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FITNESS

Health Disclaimer

The author of this material is not responsible in any manner whatsoever for any injury that may occur through following the instructions in this material. The activities, physical and otherwise, described herein for informational purposes, may be too strenuous or dangerous for some people and the reader should consult a doctor before engaging in this exercise and training program.

Get Fit Starter Kit

Welcome to your health and fitness starter kit! If you've been considering embarking on an exercise program or planning to improve your eating habits (or both), or perhaps you've already tried but are finding it a struggle, the tools and information in this starter kit can help.

Rarely is it recognised how challenging it can be to sustain a consistent exercise regime and healthy lifestyle habits. I've worked in the military as an elite soldier, a job that involved tremendous physical hardship. To perform at such a high level requires, above all else, robust health and stacks of fitness. Yet, I've known professional soldiers who struggled to keep up their training.

Is it any wonder that we mere mortals find it so difficult to maintain training consistency? Especially when it's not an integral part of our job and we don't have to pass a barrage of yearly tests. However, as you're here, I'm guessing you want to exercise regularly and eat right because you know these factors are good for your health. But this does not resolve our problem of maintaining consistency.

That brings us to the purpose of this starter kit. The 8-Week Exercise Program and workouts comprise a framework that will enable you to integrate exercise naturally into your lifestyle. In addition, the nutrition plan and plant-based recipes will support you through the initial stages of transitioning to a healthy diet. Once you've successfully implemented these interventions, you'll be well on your way to establishing habits that promote a healthy and physically robust body.

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How 2 Guide

Before diving into the Get Fit Starter Kit, it's worth skim-reading the following How 2 Guide. The eight steps will provide you with advice on how best to utilise the health and fitness tools below. By actioning the tried-and-tested strategies – such as nailing down a fitness goal and conducting a needs analysis – the effectiveness of the program, measured in the currency of physical progress, will be significantly increased.

Step 1: Before embarking on your health and exercise program, it's prudent to establish a goal first. As well as fuelling motivation, a clearly defined goal can imbue your program with purpose. The goal you choose could be to lose a specific amount of weight and/or improve an element of your fitness. For example, to be able to sustain a consistent pace for three miles. If your goal is simply to maintain training consistency and 'get back into the swing of things,' you can skip straight to the program.

Step 2: After establishing a goal and writing it down (preferably somewhere prominent, such as the top of your program), it's helpful at this stage to conduct a needs analysis. This, I promise you, is a lot less painful than it sounds. In essence, a needs analysis is where you assess your current lifestyle – including your obligations and responsibilities – against the requirements of the training program. A needs analysis prompts you to ask questions such as *How many weekly workouts can I currently commit to* and *Is it realistic for me at this stage to make other lifestyle changes as well?*

Step 3: Now that the theoretical foundations of your program have been laid, it's time to start building. The simplest way to do this is to, first, highlight the days of the week on which you plan to schedule your workouts. For example, based on the outcome of your needs assessment, you realise that presently you can realistically accommodate three weekly training sessions – Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. And though you would like to do more, you're going to stick with a modest schedule at this stage. Perhaps after a couple of weeks, you can consider including another day.

Once you have decided on the days, you can begin plotting your workouts. Below the 8-Week Training Program, you'll find eight pre-produced workouts (taken from the *Hungry4Fitness Book of Circuits & Workouts Volume 3*). These have been included in the Get Fit Starter Kit so that you can get your exercise program up and running immediately. To populate the remaining days, you have a few options to choose from.

- Option 1) By far the simplest, just keep cycling through the workouts provided.
- Option 2) Using the workouts as templates, create your own training plans.
- Option 3) Get yourself a copy of the *Hungry4Fitness Book of Circuits & Workouts Volume 3* – which contains over 80 exercise sessions.
- Option 4) Go to the Hungry4Fitness dedicated Fitness Page where you'll find hundreds of workouts (<https://www.hungry4fitness.co.uk/fitness-training>).

Step 4: It's time to dispense with theory and get physical. To recapitulate the previous Steps, at this point, you have identified a health and/or fitness goal,

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conducted a needs analysis, and crafted a rudimentary blueprint of your training program. In addition, you have scheduled the days of the week when your workouts will take place, and you have a stock of session plans to get going. If you can confidently confirm that the requirements of the previous steps have been satisfied, you're ready to implement the program.

Doing so is as simple as it just sounded. Start at the first workout on day one week one and, once you've completed it, put a line through that workout. Example:

Hungry4Fitness 8 Week Exercise Programme								
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
M	Workout 1: Low impact cardio							
T								
W	Workout 2: HIIT cycling scorcher							
T								
F	Workout 3: KB Upper body							
S								
S								

Step 5: (The fifth Step is relevant to those that are pursuing a health goal.) With your training program up and running, you can begin making lifestyle reforms. Improving your diet, cutting down on alcohol consumption, stopping smoking/vaping, attenuating stress, improving sleep, reducing periods of sedentarism, and increasing

positive social interactions, will not only compound the effectiveness of your exercise program and thus hasten the attainment of your goal, but could also significantly improve your overall health, reduce disease risk, and extend your longevity.

A reluctant word of warning needs to be raised before we consider some ideas around how to make sustainable lifestyle changes.

Studies have shown that making multiple lifestyle changes simultaneously increases the relapse rate. Embarking on an exercise regime while adopting healthy dietary habits, cutting out processed food, and enforcing a period of alcohol abstinence may become overwhelming. At this point, the risk of relapse increases as the weight of all those changes get too great to bear. Defaulting on one habit could precipitate a domino effect of failure.

A way to avoid this undesirable outcome is to set yourself the rule of trialling (a better approach would be to 'experiment' with) no more than two lifestyle changes at once. When you've made a change and successfully sustained it for a protracted period (two to four weeks) then consider experimenting with another lifestyle change.

Step 6: Having heeded the warning, let's briefly explore how you might make one lifestyle change (diet) in conjunction with the exercise program. Using the meal plans provided (see below), you could gradually improve your eating habits by

transitioning to a whole-food plant-based diet (for the reason why I selected a plant-based diet, read *How Not To Die*).

For a similar reason outlined above in the warning, you would not radically overhaul your diet. At this point, there's no need to purge your kitchen of all animal protein and processed food. Instead, integrate meatless meals into your diet while reducing processed food consumption. As you acclimatise to the reforms, continue making more until you have cultivated what T. Collin Campbell calls 'the ideal human diet.'

Campbell tells us that 'the ideal human looks like this: Consume plant-based foods in forms as close to their natural state as possible ("whole" foods). Eat a variety of vegetables, fruits, raw nuts and seeds, beans and legumes, and whole grains.'

Step 7: Steps 1 through to 6 cover the initial and formative stages of creating and implementing a personalised exercise program and making modest lifestyle improvements. The concern of Step 7, then, is about monitoring your performance, remaining consistent, and periodically assessing your progression. This all sounds quite complicated, but it doesn't have to be. A tried and tested method of tracking physical performance is to position 'milestones' throughout your program. (In the context of health and fitness goals, a milestone is a progress marker that indicates if you are on the right track to your desired destination.) By way of example, at the end of every second week, you could factor in a fitness retest session. The same strategy would be applied to a health goal – except every two weeks you would conduct a health assessment: BMI, blood pressure, body weight, and resting heart rate.

Step 8: That brings us to our final Step. Not to come across as ‘preachy’, but physical exercise and the maintenance of health habits should be viewed as lifelong pursuits. Exercise shouldn’t be used just as a means of sculpting an aesthetically desirable physique to put on parade at the poolside. And healthy eating habits shouldn’t be picked up and put down as a means of morally offsetting a spate of overindulgence. (I know people who blend up ‘detox’ smoothies to ‘cleanse’ their body after a hard drinking bout.)

When practised over the long term, healthy lifestyle habits can dramatically reduce disease risk. A study outlined by Daniel Liberman in his book *Exercised*, shows that exercise engagement extends longevity. That is, though there is a levelling-off point, the more people exercise the longer they live. (The greatest impact occurred between 150 and 300 minutes of weekly activity. It’s believed that this finding inspired the NHS’s campaign to encourage people to participate in a minimum of ‘150 minutes of moderate intensity activity a week.’) Other studies have shown a similar relationship between diet and decreased all-cause mortality: meat eaters live fewer years than vegetarians, and vegetarians live fewer years than vegans.

So, with that said, Step 8 implores you to continue using these health and exercise tools – over and over again for the rest of your life. And may it be a long, healthy, and fulfilling one!

Fitness & Exercise

The health benefits exercise confers are widely understood and well established. In addition to metabolising fat and maintaining a healthy body weight, exercise can reduce our chances of developing illness and disease. Furthermore, it can slow the ageing process and help keep us both physically and cognitively able in old age. People who exercise consistently through their formative years typically suffer fewer infirmities in their advanced years. But exercise is even better than we previously thought.

Contemporary research is showing that exercise can be weaponised and used to target and destroy some of the worst diseases. For example, in 2009 an Australian research team published a paper showing the positive effects exercise exerts in the fight against cancer. The research demonstrated that exercise when used as a supplementary treatment intervention in conjunction with established treatment methods, can support cancer patients irrespective of what stage they are at in their treatment.

Since the publication of that seminal 2009 paper, the benefits accrued through supplementing exercise during cancer treatment have been extensively reviewed. A recent publication reported that of 140 such studies, 75% showed 'statistically significant and clinically relevant benefit through exercise on a range of treatment-related side effects, physical, functional, and psychosocial outcomes.'¹ It's this impressive epidemiological power exercise exerts that led one leading doctor to

proclaim that 'If exercise were a pill, it would be one of the most cost-effective drugs ever invented.'²

Below is a list of even more health benefits associated with regular exercise:

- ✓ Weight control
- ✓ Improved body composition
- ✓ Reduce the risk of coronary heart disease (CHD)
- ✓ Improved cardio-respiratory performance
- ✓ Reduce risk of stroke
- ✓ Lowers blood pressure
- ✓ Improved immune function
- ✓ Decreased depression
- ✓ Helps reduce anxiety
- ✓ Increased bone density and with it a reduction in fractures
- ✓ Mitigates chronic stress
- ✓ Promotes a positive attitude
- ✓ Enforces self-efficacy
- ✓ Improves self-confidence
- ✓ Enhanced self-body image

What a singularly impressive list of health benefits. Makes me want to slip on a pair of trainers and go out for a five-mile run followed by a set of 500 kettlebell swings. To think, each mile, each set of ten could be boosting my immune system and protecting me against heart disease!

And, what's more, those health benefits are there for the taking – they could be yours. All you've got to do is establish a regular exercise routine that includes a mixture of the primary components of fitness: cardiovascular, strength, muscular endurance and flexibility.

Now that we have covered the theoretical side of exercise, we must turn our attention to the practical. In the following section, you are going to learn how to organize and implement an effective exercise regime that will both burn fat and (hopefully) bring about all those health benefits.

Establish an exercise regime

If you currently do no exercise, or your participation is best described as 'sporadic' or 'arbitrary' or 'whenever the whim takes', then you must enforce a fixed regime that incorporates a blended mix of physical activities. Additional emphasis must be heaped on this point as it is of critical importance. By far the single most crucial step that can be taken to sustain training consistency is to implement a regime. Failure to habituate exercise attenuates commitment and results in a laissez-faire approach. Neither outcome is likely to facilitate weight loss or confer any of the health benefits enumerated above. To help get you on your way, I have explained an infallible method of establishing a fitness regime. From here all that's left for you to do is . . . do it!

Create an exercise program

Creating an exercise program is a relatively straightforward process – especially for someone who is just engaging in exercise for weight loss and health-related reasons.

