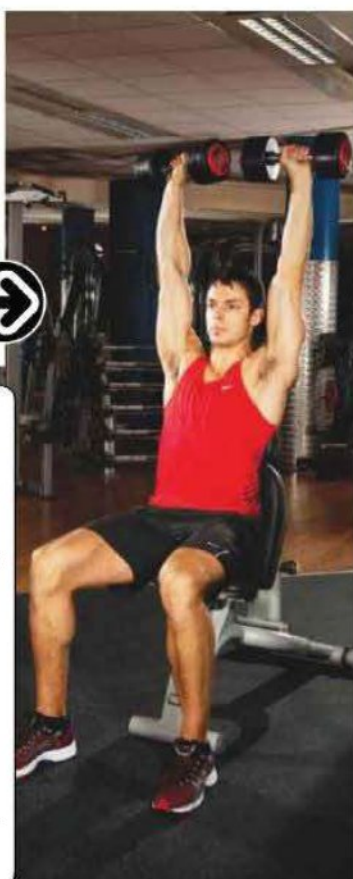
4 Seated dumbbell press

Sets 3 Reps 10

Targets Shoulders, triceps

Stay seated for a more stable base that allows you to lift more weight.

- Sit on a bench with your feet flat on the floor.
- Hold a dumb-bell in each hand at shoulder height.
- Keeping your core braced, press the weights above your head, then slowly return.



5 Diamond press-up

Sets 3 Reps To failure

Target Chest, triceps, core

The final move of the session again focuses on the major upper-body muscles. Because this is the last exercise, keep performing reps in each set until you can't do any more with good form.

- Start in a press-up position, but with thumbs and index fingers forming a diamond.
- Slowly lower your chest.
- When you're about fist-distance from the ground, press back up powerfully.

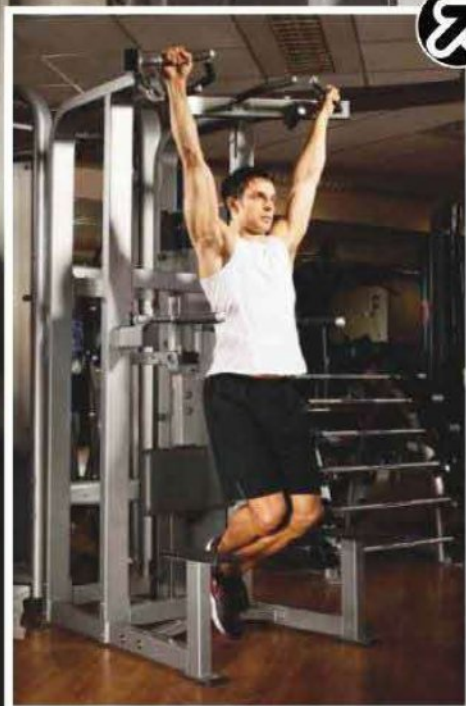
Turn over
for your
Wednesday
workout
»»»

WEDNESDAY

Pulling moves

Beginner?

Start on the assisted pull-up machine to help build the strength for full bodyweight lifts



1 Pull-up Sets 3 Reps 8

Targets Back, core

The second session starts with the toughest bodyweight move there is. Performing pull-ups while you're fresh means you can really focus on proper form to work all the main muscles involved in the move, including your core to prevent your legs from swinging.

- Hold a bar with an overhand grip with your hands just wider than shoulder-width apart.
- Let your body hang straight down.
- Pull yourself up by squeezing your lats until your chin is over the bar.
- Slowly lower yourself back to the start position.

2 Romanian deadlift Sets 3 Reps 8

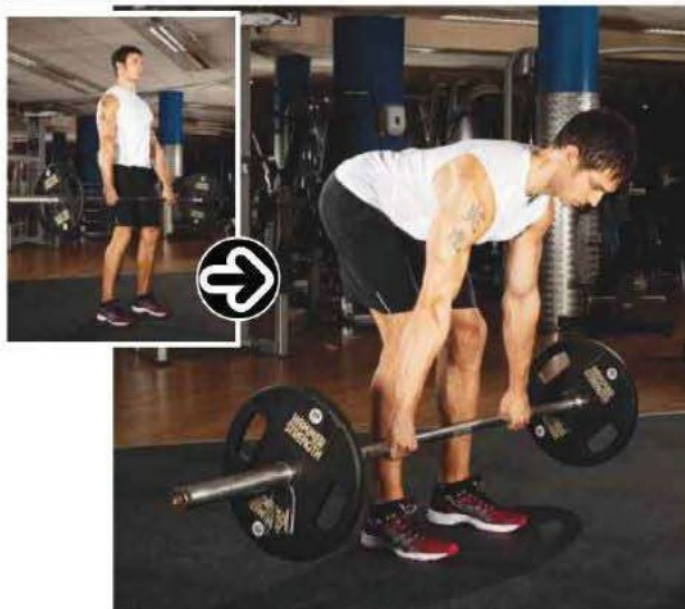
Target Lower back, hamstrings

This tough move is the best way to pack on muscle on the back of your thighs. Make sure your form is perfect to avoid unnecessary strain on your lower back.

- Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, holding a bar with

an overhand grip slightly wider than your hips.

- With your shoulders back and core braced, lean forward from the hips, not the waist.
- Lower the bar slowly down your shins until you feel the stretch in your hamstrings.
- Return to the start position.



3 One-arm cable row Sets 3 Reps 12

Target Traps, lats, rhomboids, biceps

Cable rows target the powerful muscles in your upper back and also tax your biceps. The cable maintains resistance throughout the move. Don't use momentum and perform each rep slowly.

- Stand at a cable machine with the attachment at the bottom.

- With a bend in your knees, your core braced and a natural arch in your back, hold the handle with a neutral (palms together) grip.

- Pull the handle into your sternum, squeezing your shoulder blades together.
- Return slowly to the start.

4 Single-leg gym ball hamstring curl Sets 3 Reps 8

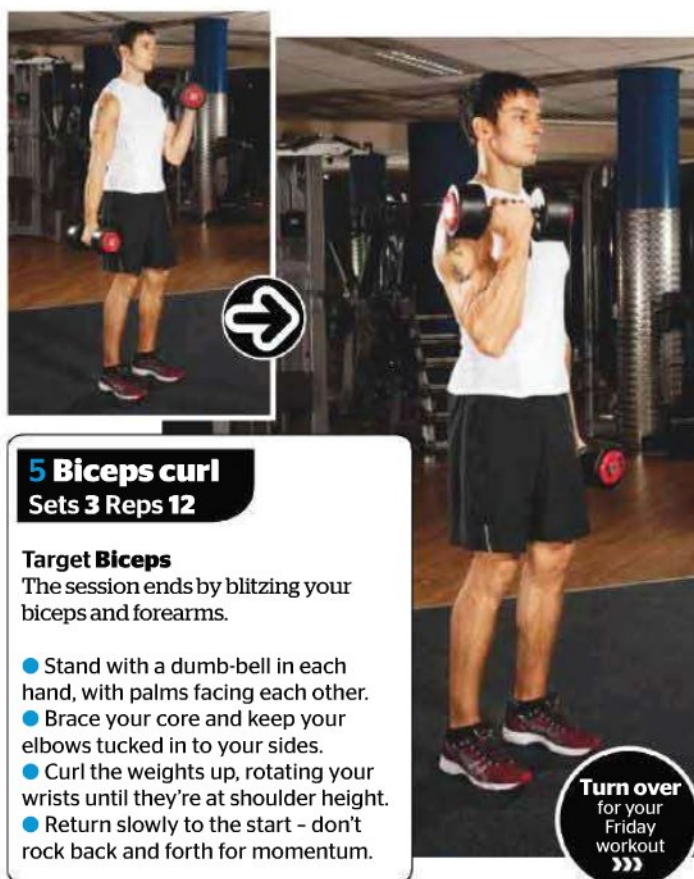
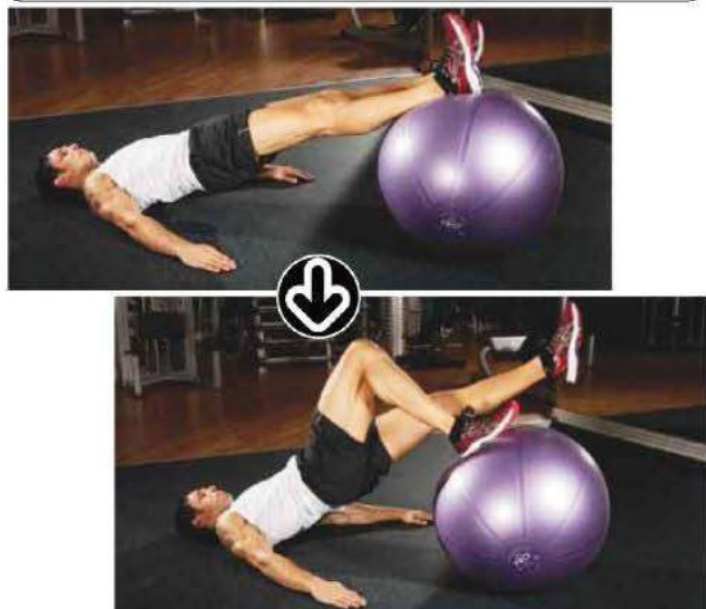
Target Hamstrings, core

This works your core and legs to improve stability.

- Lie with one foot on a gym

ball and your body straight.

- Raise your hips and drag the ball back with your heel. Pause, then slowly return to the start.



5 Biceps curl Sets 3 Reps 12

Target Biceps

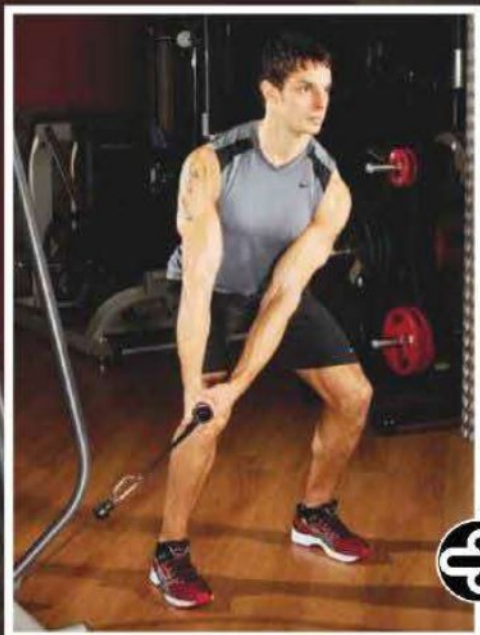
The session ends by blitzing your biceps and forearms.

- Stand with a dumb-bell in each hand, with palms facing each other.
- Brace your core and keep your elbows tucked in to your sides.
- Curl the weights up, rotating your wrists until they're at shoulder height.
- Return slowly to the start - don't rock back and forth for momentum.

Turn over
for your
Friday
workout
>>>

FRIDAY

Abs and core



After two tough total-body workouts already this week, the final session focuses solely on the core to blitz your belly into six-pack shape.

1 Cable woodchop **Sets 4 Reps 12** **(swap sides each set)**

Target Abs, obliques

This popular exercise is great for building strong, functional rotational power, which is useful in a host of sports. We're kicking off with this one to work the entire abdominal region.

- Stand side-on to a cable machine with the handle attached to the bottom.
- Hold the handle with both hands.
- In one smooth and controlled motion, raise your hands up and across your body in a swinging action.
- Return slowly to the start.

Turn over
for four
more abs and
core moves
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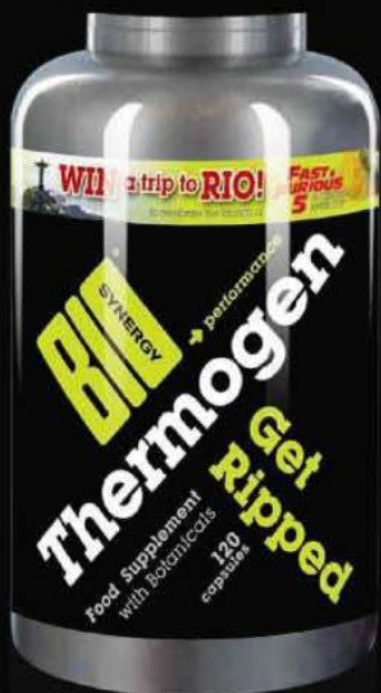


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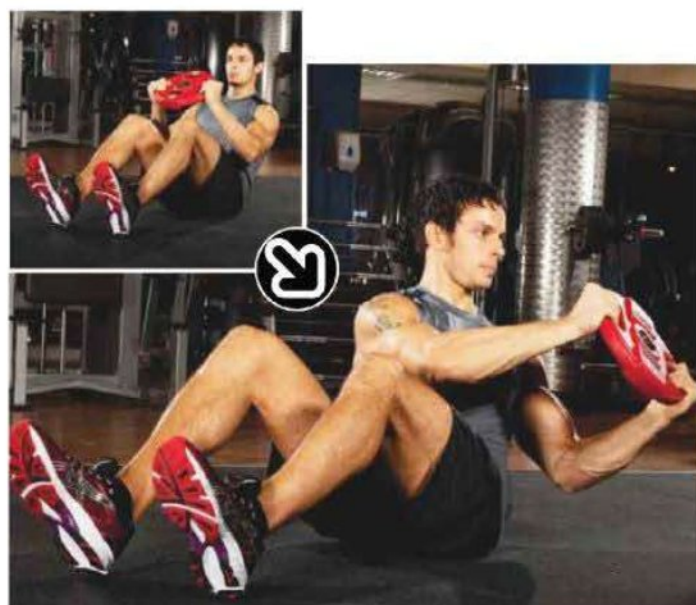
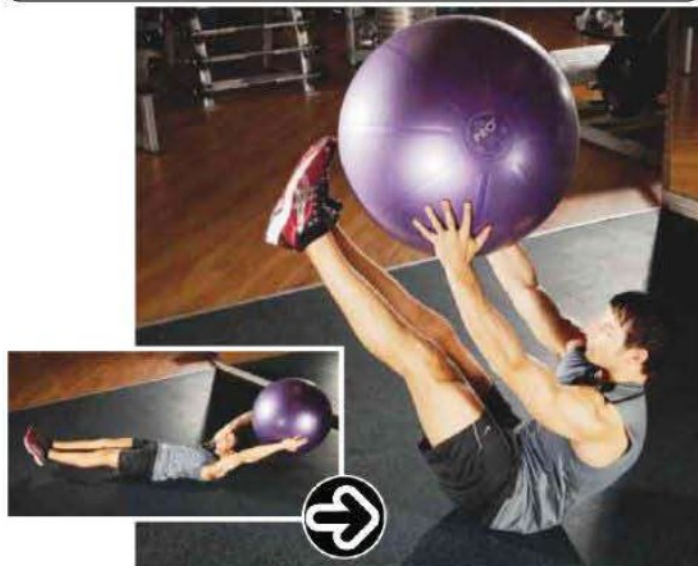
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2 Gym ball passing jackknife Sets 3 Reps 12

Target Abs

Moving the ball back and forth from your hands to your feet engages the entire core region in two ways: crunching up and drawing your legs towards your chest works your top, middle and lower abs, while your deeper stability muscles must hold your torso stable throughout every rep.

- Hold a gym ball behind your head.
- Crunch up and raise your feet so you can place the ball between them.
- Extend your legs back out and hold for a second before returning the ball to your hands and repeating.



3 Seated Russian twist Sets 4 Reps 12

Target Abs, obliques

This is another rotational move to test your obliques and those deeper core muscles that stabilise your body and transfer power between your upper and lower body.

to the floor and your knees bent at 90°.

- Hold a dumb-bell with both hands and twist one way.
- With torso and knees at the same angle, twist the other way.
- Use your abs to control the motion, rather than swinging back and forth.

