

Few Tips On Home Fitness

Brought to you by
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Introduction to Fitness

One of the most important factors to achieving a healthy lifestyle is a good eating and fitness plan. Staying fit and eating healthy, not only makes you look good but also makes you feel good. There is no better feeling than ending your fitness routine, with a sense of achievement.

There are a lot of ways to stay healthy and enjoy staying healthy; finding the sport or exercise that interests you the most makes fitness fun and healthy. If you do not enjoy the exercise program you do, then try another!

There are hundreds of ways of keeping fit from dancing to rock climbing. Find something that takes your interest give it a go, like it or hate it you can always move on to the next one.

Just about all aspects of fitness can be achieved in a gym e.g.

strength building, cardiovascular fitness, aerobics and dance. All ages and fitness levels are catered for and improvements can be monitored and changed to suit the individual.

The good thing about the gym is it's an anytime (within reason) fitness centre, whether it is raining, snowing or hurricane winds, there is always somewhere to train. Not only can you train in the comfort of the gym, there is also the help of trained professionals on hand at all times.

If you are a novice at the gym and do require help, ask a member of staff about personal trainers. Personal trainers are not that expensive and can get you into the fitness routine of your choice in no time.

Whatever you do in life to keep fit, it is 100 times better than sitting on the sofa getting fat and lazy! Get out there get the heart pumping, do not under estimate the effects a good fitness routine can have on you, your body, and the way you live your life.

Stretching and Warm up Exercises

Before any workout takes place you need to warm up. Warming up prevents any muscle strain and allows for better blood flow to the muscles.

Jumping into your fitness routine without any form of warm up could cause muscle damage and render you unable to train for sometime. Here are a few stretching techniques for various parts of the body.

Back Stretches: Lay on your front and open your arms to do a press up style motion (without lifting your body from the ground). Holding your pelvis to the floor push up with your arms, lifting your chest from the ground, this will stretch the lower back muscles.

Another technique used for stretching and warming the back can be done, by lying on your back, hand at your side, palms down. Lift your knees up with you feet flat to the floor, and then rock your knees slowly from side to side stretching the back muscles. Try these two exercises for 3 sets of 10 repetitions.

Chest Warm Up: The easiest way by far is to use a vertical chest press in your local gym. Or a horizontal press at home. Place a very light weight on these machines and attempt 3 sets of 20 repetitions.

A light press-up session is also a good warm up. Instead of doing a full press-up, use your knees instead of your feet to angle your body. Rest your knees on the floor and assume the press-up position. Attempt 2 sets of 20 reps for this to warm up.

Standing next to a post, face your right side to the post. Step forward with your right leg. With your right forearm on the wall, shoulder at about a right angle, turn your upper body away from the wall. Hold for about 30 seconds then repeat with the other side.

Shoulder Warm up: Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, raise your right arm up, then place your hand in between your shoulder blades, keeping your upper arm raised.

Then use your left arm to slowly pull your elbow toward your head. Hold this position for 30 seconds, return and start again 3 times. Then repeat with the opposite side.

Hamstrings: sit on the floor with your legs stretched out in front of you, about 2 feet apart. Now gently and slowly with both hands, reach for your left foot, hold for 30 seconds and then return. Do this for both left and right.

Calf Stretch: Stand with your feet apart, chest and back straight. Now with your right leg move your foot back about 2-3 feet ensuring your foot is flat to the floor. Then with your left leg bend

your knee toward the floor, until you feel the pull in your calf hold for 30 seconds then repeat. After 3 repeats change over.

Thighs: Hold on to a chair or sturdy piece of gym equipment with your left arm. Lift your right leg toward your buttocks, holding your ankle allowing the heel of your foot to touch your buttocks, hold for 30 seconds then repeat.

Reverse the process remembering to hold on with your right hand, using your left for holding your ankle.

Always remember these five rules when stretching and warming up:

1. Do not over stretch your muscles, only stretch to the point of tension. Not to the point of pain.

2. Stretch with slow movement, sharp and jerky movement can cause muscle strain.

3. Try to stretch and warm up both sides of the body e.g. both legs, arms.

4. For maximum effect hold your stretches for 30 seconds

5. After your work out always allow yourself to cool down. Warm down just as you warmed up.

Abs Workout

Getting a good abs workout can be done almost anywhere, at any time. There is no need for all this fancy gym equipment, strapping you into machines and pulling you this way and that. All you really need is a level floor. However, both floor and machine workouts will be taken into account.

Ensure you are focused and warmed up before you start any

exercise. Also when doing floor work be sure to use a training mat for lower back support, working out on a hard floor can damage your back.