However, to make life a little easier for you, I have created a generic 8 Week Exercise Program. The program has been tailored for a person who wants to lose weight. Consequently, it is populated primarily with cardiovascular exercises and circuit training. *'But what if I'm not particularly fond of cardio? Or what if there's an exercise in the programme that I can't do because of inexperience?'*

The 8-Week Exercise Program is designed to maximise weight loss results and if followed will deliver results. But that's not to say that you can't substitute exercises for preferable ones. For example, you might not be a fan of running or rowing, but you could (at a push) tolerate cycling, swimming, or skipping. It would not negatively impact the effectiveness of the program if you shuffled the cardiovascular exercises around.

The same could not be said if you replaced cardio with weight training. Recent research has demonstrated that 'cardio is better than weights for obesity.' In one study that compared the weight-loss effectiveness of the two training methods, the outcome was unequivocal. 'Individuals prescribed just weights barely lost any body fat but those prescribed twelve miles a week of running lost substantial amounts of fat, especially harmful organ fat.'³

What if I want to craft my own program?

That's fine and I applaud your enthusiasm. Below I have outlined a range of ideas that you can use to design a personalized program. In addition, to help get you started, eight readymade workouts have been situated underneath the blank program tracker.

To create your program, you merely need either a calendar or grid/table and a pen. Of course, you could use the program template provided.

Now, let's say you're using a box standard calendar. Simply plot each day's exercise activity – including session duration and type of exercise – for a minimum of two months. See the example below.

	Week 1	Week 2
Monday	30-minute low-intensity jog	35-minute low...
Tuesday	30-minute whole-body circuit	35-minute wh...
Wednesday	1-hour cycle (outdoors)	1-hour cycle
Thursday	30-minute medium-intensity jog	35-minute me...
Friday	30-minute whole-body circuit	35-minute wh...
Saturday	1-hour swim/cycle or combination	1-hour swim...
Sunday	Enjoy a long country walk	Enjoy a long...

(Before taking part in any exercise activity ensure to spend a minimum of 10 minutes warming up. See the discussion on essential training principles below for guidance on correct warm-ups, cool-downs, and stretching.)

Once you have organised your first week you can repeat the process for the following seven – ensuring to increase the duration of each training session. The final week should be almost double that of the first.

Of course, you do not have to continue creating and implementing an exercise program indefinitely. This is a method of cultivating the habit of participating in daily exercise. After a couple of months of following a training program, you should by then be thoroughly indoctrinated. At this point, you can dispense with the calendar and just do whatever comes into your head.

I'm a personal trainer and health and well-being coach. Thus, you would be forgiven for thinking that a professional practitioner would participate in a program of some sort or another. Sorry to disappoint but I don't follow a program – never have, never will. That's far too prescriptive for me. I usually decide the day before (or in the morning) what exercise I'm going to take part in. I have a series of workouts (which are rather like training recipes) that I cycle through across the week.

For example, on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings, I run for 35 minutes followed by a 10-minute basic bodyweight circuit. In the afternoon on the same days, I engage in resistance and boxing training for one hour. In the mornings of the other days, I either row, skip, or cycle. Occasionally, I change the workouts to reduce the risk of incurring repetitive strain but also to stimulate motivation. Typically, I train a minimum of twice a day, an hour for each workout, and I never have rest days – not even on my birthday or Christmas day.

This methodology, which I admit on the surface doesn't sound like one, is effective because each workout has its own protected time. Irrespective of what the weather or the stock market is doing – rain, shin, bear or bull market matters not a jot because – at 4:30 in the morning my trainers are on and I'm exercising. I've become

so habituated that I wake my alarm clock up. That is the secret of sustaining consistency – to wit erecting impenetrable cast iron boundaries that protect your activities.

When you no longer need the dictates of a program to determine your daily training sessions, because your workout time is bounded, you can enjoy the freedom and flexibility of concocting sessions on the fly. However, if, after departing from your programme, you feel that you are starting to slip and slide back into old habits, just get that calendar out again.

8 Exercise sessions

Accompanying the 8-Week Exercise Program you will find eight individual workouts. Each workout is structured to last between 30- to 60-minutes. They include an element of cardiovascular exercise and some a mixture or multiple training methodologies – resistance, circuits, or an amalgamation. The workouts have been designed this way for the simple reason that cardio and circuit training are two of the most effective and efficient ways of ‘burning’ calories.

Remember, though, that all the training sessions can be tailored to suit your current ability, exercise preferences and/or time constraints. The effectiveness of the programme will not in any way diminish if, for example, you decide to substitute rowing for running or burpees for squat jumps.

The workouts are merely supposed to act as a guide for you to follow while also providing training ideas. What is important is that you engage in some form of

cardiovascular and resistance exercise every day and that each training session lasts for a minimum of 30 minutes.

But what if I want to design my own training sessions?

This is the ultimate objective of the program – viz to impart the necessary knowledge, advice, guidance, and motivation to enable you to become self-directed. At some point, you should no longer need the 8-Week Exercise Program or workouts (or recipes) as health and fitness will be habituated and thus have become a permanent fixture of your lifestyle. So, in keeping with this objective, below you will discover a comprehensive overview of:

- The four essential training principles
- The benefits of warm-ups, cool-downs, and stretching
- Advice on how to structure an exercise workout
- How to stretch safely and effectively

Essential training principles

To get the most out of training we should ensure that each exercise session transitions through four distinct phases. These phases include 1) warm-up; 2) main session; 3) cool-down; and 4) stretch.

By observing this formulaic process, you will not only improve physical performance but also reduce your chances of falling foul to injury during exercise. Studies abound demonstrating a strong link between warming up and reduced injury susceptibility (see below). Moreover, concluding a training session with a cool-down and stretch

will likely reduce the severity of delayed onset of muscle soreness (colloquially called the 'DOMS') while also speeding up post-exercise recovery.

Yet even though these positive outcomes of correct training are well understood, which accounts for why professional athletes and sports coaches faithfully practice them, few people who regularly participate in exercise do. The tutorial aims to provide you with an insight into the benefits of each phase as well as ideas on how to approach them.

Phase 1: The Warm-up

In his highly authoritative book, *The Complete Guide to Stretching*, Norris states that 'before starting any exercise session, it is essential to warm up.'⁴ He qualifies this emphatic statement with a few reasons why it is essential to warm up prior to exercise. The first and most important reason why we should begin every workout with a warm-up is because it reduces injury risk. 'Conventional wisdom maintains that preliminary exercise helps the performer prepare either physiologically or psychologically and reduces the likelihood of joint and muscle injury.'⁵

Further on in his outline of the importance and the process of warming up, Norris cites several examples showing strong links between warming up and decreased injury susceptibility. However, more interesting was the research that uncovered a relationship between warming up and reduced cardiovascular complications. In a study, researchers recruited a group of trained men with no underlying heart problems and made them run at a high intensity for 10 to 15 seconds *without* first

warming up. 'In 70 per cent of these subjects, abnormal changes were seen on an electrocardiogram (ECG) machine.'

The abnormal change and irregularity of heartbeats suggested that insufficient blood was getting to the cardiac muscle. Also known as ischaemia, restricted blood flow to the heart impedes its ability to fuel the working muscles which impairs physical performance. Interestingly, when the same subjects were put through a progressive warm-up *prior* to the vigorous run, the changes were either greatly reduced or completely absent. While erratic heart rhythm isn't necessarily dangerous to healthy trained individuals, it is for those with underlying heart conditions, the elderly, or people who are overweight.

The warm-up is a crucial part of physical training, and thus it ought never to be neglected. Before engaging in exercise (or sport), it is prudent to participate in a 10- to 15-minute whole-body warm-up. An appropriate warm-up not only enhances physical performance but also prepares the body for exercise by bringing about many important physiological changes. These changes include raising core and muscle temperature, facilitating neuromuscular function and preparing the trainer psychologically.⁶

But the most important change here is the rise in muscle temperature. When muscles are warmer, they become more flexible, supple, and less susceptible to injury – strains, pulls, and tears. It is for this reason and those previously mentioned that you must – at a minimum – spend ten minutes warming up prior to engaging in exercise.

The benefits of warming up include

- ✓ Increase in joint mobility
- ✓ Increase in blood flow throughout the body
- ✓ Increase in aerobic metabolism
- ✓ Decrease in lactic acid production
- ✓ Reduces injury risk
- ✓ Increases maximum power output
- ✓ Orientates the trainer's psychology to exercise

(List adapted from Watson's *Physical Fitness & Athletic Performance* – pp. 79/80)

Best types of warm-up activities

- Rowing (because it activates the two major muscle groups)
- Cross-trainer (much for the same reason as the rower)
- Airdyne cycling (again, for the above reasons)
- Any of the aforementioned aerobic exercises interspersed with body weight and light resistance movements.

How to warm-up properly

The example below was designed as a warm-up to be completed before a run. Although it has been designed specifically for running, the same underlying principles and process can be applied to circuits, cycling, rowing, and general gym sessions – in short, any form of physical exercise.

10-minute progressive warm-up

- Walk for 2 minutes and perform controlled mobility exercises

- Ease into a slow jog
- Jog for 3 minutes maintaining a steady pace
- Stop and complete 10 squats, 10 burpees and 10 squat thrusts (30 sec)
- Carry on jogging for a further 2 minutes but increase the tempo
- Stop and complete 20 squats, 20 burpees and 20 squat thrusts (1 min)
- Carry on jogging for the remaining time and progressively build up the pace to reflect that of the run – this warm-up will integrate into the main session, which is what a good warm-up should do.

This is an outline of a simple progressive warm-up. Yet it would more than suffice to prepare the body for any type of workout. Of course, I am not suggesting that the exact exercises above be used, just the method: gradually building up the intensity; ensuring that the exercises within the warm-up reflect that of the main session.

In the exercise profession, there are opposing schools of thought regarding whether stretching should be included in the warm-up. Some argue that stretching should be included and others that it shouldn't.

I subscribe to the shouldn't school for the reason that stretching, more specifically 'static developmental stretching', is essentially a relaxation technique. Inducing a state of relaxation prior to participating in rigorous physical exercise is going to be counterproductive and thus negatively impact performance. Furthermore, because static stretching is, by definition, static, any rise in core temperature previously generated will be lost. A gradual warm-up, like the example above, that builds in

intensity over 10 to 15 minutes, will prepare you both physically and mentally for the coming session.

Warm-up summary

- Ensure that the muscles which are going to be worked in the main session are focused on during the warm-up. It would be borderline useless cycling for 10 minutes when your main session consists of an upper-body weights circuit. A warm-up should consist of a cardiovascular element because it is the most effective way to raise core temperature. But what an experienced trainer would also do is supplement the cardio exercise with ones that are going to be used within the main session.
- Start slow and gradually, over 10 minutes, increase the intensity.
- Always include a cardiovascular exercise, such as running, rowing, the cross-trainer etc., in your warm-up.
- There is no need to stretch prior to physical exercise. This is not the case if a workout involves martial arts, gymnastics, or other similar disciplines and sports that require an increase in muscle flexibility.
- Remember, to improve exercise performance and reduce injury risk, always make time for a 10-minute progressive warm-up.

Phase 2: The Main Session

The main part of the training session is where we get fit, stimulate physiological adaptations, and strive to transform our body composition. For however much time you have at your disposal, the main session can last for as little as 20 minutes or as much as an hour. In that time, your objective is to focus on a specific aspect of your

physicality – strength, muscular endurance, cardiovascular – or engage in a whole-body circuit.

The type of training that you participate in is entirely predicated on your fitness goals and physical aspirations. For example, if you aspire to develop functional strength, then your session might feature CrossFit-style exercises. But if your fitness concern is centred more on health, as opposed to aesthetics, then you might conduct a whole-body circuit.