- Sit on the floor with your torso held at an angle of 45°

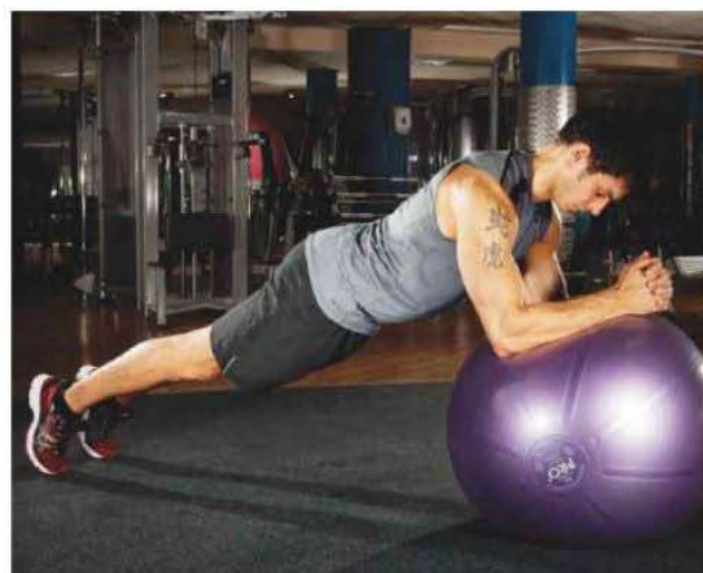
4 Two-point box Sets 3 Reps 12

Target Abs

The penultimate move in the workout requires a strong core, and also demands a great deal of co-ordination.

- Kneel on the floor and place your hands directly underneath your shoulders.

- Draw the opposing knee and elbow together so they touch under your stomach, then extend your leg and arm away from your torso.
- Return back to the start position and repeat with opposite limbs.



5 Gym ball plank Sets 4 Time 30-45sec

Target Abs

The instability of the gym ball makes this move far harder - and therefore far better for building solid abs - than a normal plank.

- Start in a plank position with your elbows on a gym ball.
- Brace your core and keep your body in a straight line.
- Don't let your hips sag.



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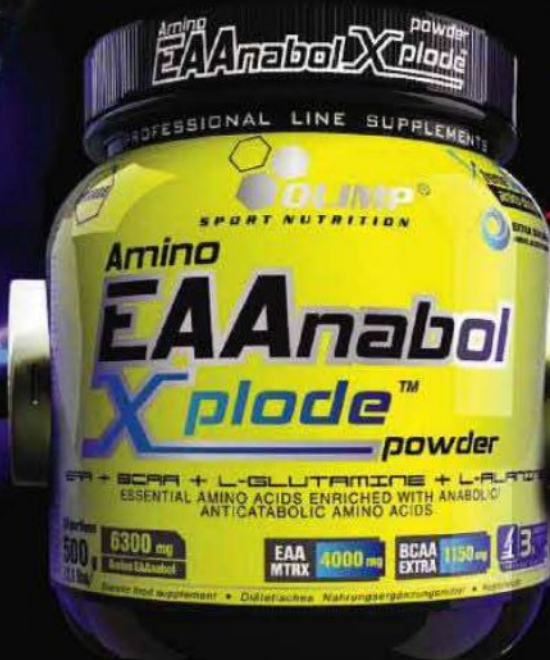
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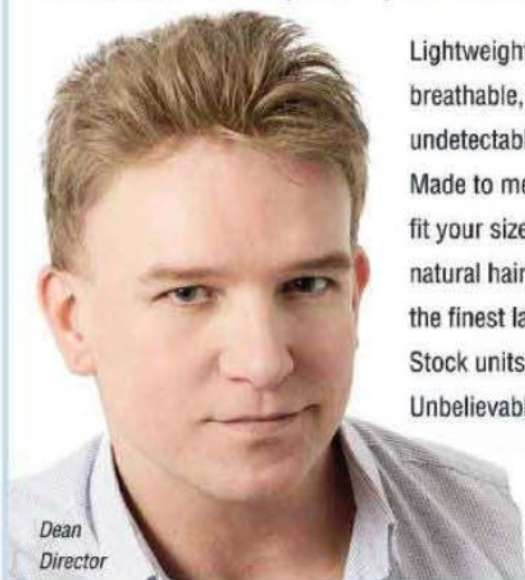
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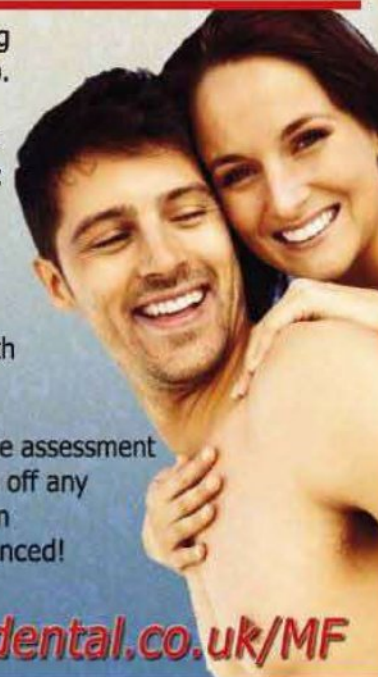
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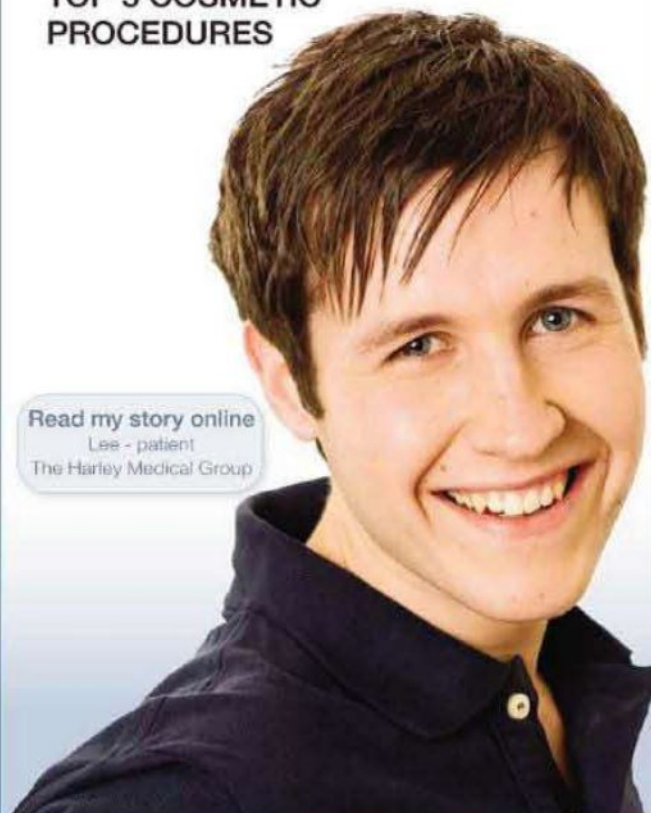
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You see, you may never have heard of **Rob Hope**, but Rob is simply a *legend* in completely **NATURAL** body-building circles. Why? Because Rob is a **WINNER** of the natural **Mr. Universe** competition – two times over!

But that's not the most interesting thing...

You see, best of all Rob Hope has achieved his incredible, world-beating physique...

- WITHOUT the usual 'gimmicky' approach that most body-builders advocate, where gains come and go like a ship in the night (Rob is VERY consistent with his gains)
- WITHOUT spending a fortune on expensive, over-priced supplements (YES - Rob advises you to keep your wallet in your pocket for the most part!)
- WITHOUT a pile of over-priced gym equipment like you see on TV and in big-box stores...
- And most amazing of all...he's done it **whilst spending just 4-6 hours per WEEK in the gym!**

You see, the really interesting thing is **just HOW Rob 'did it'** – how he achieved literally one of **the best natural physiques on the planet!**

Simply put, Rob's 'secret' lies in how he has **cleverly combined two separate disciplines, fusing** and synthesising them into a system that has propelled his muscle gains and put him at the **very top of the body-building tree.**

What Experts Say About Rob Hope And His Incredible Physique!

"One word for Rob Hope - *Unbelievable!*" – *Beef Magazine*

"Rob has in simple terms an **amazing physique** that is even more impressive as he is **100% certified Natural**. Rob shows the world that is possible to develop an amazing Championship winning physique without the use of Steroids or other Chemical Enhancements" – *247bodybuilding.com*

"...sent shock waves through the crowd when he walked on stage, he was sensational..." – *British Natural Bodybuilding Federation*

It's this 'system' which Rob used to get in phenomenal shape – **NATURALLY** - that I'm writing about today. See, for the first time ever, Rob is revealing **exactly HOW he has acquired his incredibly muscular physique...whilst spending 4-6 hours per week in the gym...and WITHOUT resorting to drugs or sacrificing his lifestyle.**

So if YOU want to pack on more real, lean muscle than you have in the last three years...and if YOU want to see your fat and flab drop off you like melting candle wax...check out what Rob has prepared for you for **FREE** with his brand-new '**Non-Stop Natural Growth System**'.

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TIM FERRISS

The best-selling author on how spending just four hours in the gym and eating more can transform your body and make you irresistible to women

Your new book, *The 4-Hour Body*, challenges the conventional methods of adding muscle, losing weight and performing better. What was your inspiration?

My dad. He was 250lb [113kg] at 5ft 6in [168cm] aged 65. I wanted to see whether the type of testing I'd used in the business world could apply to the body. It was very successful and he lost 90lb [41kg] of fat and gained more than 20lb [9kg] of muscle.

You're the guinea pig for many of the experiments in the book. Which made you most nervous?

The injury reversal experiments, especially with all the injections of plasma, stem cells and so on. But they proved hugely valuable.

'The best way to increase female sex drive is to increase male sex drive'

Which fitness myth do you feel you've busted?

The eating versus exercise, 'calories in/calories out' model of fat loss. There are many ways to increase how we burn calories. Our understanding of nutrition is very primitive. Nutrition now is where surgery was in the 1600s.

What's the one myth you still want to bust?

That more exercise is better. Treat exercise like medication and find the minimum effective dose. If you're sick, you take the right amount of medication to get better. Too little is ineffective, too much and you have side effects. It's the same with exercise: perform to the minimum level you need to improve, then rest.

You put on 15kg of muscle in eight sessions - totalling four hours - in 28 days. Can anyone achieve this?

If you don't have a medical condition, the protocol in the book can work for everyone, men and women. Not everyone will have the same results,

but I've heard from readers who gained even more muscle. If you follow the protocol and eat enough - which is where most people fail - you'll see very impressive results.

So genetics don't matter?

A great misunderstanding about genetics is that they're fixed - a lifelong sentence that can't be altered. Whatever hand you think you've been dealt in life, your appearance and performance are more malleable than many people think. I believe an Average Joe can change his body shape almost beyond recognition. I've seen too much evidence to think otherwise.

You claim your diet made you more attractive to women. How?

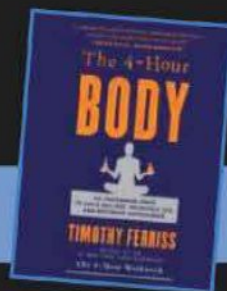
In my experience the best way to increase female sex drive is to increase male sex drive. Eating grass-fed beef and nuts, which are high in long-chain fatty acids and other compounds, increased my testosterone levels. This resulted in increased muscle gain, sperm production and desirability to women. More evidence is needed, but most men won't mind sacrificing themselves for science!

What's your single best tip to improve MF readers' wellbeing?

Eat 30g of protein within 30 minutes of waking up. My dad had been losing an average of 5lb [2.26kg] of fat a month, but when he started doing this he lost more than 17lb [7.7kg] in four weeks. The physical and mental benefits of eating protein first thing are huge. ☐



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Who's this guide for?

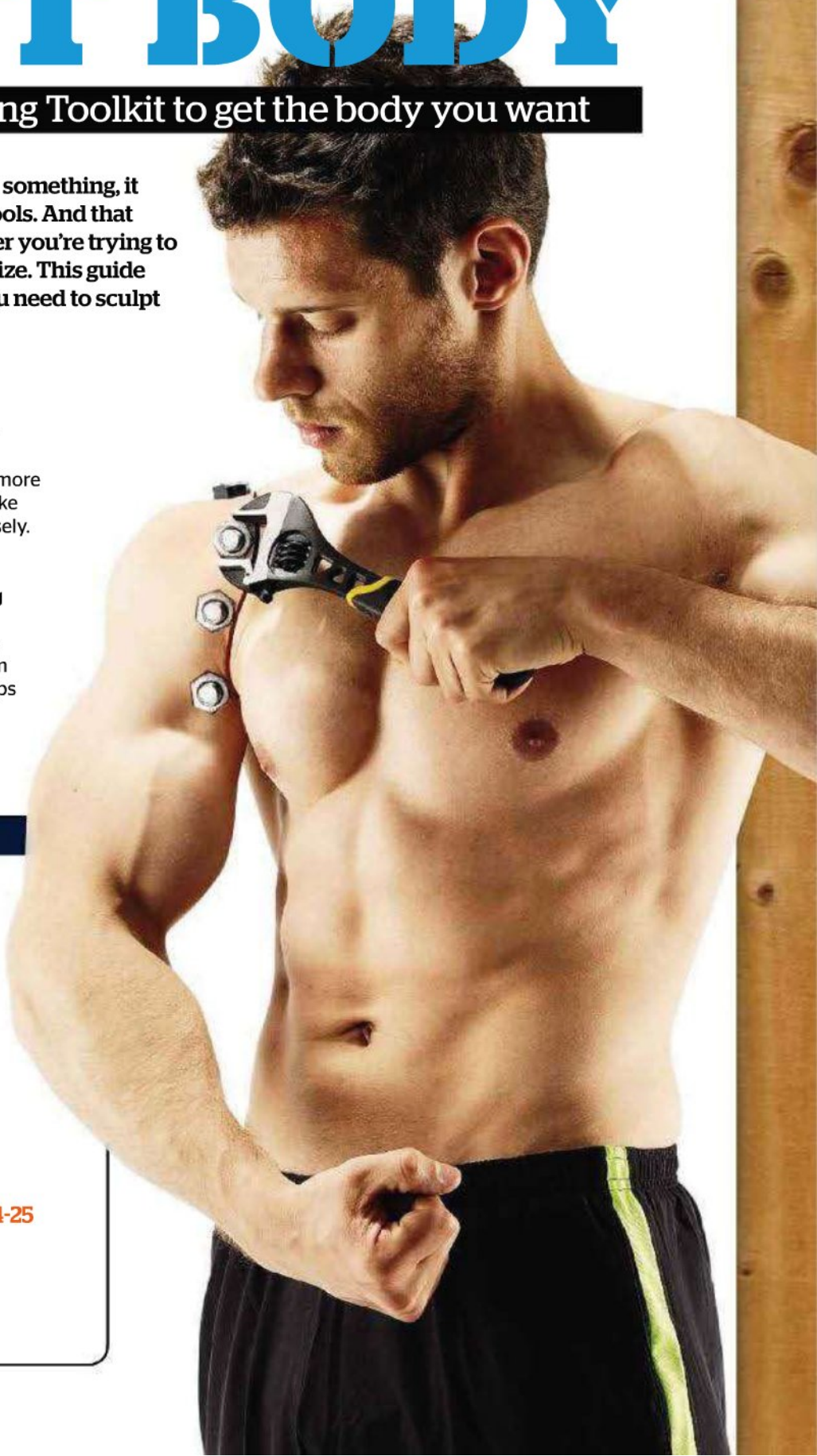
It's suitable for anyone who is new to training because it gives you an easy-to-understand breakdown of fundamental training principles. It's also valuable for more experienced exercisers who want to make sure they're using their training time wisely.

What's in the Toolkit?