Basic Crunches: Lay on the floor with your knees raised a little, place your hands by your sides or behind your head, whatever feels comfortable.

Now using your shoulders to lift your body off the floor toward your knees, start slowly, feel the abs tense as you come forward and back. There is no repetition limit here, so keep going until you fail. Do this exercise for 3-4 sets to failure; this should be a good start.

Crunch Twist: If you would like to add a twist to your crunches, you can enhance the basic crunch by, holding your hands behind your head with your elbows out.

During the upstroke move your right elbow across to your left knee for 10 strokes, then across to the opposite knee with the left elbow another 10. After the 10 resume to basic crunches position for another 10, then repeat. Continue with the 3-4 set to failure with this technique.

Leg Raises: Start by lying flat on the floor, with your hands behind your head, then slowly lift your legs to about 8 inches from the floor and hold for 20 seconds.

After the 20 seconds has elapsed, move your legs up another 8 inches and hold for another 20 seconds. The final step is to move your legs up once more to 45 degrees from the floor, for another 20 seconds, then rest. Repeat this exercise 3-4 times.

Plank: Lie face down on mat resting on the forearms; place the side of your hands on the floor in a fist shape. Push off the floor, raising your body onto your toes resting on the forearm and elbows.

Keep your back flat (like a plank), in a straight line from head to feet. Tilt your pelvis and contract your abdominals to prevent your buttocks from sticking up in the air. Hold for 60 seconds, and repeat for 3-4 sets.

If you are in the gym, using the crunch bench with the crunch techniques explained above is great, you will have excellent abs in no time. Remember to keep going to failure, this technique really does help the abs grow and tone in no time at all.

Crunch Machine: The crunch machine gives the same effect as the crunch bench; however you can add your own weights to it. Always remember when lifting weights, not to over do it.

Place a weight on the crunch machine that you can lift comfortably. 20 repetitions should do it, now increase the weight a little. Attempt another set of reps, immediately after the weight increase.

This time keep going to failure. After the first set to failure increase the weight again, by this time you should be feeling the burn. Repeat this process for 3-4 set after the initial 20 set warm up.

Leg Raise Apparatus: Assume the leg raise position on the leg raise frame. Start by slowly lifting your knees to your chest; once again repeat this process to failure. Repeat the knee raises for 3-4 sets.

Enhance the workout by slowly lifting the legs up in an arcing motion without bending the knee and slowly lowering. Once again repeat this process to failure for 3-4 sets.

You can also mix the two leg raise techniques together, by first starting with the knee raise for a warm up set. Then moving into the leg raise to get the burning sensation.

Working on your abs can be done any time, try to do an abs

workout before every training session. Combine all the techniques you have learned above and amazing abs will be knocking on the door of your stomach very shortly.

Shoulder Workout

Always remember to warm up correctly for these exercises. Stand with your legs shoulder width apart, raise your right arm up, then place your hand in between your shoulder blades, keeping your upper arm raised.

Then use your left arm to slowly pull your elbow toward your head. Hold this position for 30 seconds, return and start again 3 times. Then repeat with the opposite side.

When lifting weights find a weight that will challenge you with resistance but will not force you to struggle. For these exercises you can use light dumbbells

Lateral Raise: An effective shoulder exercise with a light weight. Keep your feet apart and knees slightly bent, shoulders back with your chest high. Slowly lift weights parallel to ground in a smooth controlled motion and return. Attempt this exercise for 10-15 repetitions over 3-4 sets

Military Press: Place one foot slightly in front of the other with legs apart, keep the knees slightly bent to reduce strain on your lower back.

Start with the weights parallel to your shoulders, and then slowly push the weights over your head to meet at the top then return to the start position. Attempt this exercise for 10-15 repetitions over 3-4 sets

Front Raise: Stand with your feet apart holding the weights by your side. Slowly with your right arm slightly bent raise your arm up level with your shoulder, ensuring that your thumbs are

pointing to the ceiling. Attempt this exercise for 10-15 repetitions over 3-4 sets

Chest Workout

Once again remember to warm up when starting a new exercise. A light press-up session is also a good warm up. Instead of doing a full press-up, use your knees instead of your feet to angle your body. Rest your knees on the floor and assume the press-up position. Attempt 2 sets of 20 reps for this to warm up.

When lifting weights find a weight that will challenge you with resistance but will not force you to struggle. For these exercises you can use light dumbbells

Dumbbell Bench Press: lay flat on a training bench with a dumbbell in each hand, using an overhand grip. Position the dumbbells at each side of your chest, stabilizing your body with your feet firmly on the ground.