Though it could be argued that there is no best way to train and that the style of training that a person participates in is (should be) predetermined by their goals, few would refute the contention that not all methods of training were created equally. By that I mean, some methods of training are far more effective at delivering certain results than other methods.

For example, a person who harboured the fitness goal of improved health and weight loss would be wasting their time engaging solely in static resistance exercises. Such exercises will not adequately stimulate their cardio-respiratory system. Thus, those physiological responses and adaptations synonymous with health and weight loss – that is, the metabolisation of superfluous non-force producing tissue (aka fat!) and the improved efficiency of the heart and lungs – will not take place.

Once you have established your fitness goal, the next task is to employ the appropriate training methodology and select exercises specific to your goal and the

method. What might this look like? If your goal is to reform your body composition, reducing fat mass while increasing fat-free mass, the most suitable training methods for achieving this outcome are continuous and circuits – a blended mix of cardio and resistance. With the method in place now all that's left is to populate your workouts with suitable exercises. The range of exercises for continuous training is quite constricted. For most of us, we are limited to just five options: running, rowing, cycling, swimming, and the cross-trainer (aka the CV room of the average gym). However, the range of possible exercises and workout configurations explodes with circuit training. I will not enumerate the plethora of possible permutations because pages and the reader's attention will not permit such a lengthy and decadent digression. Instead, I will encourage you to purchase a copy of the *Hungry4Fitness Book of Circuits and Workouts* where you will find a vast store of training sessions.

Main session summary

- There is no minimum or maximum duration that the main session can or should last. However, between 30- to 60-minutes is considered optimal.
- The training method and exercises selected are determined by your fitness goals.
- If you are not pursuing a specific fitness goal but are engaging in exercise for the associative health benefits, it is recommended that your main sessions include a mix of cardio and circuits.

Phase 3: The Cool-down

After you have conducted a training session, irrespective of what you did and the intensity at which you exercised, it is good practice to conclude with a cool-down. By observing the correct training protocol, you could be reducing the severity of the

DOMS (delayed onset of muscle soreness) while aiding the repair and recovery of damaged tissue – the inevitable consequence of exercise.

Additionally, the cool-down provides us with time to devote to the development of exercise techniques. For example, when after a tough circuit or HIIT session, I typically spend five to 10 minutes cooling down on the rower. But instead of mindlessly moving backwards and forwards, I focus on refining my technique. The approach could be applied to resistance exercises; however, the weights would be considerably reduced.

So, what are the characteristics of an effective cool-down? A cool-down can consist of something as simple as rowing a couple of thousand metres. Merely pop on the rowing machine (or cross-trainer or treadmill) and proceed to deescalate your physiological systems. Remember, the objective of the cool-down is diametrically opposite to the warm-up. When cooling down we are *lowering* core body temperature and normalising heart rate. In addition, an effective cool-down encourages the removal of metabolic waste which helps hasten post-exercise recovery.

Other methods of cooling down include retracing your steps, in a controlled manner, back through part of the main session or repeating the warm-up in reverse.

Cool-down summary

- Begin the cool-down at an intensity that is considerably lower than that of the main session.

- Gradually decrease the level of intensity over a 5- to 10-minute period.
- At the end of a cool-down all exercising – whether it is rowing, cycling, swimming, running, or carrying on with the circuit – should resemble the same level of intensity as walking.
- When you are feeling relaxed and you have somewhat recovered from the main session, this then signifies the time to begin the stretch.

Phase 4: The Stretch

According to the American College of Sports Medicine, a mere ten minutes of daily stretching can reduce your chances of incurring an exercise-related injury by as much as 50%⁷ – which is a whopping pay-off.

In the literature, there is a considerable canon of research that supports the relationship between improved flexibility (that is, increasing the range of movement around a joint (ROM)) and reduced injury. For example, one study conducted on 200 college athletes ‘found that the risk of injury decreased as flexibility improved.’⁸ Moreover, the researchers showed that those athletes who did not develop their flexibility suffered 15% more injuries.

Benefits of stretching

- ✓ Most importantly, regular stretching has been shown to reduce injury risk
- ✓ A consistent stretching regime may, over time, improve your body alignment and posture
- ✓ Reduces the severity of the DOMS

- ✓ Improves body control and awareness – also referred to as proprioception: an awareness of the position and movement of the body
- ✓ Greater increase in movement around the joint (ROM)
- ✓ Stretching, simply put, makes you feel good

It's for these reasons that we should endeavour to include at least 10 minutes of stretching into our day – and, at the very least, certainly after we have exercised. To facilitate the implementation of this positive intervention, that of engaging in 10 minutes of daily stretching, I have put together a basic stretching guide for you.

A guide to stretching

Though stretching (flexibility training) is a crucial and extremely important component of fitness, it is probably the one that is most overlooked. Why this is the case I couldn't quite say; maybe the vast majority of trainers are incredulous about the benefits of stretching. Whatever the reason ensure that you are not among these risk-takers and implement a stretching regime. It's easy to do and for the little time it takes the rewards could be substantial.

Methods of stretching

The types of stretching we can do to improve our flexibility include static or developmental stretches. A static stretch is where we hold the position for between 20 to 60 seconds. When working through a stretching regime, and this is best done post-exercise when the body is still warm, it is advisable to include the major muscle groups while also paying additional attention to those muscles predominantly worked during the session.

So, even if your main session consisted of, say, a five-mile run, you should still stretch the muscles of the upper body but ensure to focus extra time on the quads, hamstrings, and calves. Regardless of the workout target area, whenever we engage in exercise a whole host of smaller, synergist muscles are engaged in a supportive and facilitatory capacity. Consequently, because tension manifests in a wide range of muscle groups, our stretch routine should encompass the whole body.

How to include 10 minutes of stretching into your day

Probably one of the best ways to ensure that you get your 10 minutes a day is by bolting a stretch onto the end of your training/sports sessions. As soon as you finish pumping iron or pounding the pavement, immediately (after the cool-down) initiate your stretching regime. Begin with the muscles of the upper body and slowly work down to those of the legs. Adopting this systematic process will reduce the likelihood of omitting muscle groups.

The ACSM recommends holding each stretch for 10 to 30 seconds each.⁹ However, a recent report suggested that the optimal stretch duration is somewhere between 20 seconds and one minute. Moreover, the report also emphasised the importance of treating your stretches as you would an exercise. Traditionally, a stretch would be held for one exposure.

However, studies have shown that applying the reps and sets method to your stretches yields better results. Instead of holding the stretch position once for, say, 30 seconds, we would perform two to three sets ensuring to release after each set.

Of course, the intensity remains low, and the strictest form is maintained. Make this your mantra:

“A stretch should never cause physical pain or discomfort. It should induce a mild sensation in the area under tension.”

Another method you can use to get more elasticated is by introducing Yoga into your life. This is my secret weapon against injury. Every morning, without fail, I scrape myself out of bed at 5 a.m., roll out the Yoga mat, and slowly work through a series of sun salutations and various floor exercises.

I've been doing this religiously for about two years now and not only is it a beautiful way to start each day, but it has noticeably increased my flexibility which has translated into fewer injuries and improved physical performance. For a comprehensive introduction to the Yogic method, see Herbert David Coulter's *Anatomy of Hatha Yoga*.

8-Week Exercise Program

This 8-Week Exercise Program provides you with a basic training framework to follow. The program has been designed to support you in maintaining exercise consistency for a pre-specified duration. You have the option of implementing the readymade program or creating your own. Irrespective of the option you select, using the grid below enables you to monitor progression through the eight weeks.

To get the most out of the program, aim to complete every workout that you plot into the plan (that's if you decide not to use the pre-produced program). On completing a workout, tick the corresponding box. Treating the program as you would a to-do list can improve motivation and increase training productivity. Remember, if you're struggling with workout ideas, use the session plans provided.

Tips to get started

- ✓ First, before embarking on the exercise program, establish a health and fitness goal. Once you've resolved on a goal, write it at the top of the program. Though not applicable to all goals, it is helpful to subdivide your goal into milestones. These milestones are then placed periodically throughout the eight weeks.
- ✓ Start at week one and progress through all the workouts in the program.
- ✓ Using the grid as you would a to-do list, tick off each completed day's workout.
- ✓ On completion of one full week, reassess your performance in relation to the milestones. If you're on target brilliant! If not, make adjustments.
- ✓ The exercise program will deliver the best possible results if implemented alongside dietary and lifestyle changes.

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8-Week Exercise Program

Progression Tracker

Fitness goal start point: Fitness goal target:

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Monday								
Tuesday								
Wednesday								
Thursday								
Friday		Fitness test		Fitness test		Fitness test		Fitness test
Saturday								
Sunday								



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STANDARD TRAINING PROCESS

10 Minute Warm-Up

- 5/10 minutes cardio: rowing, cross-trainer, airdyne cycling, skipping
- 1 to 3 sets of 6 to 12 reps of a mixture of the exercises that feature in the main session

Main Session

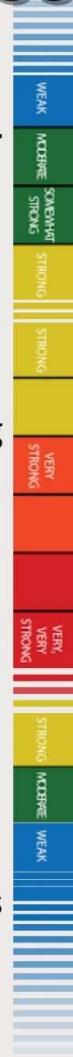
- Dedicate this phase of the training process to pursuing your training goal; or
- Complete a Hungry4Fitness workout

5 Minute Cool-Down

- 5 minutes cardio: rowing, cross-trainer, airdyne cycling, skipping

5 Minute Stretch

- Stretch all the main muscle groups
- Focus additional time on those muscles that were primarily targeted in the main session
- Apply the following formula to your stretches: 2 to 3 sets of 30 to 60 seconds



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Week 1		
Monday	30-Minutes cardio and bodyweight circuit (1 min each exercise – repeat three times through) Press-ups → Skipping → Plank → Skipping → Air squats → Skipping → Hill climbers → Skipping → Burpees → Skipping	Completed Y/N
Tuesday	20-Minutes cardio training Running → Rowing → Skipping → Cycling → Swimming	Completed Y/N
Wednesday	24-Minute whole-body conditioning circuit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 min cardio (rowing/running/skipping) • 1 min kettlebell swings • 1 min bodyweight exercises: 5 burpees → 5 press-ups → 5 sec plank → 5 squat jumps Repeat for 6 rounds	Completed Y/N
Thursday	20-Minutes cardio training Running → Rowing → Skipping → Cycling → Swimming	Completed Y/N
Friday	20/30-Minutes resistance training (3 to 5 sets of 12 to 20 reps) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kettlebell swing • Kettlebell deadlift • Barbell bent-over row • Barbell back squat • Dumbbell curl to press (alternate arm) • Dumbbell Farmers' walk (convert reps to metres) 	Completed Y/N
Saturday	30-Minutes active recovery session (swim/cycle/walk)	Completed Y/N
Sunday	30-Minutes active recovery session (swim/cycle/walk)	Completed Y/N

Week 2		
Monday	30-Minutes cardio and bodyweight circuit (1 min each exercise – repeat three times through) Press-ups → Skipping → Plank → Skipping → Air squats → Skipping → Hill climbers → Skipping → Burpees → Skipping	Completed Y/N
Tuesday	20-Minutes cardio training Running → Rowing → Skipping → Cycling → Swimming	Completed Y/N
Wednesday	24-Minute whole-body conditioning circuit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 min cardio (rowing/running/skipping) • 1 min kettlebell swings • 1 min bodyweight exercises: 5 burpees → 5 press-ups → 5 sec plank → 5 squat jumps Repeat for 6 rounds	Completed Y/N
Thursday	20-Minutes cardio training Running → Rowing → Skipping → Cycling → Swimming	Completed Y/N
Friday	20/30-Minutes resistance training (3 to 5 sets of 12 to 20 reps) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kettlebell swing • Kettlebell deadlift • Barbell bent-over row • Barbell back squat • Dumbbell curl to press (alternate arm) • Dumbbell Farmers' walk (convert reps to metres) 	Completed Y/N
Saturday	30-Minutes active recovery session (swim/cycle/walk)	Completed Y/N
Sunday	30-Minutes active recovery session (swim/cycle/walk)	Completed Y/N