The Training Toolkit contains everything you need to know to build muscle, lose fat and stay motivated. We also explode the training myths that prevent you from seeing results and we give you expert tips that will help you reach your workout targets. In short, the *Men's Fitness* Training Toolkit contains everything you need to build your best ever body.

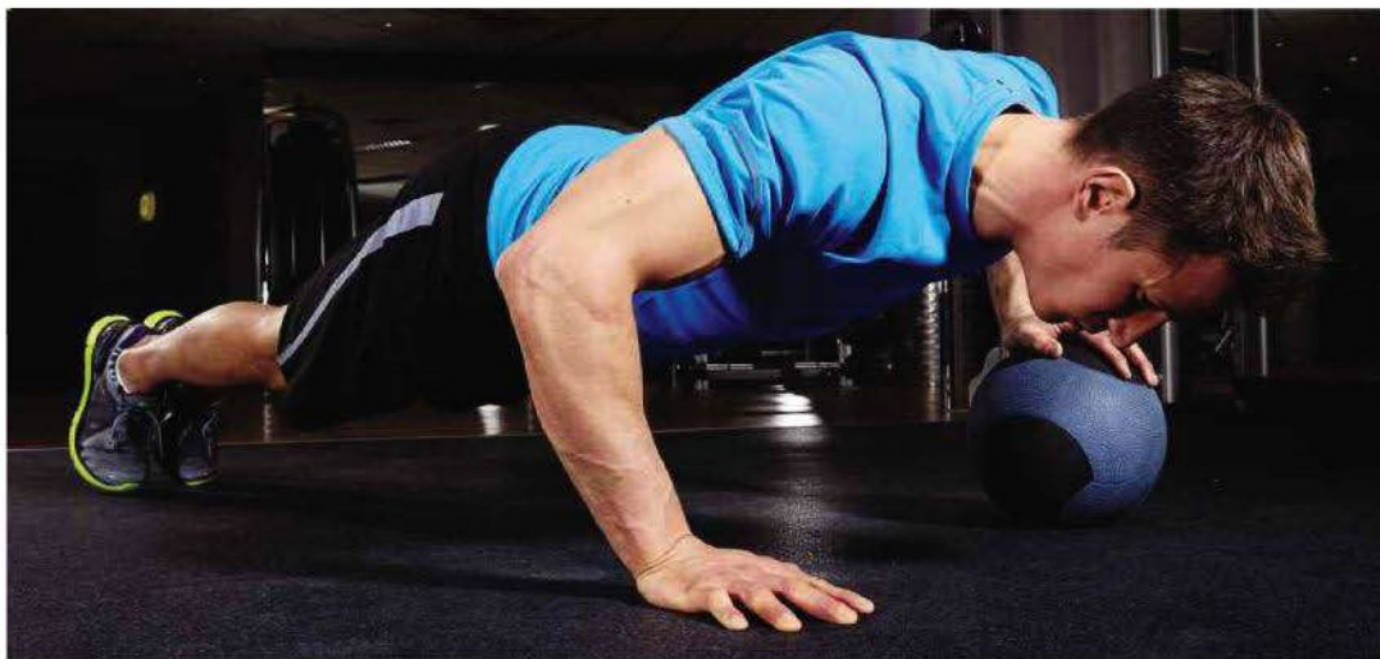
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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

No-nonsense responses to fundamental fitness queries



Q Do I have to join a gym?

A The simple answer is no. There are advantages to joining a gym, but it is possible to achieve your fitness goals without one. You can train at home and get great results with basic kit. Or you can go outside and train without any kit. It's what you do to your muscles, rather than the gear you use to get that effect, that counts. If you stimulate your muscles by doing press-ups, that can have a similar effect to performing a bench press.

'You shouldn't think that the only thing you can do outdoors is run or play team sports,' says trainer Darryl Edwards (thefitnessexplorer.com). 'Use your imagination and use your environment as a gym. You can do press-ups, bear crawls [crawling on hands and feet rather than knees] and burpees in a park without any equipment, and use trees to do pull-ups and muscle-ups. Basing your circuit on what you can see will also get your mind engaged with what you're doing.'

Q Can I cut fat from a specific body part?

A Sadly not. 'Your body will choose where you burn your body fat from,' says trainer Jason Anderson (movement3.co.uk). 'Training your legs won't necessarily mean you'll get lean legs.' The good news, however, is that weight training and effective cardio sessions will have a general fat loss effect. Your problem area may not be the first to go, but your efforts will have a positive effect.

Q How often do I need to work out?

A Less frequently than you might imagine. And it's certainly not the case that more is better. That's because it's when you're recovering that increases to your muscle size and strength take place. If you don't take sufficient time to recover, you won't see improvements.

'Beginners should aim to train either three or four times a week,'

says Anderson. 'It's not just your muscles that need time to recover. When you're a beginner your nervous system is working hard to recruit your muscles, which it's not used to doing, so it will also need time to recover. Try doing one day on, one day off.'

Q I've tried and failed to get fit in the past. Why will it work now?

A If you've been unsuccessful in the past, this has nothing to do with your body being fundamentally resistant to exercise and everything to do with your approach. 'If exercise hasn't worked it's because you haven't had a focused plan, eaten properly or set proper goals,' says Chris Rogers from Fitness First. 'You definitely can change the way you look but going to the gym once or twice a week won't give you a radical transformation, especially if you're not eating well.' So follow the workout and nutrition advice in this supplement to make real changes.



Q If I train hard, can I eat what I like?

A It would be nice to think that every half-hour you spent in the gym would cancel out a pint of lager but it doesn't quite work like that. Yes, training will help burn calories but you need to make sure that you are taking on the right nutrients if you want to make the most of your training.

'Think of your body as an engine,' says Rodgers. 'You want good-quality oil to keep it going. You can do the initial work in the gym but if you don't eat properly then you won't recover properly. In fact, it's even more important to eat well when you're training because weight training puts stress on your body, and the right nutrients help you recover from that. You won't maximise your potential strength and muscle growth if you have a poor diet.'

If you don't take sufficient recovery time, you won't improve

Q When can I start?

A It's best to have a check-up with a GP before you begin training, but once you get the medical thumbs-up you can go for it. If you want to make a real difference to how you look and feel it helps to understand what you're doing. Over the following pages you'll find explanations of the muscle-building and fat-burning processes, as well as a guide to basic training methods and some sample routines. We'll also explain how to help form good exercise habits and stay motivated so that you enjoy what you're doing.

WHY WEIGHT TRAIN?

Because it'll make you happier, healthier and sexier. Here's why



BOOST YOUR BRAIN

Exercise will increase blood flow to your brain, which helps oxygen and nutrient delivery. Research from the University of Illinois found that people who exercise experience 'substantial sparing' from the natural decay of the parts of the brain that handle memory, problem solving and thinking.



PROTECT YOUR HEART

Weight training can improve your cardiovascular health by widening your blood vessels, according to research published in the *Journal Of Strength And Conditioning Research*. The same study found that resistance exercise produced greater increases in blood flow to the limbs and a longer lasting drop in blood pressure than a bout of aerobic exercise.



WARD OFF COLDS

Being fit can reduce your chances of getting colds, according to US researchers who monitored 1,002 adults for 12 weeks. Subjects in the top 25 per cent of fitness levels experienced 43 per cent fewer days with upper respiratory tract illness than the least fit 25 per cent. And when the fit group did get ill, their symptoms were, on average, 32 per cent less severe than the least active group.



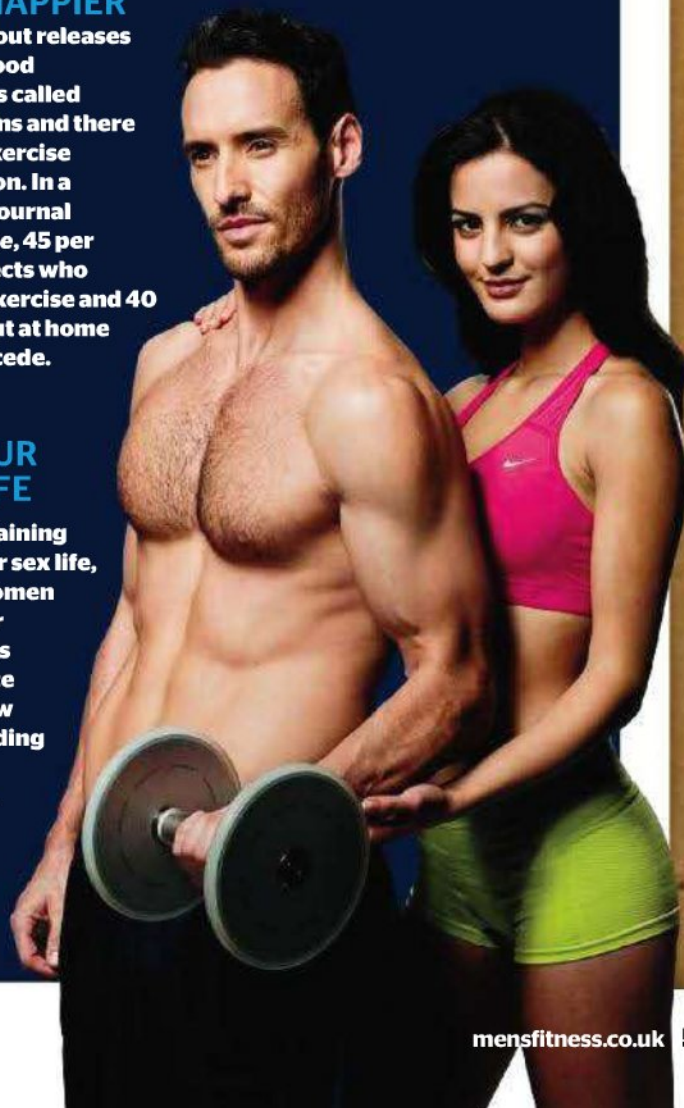
FEEL HAPPIER

Working out releases the feelgood hormones called endorphins and there is even evidence that exercise can help treat depression. In a study published in the journal *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 45 per cent of depressed subjects who participated in group exercise and 40 per cent who worked out at home saw their symptoms recede.



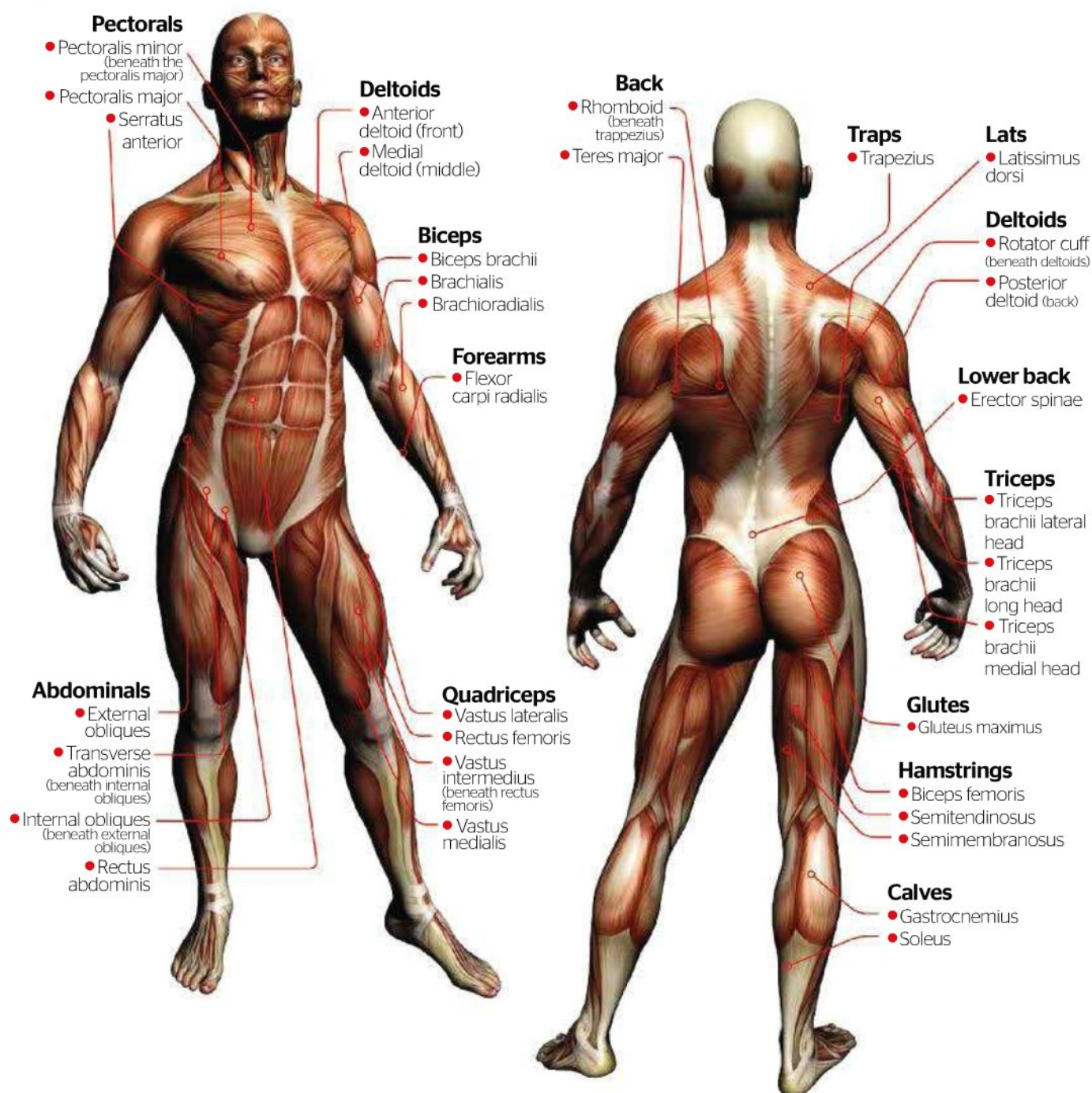
PERK UP YOUR SEX LIFE

Weight training can do wonders for your sex life, and not just because women will be attracted to your body. Exercise increases your physical endurance and improves blood flow around the body, according to research from the University of Arkansas. And you don't need a degree in physiology to work out why that's a good thing.



KNOW YOUR MUSCLES

There are over 600 muscles in the body. These are the key ones you'll be targeting during your workouts



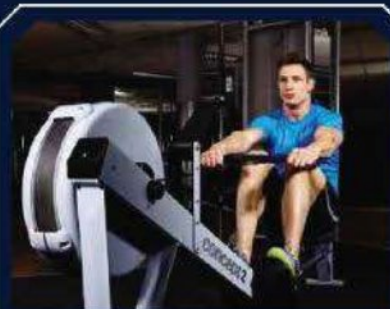


TRAINING TERMS

Key words and phrases explained

AEROBIC EXERCISE Meaning 'with oxygen', aerobic exercise refers to long-duration, low-to-medium intensity exercise such as running or cycling.

ANAEROBIC EXERCISE Meaning 'without oxygen', anaerobic exercise refers to short duration, high-intensity exercise such as weightlifting and sprinting.



CARDIO Short for cardiovascular training, which improves the efficiency of the heart, lungs and blood circulatory system.

CATABOLISM The destructive process that breaks down muscle tissue once the energy in your body has been exhausted. This happens after around 45 minutes of intense exercise.

COMPOUND EXERCISE An exercise that recruits many muscles in a single movement, such as the bench press or squat.

CONNECTIVE TISSUE The ligaments and tendons that connect and support muscles and bones.

CORE STABILITY The strength of the muscles deep in the abdomen and around the spine. These muscles trigger larger muscles elsewhere in the body to stabilise the body.

DELAYED ONSET MUSCLE SORENESS An muscle ache that occurs up to 48 hours after a workout and is usually caused by getting the muscle to do something it hasn't performed before.