Slowly push the dumbbells toward the ceiling until they almost touch at full extension. Then slowly return to the start position ensuring stability. Attempt 10-15 repetitions over 3-4 sets.

Incline Bench Press: This exercise is very similar to the flat bench. The only difference is the position of the bench, elevate the bench to a 45 degree angle and continue as above. Attempt 10-15 repetitions over 3-4 sets.

Decline Bench Press: This exercise is very similar to the flat bench. The only difference is the position of the bench, set the bench on a decline to about a 35 degree angle and continue as above. Attempt 10-15 repetitions over 3-4 sets.

Push Ups: Lie face down with your hands at shoulder level, palms flat on the floor and slightly more than shoulder-width apart keep your feet together and parallel to each other, ensuring your legs,

buttocks and back are straight.

Slowly lower your body towards the floor, bending your arms and with your palms flat and fixed. Lower your body until your chest touches the floor ensuring that your knees do not, and then return to the start position. Attempt 10-15 repetitions over 3-4 sets.

Incline Push Up: The same as above but ensure your hands and upper body are in an elevated position.

Decline Push UP: The same as the normal straight push up above just remember to ensure your feet and legs are in an elevated position.

After all exercises are complete, always remember to do a full warm down of the muscles used in your routine. Warming down is still an essential part of training and does help to combat muscle strain.

Legs Workout

Before exercising your legs always remember to warm up properly to avoid any injury. Depending on what parts of the legs you are working on, warm the specific muscle up accordingly.

A 10 minute exercise bike ride or a slow jog will suffice for most leg exercises. Please view the stretching procedures earlier in this book. These exercises will use a combination of free weight and gym equipment.

Lunges: This exercise is excellent for working most of the major leg muscles, as well as many of the smaller stabilizer muscles because it requires good stability.

When lifting weights find a weight that will challenge you with resistance but will not force you to struggle. For these exercises

you can use light dumbbells

Place one leg a couple of feet in front of the other, with legs slightly apart. Keep your toes pointed forward and your front foot flat on the floor.

Slowly Bend your front leg until your knee is at a 90-degree angle (in a lunge motion), remembering to keep your back straight. Push up and return to the starting position. Repeat and do the same for the opposite leg. Try this exercise for 10-15 repetitions over 3 to 4 sets.

Standing Calf Raises: Standing with your feet slightly apart holding you're back straight and your stomach in, with your feet pointing forwards.

Holding weights is not essential for this exercise, so beginners do not have to use any weights. If you want to hold dumbbells in each hand, then your arms must be straight by your sides, with your palms facing your legs.

Holding in your standing position slowly push your body up onto your toes raising your heels from the ground, ensure you are high enough not to lose your balance. Slowly lower your heels to the floor and repeat. Attempt this exercise for 15-20 repetitions over 3-4 sets.

After you have completed all sets in this exercise, shake your legs to relieve any tension.

Leg Extensions: Adjust the leg extension apparatus, ensuring the centre of the knee is inline with the central rotation of the lifting arm.

Mount the machine and sit with the lower back against the backrest and the shins against the ankle support pads. Ensure a light weight is selected for the first set, and then adjust accordingly to the desired weight.

Slowly straighten the legs forward and up, ensuring not to lock the knee at full extension. Slowly lower back to a 90 degree angle and repeat. Repeat this exercise for 10-15 reps for 3-4 sets.

Hamstring Curl: Adjust the leg curl apparatus, so that when lying down the ankle support pads are aligned with the ankle using only a light weight (enough for resistance) for the whole of the exercise.

Lie facedown on the apparatus and grip the support handles at the head of the machine. Ensuring the upper body is stable; proceed slowly to curl the legs in an upward motion bringing the heels to the buttocks. Slowly return the legs to the starting position. Repeat this exercise for 10-15 reps for 3 sets.

Squats: Holding weights is not essential for this exercise because practice and a good balance are required, so beginners do not have to use any weights. If you want to hold dumbbells in each hand, then your arms must be straight by your sides, with your palms facing your legs.

Stand with your feet flat on the floor and shoulder width apart (hand by your side with dumbbells, hands out stretched with your palms down if no weights are used). Ensure your lower back is in a neutral position.

Slowly descend until the upper legs are parallel to the floor. Then slowly ascend back to the starting position. Ensure your upper body is in an upright position to avoid leaning forward and losing balance. Repeat this exercise for 10-15 reps for 3 sets.

After all exercises are complete, always remember to do a full warm down of the muscles used in your routine. Warming down is still an essential part of training and does help to combat muscle strain.