Week 3		
Monday	30-Minutes cardio and bodyweight circuit (1 min each exercise – repeat three times through) Press-ups → Skipping → Plank → Skipping → Air squats → Skipping → Hill climbers → Skipping → Burpees → Skipping	Completed Y/N
Tuesday	30-Minutes cardio training Running → Rowing → Skipping → Cycling → Swimming	Completed Y/N
Wednesday	28-Minute whole-body conditioning circuit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 min cardio (rowing/running/skipping) • 1 min kettlebell swings • 1 min bodyweight exercises: 5 burpees → 5 press-ups → 5 sec plank → 5 squat jumps Repeat for 7 rounds	Completed Y/N
Thursday	30-Minutes cardio training Running → Rowing → Skipping → Cycling → Swimming	Completed Y/N
Friday	30/40-Minutes resistance training (3 to 6 sets of 12 to 24 reps) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kettlebell swing • Kettlebell deadlift • Barbell bent-over row • Barbell back squat • Dumbbell curl to press (alternate arm) • Dumbbell Farmers' walk (convert reps to metres) 	Completed Y/N
Saturday	35-Minutes active recovery session (swim/cycle/walk)	Completed Y/N
Sunday	35-Minutes active recovery session (swim/cycle/walk)	Completed Y/N

Week 4		
Monday	30-Minutes cardio and bodyweight circuit (1 min each exercise – repeat three times through) Press-ups → Skipping → Plank → Skipping → Air squats → Skipping → Hill climbers → Skipping → Burpees → Skipping	Completed Y/N
Tuesday	30-Minutes cardio training Running → Rowing → Skipping → Cycling → Swimming	Completed Y/N
Wednesday	28-Minute whole-body conditioning circuit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 min cardio (rowing/running/skipping) • 1 min kettlebell swings • 1 min bodyweight exercises: 5 burpees → 5 press-ups → 5 sec plank → 5 squat jumps Repeat for 7 rounds	Completed Y/N
Thursday	30-Minutes cardio training Running → Rowing → Skipping → Cycling → Swimming	Completed Y/N
Friday	30/40-Minutes resistance training (3 to 6 sets of 12 to 24 reps) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kettlebell swing • Kettlebell deadlift • Barbell bent-over row • Barbell back squat • Dumbbell curl to press (alternate arm) • Dumbbell Farmers' walk (convert reps to metres) 	Completed Y/N
Saturday	35-Minutes active recovery session (swim/cycle/walk)	Completed Y/N
Sunday	35-Minutes active recovery session (swim/cycle/walk)	Completed Y/N

Week 5		
Monday	30-Minutes cardio and bodyweight circuit (1 min each exercise – repeat three times through) Press-ups → Skipping → Plank → Skipping → Air squats → Skipping → Hill climbers → Skipping → Burpees → Skipping	Completed Y/N
Tuesday	40-Minutes cardio training Running → Rowing → Skipping → Cycling → Swimming	Completed Y/N
Wednesday	32-Minute whole-body conditioning circuit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 min cardio (rowing/running/skipping) • 1 min kettlebell swings • 1 min bodyweight exercises: 5 burpees → 5 press-ups → 5 sec plank → 5 squat jumps Repeat for 8 rounds	Completed Y/N
Thursday	40-Minutes cardio training Running → Rowing → Skipping → Cycling → Swimming	Completed Y/N
Friday	30/40-Minutes resistance training (3 to 6 sets of 12 to 24 reps) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kettlebell swing • Kettlebell deadlift • Barbell bent-over row • Barbell back squat • Dumbbell curl to press (alternate arm) • Dumbbell Farmers' walk (convert reps to metres) 	Completed Y/N
Saturday	40-Minutes active recovery session (swim/cycle/walk)	Completed Y/N
Sunday	40-Minutes active recovery session (swim/cycle/walk)	Completed Y/N

Week 6		
Monday	30-Minutes cardio and bodyweight circuit (1 min each exercise – repeat three times through) Press-ups → Skipping → Plank → Skipping → Air squats → Skipping → Hill climbers → Skipping → Burpees → Skipping	Completed Y/N
Tuesday	40-Minutes cardio training Running → Rowing → Skipping → Cycling → Swimming	Completed Y/N
Wednesday	32-Minute whole-body conditioning circuit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 min cardio (rowing/running/skipping) • 1 min kettlebell swings • 1 min bodyweight exercises: 5 burpees → 5 press-ups → 5 sec plank → 5 squat jumps Repeat for 8 rounds	Completed Y/N
Thursday	40-Minutes cardio training Running → Rowing → Skipping → Cycling → Swimming	Completed Y/N
Friday	30/40-Minutes resistance training (3 to 6 sets of 12 to 24 reps) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kettlebell swing • Kettlebell deadlift • Barbell bent-over row • Barbell back squat • Dumbbell curl to press (alternate arm) • Dumbbell Farmers' walk (convert reps to metres) 	Completed Y/N
Saturday	40-Minutes active recovery session (swim/cycle/walk)	Completed Y/N
Sunday	40-Minutes active recovery session (swim/cycle/walk)	Completed Y/N

Week 7		
Monday	40-Minutes cardio and bodyweight circuit (1 min each exercise – repeat four times through) Press-ups → Skipping → Plank → Skipping → Air squats → Skipping → Hill climbers → Skipping → Burpees → Skipping	Completed Y/N
Tuesday	50-Minutes cardio training Running → Rowing → Skipping → Cycling → Swimming	Completed Y/N
Wednesday	36-Minute whole-body conditioning circuit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 min cardio (rowing/running/skipping) • 1 min kettlebell swings • 1 min bodyweight exercises: 5 burpees → 5 press-ups → 5 sec plank → 5 squat jumps Repeat for 9 rounds	Completed Y/N
Thursday	50-Minutes cardio training Running → Rowing → Skipping → Cycling → Swimming	Completed Y/N
Friday	40/50-Minutes resistance training (3 to 6 sets of 12 to 24 reps) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kettlebell swing • Kettlebell deadlift to high pull • Barbell bent-over row • Barbell back squat • Dumbbell snatch (alternate arm) • Dumbbell Farmers' walk (convert reps to metres) 	Completed Y/N
Saturday	50-Minutes active recovery session (swim/cycle/walk)	Completed Y/N
Sunday	50-Minutes active recovery session (swim/cycle/walk)	Completed Y/N

Week 8		
Monday	40-Minutes cardio and bodyweight circuit (1 min each exercise – repeat four times through) Press-ups → Skipping → Plank → Skipping → Air squats → Skipping → Hill climbers → Skipping → Burpees → Skipping	Completed Y/N
Tuesday	60-Minutes cardio training Running → Rowing → Skipping → Cycling → Swimming	Completed Y/N
Wednesday	40-Minute whole-body conditioning circuit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 min cardio (rowing/running/skipping) • 1 min kettlebell swings • 1 min bodyweight exercises: 5 burpees → 5 press-ups → 5 sec plank → 5 squat jumps Repeat for 10 rounds	Completed Y/N
Thursday	60-Minutes cardio training Running → Rowing → Skipping → Cycling → Swimming	Completed Y/N
Friday	40/50-Minutes resistance training (3 to 6 sets of 12 to 24 reps) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kettlebell swing • Kettlebell deadlift to high pull • Barbell bent-over row • Barbell back squat • Dumbbell snatch (alternate arm) • Dumbbell Farmers' walk (convert reps to metres) 	Completed Y/N
Saturday	60-Minutes active recovery session (swim/cycle/walk)	Completed Y/N
Sunday	60-Minutes active recovery session (swim/cycle/walk)	Completed Y/N

Workout 1

Low-impact Cardio Circuit

Before starting the workout ensure to warm-up well first. The warm-up is an integral phase of the training process and should never be omitted. In addition to improving exercise performance and preparing our minds and body for the coming demands, warming up reduces injury risk. For this workout, a warm-up has been provided.

The workout is structured around a low-impact cardio exercise. To appeal to a wider audience, three options are available. The process doesn't differ between options only the exercises. So, if you don't have access to an airdyne bike, the low-impact exercise of choice for option 1, that's not a problem. Instead, you can select option 2, which features rowing, or option 3, which features the cross-trainer. When you've selected your preferred option, here's how to do the workout.

Organised into circular circuits, the objective is to complete one full lap before resting. It's neither a race nor a competition. Take your time around the circuit and focus on maintaining a methodical output. It is perfectly acceptable to rest between each station if you feel the need. Remember, as we are treating this workout as rehabilitation or active recovery, the training intensity must remain low.

Key points

- Warm-up prior to embarking on the circuit.
- Select the option most suited to your training facility and exercise objectives.
- Aim to complete one full lap of the circuit without resting.

- But it's absolutely fine to rest if you need to.
- There is no set number of laps. You decide how many laps are suitable for your current level of fitness.