EXTENSION Any movement that increases the angle between two bones in the body, such as straightening your arm.

FAILURE Lifting to failure is where you perform reps in a set until you are too exhausted to maintain perfect form.

FARTLEK A form of interval training where you alter your speed at random.

FAST-TWITCH MUSCLE FIBRES The larger muscle fibres that are involved in quick, explosive movements. These are the fibres targeted during weight training.

FLEXION Any movement that decreases the angle between two bones, such as bending your arm at the elbow.

FORM The technique you use when performing an exercise.

HYPERTROPHY The process whereby muscle fibres grow and become stronger.

INTERVAL TRAINING Cardio training in which short periods of intense effort are interspersed with recovery periods.

ONE-REP MAX The maximum weight you can lift for one rep. See p28 to find out how to calculate your one-rep max.

OVERTRAINING Training your body too frequently and intensely for it to recover properly.

PLYOMETRICS Exercises that lengthen a muscle immediately before explosively contracting it into a move, such as jumping.

RANGE OF MOTION The plane across which a muscle can move.

REP Short for repetition. The action of performing an exercise once.

SET A group of reps performed back to back.

SLOW-TWITCH MUSCLE FIBRES The smaller muscle fibres used in long-distance endurance efforts.

SPOTTER A person who assists you when doing a lift.

STABILISING MUSCLE A muscle that plays a supporting role to bigger muscles to keep joints in alignment.

SUPERSETS One set each of two exercises performed back to back.

TEMPO The speed at which reps are performed.

TIME UNDER TENSION The total time that the targeted muscle is under tension during the set.



ISOLATION EXERCISE An exercise that involves a single joint and is designed to isolate a single muscle group, such as the biceps curl.

17 TOP WORKOUT TIPS

Use these tricks to keep your training on track

1 Have a target

Having a target, such as adding 20 per cent to a lift or losing a certain amount of weight, is a huge motivating factor. 'Set yourself small, measurable goals,' says Sean Keefe of Strength & Performance. 'I always put people on four-week cycles with a goal for each cycle. It helps you see how much you've improved.'

2 Be realistic

You won't go from being sedentary to training like a professional athlete. 'Stick to something you can commit to, such as three training sessions a week,' says Darryl Edwards from thefitnessexplorer.com. 'It's easier to stay on track and you can add a session once your habits are established.'

3 Keep a record

If you don't record what you're doing, how will you know when you're making progress? 'Record what you've done, but not just what you've lifted,' says Keefe. 'Also record what was happening in your life. Did you have a bad day at work, for example? Recording that will help you work out why things have gone well or badly.'

4 Don't give it 100 per cent

Workout intensity is important but don't hammer yourself every time. 'People believe they'll feel better by having a punishing regime but they get demotivated,' says Edwards. Keefe agrees: 'Always hold a little bit back. If you train at 100 per cent intensity all the time then you'll burn out.'



5 TEST YOURSELF

Doing the same test at regular intervals is an easy way of tracking your progress. 'I'd recommend testing your three-rep max bench press and squat, your vertical leap and your body fat percentage once a month,' says Gideon Remfry from KX gym. 'It's quick and gives you a sense of purpose.'

6 Increase your general activity

You can help make training a part of your life by being more active when you're not in the gym. 'I'd advise gradually increasing activity that's not part of the gym session,' says Edwards. 'Walk to work, take the stairs - it primes your body for more activity. Then in the gym it's more of a subtle shift in activity rather than being a shock to your body.'

7 Short can be sweet

You don't need a full hour to do a useful training session. 'I've done five- or ten-minute sessions and I've been more productive because I'm under time pressure,' says Edwards. 'You get in, go hard, then get out. That's more productive than two hours on the treadmill or just doing biceps curls. Most people could cut their gym time in half by reducing rest and increasing intensity.'



8 Be a morning person

'You need to train at a time that works for you and for people with day jobs, the morning is often most convenient,' says Jason Anderson from movement3.co.uk. 'If you leave it to the end of the day the chances are you'll be knackered and tempted to cancel the session.'

9 Work on flexibility

Of your schedule, that is. 'You need to be realistic about your life,' says Keefe. 'Plan your sessions in advance but if you know you've got a busy week at work, back off a bit. When you get more free time, you can put in more training.'

10 Use expert advice

Taking the advice of experts will help you avoid wasting your time and efforts. 'Work with a good professional for the first part of your training,' says Remfry. 'You don't have to do it all the time but it's a solid way of starting. I wish someone had taken me under their wing when I started training. I would have cut out seven years of rubbish.'

11 Have a plan B

Your programme won't always go according to plan. When that happens, you need an alternative. 'I have an idea about what I'll do in each session but I'll also have a back up plan,' says Keefe. 'That way, if I aim to do five sets of five reps of an exercise but struggle with the first set, I'll change my plan and do things differently.'

12 DON'T GET LEGLESS

'A lot of guys don't train their legs,' says Rogers. 'But if you don't do squats, lunges and deadlifts you won't build muscle and lose fat effectively - and you'll end up with pencil legs. Squats may work your legs but they release growth hormone to increase muscle all over your body.'

13 Follow the form

Your ego might swell when you try to lift heavy weights but it may not have the same effect on your muscles. 'Always favour technique over weight,' says Anderson. 'Use a light weight with good technique rather than heavy with poor form otherwise you're teaching yourself to get stronger with poor movement patterns, which will eventually cause injury.'

15 Reward yourself

If you hit your target, you deserve a reward. But if you miss it, you should also face the consequences. 'I set goals for my clients,' says Chris Rogers from Fitness First. 'If they reach it I'll give them a reward, but if they don't reach it then they get a punishment - "the redemption workout", a really hard session.' You can do the same.

16 Get snap happy

'Take a "before" photo with your top off,' says Rogers. 'You may not like it but look at it every day. Then take a picture every four weeks. Seeing your progress will really spur you on.'

14 KNOWLEDGE IS POWER, AND MUSCLE

'You have to enjoy it and you do that by knowing what you're doing,' says Keefe. 'I always recommend that people read about what they're doing so they understand it. It keeps you focused and motivated.'



17 Mix it up

Do the same thing over and over again and both your mind and your muscles will get bored. 'There is no programme that is the best - you need to regularly change your programme,' says Rogers. 'I get a lot of guys saying to me, "It worked well before but now it's not having an effect". That's because they've been doing it for years.'

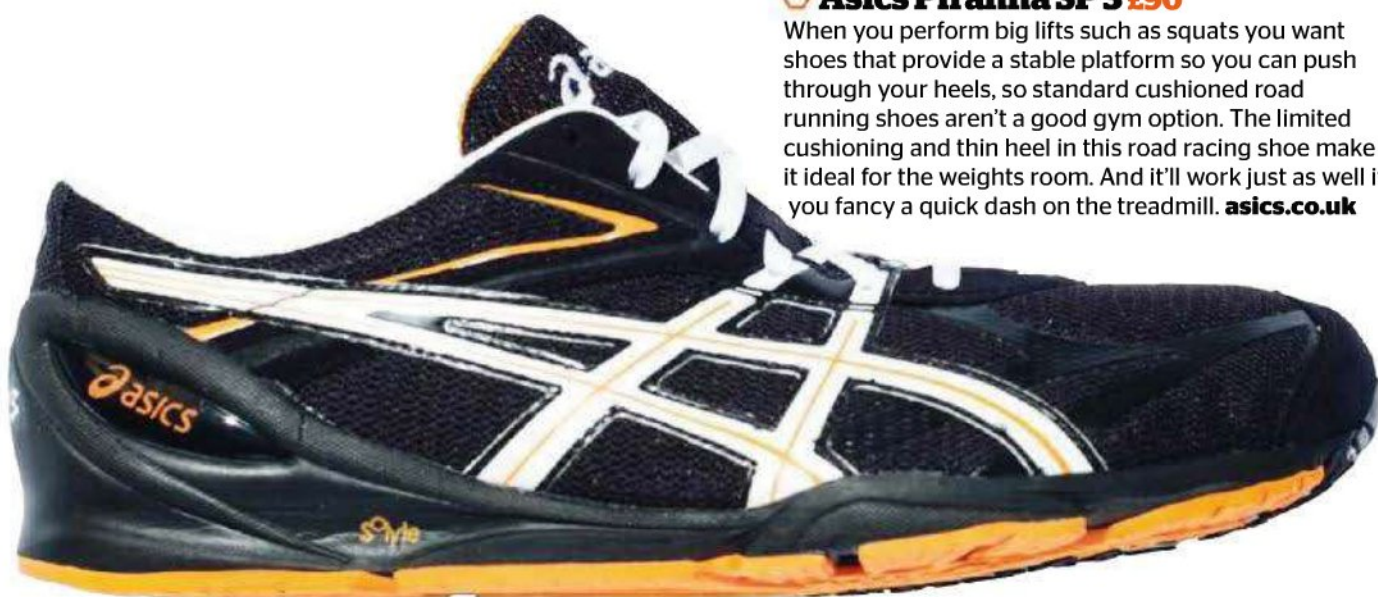
GYM GEAR

WISH LIST

Using the right gear will help you get more out of your training

Asics Piranha SP 3 £90

When you perform big lifts such as squats you want shoes that provide a stable platform so you can push through your heels, so standard cushioned road running shoes aren't a good gym option. The limited cushioning and thin heel in this road racing shoe make it ideal for the weights room. And it'll work just as well if you fancy a quick dash on the treadmill. asics.co.uk



Reebok Premier Zigtech £22

Wearing shorts will help you resist skipping leg sessions because you won't want to be seen sporting skinny pins. This pair is breathable and has pockets for your gym membership card or locker key. reebok.com



Reebok Training Day Zigtech £23

Cotton T-shirts get drenched in sweat, which is unpleasant for you and whoever's unlucky enough to use the bench after you. Technical T-shirts, such as the Zigtech, draw or 'wick' sweat away from your body and are made of breathable material. You'll be more comfortable during your training sessions and more popular with fellow gym-goers. reebok.com





○ Sigg Wide Mouth **£18.50**

Using your own water bottle will save you time because you won't have to keep queuing for the water fountain. The stylish Sigg bottle has a sports cap that lets you drink on the move and an easy-to-grip design that means it won't fly from your hand mid-lunge. sigg.com

Drink up
For advice about what to put in your sports bottle, turn to p30

○ Polar FT7 heart rate monitor **£93.50**

A training watch will help you track your efforts which, as you should now know, will help you achieve your goals. The FT7 tracks your heart rate and calorie burn, so it's useful for monitoring cardio and fat loss sessions. Results can easily be uploaded online, where you can analyse your efforts, get training guidance and set future goals. polarelectro.co.uk



CHOOSING A GYM

Here's what to think about before signing the membership form



TEST SEVERAL GYMS

'Trying the gym before you sign up for a membership is crucial,' says David Stalker, executive director of the Fitness Industry Association. 'Take full advantage of the day passes and even try five or six places. And don't just think about what happens in the gym. Also think about things such as parking and transport.'



CHECK STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

'Check whether the personal training staff are registered with the Register of Exercise Professionals, the body responsible for regulating PT standards,' says Stalker. 'If they are it means they have been on recognised training courses so they know how to put programmes together. You can also go onto the REPs website (exerciseregister.org) and search by name.'



DON'T BE PUT OFF BY FREE WEIGHTS

'Most people who go to a gym for the first time see banks of cardio machines and feel comfortable about that,' says Stalker. 'In comparison the free weights make them feel quite unsure and uncomfortable. But you need a mix of machines and free weights to make progress.'



TRY A PERSONAL TRAINER

'An hour of personal training may cost about £50 in London and about £30 elsewhere but it's probably the best money any newcomer to fitness can spend,' says Stalker. 'Take ten sessions and then you'll know what you're doing. After that, book a session if you feel like you're stalling or lacking motivation.'



READ THE SMALL PRINT

'Make sure you agree to what you're signing up for,' says Stalker. 'Work out what you think is a good deal. If you're offered a three-year contract for £20 a month it may seem good value but can you say, "I'm committed to doing this and I'm not going to move from the area"?''



SPEAK TO OTHER MEMBERS

'Talk to other people who use that facility,' says Stalker. 'If you're there on a guest pass, ask other gym users what they think of the gym. They'll give you an honest reply.'

CHOOSE YOUR KIT

Get the most from your sessions with our gear guide

Gyms are full of kit that can help you achieve your workout goals. But when should you use a barbell rather than dumb-bells? And what exactly is a kettlebell for? Our quick guide will help you make the right choices.



BARBELL



DUMB-BELL



BODYWEIGHT



CABLE MACHINES



FIXED PATH MACHINES



STRETCH BAND



MEDICINE BALL



KETTLE BELL





WHY USE IT? You can adjust the weight quickly, easily and in small increments. It also allows you to perform the compound lifts that are the quickest route to gaining size and strength.

WHY NOT USE IT? Performing big lifts means that you may often need a spotter, which may not always be possible. Using a barbell also means it's hard to target specific muscles, because most of the lifts will involve more than one muscle group.

KILLER MOVE SQUAT

One of the main muscle-building exercises, the squat also improves core stability.



WHY USE IT? Dumb-bells allow your muscles to move through their full range of motion. Each side of your body must work independently, which improves co-ordination.

WHY NOT USE IT? Your muscle groups vary in strength, so you need a range of dumb-bells to work effectively. Many training methods require you to increase the weight each set, which means you need many pairs at once.

KILLER MOVE FLYE

One of the best pec-building exercises to give your chest a strong shape.



WHY USE IT? Bodyweight exercises don't require any kit so they can be done anywhere and at any time for a quick workout.

WHY NOT USE IT? Once you've mastered moving your bodyweight you won't get bigger or stronger until you add more weight. Bodyweight moves are less effective for 'pulling' muscles - biceps, lats and traps - which tend to require kit.

KILLER MOVE PULL-UP

The ultimate exercise to build a big, strong back. Just ensure you have something secure to hang from.



WHY USE IT? These let you perform a wide variety of functional moves with no risk of taking your muscles beyond their natural range of motion, so they're ideal for beginners.

WHY NOT USE IT? There are no significant drawbacks, other than that cable machines are too big and too expensive for most people to have at home. And because of their popularity you can end up queuing at the gym.

KILLER MOVE SPLIT SQUAT TO ROW

A functional move that works major muscles from legs through the core to back and biceps.



WHY USE IT? Machines remove difficulty and risk - you simply push or pull in the pre-determined manner. They let you overload specific muscles for accelerated growth.

WHY NOT USE IT? All the positives are also negatives. The movements are pre-determined rather than natural, so your stabilising muscles don't work hard. Injury can occur if you target one muscle without also training the supporting ones.

KILLER MOVE ASSISTED CHIN-UP/DIP

Doing these tough, muscle-building moves with some assistance is far better than not doing them at all.



WHY USE IT? Portable, versatile - you can perform both pulling and pushing moves - and cheap, a band is the only piece of kit where the resistance increases the harder you work.

WHY NOT USE IT? The resistance is low at the beginning of a move so your muscles aren't worked through their full range of motion. You also have no means of measuring your progress - you won't know if you're getting stronger.

KILLER MOVE REVERSE FLYE

Using a band targets the upper back without relying on momentum, as is often the case with dumb-bells.



WHY USE IT? Holding a weighted ball is an easy way to add resistance to core exercises such as crunches. Throwing them around adds a dynamic element to your workout.

WHY NOT USE IT? Most balls weigh less than 10kg so they are too light to build size or strength in any of your main muscle groups.

KILLER MOVE THROW-DOWN

Taking the ball back over your head and then hurling it down to the sides works the abs and obliques.



WHY USE IT? Kettlebells provide even greater functional movement and more range of motion than cable machines. You can isolate specific muscles or work the whole body.