Back Workout

Always remember to warm up for these exercises. Lie on your front and open your arms to do a press up style motion (without lifting your body from the ground). Holding your pelvis to the floor push up with your arms, lifting your chest from the ground, this will stretch the lower back muscles.

Another technique used for stretching and warming the back can be done, by lying on your back, hand at your side, palms down. Lift your knees up with you feet flat to the floor, and then rock your knees slowly from side to side stretching the back muscles. Try these two exercises for 3 sets of 10 repetitions.

Pull Ups: Pull ups are a good starting exercise as no weights are involved. Address the pull up bar with both hands about 9 inches apart, with the forearms parallel to each other.

Slowly pull your body up to the bar ensuring stability until your chin is level with the bar. Hold for a couple of seconds and then slowly return. Repeat this exercise as many times as possible (to failure) for 3 sets.

Back extensions: mount the back extension apparatus ensuring your legs are supported with the pads, and enough room is available to lower your body. With your arms folded across your chest, slowly lower your body to the floor in a downward arc motion.

Then slowly return ensuring abs and buttocks are tight. Be careful not to over extent the back muscles on return as this may damage your back muscles. Attempt this exercise for 10-15 reps over 3-4 sets.

Seated Row: Sit on the apparatus with your legs out straight but slightly bent at the knee, ensuring you have a suitable weight attached to the cable. Grasp the handles of the seated row machine with your palms facing upwards.

Slowly pull back the bar to the upper abs, ensuring your elbows are tucked in to the body. As you pull the handle back to the body, be sure to allow the elbows past your sides until the bar almost makes contact with the abs slowly return, and repeat. Attempt this exercise for 10-15 reps over 3-4 sets.

Lat Pull Down: Ensure the correct bar is on the Lat Pull Down machine. This bar should be around 3 feet in length. Using the correct weight suitable for you, grasp the bar and sit down ensuring the knees are secure under the support pads, with your feet firmly on the floor.

Slowly allow the bar to return to the start position. Start the exercise by slowly pulling the bar to the top of the chest, holding and slowly returning to the start position again and repeat. Attempt this exercise for 10-15 reps over 3-4 sets.

One Arm Row: With a dumbbell in your right hand and your left knee on a training bench (from the knee down to the ankle, with your foot hanging over the edge). Bend forward so your back is parallel with the training bench.

With the dumbbell hanging down toward the floor and your palms facing inward, slowly pull the dumbbell to your side, ensuring the elbow is tucked in tight and pointing toward the ceiling. Slowly lower and repeat. Attempt this exercise for 10-15 reps over 3-4 sets.

After all exercises are complete, always remember to do a full warm down of the muscles used in you routine. Warming down is still an essential part of training and does help to combat muscle.

Cardiovascular

To achieve a good cardio workout all you really need is a good pair of running shoes. Most cardiovascular exercise needs little or no third party apparatus to help you accomplish your routine.

Running, dancing, walking can all be done with no equipment (well, dancing maybe some music would help). Other forms of cardio are step, circuit training, bike riding, swimming, aerobics and more...

Running: Before you start your run, be sure to warm up first. Start with a brisk walk ensuring you move your arms vigorously gradually breaking into a slow jog. It is better to run at a speed to which you can still converse.

If you find yourself loosing breath, slow your pace down until you've recovered. If you are a novice runner try running and walking, until you can hold your run for 15 minutes.

Now increase the length and time of your run by a couple of minutes every other time you hit the road or treadmill, until you can run for 30 minutes without stopping.

Try to increase your run time by 10% each week, remember not to over do it and don't forget to warm down at the end of each by slowing down gradually. When your run is complete stretch your legs for 30 seconds per muscle, hamstring, calf and thigh.

Cycling: First of all, if you are riding on the roads safety is paramount, always use the appropriate safety equipment when road riding.

You can stay fit by riding a bike to work, most people work within a five mile radius of there place of work, which is a perfect distance for a bike ride.

Exercise bikes can be used in a variety of ways, general riding for specified length of time, this is like going for a bike ride with out the dangers of road riding and the weather. Warm up riding you can use an exercise bike for warming up the legs before a leg workout.

Also exercise bike classes, these classes are taken by an

instructor, who will put you through various levels of pace, quite like a circuit training exercise with a bike.

You may find it surprising to find that riding a bike five miles 3 times per week will improve your heart rate, your posture, skin and weight control. Some even say that riding and running are great ways of relieving stress.