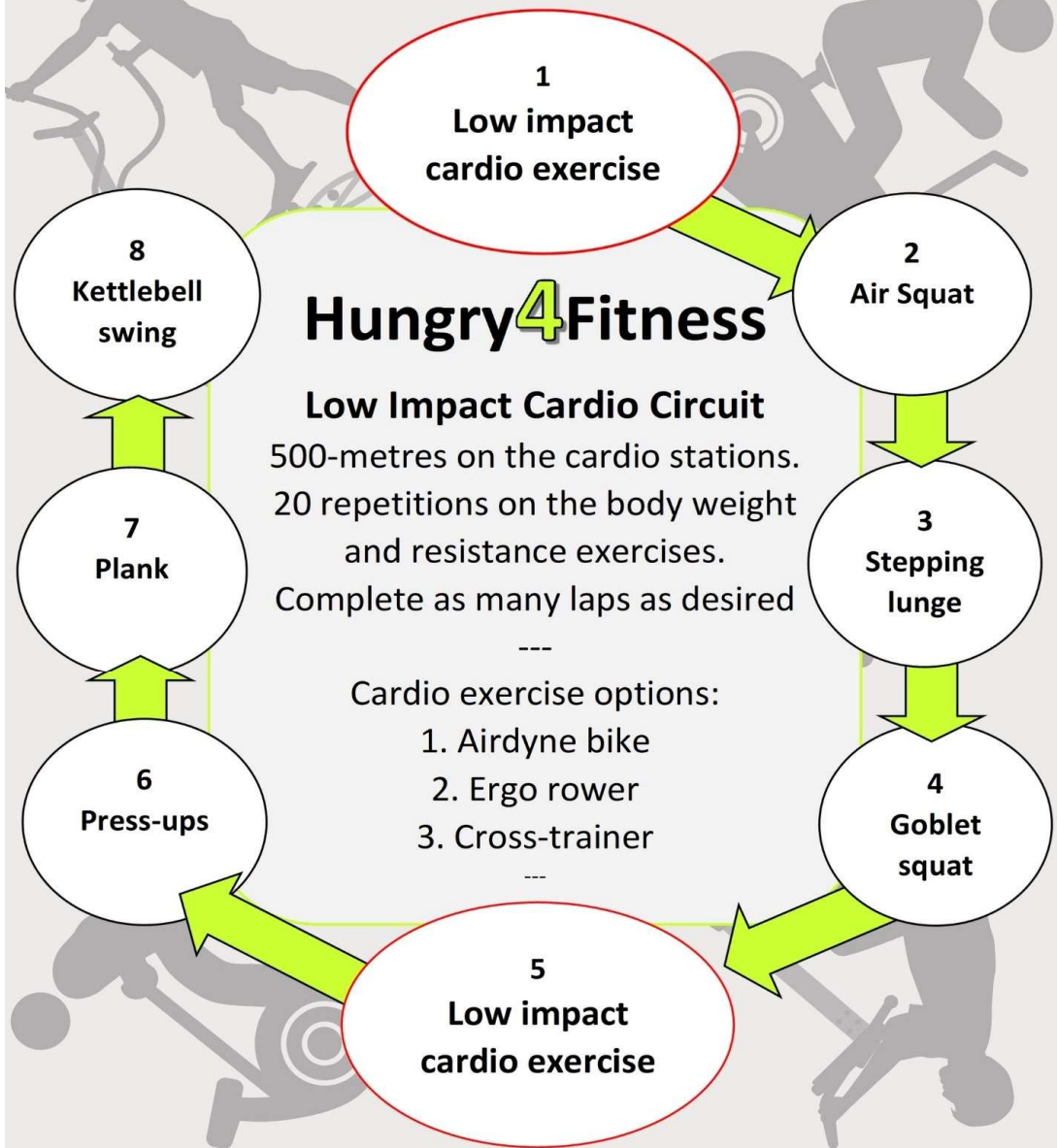
Workout hints and tips

- Organise the equipment needed for the circuit before starting. Spending a few minutes doing this will improve transition time between stations and mitigate the fuff of finding kit mid-circuit.
 - When performing the plank convert the reps into seconds – one rep equals one second.
 - Any exercise that features in the circuit is replaceable. Not keen on goblet squats? Fine, swap them for dumbbell squats, barbell squats, resistance band squats, or Hindu squats.
-

Warm up

- 3-minutes low impact cardio exercise - airdyne cycling, ergo rower, cross-trainer
- 1 up to 5 reps air squats into press-ups
- 2-minutes low impact cardio exercise - airdyne cycling, ergo rower, cross-trainer
- 1 up to 5 reps air squats into press-ups
- 2-minutes low impact cardio exercise - airdyne cycling, ergo rower, cross-trainer
- 1 up to 5 reps air squats into press-ups
- 2-minutes low impact cardio exercise - airdyne cycling, ergo rower, cross-trainer
- 1 up to 5 reps air squats into press-ups

LOW-IMPACT CARDIO CIRCUIT



Workout 2

HIIT Cycling Scorchers

After warming up, which should integrate naturally into the workout, you will progress through a series of low- to medium-intensity intervals. The intervals have been structured in a descending time/ascending intensity format. That is, the duration of the interval decreases while the intensity – stipulated by revolutions per minute (RPM) – increases. This stage of the workout is organised into three 10-minute blocks, each block is further broken into 5-, 3- and 2-minute segments.

Once you've completed the first phase of the workout, assuming you've not been dropped from the peloton, the intensity heats up as you enter the bunch sprint. For the final 15-minutes of the workout, you'll be fighting tooth and nail through a series of short-duration high-intensity intervals. The objective here is to maintain a cadence exceeding 110 RPM for 20-seconds. Each high-intensity interval is followed by a low-intensity recovery interval of equal duration. For the recovery interval, try to hold a cadence of between 70 to 80 RPM.

Key points

- Complete the 5-minute warm-up before starting the workout.
- The first phase of the workout consists of three 10-minute blocks. Each block is broken into 5-, 3- and 2-minute segments. Each segment has been assigned an RPM range. The objective is to try and remain inside the RPM range for the duration of the interval.

- The second phase of the workout features a series of short-duration high-intensity intervals. Your objective is to oscillate between high- and low-intensity intervals for 15-minutes. Try to sustain a near-maximal intensity for all 20-second intervals.

Workout hints and tips

- You might be wondering why there is a conspicuous absence of any mention of resistance settings. *Why haven't you told me how hard to set the resistance throughout this workout?* The answer: it's highly unlikely that the resistance settings of the stationary bike that you use will match those of the bike that I used. Thus, I leave this to your discretion. *You decide how hard to set the resistance throughout the workout.*
- Even if we tried, we couldn't escape the fact that this is a tough sweat session. One that will put your physical fitness to the test. With that in mind, remember to top up your water bottle before hopping on the bike.
- I can't speak for you, but I personally derive a lot of motivation from engaging with a training plan during a workout. When I completed this HIIT cycling session, I propped the plan against the bike monitor and put a line through all completed intervals. For me, this simple training strategy makes all the difference.

Warm up

- 1-minute cycling maintain 60 RPM (± 5) → 1-minute cycling maintain 70 RPM (± 5) → 1-minute cycling maintain 80 RPM (± 5) → 1-minute cycling maintain 90 RPM (± 5) → 1-minute cycling maintain 100 RPM (± 5)



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HIIT CYCLING WORKOUT

Phase 1: 5-Minutes

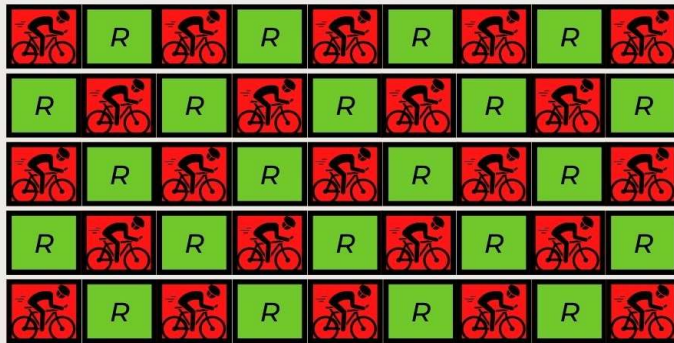
5-minute progressive-intensity warm-up

Phase 2: 30-Minutes

5-minutes cycling (80 - 85 RPM)
3-minutes cycling (85 - 90 RPM)
2-minutes cycling (90 - 95 RPM)
Repeat 3 times increasing the RPM by 5

Phase 3: 15-Minutes

20-seconds **HI** / 20-seconds **Rest**
Aim to maintain maximum output for all high-intensity intervals



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Workout 3

Upper Body Kettlebell Challenge

After completing the progressive 10-minute warm-up, choose a kettlebell weight suitable for the workout option you select. Option 1 observes the strength training protocol – low sets and reps with plenty of rest – thus it favours a heavier bell. Option 2 is all about volume. So, if you want to survive the workout, ensure to use a lighter bell – perhaps one pound (16kg) less than you're used to. Here's how to approach each option:

Option 1 is structured similarly to your standard weightlifting session. Each of the four kettlebell exercises is accompanied by a prespecified sets and reps range. The range spans strength and muscle endurance. That is, low to high sets and reps. Rest periods have not been stipulated and you should rest as much as required to maximise your performance throughout each lift.

Option 2 is more prescriptive. Organised into CrossFit-style AMRAPs, the challenge is to accrue *as many reps as possible* in five-minutes. On completion of each AMRAP, take a two-minute rest before progressing to the next exercise. Of course, if you need a little extra time, ensure to take it.

Key points

- Complete the warm-up before starting the workout
- Once warm, select the workout option most reflective of your personal fitness goals. (You want to increase strength and muscle mass? Select Option 1. But if

you want to improve muscle endurance and aerobic fitness while pitting yourself against a tough physical challenge, you know what to do – go Option 2!)

- Ensuring that you have chosen an appropriate weight k-bell, proceed through the upper body kettlebell workout.

Workout hints and tips

- It's prudent to have a couple of spare kettlebells to hand; preferably one above and below the weight you're using. Irrespective of which option you select, having a range of weights on standby will enable you to move efficiently through the gears during the workout. Let's say that you select Option 2 and after a minute of under-the-leg passing you can 'feel it'. With a heavy bell ready and waiting you'll be able to make a quick substitution without disturbing the workout.
- A great way to tap into our powerful competitive spirit is to train with a partner. Option 2, more so than Option 1, favours this tactic. Recruit a partner of comparable fitness (not your grandma) prior to having a bash at the AMRAPs and compete over the five-minutes. Maybe even put a wager on who can amass the most reps. Loser receives 25 burpees.

Warm up

- 1- to 2-minutes mobility exercises → 5-minutes rowing at a low intensity → 1 up to 10 reps squat thrusts into press-ups → 2-minutes rowing at a moderate intensity → 1 up to 10 kettlebell swing into KB thrusters → 1-minute rowing at maximum intensity → *Good to go!*



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UPPER BODY KB WORKOUT

Workout Method

- Session duration: 30 minutes
- Rest time: 1 to 2 min between sets
- Difficulty: All levels welcome
- Formula: Sets/reps/rest or AMRAP (*as many reps as possible*)
- Objective: Build strength in the legs

Exercises

Under the leg pass: 3 to 5 sets of 12 to 20 reps or 5min AMRAP

KB Swing: 3 to 5 sets of 12 to 20 reps or 5min AMRAP

KB Snatch pull: 3 to 5 sets of 12 to 20 reps or 5min AMRAP

KB Jerk: 3 to 5 sets of 12 to 20 reps or 5min AMRAP

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Workout 4

Lower Body Kettlebell Challenge

This lower body kettlebell challenge is the sequel to Workout 3. They were designed to be completed on alternate days. However, if you're a proper fitness fanatic, or you want that 'full body' training experience, you could tackle them together. This could be done by reshuffling the exercises into an upper body/lower body sequence or progressing through the plans as you find them.

You have two options to choose from. Each option delivers a different training outcome. The first is geared more towards developing functional strength whereas the second enhances endurance and aerobic fitness. Here's how they work.

Option 1 is structured similarly to a standard gym session. For each of the four kettlebell exercises, you will complete the prespecified sets and reps. The sets and reps span the strength and muscle endurance range. This means that if you want to focus purely on strength, you should select the lowest set but use a heavier kettlebell. If you want to make muscle endurance your focus, move up the range but down the kettlebell weight.

Option 2 is all about volume and overload. Organised into four 5-minute AMRAPs, the challenge is very simple: perform as many reps as possible in the time allotted. After each AMRAP take a 2-minute break before progressing to the next exercise. Of course, if you need a little extra time, ensure to take it. But, which is something I didn't

mention in the Upper Body Kettlebell Workout, when you decide on a time, ensure to stick with it throughout the plan.

Key points

- Complete the warm-up prior to starting the workout.
- Select the option most suited to your training objective. Option 1: sets, reps, rest, repeat. Option 2: five-minute AMRAPs.
- Using the session plan provided, progress through the four kettlebell exercises.

Workout hints and tips

- Ensure that you are technically proficient at all the exercises before starting the workout. If you encounter an exercise that you are not 100% confident at performing, either brush on your technique or use a light kettlebell.
- To help keep track of your progress through the sets-and-reps option of the workout, consider using the session plan provided.
- If you pluck up the courage to have a bash at the AMRAPs, make a note of your rep scores. This will give you a benchmark to compete against if you have a go at the workout in the future.

Warm up

- 1- to 2-minutes mobility exercises → 5-minutes rowing at a low intensity → 1 up to 10 reps squat thrusts into press-ups → 2-minutes rowing at a moderate intensity → 1 up to 10 kettlebell swing into KB thrusters → 1-minute rowing at maximum intensity → *Good to go!*



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KETTLEBELL LEG WORKOUT

Workout Method

- Session duration: 30 minutes
- Rest time: 1 to 2 min between sets
- Difficulty: All levels welcome
- Formula: Sets/reps/rest or AMRAP (*as many reps as possible*)
- Objective: Build strength in the legs

Exercises

KB Goblet squat: 3 to 5 sets of 12 to 20 reps or 5min AMRAP

KB Lunge: 3 to 5 sets of 12 to 20 reps or 5min AMRAP

KB Squat jump: 3 to 5 sets of 12 to 20 reps or 5min AMRAP

KB Step-ups: 3 to 5 sets of 12 to 20 reps or 5min AMRAP

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Workout 5

Build Bags of Power!