WHY NOT USE IT? The complete freedom of movement makes kettlebells dangerous in inexperienced hands. It can be easy to over-extend muscles and joints past their natural limit.

KILLER MOVE CLEAN AND PRESS

A highly functional move that works every link of your muscle chain.



HOW MUSCLES GROW

The simple science behind getting bigger and stronger

The process of muscle growth is, essentially, your body responding to stress (weight training) by thinking, 'That was hard - I'd better do something about

it so it's not as difficult next time'. When you perform resistance exercises, you create microscopic tears in your muscles. Your body then responds to this stimulus

and your muscles repair themselves to become bigger and stronger than they were before. There are several key stages in this process and they are explained below.

WARM-UP

An increased heart rate pumps blood to your muscles, making them warmer and allowing them to extend fully. It also supplies muscle fibres with oxygen.

LOADING THE MUSCLE

At the start of the rep your muscles are under load and stretched. As a result the heart pumps more blood into the protective sheaths that surround the muscle fibres, supplying oxygen and nutrients to these fibres.

SPARKING YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM

When you lift the weight, your central nervous system relays this to the nerves contained in the sheaths protecting the muscle fibres. This tells the muscle fibres to contract, lifting the weight.

If you're doing the exercise correctly, your muscles activate in a

particular sequence and your central nervous system adapts to this. As you repeat the workout over time, your nerves get more efficient, allowing you to do more reps or lift more weight.

CHEMICAL REACTIONS

Adenosine triphosphate (ATP) is the immediate energy source for muscle contraction. It is broken down within the body's cells to release energy. The cells' creatine, phosphate

and glycogen reserves are also converted into ATP. This process creates lactic acid as an unfortunate by-product.

FEELING THE BURN

Once the glycogen stores are depleted and lactic acid builds up, the muscle can't work efficiently, so you rest. This is when oxygen-based muscle respiration occurs, processing the lactic acid back into glycogen and giving you an energy source for the next set.

SUCCESSFUL FAILURE

As you reach failure on your final set, your fast-twitch muscle fibres become fatigued. Microscopic tears ('microtears') are created in the myofilaments, the smallest fibre bundles in your muscles.

REPAIR AND GROWTH

After the workout your body starts to repair the microtears by adding the amino acids actin and myosin to the myofilaments, which also causes them to grow in size. The body is unable to grow additional muscle cells, however, so growth is limited by the number of cells that you have.

Another effect of intense workouts is that your muscles adapt to store more glycogen, so that there will be more energy on hand for the next workout. This also has the happy side effect of making the muscles increase in size slightly.

ANATOMY OF A MUSCLE

Muscles are made of bundles of fibres contained in protective sheaths, called fascia, which are then bundled together. The biggest bundle is the muscle itself. The next largest are the fascicles, which contain the long, single-celled muscle fibres. Muscle fibres are then subdivided into myofibrils, which are divided again into bundles of myofilaments, which consist of chains of sarcomeres.



MUSCLE MYTHS

MYTH You can turn fat into muscle

REALITY To convert fat into muscle you'd have to be an alchemist. They're two totally different things, so converting one into the other would be messing with all known laws of science. 'The process of building muscle and burning fat is unrelated,' says trainer Sion Colenso. 'Muscle is active tissue that burns calories, while fat tissues store excess energy.'

MYTH Doing crunches builds a six-pack

REALITY 'You can have the strongest abs in the world but if they're under a layer of fat then you're not going to see them,' says trainer Jason Anderson from Movement3. And if you're trying to burn fat, crunches are just about the worst move you could choose. In fact, you'd have to do about 500,000 to burn one kilogram of fat.

MYTH Machines are better than free weights

REALITY Machines can cost thousands of pounds and are constantly being updated. Therefore they must be more useful than unsophisticated old dumb-bells and barbells, right? Wrong. 'Machines will work to a degree but they only allow you to move in a fixed movement,' says Sean Keefe from Strength & Performance. 'That means your stabilising muscles, the small ones that protect your joints, aren't forced to work. If your stabilising muscles are weak then you increase your injury risk when you go from using machines to free weights.'



48 hours

The minimum time you should leave between training the same muscle group twice

TURN OVER FOR A MUSCLE WORKOUT

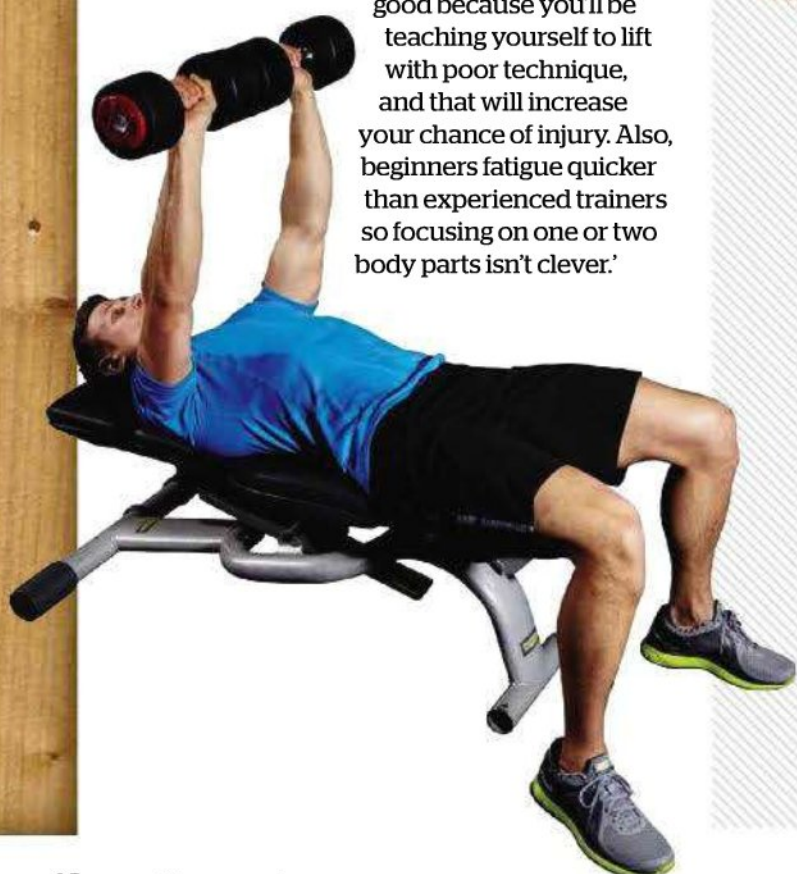
WHOLE BODY MUSCLE WORKOUT

Hit every muscle group with this balanced routine

You might be tempted to do a workout composed entirely of bench presses and biceps curls but that wouldn't be wise. 'The basis of your workout should be big compound moves,' says Chris Rogers from Fitness First. 'You'll get better results with them when you start training than you would by doing isolation moves such as biceps curls. You'll use lots of muscles at once - which means a better growth hormone release - and they're more functional, real-world movements.'

Once you have a solid foundation you can think about progressing to a split routine in which you focus on two muscle groups per session, working each body part once a week. 'Initially, do three whole-body training sessions a week for six weeks before moving on to a split routine,' says Jason Anderson of Movement3. 'There's no point in doing a split routine if your technique isn't

good because you'll be teaching yourself to lift with poor technique, and that will increase your chance of injury. Also, beginners fatigue quicker than experienced trainers so focusing on one or two body parts isn't clever.'



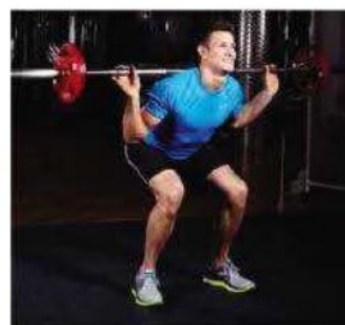
FORM TIP

If you can't wiggle your toes at the bottom of the squat then your weight is too far forward.

1 SQUAT

Sets **3** Reps **10-12** Target **Quads, glutes, legs**

WHY DO IT? The squat is one of the most effective muscle-building exercises you can do because it recruits some of the biggest muscles in your body. Getting your whole lower body working at once will help release growth hormones into your system.



HOW TO DO IT

- Start by standing up straight with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Bend your knees, making sure you keep your

back upright and your knees in line with your toes.

- Sink down until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor, then push through your heels to return to the start.

2 DUMB-BELL BENCH PRESS

Sets **3** Reps **10-12** Target **Chest, triceps**



WHY DO IT?

This classic move will work your pectoral muscles as well as your triceps and even your shoulders. Doing it with dumb-bells will help develop your small stabilising muscles because you control the path of the weights.

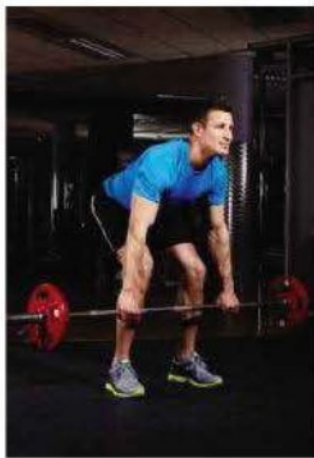
HOW TO DO IT

- Lie on a bench with your knees bent at 90° and your feet on the floor.
- Hold the dumb-bells above your chest.
- Lower the dumb-bells until they are nearly level with your chest.



3 BENT-OVER ROW

Sets 3 Reps 10-12 Target Lats, traps, rhomboids



WHY DO IT?

It's important to balance the chest work you do with an equal amount of back exercises. This targets a big muscle group while also developing your stability

HOW TO DO IT

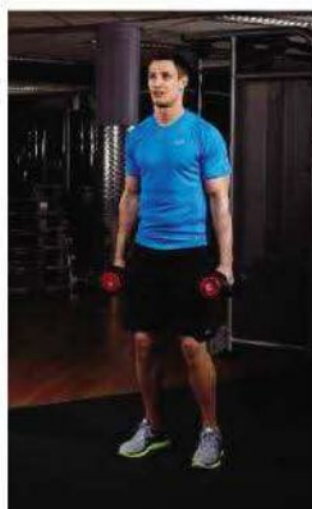
- Hold the barbell with your hands just wider than

shoulder-width apart.

- Bend forward at the hips, rather than the waist, with your neck and spine in a neutral position and let the barbell hang down.
- Pull the bar up to your sternum, keeping your elbows high and squeezing your back muscles at the top of the move.

5 BICEPS CURL

Sets 3 Reps 10-12 Target Biceps



WHY DO IT?

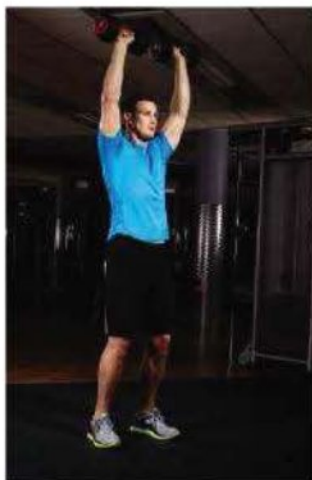
The biceps curl isn't the magical muscle-builder many people believe it to be but it does target your biceps, which aren't worked hard elsewhere in this workout.

HOW TO DO IT

- Start with the dumbbells by your sides.
- Curl one dumb-bell up to your chest without rocking back to aid the movement.
- Lower the dumb-bell and repeat the move on the other side.

4 DUMB-BELL SHOULDER PRESS

Sets 3 Reps 10-12 Target Deltoids



WHY DO IT?

This overhead press will work the whole of your shoulder joint.

HOW TO DO IT

- Stand holding the dumbbells at shoulder height with

your palms facing forwards and your core braced.

- Press the weights directly overhead until they nearly touch at the top.
- Lower the dumbbells back to the start slowly under control.

6 PLANK

Sets 3 Time 30-45 seconds Target Abs, core



WHY DO IT?

Having a strong core is essential so that you can protect your spine during big lifts such as the squat. It's best to do this move at the end of your workout because fatiguing these deep-lying muscles before you do big lifts will leave you open to injury.

HOW TO DO IT

- Position yourself so that you rest on your forearms

with your arms bent at 90° and your elbows directly below your shoulders.

- Make sure your body is straight from head to heels and your neck is in a neutral position.
- Hold that position for the allotted time, or for as long as you can without breaking good form.

FORM TIP

Make sure you don't hunch your shoulders because that will put extra stress on your shoulder joint.

LIFTING FOR FAT LOSS

Weightlifting, rather than running, is best for fat loss. Here's why

What's the best way to shift that spare tyre around your waist: long and slow cardio sessions or cutting fat from your diet? The answer is neither, but these are still the first things many people do when trying to shift fat. The best approach, you may be surprised to hear, is lifting weights. So forget everything you thought you knew about training in the 'fat-burning zone' and fat-free food and start torching calories today.

Home truths

If you've spent hours jogging around the local park in a bid to shift some body fat, it's time to knock it on the head. 'Low-intensity exercise in the so-called "fat-burning zone" does tap into fat stores for fuel,' says personal trainer Gavin Walsh, 'but it doesn't burn many calories. It's far more effective to train hard and fast.'

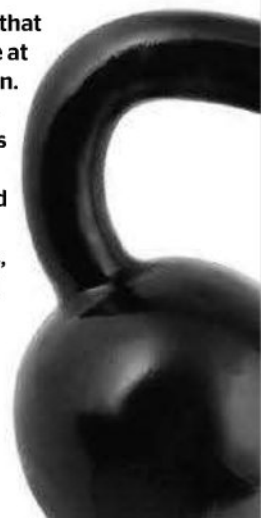
There are other reasons too. 'If you perform a lot of cardio then your body can start breaking down muscle tissue to burn as fuel,' says personal trainer Sion Colenso.

So the good news is your fat loss training sessions can be a lot shorter. The bad news is they also need to be a lot harder and be based around lifting weights.

Oxygen debt

There are a number of reasons that lifting weights is more effective at burning fat than a long, slow run. A hard weights session creates an oxygen debt in your muscles that must be replenished. This is accompanied by an increased consumption of energy.

During this recovery process, fat stores are broken down and free fatty acids are released into the blood where they are used as fuel. And when





you lift weights you cause small tears in your muscle fibres and these must be repaired.

'The more muscular damage you cause, the greater the extent of repair needed, which comes at a higher metabolic cost, so over time you burn more calories,' says personal trainer Robert Bray. 'While a steady-state run will result in higher energy consumption for around 30 minutes after the session, with weights the effect can last up to 48 hours, resulting in a far greater expenditure of calories.'

An additional benefit is that weight training will increase your lean muscle mass. 'Muscle is active tissue that burns calories,' says Colenso. 'So if you gain muscle, your metabolic rate is elevated and your body will burn more calories even at rest.'

Get intense

Ready to ditch cardio forever? Not so fast. Although lifting weights burns more calories than slow cardio, high-intensity interval training (HIIT) has a role to play in helping you slim down, especially if you are new to weight training.

'The more experienced you are, the more thoroughly you can fatigue your muscles,' says personal trainer Jeff Willoughby. 'But if you're not yet able to tax your muscles to the extent needed to mobilise fat stores as fuel, then you need to supplement your weight training with high-intensity intervals'

So what makes intervals the only form of cardio good for torching fat? 'HIIT also creates

If you gain muscle, your body will burn more calories even at rest

an oxygen debt in your muscles that stokes up your metabolism,' says Walsh.

There's more. 'A by-product of HIIT is that lactate builds up in the muscles,' says Willoughby. 'This compound destroys oestrogen, the female sex hormone, which is responsible for storing body fat around your waist. The less oestrogen you have in your body, the less fat you'll store around your hips and arse.'