Swimming: one of the best ways to firm up and trim your body down. Due to the resistance the water has on the body swimming involves all the major muscle groups this allows the body to burn up to 20% more calories than swimming through air. Swimming a few lengths per day will keep you fit and give you an excellent workout.

If you wish to take your swim a little further try picking up the pace of your swim, you can work up to a great aerobic exercise and give your body an excellent workout.

Start off by swimming 1-2 lengths at a time resting between sets if necessary, after you have swam ten lengths call it a day. The next day repeat the process until you can swim five lengths without a break. Progress to ten lengths in by adding an extra length each time you return.

You can put together your own cardio raining routing in the gym, if you have a problem with this then the staff on hand will write one for you and show you how to achieve your goal. Try to make your cardio last between an hour and an hour and a half. A good start point for cardio is always a run.

This cardio workout will work for a person of medium fitness, however adjust the times and pace according to your fitness levels.

- 1.Run at a light pace for 20 minutes, start off at a walking pace and gradually move to a run, this helps you get warmed up and the blood pumping.

2. Rowing machine- set the rowing machine for a countdown time of 15 minutes or keep a check on your watch or the clock. Start off with a slow rowing motion to get the pace up, maintain this steady pace throughout the full 13 minutes and use the 2 minutes to slow the pace down.

3. Move immediately on to exercise bike take a steady paced ride for 12 minutes with a sprint finish for the remaining 3 minutes.

4. After the exercise bike move directly on to the step climber for a period of 15 minutes climbing on a light level to get the legs going. Try to move at a swift pace for the full 15 minutes as this is the last of the leg work you will be doing.

5. When you have completed the step climber, move onto the abs bench for some crunches. 4 sets of crunches to failure is your target for this exercise. Try twisting your body and touching your left knee with your right elbow and vice versa.

6. The last exercise in this quick cardio workout is the leg raise apparatus. Bring your knees up to your chest for 3-4 sets for as many reps as possible (failure)

After the completion of this cardio workout, remember to do a full warm down by stretching the muscles. The full workout should take you around 1 hour 20 minutes.

Tips for Toning

Here you will find a selection of toning tips for you to use at your own discretion. There are no hard and fast rules to these tips or an order to which you should proceed, just have fun doing them and remember they will help you.

Warm Up: Always remember to warm up before you start your training program. 10 minutes is all you need to prepare your muscles for a workout. Running, fast paced walk, exercise bike

and rowing machines are ideal. Warming up your muscles is essential in the prevention of injury, so don't forget to do it.

Variety: Try to vary your training days, alternate from cardio and muscle training at different days of the week.

Diary: Maintaining a training diary during your training sessions helps you to understand and evaluate your fitness levels. Knowing what you jogged, cycled or lifted the previous week is an excellent way to monitor your progress. Also keeping a weight loss/gain plan in your diary is a good idea.

Routine: Make up a routine for your muscles. Working with different sets of muscles one day will allow for the other muscles to relax.

Goals: Set your goals for what you want to achieve in a certain time frame. Setting goals gives you an aim, a target to strive for. Try not to set the impossible, just enough to make you work hard. Monitor your progress in your diary. There is no better feeling than seeing a good end result.

Staying Focused: When you enter the gym remember what you entered for? Focus yourself on the training regime of the day. Remember it's not a military exercise, but some amount of focus and dedication is needed.

Breathe Right: Breathing correctly when training does take some practice, try to monitor your breathing technique. Remember to breathe out when lifting, and in when returning to the beginning position.

Also remember to breathe when cardiovascular exercising, holding your breath along with erratic breathing patterns will result in poor performance.

Warm Down/Cool down: After a period of workout, give your body a chance to cool down. Try a short cardio cool down session

of stretches, light jogging or walking. This will help with training pains and muscle ache.

Over doing it: A good rule to stick by when training, is don't over do it! Pushing yourself to the limit only results in injury. Know what your body is capable of, pushing yourself too hard will result in more time spent in pain than in training.

Posture: Try to keep your posture straight, sitting or standing. Try stay straight when ever you can.

Personal Trainer: If you are unsure of how to achieve the body you are looking for, contact a personal trainer. A personal trainer can and will get you on the road to fitness.

You do not have to use a personal trainer all the time. Utilize the help you receive to find your feet and get your routine together. Then build on this in your own way.

With a combination of all these tips along with regular healthy eating, the body you desire will soon be upon you. Always remember to focus and stick at your routine. In the end all the effort and training will be worth it.

What ever your choice or choices of fitness, keep up the hard work, enjoy what you do and be fit for life. Always remember to ensure a safe working environment when you are training.

Thank you for your time!