The circuit is comprised of 10 exercises – not all of which involve a powerbag. Your objective is to cycle through one full lap of the circuit. Concluding each lap there is a short cardio station to complete.

To make this powerbag circuit accessible to a wider audience, it has been organised into three difficulty levels – low, medium, and high. Across the three levels, the exercises do not change. All that differentiates the levels is the number of laps and duration of the cardio station.

The rep count per exercise is capped at 10. But you can reduce or increase the rep range to accommodate your physical ability and training experience. The three levels are as follows:

Low: 6 laps – 2-minute cardio (600 reps total)

Medium: 8 laps – 3-minutes cardio (800 reps total)

High: 10 laps – 4-minutes cardio (1000 reps total)

Key points

- Ensure to complete the circuit-specific warm-up prior to picking up that bag!
- Select the level most suited to your current level of fitness.
- Maintaining a training intensity commensurate with your exercise objectives, complete the number of circuit laps stipulated by the level chosen (see above).

- After each lap of the circuit, progress straight into the cardio station. A point of note. The cardio exercise has not been specified. Why the choice? you may be asking. Well, as with the level structuring, having exercise options ensures more people can participate in the workout. Also, those with limited exercise kit – say, just a lone powerbag at home – will be able to tailor the circuit to fit their training facility.

Circuit hints and tips

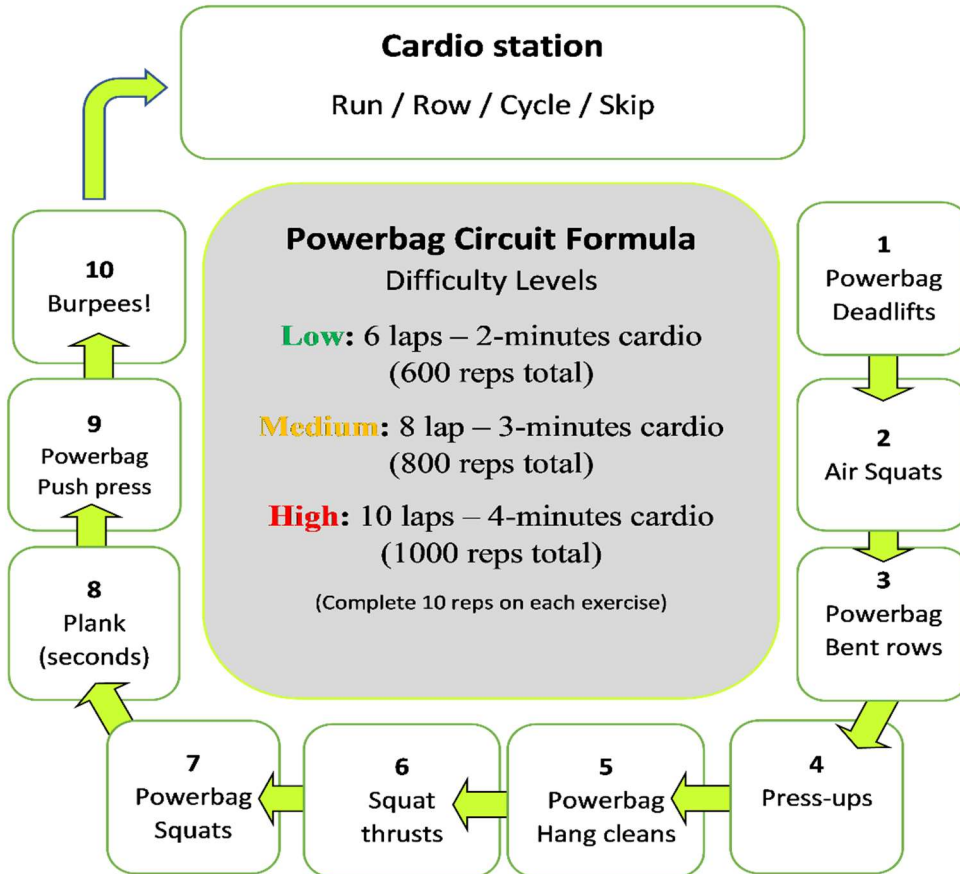
- If your memory's anything like mine – sieve-like – you'll have forgotten the exercise ordering before completing that first set of deadlifts. To avoid missing exercises, and to improve the fluidity of the circuit, have the session plan to hand. Follow it for a couple of laps until the exercise ordering is firmly cemented in your mind.
- It's helpful to have a range of different weighted powerbags on standby. The rationale. A weight that'll test your push pressing power probably won't tickle your squat. By having a light and heavy bag at the ready, you'll be able to maximise your performance on each exercise. When I completed this circuit, I used a 50kg bag for the deadlifts and squats and a 35kg for the hang cleans and push presses.

Warm-up

- 5 min cardio (run/row/skip) at a low-intensity pace → 25 reps air squats, burpees, and press-ups → 3 min cardio (run/row/skip) at a low- to medium-intensity pace → 20 reps air squats, burpees, and press-ups → *Start the session!*

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Powerbag & Cardio Circuit



How it works

After a vigorous warm-up, start at the first exercise – powerbag deadlifts – and proceed to complete one full lap of the circuit. Concluding the lap, transition straight to the cardio station. Engage in the cardio exercise of your choice for the stipulated duration (**Low** = 2-minutes; **Medium** = 3-minutes; **High** = 4-minutes). From here you have two options. Option 1: take a minute rest. Option 2: don't rest and instead get back into the circuit.

Workout 6

Strengthen the Chain

The deadlift workout is organised into an ascending and descending ladder. That is, the resistance increases while the number of repetitions decreases. You'll also notice that the bodyweight reps and cardio distances increase as you progress through the workout.

Though the session looks a like a circuit, you are not competing against the clock. The objective is to complete the workout as per the plan. As you do so take as much rest as you need between exercises. Don't feel obliged to follow the plan to the letter. Use it as a framework or guide or, better still, a training to-do list.

Key points

- The workout observes an ascending/descending ladder. As the reps reduce the resistance increases. The body weight and cardio numbers only increase.
- Remember, it's entirely up to you how many sets you split those reps across. Either challenge yourself and polish them off in a single stint or take your time and focus on form.

Workout hints and tips

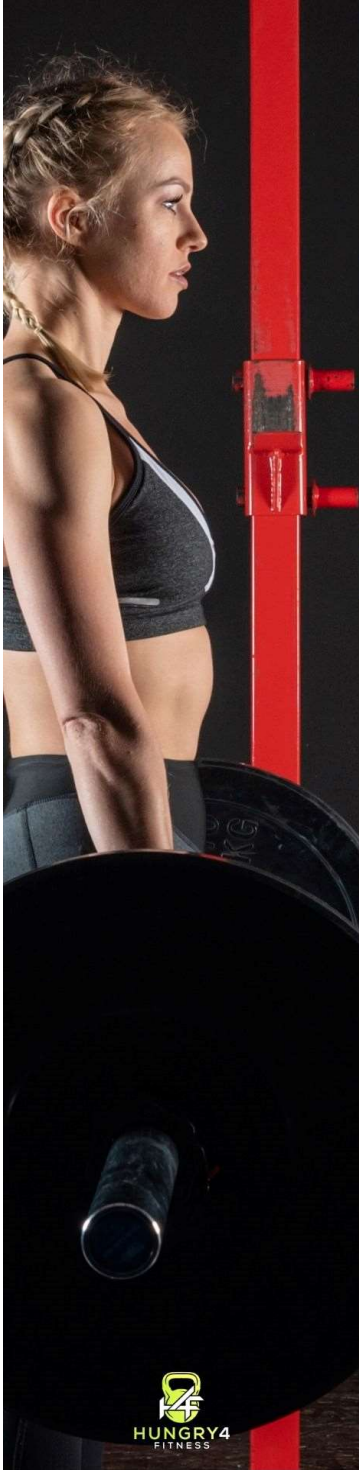
- I'll agree, there's a conspicuous absence of advice concerning the style of deadlift used in the workout. Whenever deadlifting is mentioned most people think of the conventional movement. However, it's good training practice to mix up your deads. Why? Well, for one, changing the style makes for a more

interesting exercise experience. But more importantly, different deadlifts work the body in different ways. For example, stiff-leg and sumo deadlifts shift emphasis to the quads and lower back.

- The resistance structure is not set in stone and can be modified to suit your ability. Beginners and intermediate trainers might opt to repeat the third set (75% BW) and forgo the final heavy lift. Advanced trainers could start at 50% (of max body weight) and increase by 25% with each successive set. This would result in a hefty final lift of 125%.
- Feel free to change the exercises that intersperse the deadlifting sets. As it stands, the workout promotes strength, muscular endurance and cardio fitness. (It'll also increase power if you include sumo deadlift to high pulls.) However, if you want to focus more on strength, you could replace the bodyweight exercises with compound movements. To avoid fatiguing the same muscle groups used when deadlifting, it's advisable to select exercises that engage anterior muscles – such as barbell bench press or standing shoulder press.

Warm-up

- 1000-metres rowing (low-intensity)
- 1 up to 10 press-ups into air squats
- 750-metres rowing (medium-intensity)
- 1 up to 5 deadlifts into air squats
- 500-metres rowing (medium- to high-intensity)
- 1 up to 5 deadlifts into air squats
- 250-metres rowing (max intensity)



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DEADLIFT WORKOUT

Workout totals

- Deadlift reps: 250
- Bodyweight reps: 500
- Metres rowed: 2500

Workout Method

- 100 reps Deadlifts (25% BW)
- 25 reps Press-ups
- 25 reps Air Squats
- 250-metre Row
- 75 reps Deadlifts (50% BW)
- 50 reps Press-ups
- 50 reps Air Squats
- 500-metre Row
- 50 reps Deadlifts (75% BW)
- 75 reps Press-ups
- 75 reps Air Squats
- 750-metre Row
- 25 reps Deadlifts (100% BW)
- 100 reps Press-ups
- 100 reps Air Squats
- 1000-metre Row

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Workout 7

30-Minute Circuit

This workout is super simple and fuss-free. In addition, it is easy to customise, and you can tailor it to suit your fitness objectives. Here's how it works. The circuit is comprised of 10 exercises. The exercises are a blend of resistance, body weight, and cardio. Once you have completed the warm-up, set a 3-minute countdown timer. When you're ready, progress through the list of exercises. Your objective is to complete as many repetitions or cover as many metres as possible in 3-minutes. On completion of each exercise, take a minute rest. It's advisable during the rest to stay active with low-intensity cardio such as cycling or walking.

Methods of modification

Another strength of this workout, besides the many fitness benefits it delivers, is its adaptability. There are literally hundreds of ways that you could adapt this workout. But I'm just going to outline three. If you practice a sport, you could include exercises, drills, or movements specific to that sport. For example, if you were a boxer, you could substitute one or more of the cardio exercises for skipping. And you could replace the resistance or body weight exercises for punch bag drills, shadow boxing, or even sparring. The same method could be applied to a whole host of different sports from CrossFit to the combative arts and beyond.

Then there's the option of focusing the exercises on a specific component of fitness. Let's say that you wanted to develop functional strength. Simply replace the static exercises for functional or compound movements. Alternatively, if you wanted to

improve muscle endurance, or you were completing this workout at home, you could substitute all resistance exercises with calisthenics.