Learn to fail

The best weight training strategy is to lift to failure with very short rests between sets as this creates maximum muscle damage. 'Not lifting to failure is one of the biggest mistakes men make when trying to lose fat,' says Willoughby. 'If you can do three sets of ten reps with ease, then you aren't creating

AT A GLANCE

- Weights are more effective for fat loss than slow cardio because your body continues to burn calories long after you've finished training.
- High-intensity interval training is also a good way to burn calories in a short space of time, especially if you are new to weight training.
- Keep your rest periods to around 45 seconds to ensure an effective session.

an oxygen debt and you won't burn excess calories. Do supersets that will work different muscle groups, so that you can work out harder.'

In short, you need to lift until you literally can't do one more rep, then rest for 45 seconds and doing another set. Because the rest is so brief, you will have to reduce the weight you lift after each set, but lifting lighter dumb-bells is fine. 'In the short term it may be a blow to your ego but you'll get results in the long term,' says Willoughby.

Move some metal

Some moves are far more effective for burning fat than others. 'I'd suggest following a programme of total-body moves if you want to lose weight,' says Walsh.

'Say you're doing three supersets of squats and pull-ups with 45 seconds between each one. After that you'll be lying on the floor - it's a really tough session. Compare that to doing one set of lat pull-downs before resting for three minutes with an energy drink.'

Most compound moves require free weights, such as barbells and dumb-bells, but you shouldn't turn your back on resistance machines.

'Machines take the stability element out of each move, allowing you to push harder for greater muscular damage, especially if you are new to lifting,' says Willoughby. 'If you are more advanced, start the session with free weights before maxing out on the machines to really fry your muscles.'

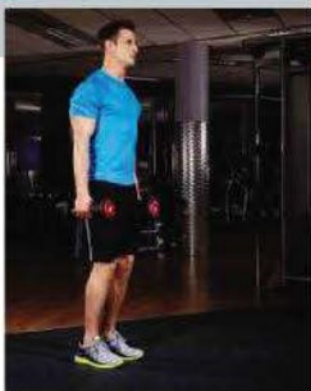


TURN OVER FOR A FAT LOSS WORKOUT

FAT LOSS WORKOUT

Do this circuit-style workout to blitz your body fat

1 DUMB-BELL LUNGE



Time 45 seconds



WHY DO IT?

It recruits important muscles, builds balanced strength and tests co-ordination.

HOW TO DO IT

- Step forward, bending both knees until your

back knee almost touches the floor.

- Make sure your front knee is over your front toe and keep your back upright throughout.
- Push off the front foot to return to the start.

3 PRESS-UP

Time 45 seconds

WHY DO IT?

Shifting your own bodyweight helps you build a functional kind of fitness. This classic move is ideal for a high-rep circuit.

HOW TO DO IT

- Start with your hands level with your shoulders, just wider than shoulder-width apart.
- Keep your body in a straight line from head to heels throughout the move.
- Lower your body, keeping



your elbows pointing back rather than to the sides.

2 ROMANIAN DEADLIFT



Time 45 seconds



WHY DO IT?

This move targets your glutes and hamstrings, which is vital if you want to build real muscle and get stronger.

HOW TO DO IT

- Start with feet shoulder-width apart, holding a

barbell with hands just outside your thighs.

- Initiate the move from your hips, not your waist.
- Keep your back straight and let the weights travel down your shins or until you feel a good stretch in your hamstrings.

4 ALTERNATING SHOULDER PRESS

Time 45 seconds

WHY DO IT?

Alternating sides increases the stability element of this move and makes sure that both shoulders improve at the same rate.

HOW TO DO IT

- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart with your torso upright and your core braced.
- Start with one dumb-bell at shoulder level with your elbow to the side and the other dumb-bell raised.
- As you lower one dumb-bell, raise the



other and use your core muscles to stabilise the movement and avoid rocking from side to side.



Circuits are great for fat loss because they allow you to burn a huge amount of calories both during your session and also after you have stopped working out. The reason you carry on

burning calories even after your session has finished is because the intense nature of the workout means your body has to work hard to get back to its normal state. This circuit alternates upper- and lower-body

moves, so that you can go from one exercise to the next without having to pause for a rest.

FIT TIP
Start by doing two circuits with two minutes' rest in between and work up to four or five circuits

5 DUMB-BELL STEP-UP

Time 45 seconds

WHY DO IT?

This trains you to be stronger in a movement that you perform every day - stepping upwards while holding a weight.

HOW TO DO IT

- Find a chair, box or bench that is no higher than knee height and place one foot flat on the top.
- Keep your back upright and hold the dumb-bells by your sides.
- Push up with your leading leg while keeping



- your back upright.
- Step back down with your trailing leg and repeat as before for all your reps before swapping sides.

7 DUMB-BELL BENT-OVER ROW

Time 45 seconds



WHY DO IT?

This works the back and helps develop a strong core.

HOW TO DO IT

- Lean forward from the hips with your back straight, core braced, shoulders

retracted and knees slightly bent, holding the dumb-bells by your knees.

- Pull the weights up to your sternum and squeeze your shoulder blades together at the top of the move.
- Lower slowly to the start.

6 BURPEE

Time 45 seconds



WHY DO IT?

This works your lower body and tests cardio fitness.

HOW TO DO IT

- From standing, drop down so your knees are bent and your hands are on the floor.
- Jump both feet back

simultaneously, then jump them forward again.

- Jump up so your body is vertical and your feet leave the ground.

FORM TIP
To make the burpee even harder, take your hands off the floor when you jump your feet back.

8 SHADOW BOXING

Time 45 seconds

WHY DO IT?

This switches the focus to your upper body, with another move that will get your heart pumping.

HOW TO DO IT

- Get into a boxing stance, then throw a series of jabs, crosses, hooks and uppercuts.
- Try to imagine that



you are boxing a real opponent, so you keep moving your feet and move in and out of range.

HOW TO BUILD A WORKOUT

Doing exercises in the right order will maximise your benefits



31 minutes **Compound lifts**



If you think hammering your biceps for half an hour before spending five minutes on the rest of your body constitutes a good session, think again. The bulk of your session should comprise compound moves – exercises that involve a large number of muscles. You also need to include a warm-up, warm-down, isolation move and abs work. Use this structure, from KX Gym's Gideon Remfry, as a template for your sessions.



MINUTES 0 TO 5 Preparation

Use your time getting changed to focus on what you want to achieve from the session. Visualise performing every rep with perfect form and the right tempo and getting to the end of each set successfully.



MINUTES 6 TO 12 Warm-up

To fully warm up your muscles and connective tissue, spend five minutes doing mobility movements that work the whole body, gradually increasing the range of motion. Pick movements that mimic what you will do during your workouts, such as torso rotations, lunges, pushes and pulls.



MINUTES 13 TO 43 Compound lifts

The heart of the session. In these 30 minutes perform a series of moves that work every major muscle group in the body. Alternating between lower-body and upper-body moves allows one half to recover while the other is working to cut down on rest time and make the session more time-efficient. A good programme would involve squats, bench press, deadlifts, pull-ups, lunges and rows. Aim for three sets of each. These compound moves target the most muscles in the least time so your body responds by releasing more growth hormones so that your muscles grow back stronger.



MINUTES 44 TO 48 Isolation moves

Use the next five minutes to focus on isolation moves to really fatigue key muscle groups. Biceps curls, triceps presses and hamstring

curls should all feature to blitz the muscles into exhaustion.



MINUTES 49 TO 53 Abs exercises

Time to hit the abs hard. By this stage of the workout your core will have done a lot of work in stabilising you during the compound lifts so spending a few minutes on a variety of crunches, reverse curls and side planks will really stress these muscles and force them to come back bigger and stronger.



MINUTES 54 TO 56 Stretching

Well done. You're almost there. Your muscles will be hurting but it's important to spend a few minutes stretching them all. Specifically target the muscles you have used and pay extra attention to the tight areas (pecs, lats, quads, hamstrings and calves). Hold each muscle stretch for three sets of ten seconds to regain their elasticity and help flush out lactic acid.



MINUTES 57 TO 58 Recovery nutrition

With the hard work behind you, now comes the most important part of the session. Drink a protein shake so that your muscles can begin the recovery process. The post-workout period is vital for getting in high-quality protein so that you can start your next session stronger.



MINUTES 59 TO 60 Shower

Hit the showers, alternating between hot and cold to help flood the muscles with nutrient-rich blood and flush out lactic acid. Reflect on the session: what did you do well? Were you using the correct weights? And are you ready to go heavier on some moves next time?

WORKOUT DESIGN

HOW MANY EXERCISES SHOULD I DO?

'For muscle growth I advise doing four to eight moves, depending on the session,' says Allan Collins of Jordan Fitness (jordanfitness.com). Working the whole body can take up to eight exercises, while targeting a single body part can be done in four or fewer. 'If you do fewer exercises, increase the number of sets proportionally,' says Collins.

HOW MANY SETS AND REPS SHOULD I DO FOR EACH MOVE?

'Aim to do 70 reps or more per session,' says Collins. For muscle growth, your rep range for each set is eight to 12, and you're aiming to exhaust your muscles by the end of the final set. 'Muscles should be under tension for 40-70 seconds in each set,' says Collins. Lifting for less than 40 seconds would give you functional strength but wouldn't increase muscle size. For compound exercises do up to five sets; for isolation moves do two to three.

HOW MUCH REST SHOULD I TAKE?

Move on too quickly and your muscles will not recover enough; rest too long and you let your body off the hook. Generally, the heavier the weight, the more recovery time you need. If you're doing eight reps of a single-joint move with a light weight you may need only 30 seconds' rest. But if you're doing a big compound, exercise such as a hang clean, you may need two minutes.

KEY REP RANGES

REPS	EFFECT
1-7	Strength
8-12	Muscle growth
13+	Muscle endurance

ADVANCED TRAINING METHODS

Use these options as you progress or if your growth stalls

PYRAMID SETS



WHAT ARE THEY?

Pyramid sets use different rep ranges and weights. You start with high reps and a low weight, then increase the weight and decrease the reps – so you'd do sets of 12, ten, eight and six reps, for example.

WHY DO THEM?

'The main benefit, particularly for beginners, is that you get to warm up properly before you hit failure because you're steadily increasing the weight,' says KX Gym's Gideon Remfry. 'Don't go too heavy too soon. You're aiming to build up stress so you get compensation but not so much that you don't recover.' Try pyramid sets that increase the weight at the start of your session when you're fresh, then decrease the weight at the end to fatigue your muscles. 'Use pyramid training every two months for a week as an alternative to your standard sessions,' suggests Remfry.

DROP SETS

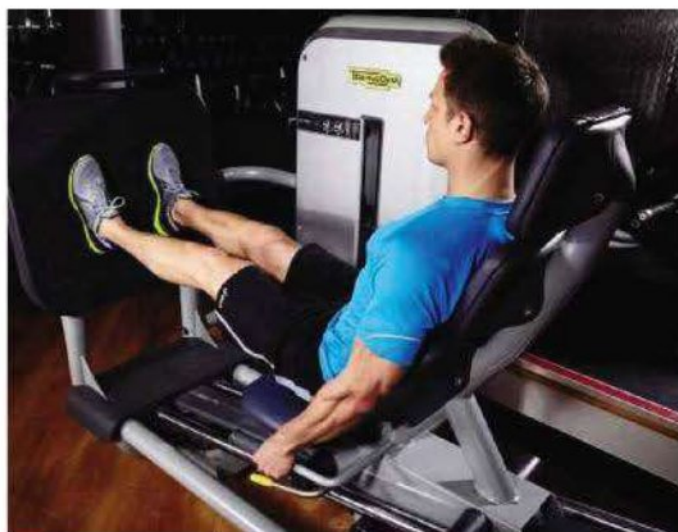
WHAT ARE THEY?

Drop sets are a way to increase the number of reps you do. Once you reach failure (when you can no longer perform the move with perfect form), reduce the weight and do as many reps as you can with that weight. Doing drops sets with dumb-bells or on a machine will help you switch weights at speed and get the full benefit.

WHY DO THEM?

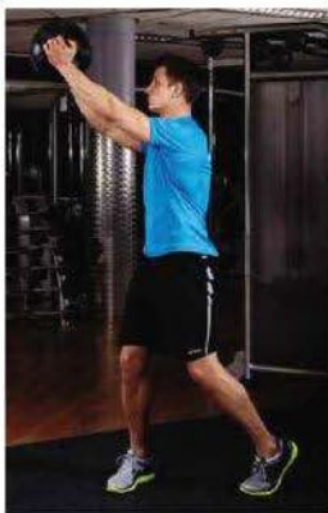
The intense nature of this kind of workout ramps up the

muscle-building effect so you can use it to burst through a training plateau. 'You need to make sure you start lifting within three seconds so you don't get a chance to recover,' says Remfry. 'That means you may need a spotter.' But be warned: using this method too frequently could lead to overtraining, which puts you at increased risk of injury. 'Do it every three months for a week, working each major muscle group once in that week,' says Remfry.





CIRCUITS



WHAT ARE THEY?

Circuits are a series of exercises performed back to back with little or no rest in between. Completing all the exercises without stopping constitutes one circuit. Ordinarily you would perform multiple circuits in one session.

WHY DO THEM?

Cutting out rest means that you get more of a cardio benefit from doing circuits. You'll also continue to burn calories long after your session ends so they're good for fat loss too. 'If you do a station-based circuit where you do each activity for, says, 60 seconds, you can do a high number and variety of exercises,' says Fitness Explorer's Darryl Edwards. 'You're not working one muscle group for too long and you can choose exercises that mean you don't get too fatigued, so it's a great way to get a full-body workout. Compound moves are best because the more muscles you're working, the more calories you'll burn.'

Using post-exhaustion sets is really efficient

POST EXHAUSTION SETS



WHAT ARE THEY?

This technique follows a compound, multi-joint move with a single-joint isolation exercise targeting a particular muscle. The muscle is activated during the first exercise and then completely exhausted in the second.

WHY DO THEM?

This will appease the chest and arms brigade, who will no doubt be a bit sick of us dissuading them from hammering



their favourite body parts. It gives you the chance to do a compound chest and arms move, such as a press-up, and follow that with a move that isolates either the chest (such as a chest flye) or the triceps (such as an overhead triceps extension). 'This is really time-efficient and will shock your muscles,' says Remfry. 'It will also lead to massive amounts of growth hormone release, so it's good for building muscle. Start by doing it as a final set at the end of a session.'

SUPERSETS

WHAT ARE THEY?

Supersets are pairs of exercises done back to back, usually targeting opposing muscle groups. You complete a set of the first exercise before going straight into a set of the next exercise without any rest.

WHY DO THEM?

Removing rest periods makes supersets a great time-saving workout. 'It's a

great motivator because you don't have a two-minute rest time between exercises when you're doing nothing,' says Edwards. 'You can combine exercises that don't tax the same muscle groups so it will reduce your workout time. You'll also increase your strength endurance because you're reducing your rest times and the increased intensity means you'll get a cardio benefit.'



SMARTER CARDIO

Get great cardio fitness results with these 20-minute sessions



Ploddling away on a treadmill is boring and an inefficient use of your time. The trick to quality cardio sessions is keeping your effort high. But to do that, you need to get your head around working hard. The best way to do that is to trick your brain into helping push your body by playing a cardio game. The following sessions will stimulate your mind and tax your cardiovascular system.

⬢ Pack of cards

MACHINE TREADMILL

Take a pack of cards with you to the treadmill. Jog and then do a progressive, five-minute warm-up. Stop and turn over a card, then run for one minute at the effort level (see box, right) of the card - one is walking pace and nine is the top speed you can sustain for 60 seconds. If you get a ten or a picture card, sprint for as long as possible up to 30 seconds. Do this for 20 minutes.

⬢ Speedy spinning

MACHINE STATIONARY BIKE

Get on a stationary bike and begin with a five-minute warm-up. Cycle at level 6-7 for two minutes and then explode into motion, pedalling as fast as you possibly can. Lean forward on the handlebars and let your legs fly at full pace for 20-30 seconds. Make a note of the top RPM that you reach and record it as your personal best. Rest for 30 seconds and then go back to pedalling at level 6-7 for one minute before repeating the flat-out effort. Do this ten times in total, trying to beat your PB each time.



STROKE OF GENIUS

Use these tips to perfect your rowing technique



1 CATCH

Reach forward with knees bent and arms extended, with your body leaning towards the flywheel. Hold your head high. Your arms should be straight, your shoulders relaxed and your back neutral.

2 DRIVE

The drive begins with the legs and back doing all the work. Straighten your legs and push through your back. Your arms should remain straight until the end of the drive when your knees are almost straight, so keep your shoulders relaxed. Pulling with your arms too early will reduce leg power and you may hit your knees with the handle.

3 FINISH

Retract your shoulder blades and pull the handle in to your abs. Any higher and it will make you lean

back too far, but any lower and it will get caught by your knees. Your legs should be straight and your body leaning slightly back.

4 RECOVERY

After the finish, begin the recovery by letting your hands move back towards the flywheel. Always let your arms straighten before bending your legs to avoid hitting your thighs as the seat moves forward, which would lose all your momentum.

5 CATCH

The recovery takes you back to the catch position as your arms straighten and your knees bend, ready to pull again. Make sure your legs do all the work during the drive and don't pull with your arms until it's complete. This allows your action to be as continuous as a conveyor belt and ensures that your stroke is as efficient as possible.

500s

MACHINE ROWER

Do 500m to warm up, then reset the counter. Accelerate and go hard for the next 500m and note the time that you achieve. Then recover for 500m. Go hard for another 500m and try to beat your previous time. Continue this pattern for 20 minutes, trying to make each interval faster than the last.

Duathlon coin toss

MACHINES TREADMILL, STATIONARY BIKE

Jog at level 5 on the treadmill. After four minutes flip a coin and call heads or tails. If you get it right, get on the bike and continue at level 4-5. If you get it wrong, stay on the treadmill and increase your effort to

Do speedy spinning ten times, trying to beat your best each time

level 7. After four minutes flip the coin again and apply the same rules, always following an incorrect call with four minutes at level 7. Flip the coin two more times to complete the workout.

Gym sprint triathlon MACHINES TREADMILL, STATIONARY BIKE, ROWER

Jog to the gym, then start on the rower at high resistance



EFFORT LEVEL

Use this guide to judge how fast you should be going

- 1-3 Easy up to a gentle pace**
- 4-5 Able to hold a conversation**
- 6-7 Getting out of breath**
- 8-9 Can't talk, uncomfortable**
- 10 Flat-out sprint**

and row for six minutes at level 7-8. Then spend 40 seconds on the transition to the stationary bike and cycle for six minutes, spinning the pedals at a cadence of 90-100RPM. Then spend 40 seconds on the transition to the treadmill, setting it to a +4 incline, and finish by running for six minutes at level 8-9.

RATE YOUR FITNESS

Take the tests, then use the tips to improve your scores



ONE-REP MAX SQUAT



rest in between, increasing the weight between 2.5kg and 10kg each time.

Divide the heaviest weight you lift by your bodyweight for your score.

SCORE	LEVEL
2.0	Excellent
1.5	Very good
1.25	Good
1.00	Average
0.75	Poor

WHY DO IT?

Many strength coaches cite the squat as the best all-round strength-building exercise.

THE TEST

Ideally, do the test with a squat rack, not on a Smith machine.

Warm up first. Then get in an upright position with your feet shoulder-width apart and pointing slightly outwards.

Aim for four attempts, with three to five minutes'

HOW TO IMPROVE

- Learn to sit back into the squat, keep the weight distributed over your heels and not let your knees drift too far forwards.
- Work on your weak points - lower back, glutes and hamstrings. Try good mornings or Romanian deadlifts.
- Strengthen your adductors by getting into a side plank position, then putting your top foot on a bench and lifting yourself up.

PREDICT YOUR 1RM

If you haven't got a spotter, don't want to risk a max lift, or have no idea what your max should be, you can use the table (right) to predict it.

Just use a weight that you can do two to ten reps with for a max set, then multiply it by the value on the right to get your predicted max.

REPS	COEFFICIENT
2	1.07
3	1.12
4	1.15
5	1.18
6	1.21
7	1.24
8	1.27
9	1.30
10	1.33

EXAMPLE If you can lift 85kg for 5 reps, your predicted 1RM is $85 \times 1.18 = 100\text{kg}$



PRESS-UP



WHY DO IT?

The humble press-up is both an excellent test of upper body strength endurance.

THE TEST

Start in the top position of a press-up, with your hands shoulder-width apart and body straight.

Lower yourself until your elbows are bent at 90°, then press back up.

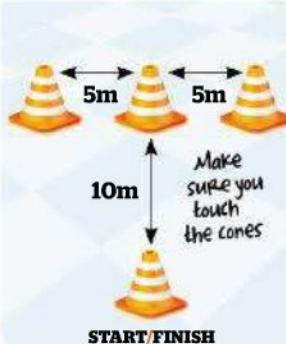
SCORE LEVEL

40+	Excellent
30-40	Very good
20-30	Good
10-20	Average
Below 10	Poor

HOW TO IMPROVE

- Aim to do three or four sets of max reps, with around 60 seconds' rest between sets.
- Vary the tempo. Come down slowly and explode up, for example.

T-TEST



WHY DO IT?

It's one of the best ways of testing your agility and your ability to quickly change direction - a skill that's useful in most sports.

THE TEST

Set three cones up, five metres apart, in a straight line. Set up a fourth cone ten metres behind the middle cone to form a 'T'

- this is the starting cone. On the word go, run to the middle cone and touch it.

Next, sidestep to the left cone and touch it, then back to the right cone and touch it.

Finally, sidestep back to the middle cone, then run backwards to the starting cone. When you touch it, your timing partner stops the clock.

SCORE LEVEL

9.5sec or less	Excellent
9.6-10.5sec	Very good
10.6-11.5sec	Good
11.6-12.5sec	Average
12.6sec or more	Poor

HOW TO IMPROVE

- Try to stay low, with your knees bent and your centre of gravity slightly forwards. Run on the balls of your feet, not your toes.

VO₂ MAX TEST



12-minute run. Set up a treadmill with a 1° gradient. Warm up, then aim to run the farthest distance you can in 12 minutes.

Calculate your VO₂ max using the equation $VO_2 = (\text{metres run} - 505) / 45$. So if you ran 2.4 kilometres, your score would be $(2,400 - 505) / 45 = 42$.

VO₂ MAX LEVEL

Over 70	Excellent
60-70	Very good
50-60	Good
40-50	Average
Under 40	Poor

WHY DO IT?

Your VO₂ max represents the maximum capacity of your body to transport and use oxygen in a given time. It's measured in millilitres of oxygen per kilogram of bodyweight per minute (ml/kg/min).

THE TEST

A basic way of estimating your VO₂ max is the Cooper

HOW TO IMPROVE

- Try to do continuous aerobic training at a heart rate of 70-85 per cent of your maximum for between 30 and 60 minutes, three to five times a week.

SIT AND REACH FLEXIBILITY



measure goes. The point where the two intersect is 0cm. Put your feet on the baseline, 20-30cm apart. With hands together, slowly reach forwards, keeping your fingers on the measuring line. Measure how far past the baseline you can reach. If you can't reach past your feet, you'll have a negative reading.

DISTANCE LEVEL

15cm or more	Excellent
10-15cm	Very good
0-15cm	Good
-5-0cm	Average
Less than -5cm	Poor

WHY DO IT?

It's a good indicator of the flexibility of your hamstrings and lower back.

THE TEST

Warm up and stretch before you start. Mark a straight line on the floor as your baseline. Mark another line perpendicular to it as your measuring line - this is where your ruler or tape

HOW TO IMPROVE

- It's extremely important to warm up for at least ten minutes beforehand.
- If you're stretching as part of your workout, do it afterwards.

THE RULES OF NUTRITION

Without the right nutrition all your hard work in the gym won't be rewarded. Here's everything you need to know



Eating well is simpler than you might think. By following key healthy eating principles you can be sure that what you eat will support the hard work you do in training. Even better, you don't have to diet.

Go natural

If people weren't eating it 1,000 years ago, avoid it now. That means basing meals on fresh meat, fish and vegetables, and cooking your meals from scratch rather than from a packet or a takeaway. Processed foods, such as cakes, pies and ready meals, tend to be high in calories, full of salt and additives, and low in essential nutrients, so while they're poor at providing sustained energy, they are very good at making you gain weight. Many also contain trans fats, which your body can't digest properly, leading to high cholesterol and clogged arteries.

Eat little and often

Eating small, regular meals is the best way to keep your body energised and provides a regular intake of protein to help you build muscles and burn fat. That's because eating little and often keeps your metabolism - the speed at which you burn energy - revved up, so you'll burn more of the energy you consume, plus some that's been stored as body fat, compared with eating a big breakfast, lunch and dinner. Aim for six small meals a day.

Base meals on protein

This is really important whether you want to add muscles or burn fat.



Basing each of those small meals on a high-quality source of protein – think meat, fish and eggs – will make you feel fuller for longer so you're less tempted by high-sugar snacks, provide the nutrients needed to repair damaged muscles, and provide a host of essential vitamins and minerals. Each meal should also contain vegetables in a variety of colours. For carbs, stick to brown rice and sweet potatoes.

Get plenty of variety

Your body requires many vitamins and minerals to stay healthy, and if you eat a limited diet you risk poor health, let alone the energy to

We need fats to help better absorb certain vitamins

train or fight off illness. That's why you need to eat as wide a range of foods as possible, especially fruit and vegetables. The Department of Health recommends eating five portions of fruit and veg a day, but some research suggests we should be eating up to nine, and of as many different colours as possible. This ensures you get plenty of cancer-fighting antioxidants, gut-satisfying fibre, and the vitamins and minerals you need to keep you fit and healthy.

Don't cut out fat

Many people try to cut out fat when trying to lose weight, but this isn't the best course of action. We need fats to help better absorb certain vitamins, for instance, and some fats can also help us feel fuller for longer. The best sources of fats are olive



oil, avocados and nuts, but remember fats are still very high in calories so don't go overboard.

Drink a lot of water

We can survive several weeks without food but only a few days without water. Your body can't store water like it does food, so you need a constant supply to replenish the fluid you lose through sweating and toilet stops. The average person loses around one litre of fluid for every

hour of exercise, and that can have a detrimental effect on your health and performance. Aim to drink at least eight glasses of water every day, but more if you're exercising or if it's hot. A good indicator of how much water you need is to weight yourself before and after exercise: for every 1kg lost drink 1.5 litres of water to replenish fluids. You should also get in the habit of sipping water throughout the day. If you feel thirsty you are probably already dehydrated.

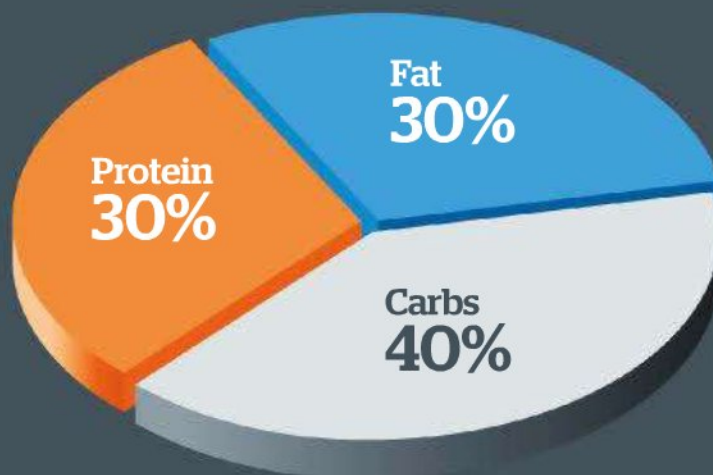
Cut out the booze

If you are trying to add muscle, lose fat or simply get fitter then alcohol is not your friend. Yes, there is evidence that consuming a little alcohol, such as red wine, on a regular basis does offer some health benefits, but necking pint after pint will compromise your fitness goals. Not only are alcohol drinks high in calories – which will get stored as fat – you'll also be more tempted by that takeaway on the way home and less likely to stick to your gym session the following morning. If you want to get in shape, give the booze a miss.

YOUR IDEAL DIET

Here's the nutritional split you should be aiming for

This is a general guide to where your calories should be coming from. The training you do should affect the split so that if you're doing a lot of endurance training you may want to up your carb intake, and if you're weight training to build muscle then you may want to increase your protein consumption.



SPORTS SUPPS

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What are supplements? And which ones should you take?



Sports supplements are the one subject *MF* gets asked about most. These pills and powders can obviously cause confusion, so here's what you need to know.

Are supplements safe to take?

Yes, they are completely safe and don't contain anything you won't find in real food. But many people confuse supplements, such as protein powders, creatine or fat-burning pills, with performance-enhancing drugs, such as anabolic steroids. They're not the same. Supplements are designed to complement hard training and

good diet to enhance your results to build muscle, burn fat and get fitter. 'Supplements are designed to help you get the nutrients you need quickly and efficiently,' says personal trainer Shaun Stafford (shaunstaffordtraining.com). 'Numerous studies have shown the health benefits of multivitamins, creatine, omega 3 fish oil and other forms of supplement.'

What about side effects?

If taken in the right quantity then supplements don't have side effects - only health benefits. 'With performance-enhancing drugs the side-effects can be severe, but the type of supplements we're talking about are designed to simply provide your body with

some key ingredients that will help you work out harder, recover faster and ultimately speed up your results,' says Stafford.

Will they make me massive?

No. Adding serious muscle is a long-term objective: downing a few protein shakes will not transform your body overnight. 'Getting more muscular is a complex process involving the right elements of training, eating, sleeping and recovery,' says Jean-Claude Vacassin, founder of W10 Performance (w10performance.com).





'Supplements are designed to aid the nutrition and recovery component of this, but they are no substitute for hard graft in the gym and eating the right foods and the right time.'

They seem expensive - are they worth it?

Yes, but only if you are training hard and eating well - remember, they're not magic pills. 'Supplements don't have to cost the earth, and you don't have to take everything to get good results,' says Stafford. 'A good core supplement plan should consist of a good daily multivitamin, a high-quality omega 3-rich fish oil product, and some protein powder

Supplements are designed to help you work out harder

to make a post-workout shake. Add this all up and you are looking at a few quid a day, which is what most people spend on takeaway coffee.'

How quickly can I expect to see results?

If you are deficient in certain vitamins and minerals, adding them to your diet through supplements can have almost immediate results. 'Supplying your body with the nutrients it needs can quickly result in better moods, deeper sleep, higher energy levels and better performance in the gym,' says Vacassin.



CHOOSING THE RIGHT SUPPLEMENTS FOR YOU

With so many products to choose from, how do you know what you need? Here's a handy guide

THERMOGENICS



These products increase the rate at which your body burns fat through a process called thermogenesis.

They create a stimulant effect that produces greater energy.

TAKE THEM IF... you want to lose weight or get more energy.

USE Bodybuilding Warehouse Caffeine (200mg), £4.95 for 100.

AMINO ACIDS



Amino acids increase the release of human growth hormone, which helps prevent the breakdown of

muscle tissue during intense exercise and improves recovery.

TAKE THEM IF... you want more muscle mass and strength.

USE Bodybuilding Warehouse Excel 2:1:1 BCAA Blend, £34 for 1kg.

CASEIN PROTEIN



The building blocks that make up muscle. Like whey protein (see below), it helps repair and build muscle, but

casein is absorbed more slowly and more thoroughly than whey protein.

TAKE IT IF... you want lean muscle.

USE Bodybuilding Warehouse Casein, £36.99 for 2.5kg.