Key points

- Your aim is to maintain maximum output for three minutes on the 10 exercises.
- After each exercise, you are entitled to a minute rest. Remember to remain active during your rest lest you start cooling down or lose your training appetite.
- On completion of each exercise, make a note of your score. This can be used as a benchmark to compete against when you next have a go at this workout.

Workout hints and tips

- Prior to tackling this workout, it's advisable to organise your equipment first. This improves efficiency throughout the workout, and it removes the irritation of sourcing exercise equipment when you are tired and sweaty.
- To get the best score possible, certainly for the first three exercises, ensure to warm up well.
- Setting a countdown timer with 30-seconds audible reminders helps maintain motivation and work rate.
- Don't forget to stretch off when you have completed the workout.

Warm-up

- 3-minutes rowing → 3-minutes cycling → 3-minutes press-ups into air squats (5 reps) → 3-minutes running → *Set your countdown timer and get going!*



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10 X 3 MINUTES MAX EFFORT

Workout Method

- Session duration: 39 minutes
- Rest time: 1 min
- Difficulty: Medium to high
- Method: Max effort for 3 mins
- Objective: Best possible score

Exercises 3 min per station - 1 min rest

- 1) Running  Score
- 2) Press-ups  Score
- 3) Pull-ups  Score
- 4) Leg raises  Score
- 5) Skipping  Score
- 6) Air squats  Score
- 7) Bent rows  Score
- 8) Burpees  Score
- 9) KB swings  Score
- 10) Ergo row  Score

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Workout 8

10-Minute Total Body Weight Blast

This body weight workout couldn't be simpler. Once you've warmed up – a jog around the block or five to 10-minutes of skipping will do – set a repeat minute countdown timer.

When you're ready, start the countdown and begin performing air squats for one minute. Aim to maintain a methodical pace for the duration of the round.

As soon as the time elapses, immediately progress to the next exercise – walkouts. Again, try to walk out and back without stopping for one minute.

Following the same format, proceed through all the body weight exercises. When you have completed the final exercise – one-minute burpees – either finish the workout or take a short break and go again.

Key points

- Warm-up well before progressing through the plan.
- Set a minute repeat on your countdown timer.
- Start at the first exercise, air squats, and perform as many reps as you can in 60-seconds.
- Without resting, proceed through the rest of the body weight exercises spending one minute on each station.
- For added fitness gains, consider concluding the workout with a bout of cardio.

Workout hints and tips

- Use the exercise list to keep track of progress. Have a copy of the plan and a pen to hand when you do this workout. After each AMRAP conclude, ensure to make note of your rep score. This can be used as a benchmark to compete against when you next have a go at the workout.
 - Set a one-minute repeat interval timer (preferably with a 10-second end of interval warning) as this enables you to forget about the clock and focus on getting fit.
 - A rest period has not been stipulated as the objective of the workout is to progress through all ten exercises without stopping (or just long enough to make a note of your score). With that said, if you view yourself as a beginner or untrained, you will likely need to rest between exercises. Because the AMRAP duration is short, your rest period should reflect that. I recommend 10, 20, or 30 second breaks.
 - An alternative to resting is to factor in active recovery stations such as walking.
-

Warm-up

- 5-minutes jogging maintaining a light- to moderate-intensity.
- Complete 2 reps of each of the 10 exercises in the plan.
- 2-minutes jogging at a higher intensity.
- Complete 2 reps of each exercise.
- 2-minutes jogging 20-second Fartlek intervals: 20-seconds high-intensity/20-seconds low-intensity.
- Complete 5 reps of each exercise.



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BODY WEIGHT BLAST

Workout Method

- Session duration: 10 minutes
- Rest time: N/A
- Difficulty: Medium to high
- Method: Max effort for 1 min
- Objective: Best possible score

Exercises 1 min per station - no rest

- | | |
|-------------------|-------|
| 1) Air squats | Score |
| 2) Walkouts | Score |
| 3) Hillclimbers | Score |
| 4) Flutter kicks | Score |
| 5) Press-ups | Score |
| 6) Plank | Score |
| 7) Step and reach | Score |
| 8) Shoulder press | Score |
| 9) Hindu squats | Score |
| 10) Burpees | Score |

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Diet & Nutrition

According to Dr Gregor (2017), author of *How Not To Die*, over 90% of health comes from what we eat.¹ If this is true, and recent research strongly indicates that it is, one of your primary objectives in your weight loss campaign should be to cultivate a healthy diet. Not only is a healthy diet closely correlated with decreased disease, illness, and preventable mortality (see opening quotes), but it is by far the single most effective method of losing weight.

Before we embark on an exploration of what constitutes a healthy diet and delve into the methods of how to shape a diet that assists and supports weight loss (and health! of course), I invite you to complete the following task.

Task: In the space provided below, make a mind map/spider diagram/list of your current understanding of the key components of a healthy diet. Alternatively, if you're not much for making mind maps, encapsulate the proceeding question in a paragraph: **Q: Do you know which foods comprise a healthy diet?**

Your answer:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

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If you struggled to complete the task, don't worry, you are not alone. As it happens, many people have a hazy understanding of what qualifies as healthy eating. But then this should not come as a surprise considering the ubiquity of contradictory information out there and that even the 'professionals' have yet to arrive at a consensus. What most people believe to be healthy eating is, in fact, quite the opposite. For example, the following assumptions are commonly cited as healthy eating habits:

- Meat must be consumed to ensure the body gets adequate protein.
- Milk is essential for bone development.
- All fat is an evil that is best avoided.
- Five pieces of fruit or vegetables should be consumed daily.
- White rice and pasta are good sources of energy.
- Alcohol can be consumed in moderation as part of a healthy lifestyle.
- Low-fat products are better than their full-fat counterparts.
- It's not where the calories come from that is the concern, it's the quantity consumed.
- I can eat what I like so long as I do some exercise.

By the fact that these assumptions have been identified, you will have guessed that they are wrong. Well, they are not only wrong but, according to emerging research, some of them are contributing to disease, ill-health, obesity, and premature mortality. The WHO, for example, has warned that the increased consumption of 'energy-dense' and 'nutrient-deficient' foods – such as certain animal products and all confectionaries – coupled with high doses of salt, sugar, and saturated fat – again,

animal products, confectionaries, and all processed foods – have contributed to the exacerbation of disease and a three-fold increase in obesity rates.²

By the end of this section, you will have experienced an in-depth insight into what a healthy diet looks like – in accordance with the recommendations espoused by contemporary nutritional science. Furthermore, you will possess (I hope) the knowledge of how to cultivate a diet that supports your aspiration of establishing lifestyle habits that strengthen your health as opposed to undermining and weakening it.

In addition, you will develop a keen eye for distinguishing unhealthy foods, and you will be able to see through the obfuscating disguise of ‘health’ that many processed foods have been cleverly concealed in. This ability – or competency – is not to be disregarded and is of critical importance in the pursuit of a diet that promotes both weight loss and improved health.

Diet reformation

There must be a billion and one blogs on the subject of diet – and a further million books to boot. Anyone who has ever entered even a small part of this enmeshed web of information will no doubt have become quickly entangled in confusion. To be sure, there is a staggering amount of contradictory advice on what constitutes healthy eating.

And though it would be impossible to disentangle this giant web of culinary confusion and contradiction, there is, if one looks close enough, a fine thread of

continuity running through it all. Below I have encapsulated in a concise checklist the common consensus and key characteristics of a healthy, weight-loss-promoting diet. The list shares many similarities with Dr Greger's 'Daily Dozen', a distillation of years of research in nutritional science. Whenever he discovered 'exciting new data' on the health-fortifying, disease-fighting effects of a food, he would endeavour to include it in his diet. 'As the list of foods I tried to fit into my daily diet grew, I made a checklist and had it on a little dry-wipe board on the fridge.' Underneath our dietary checklist, the points of primary concern have been explained in more detail.

Dietary checklist

- ⊗ Cut out all processed food
- ⊗ Cut out all refined carbohydrates: white rice/pasta/bread/etc.
- ⊗ Drastically limit or completely remove sugar
- ⊗ Drastically limit or remove all animal protein: dairy/poultry/meat/fish
- ⊗ Drastically reduce or remove alcohol consumption
- ⊗ Reduce or cease snacking between meals
- ✓ Increase vegetable consumption – especially cruciferous vegetables (dark leafy greens) – preferably to eight pieces every day
- ✓ Increase fruit consumption – especially berries (as they are low in sugar content but extremely high in essential vitamins) – preferably to four pieces every day
- ✓ Replace refined carbohydrates for whole grains: brown rice/pasta/bread/etc., but still consume in moderation
- ✓ Consume clean liquids: herbal teas/fresh ground coffee/water
- ✓ Consume nuts and seeds in their natural, unadulterated form
- ✓ Include legumes and lentils – chickpeas, butter beans, red/green lentils

<p style="text-align: center;">Healthy Foods</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Eat these foods in abundance. Ensure that they comprise at least 90% of your dietary intake.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Unhealthy Foods</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Only ever consume these foods in moderation. But it's best, of course, not to eat them at all.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All fresh vegetables • Cruciferous (green leafy) vegetables • All fresh fruit – especially berries • Whole grains: brown rice, brown pasta • Plain nuts • Seeds: flax, hemp, sunflower, etc. • Legumes: pinto beans, cannellini beans, butter beans, chickpeas, etc. • Water • Herbal teas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast cereals • Cheese • Tinned vegetables • Tinned fruits • Bread • Savoury snacks such as crisps, sausage rolls, pies and pasties • Meat products such as bacon, sausage, ham, salami and paté • Microwave meals and/or ready meals • Cakes and biscuits • Drinks such as milk and/or soft drinks • Any food containing white flour • Bagels • Waffles and pastries • Breakfast cereals • White rice • Pizza • Yogurt • Soda, fruit juice, and smoothies • Pasta sauce from jars • Condiments, such as ketchup or BBQ sauce • Granola • Any and all confectionaries • Refined sugar

Processed Foods

INGREDIENTS: CORN, VEGETABLE OIL (CORN, CANOLA, AND/OR SUNFLOWER OIL), SALT, CORN STARCH, TOMATO POWDER, LACTOSE, WHEY, SKIM MILK, ONION POWDER, SUGAR, GARLIC POWDER, MONOSODIUM GLUTAMATE, MALTODEXTRIN (MADE FROM CORN), CHEDDAR CHEESE (MILK, CHEESE CULTURES, SALT, ENZYMES), DEXTROSE, MALIC ACID, CORN SYRUP SOLIDS, BUTTERMILK, NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL FLAVORS, SODIUM ACETATE, ARTIFICIAL COLOR (RED 40, BLUE 1, YELLOW 5), SPICE, CITRIC ACID, DISODIUM INOSINATE, AND DISODIUM GUANYLATE.

To improve health and reduce superfluous body fat all processed foods must be purged from your diet. As well as being over-laden with sugar, salt, and saturated fat – all health-filching ingredients – processed food is highly refined, nutrient-deficient, and, perhaps most concerning of all, it contains chemical additives.

In her book, *Swallow This*, Joanna Blythman brings our attention not only to the concerning use of chemical additives in processed foods but also to the additional chemicals used in the manufacturing process and plastic packaging they are entombed in. Blythman's shocking exposé is worth quoting at length.