WHEY PROTEIN



This is a super-efficient protein derived from cow's milk. It has most of its fats and sugars filtered out so it's easily digested and

acts fast. Its main purpose is to repair muscle damage caused by intense training, but it also decreases hunger pangs and is

high in antioxidants.

TAKE IT IF... you want to build a more muscular physique.

USE Bodybuilding Warehouse Premium Whey, £31.99 for 3kg.

CREATINE



Creatine is a type of amino acid found in small amounts in some meat and fish. It prolongs maximal power output and

speeds up recovery between sets.

TAKE IT IF... you want to increase strength and explosive power for sprinting and powerlifting.

USE Bodybuilding Warehouse Creatine Gluconate, £19.99 for 500g.

ANTIOXIDANTS



The body's natural defence against illness and infection. They eliminate free radicals, which

destroy cells and create oxidative damage. Free radicals are created by intense exercise, such as weight training.

TAKE THEM IF... you are going to undertake intense exercise - or want to protect against the regular stresses of modern life.

USE Bodybuilding Warehouse Acai Berry (2,000mg), £9.99 for 120.

CARBS



Mainly sugars and starches, carbs are the most efficient source of food energy. They provide immediate energy, which is

stored as glycogen.

TAKE THEM IF... you want to improve performance and recovery in endurance sports.

USE Bodybuilding Warehouse Maltodextrin, £11.99 for 3kg.

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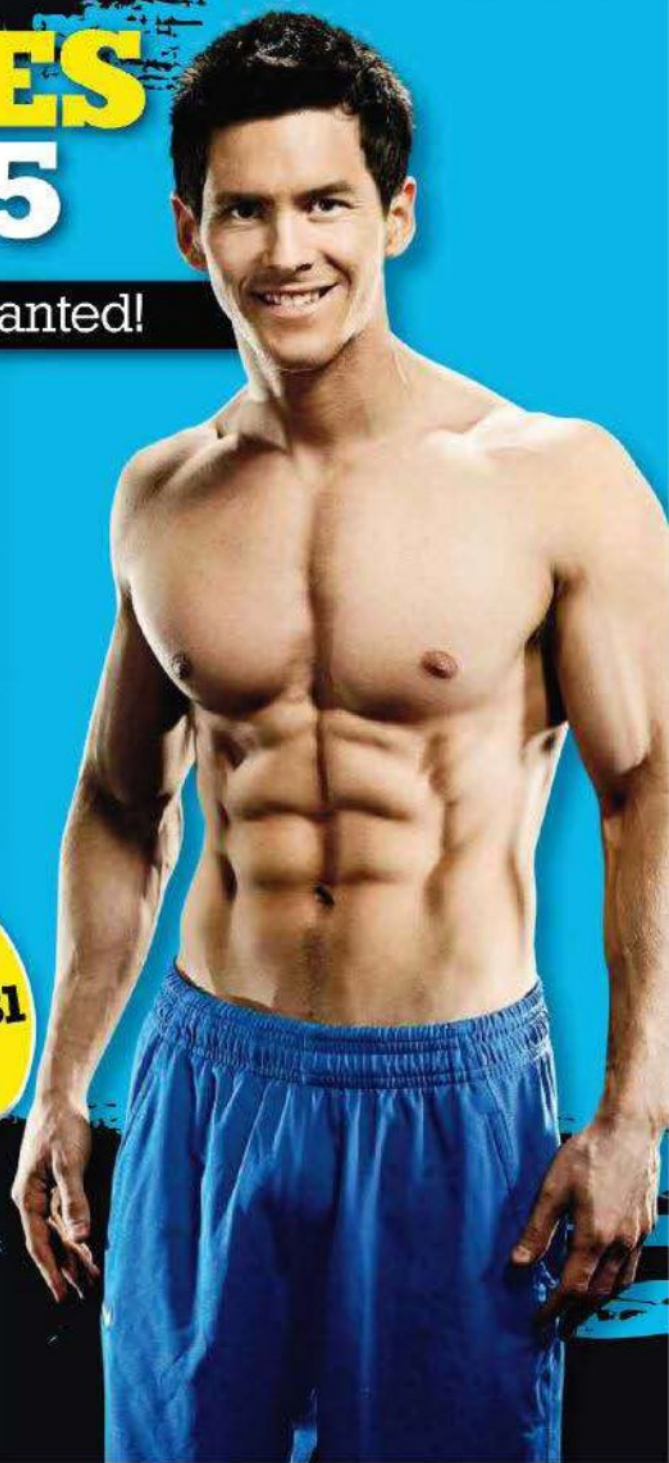
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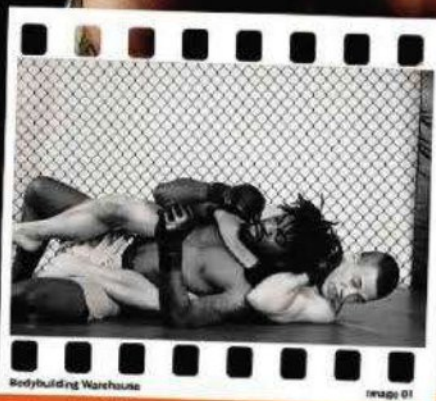
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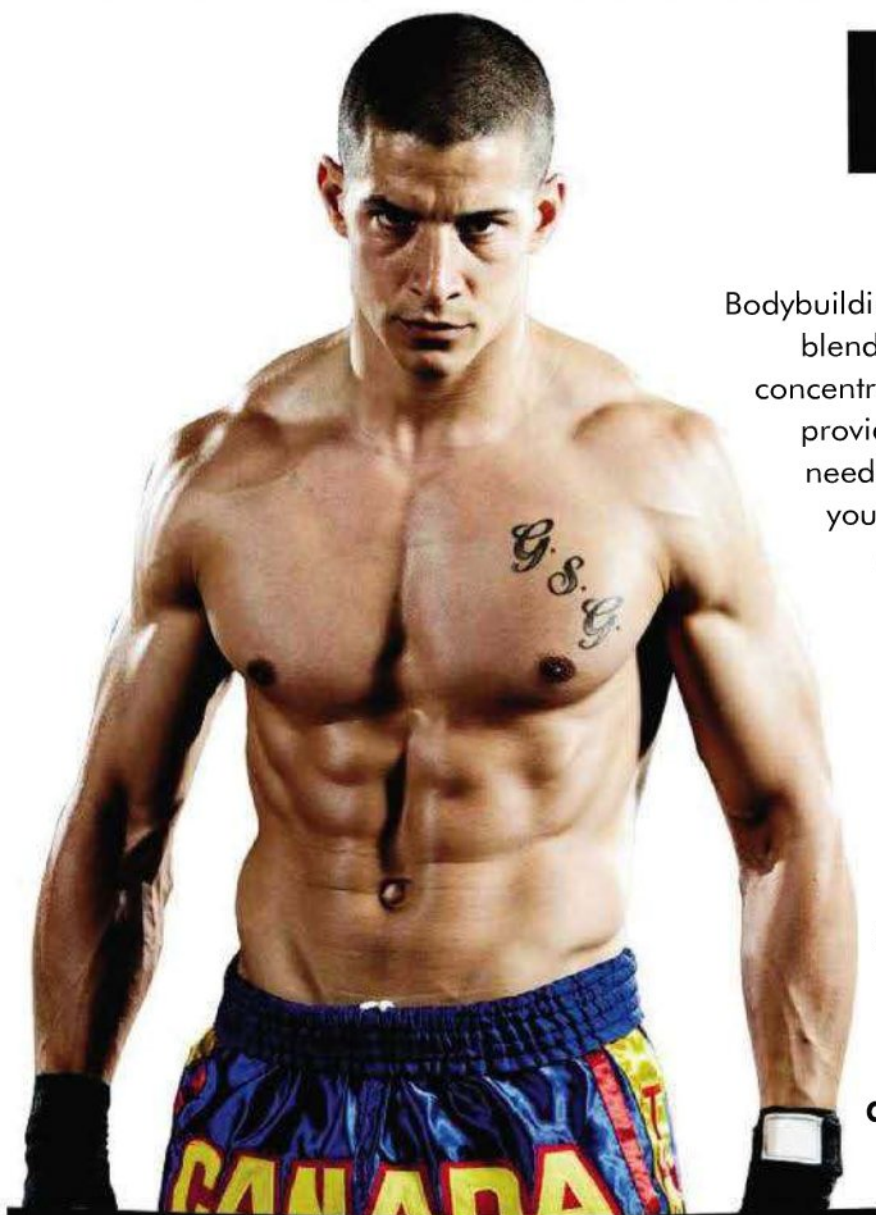
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Muscle expert
Charles Poliquin

Why you should listen to him

He has trained Olympians in 18 different sports and is the world's leading authority on strength and conditioning.

Charles Poliquin says...

You don't know squat!

Master this big-time move and pack on muscle everywhere

I I've heard more myths and lies about the squat than any other lift.

Maybe people like having a handful of excuses to explain why they don't perform one of the toughest - yet most rewarding - moves you can do in a gym.

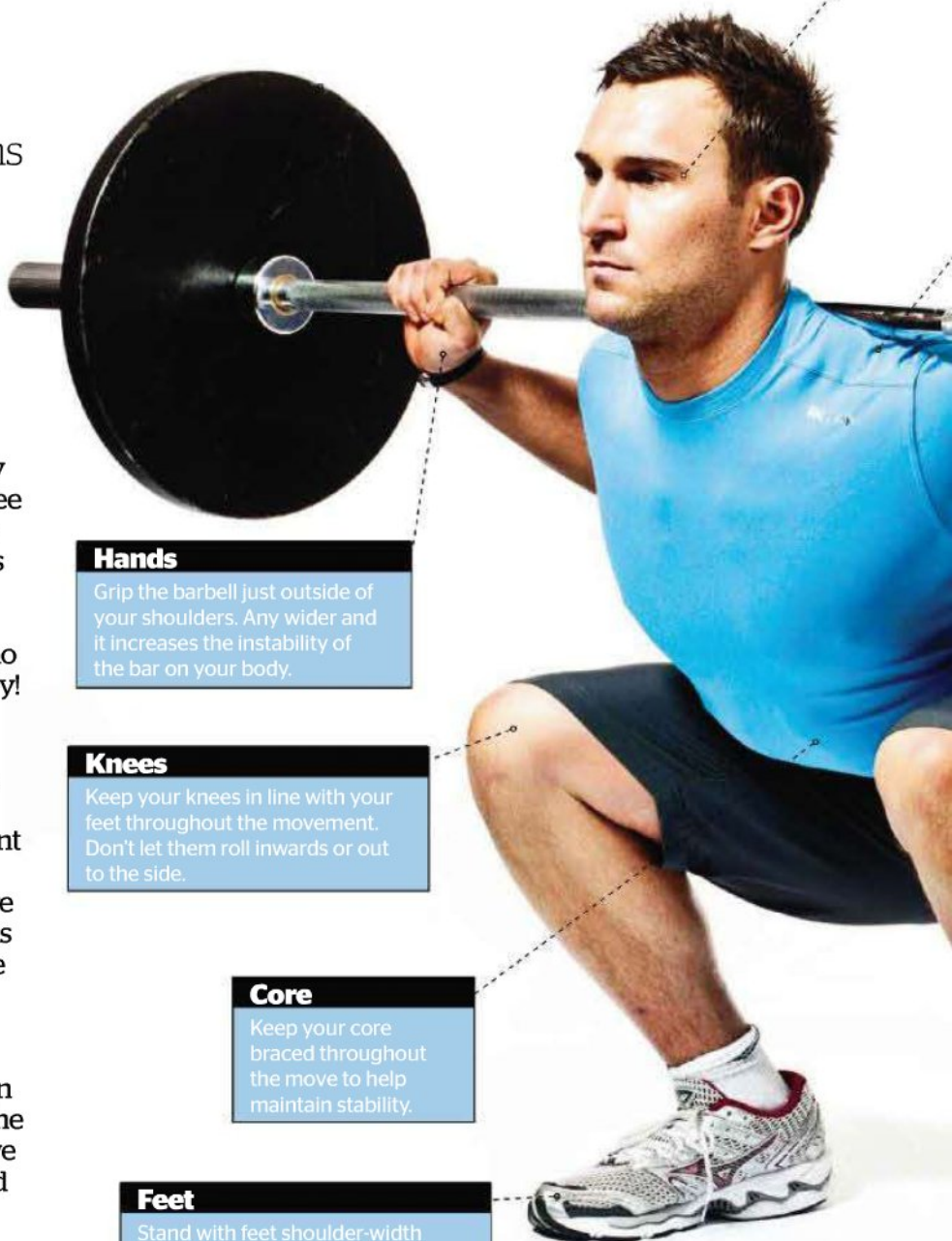
My favourite myth is that squats are bad for your knees. Every study has shown that squats improve knee stability and that regular squatting reduces not only the rate of injuries but also the time it takes to recuperate from them.

Another myth is that it's safer to do squats on a Smith machine. Baloney! In my experience this approach is very hard on the patellar ligament and the anterior cruciate ligament, both of which act as stabilisers for the knees. That's not a joint you want to mess around with.

Finally, some claim that squats are bad for your back. Wrong. So long as you squat with the proper form, the centre mass of the barbell will be close to your centre of gravity, meaning injury risk is minimal.

If done without perfect form it can be dangerous. But done correctly, the squat is safe and extremely effective at promoting muscular growth, and should be the foundation of any weight-training programme.

Here's the complete lowdown on the king of the leg moves.



Hands

Grip the barbell just outside of your shoulders. Any wider and it increases the instability of the bar on your body.

Knees

Keep your knees in line with your feet throughout the movement. Don't let them roll inwards or out to the side.

Core

Keep your core braced throughout the move to help maintain stability.

Feet

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart - any narrower doesn't provide enough stability - and have your toes turned out slightly.



Find more sage exercise advice from Charles Poliquin at mensfitness.co.uk/links/poliquin

Eyes

With your head stable, keep your eyes focused on a spot on the floor about two metres in front of you throughout the move.

Still need convincing?

'There's no substitute for the squat,' says Poliquin. 'It not only recruits a huge number of muscles and nerves, it also generates an unequalled hormone response.'

Shoulders

The bar should rest on the back of your shoulders, across your traps, and not on your neck.

**Elbows**

Your elbows need to be tucked directly under the bar, which will help keep your shoulder blades retracted and keep your torso upright during the lift and prevent you leaning too far forwards or backwards.

Lower back

Maintain a natural arch in your back throughout the entire move.

Thighs

Initiate the movement by bending the knees, and descend until your hamstrings touch your calves before pushing back up through your heels.

Q+A**Ask Poliquin**

Got a question for our muscle expert?
Email mfexperts@dennis.co.uk

Q I play football and I want to get faster. Will a full leg-weights workout help or hinder my speed?

A Soccer is about 40 years behind the rest of the sporting world when it comes to the benefits and application of strength training. Working your legs with weights will definitely improve your running speed. Why else would Olympic sprinters and American footballers devote so much time and effort to strength training?

**Q What are the best non-gym muscle-building activities?**

A According to research and basic observation, mountain climbing and grappling sports such as judo and wrestling are the best pursuits for putting on muscle without weights. However, your results would be much slower and come with a far greater injury risk than weight training at a gym.

Q My calves won't grow - what can I do?

A If you have the lower leg development of a parrot, start doing single-leg calf work, and do all standing calf exercises before doing the seated stuff, both of which will promote growth.

Q I recently started Bikram yoga a couple of times a week alongside my four weekly weight sessions. Will this help?

A This is a superb addition to your regime. Stretching is the yin to the yang that is strength training, and the hot environment of Bikram increases growth hormones dramatically, helping to make your muscle gains more permanent.



Photography Danny Bird, Shutterstock Model Scott Elliot@WAtletic