A ready-made pizza, for instance, often sits on a polystyrene disc, swathed in clingy plastic wrapping, inside a plasticised cardboard sleeve or box. When we pull off the wrapper, some of the pizza topping usually comes away with it,

evidence of contact. In factory food, a number of polymer plastics hold pre-cooked ingredients in their sticky, clammy embrace, all the while exchanging body fluids. The film on ready meals that turns brittle once cooked according to the manufacturer's instructions is dotted with steamy brown liquid that drips onto the food contents in the shallow plastic tray, a humid haze of reheated industrial ingredients and plastic. Prawn mayonnaise sandwiches and Peking duck wraps sit in the supermarket and takeaway shop chiller for 48 hours, oozing their sweet, oily innards onto the plastic and cardboard carton, a carton that has absorbed printing ink, and is more likely laminated with an ultra-fine plastic film.³

Task: Stop reading! Go and make a list of all the foods in your cupboards and fridge that are processed. But you may well ask, *what are processed foods?* Examples of common processed foods include:

- breakfast cereals
- cheese
- tinned vegetables
- tinned fruits
- bread
- savoury snacks such as crisps, sausage rolls, pies, and pasties
- meat products such as bacon, sausage, ham, salami and paté
- microwave meals and/or ready meals
- cakes biscuits
- drinks such as milk and/or soft drinks⁴

Now that we've exposed some of the more prevalent processed foods, and that list merely scratches the surface of the veritable edifice of adulterated edibles available, go and make a list of all those foods in your kitchen that qualify as processed. Come back as soon as you have fulfilled the task.

(Assuming the task has been completed.)

It stands to reason that, like most people living in the Western hemisphere, your cupboards and fridge are packed to bursting with processed foods and, consequently, the list you've just made is a lengthy one.

This surfeit of processed foods (in conjunction with a number of other reasons – some of which are identified below) accounts for why obesity, certain cancers, coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and a plethora of other nasty, yet preventable, diseases are plaguing the West.

But you do not have to succumb to the miserable statistics that head this programme. You can, right at this very moment, take immediate action to cleanse your kitchen of those foods that increase disease risk, breed ill-health, and contribute to weight gain. How?

By far the simplest way to purge your environment of health-deteriorating foods is to bin them. Once you've done that, you can start replacing them with healthier alternatives. *But I don't like wasting food*, you proclaim, in an obvious attempt to procrastinate your way out of taking action.

Fine, bag up all those foods and donate them to a food bank. If you are serious about improving your health, you must be prepared to take decisive, serious, and sustained action: no half measures or binge days. One of the most important strategies to achieving those desirable ends – that of improving your health and lifestyle – is by engineering an environment conducive to those ends.

It should be obvious that your chances of maintaining healthy eating habits diminish dramatically when temptation beckons behind every cupboard door and fattening fare stares you in the face whenever you open the fridge. It's for this reason that they must be eradicated. Thus, you must purge your kitchen of processed foods and instead populate it with those foods that feature in the 'Healthy Food' side of the list above.

Moving on . . .

Refined carbohydrates/sugar

Refined food has gone through a synthetic, mechanical process that transforms raw or natural produce into something that will eventually be eaten. However, during this process, much of the nutrient value of the food is lost. For example, refining grains 'removes the bran and germ, which contain important nutrients like B vitamins, iron, and fibre.'⁵

In addition to depleting the nutrient value of food, the refining process also strips grains of 'roughage' – otherwise known as *insoluble fibre*. The diminution of dietary

fibre has been linked to increased rates of obesity and incidences of metabolic syndrome, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

In a study of 40,000 males, researchers established a convincing link between high-fibre consumption and the reduced risk of coronary heart disease.⁶ Other laboratory-based studies, conducted on non-human mammalian species, have shown that a diet containing fibre-rich foods can lower total cholesterol while also positively affecting the balance between 'bad' cholesterol (LDL) and 'good' cholesterol (HDL).⁷ Remarkably, the study demonstrated that even a fibre supplement could lower cholesterol by 42 per cent.

Refined foods have also been shown to exacerbate weight gain while causing the adulteration of healthy eating habits. (And such foods, because they have been stripped of their roughage, do not quell the pangs of hunger as their superior wholegrain counterparts do. When satiation is not reached, when after a meal we're left feeling peckish and unsatisfied, more calories are consumed to compensate. These calories likely come from the same inferior food source or from snacks.) People who regularly eat refined, sugary foods come to crave them – sugar is as addictive as some Class A psychotropic drugs. Moreover, they lose their taste for healthy foods which become 'bland' and 'tasteless'.

This triggers a kind of negative behaviour reinforcing feedback loop where the addiction and lack of satiation drive consumption while the adulteration leads to the reduction of healthy foods in the diet. Thus, it is always best to abstain from eating processed, sugary foods.

Task: Stop reading and compile a list of all refined carbohydrates and sugary foods in your cupboards and fridge.

But what are refined carbohydrates and sugary foods? Examples include:

- bread and tortillas containing white flour
- bagels
- waffles and pastries
- breakfast cereals
- white rice
- pizza
- flavoured yoghurt
- cakes
- soda, fruit juice, and smoothies
- pasta sauce
- condiments, such as ketchup or BBQ sauce
- granola
- any and all confectionaries
- refined sugar

(Assuming the task has been completed.)

Right, now that you've made your list you know what to do. Bin!

Next . . .

Animal protein

The argument over the impacts of animal protein on health continues to be hotly debated. Health professionals, dietitians, nutritional scientists, and deluded bloggers wage word wars weekly over whether the consumption of meat, poultry, and dairy increases disease susceptibility. Some of the arguments are based on sound science, some on food biases and ignorant ideologies.

However, though the effects animal protein has on health remains a contentious issue, emerging research suggests that, when consumed regularly, certain risk factors increase. For example, a Harvard professor of Public Health maintains that an 'accumulated body of evidence shows a clear link between high intake of red and processed meats and a higher risk of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and premature death.'⁸ In addition, a meat-heavy diet is associated with overweight and obesity. But this really shouldn't come as a surprise considering the high saturated fat content of animal food sources.

The takeaway here is that if you are serious about improving your health, you must start cutting down on meat and dairy consumption. Transitioning to a vegetarian or, better still, plant-based diet could potentially reduce your risk of developing the diseases outlined by the Harvard health professor above. But also, a plant-based diet can help reduce daily calorie intake, making it an important lifestyle factor for those who want to lose weight. And don't think that a plant-based diet is nutritionally restricting. As Dr Greger notes, paradoxically, 'a meatless diet could be considered an all-you-can-eat version of a calorie-restricted weight-loss diet, without having to count calories or restrict portion intake.'

Nowadays making the transition from fauna to flora is much easier than in former times. Not only are vegetarians and vegans increasing as a demographic, making it socially more acceptable *and* accessible, but there are many emerging meat alternatives and literally millions of healthy vegetarian recipes. (Get started with the internationally acclaimed cookbook, *Folks Over Knives*.)

Alcohol

The World Health Organisation paint a dire picture of the pernicious impact of alcohol on human health. 'Alcohol consumption contributes to 3 million deaths each year globally as well as to the disabilities and poor health of millions of people. Overall, harmful use of alcohol is responsible for 5.1% of the global burden of disease.'⁹

In addition to increasing your chances of developing fatty liver disease, mouth, throat, and breast cancer, brain damage and a whole host of other horrible health problems, alcohol consumption has been shown to contribute to weight gain.¹⁰

According to Dr Greger 'moderate drinking does appear to protect against heart disease, perhaps because of a blood-thinning effect, but even light drinking (less than one drink a day) has been found to *increase cancer risk*.'¹¹

And though the link between light drinking and weight gain is tenuous, with opposing and contradictory findings, 'recent studies have shown that heavy drinking may be more of a risk factor for weight gain.'¹²

But, irrespective of where you class your consumption – light/moderate/high – if weight loss is your goal, it is best to banish alcohol from your diet completely. Considering that one gram of alcohol contains over seven calories, a glass or two each evening or over the weekend is only going to increase overall calorie intake which will ‘certainly promote a positive energy balance and ultimately weight gain,’ (ibid).

Though it has been argued that there are some benefits to consuming alcohol – such as a small decreased risk of developing heart disease and the augmentation of microbiome diversity – these scant positives pale under the enormous shadow of the myriad ills associated with drinking. For example, such ills include alcohol dependency, cellular degradation, cirrhosis of the liver, genetic damage (and possibly the unravelling or erosion of the telomeres), cancer (of course), fatty liver syndrome, foetal damage in pregnant women, obesity, and many neurological disorders – premature cognitive decline, wet brain syndrome, and the impairment of neurogenesis. This long list is by no means exhaustive. Far from it in fact. We haven’t even touched on the negative social impacts of alcohol. If you’ll forgive a quick digression, according to NHS England, the estimated medical cost alone of ‘alcohol-related harm’ currently exceeds three thousand million pounds every year.¹³ This exorbitant societal expense, which taxpayers must absorb, is on the rise. Just some food for thought.

This terse exposition of how alcohol contributes to weight gain has been an attempt to encourage the transition towards a teetotal lifestyle. For the person pursuing weight loss and improved health, it would be prudent – at the least helpful – to

abstain from alcohol consumption completely. Though a desperately difficult challenge for many, with the right interventions and support networks in place, it is more than achievable.

Snacking

Snacking is also recognised as an enemy of weight loss and health. That, of course, is dependent on the type of snack foods being consumed. If snacks are processed, from a packet, laden with fat and/or sugar, over time they will exert a deleterious effect on health and contribute to the accumulation of body fat.

Ultimately, irrespective of what foods are being snacked on, it is always best to keep this behaviour to a minimum. The body needs far fewer calories than we realise. Two to three plant-based meals are more than enough to provide us with all the nutrients and energy we need to sustain homeostasis and fuel daily activity.

Sedentarism

[Sedentarism is] The habits and routines associated with relatively low levels of activity and movement, leading to health-related problems such as obesity.

Oxford Dictionary

Being active is not necessarily about how much physical exercise you do. Exercise does play a part in it but only a minor one. Being active is about how frequently you move throughout a given day: walking, gardening, cycling, copulating, doing chores, etc. A single 24-hour period is comprised of 1440 minutes. Even if you exercised for

30 to 45 minutes every day but spent the remaining 1395 minutes impersonating a potato, you'd still be leading a sedentary life.

Emerging research is starting to show that people who are generally more active, who are up and moving about, tend to be at a healthier weight and are less likely to develop the diseases associated with sedentarism. But what does it mean to lead an active lifestyle?

It's quite simple really. Leading an active lifestyle is about engineering your daily habits to include more movement. For example, a couple of years back I got so sick of sitting in traffic when commuting to work that I sold my car and bought a pushbike. Now I enjoy the six-mile commute. No traffic. No polluting. And an extra 40 minutes of exercise! That's just one example of how simple it is to defeat sedentarism.

But of course, this is not a tenable solution for everyone. After all, some people commute much further than six miles and others work from home – and others are just far too lazy. However, there are quite literally a million and one ways to get more movement into your life.

Before turning the keys in the ignition ask yourself: *Do I need to drive? Can I not make this journey on foot or by bike?*

Apparently, nine out of every ten car journeys are entirely unnecessary, and the distance is so short that it could be covered on foot in almost the same amount of

time. (I read somewhere that the average American drives 1500 miles a year but because the commutes are mostly short and there is a lot of traffic, they could walk the distance quicker!)

If possible, go for an afternoon/evening walk. It only needs to be a 30-minute stroll at a gentle pace. That's more than enough to burn a few extra calories and get the blood circulating.

When at your desk (presuming that, like the many millions of people across the globe, you spend most of your day tapping away at a computer) try standing or swapping the chair for a stability ball. Or, if your company is too tight-fisted to supply you with an elevated desk and health and safety prohibits soft spherical objects, set a 20-minute timer to remind you to get up off your backside and move. Maybe go for a five-minute walk or do some squats.

Seven simple sedentary-busting ideas

1. Spend as much of your days as possible in the horizontal position. On account of the heart having to pump harder to circulate blood, the body expends more energy when we are standing.
2. Always take the stairs, never the escalator or lift.
3. Walk when possible – preferably try and form the habit of taking a 20- to 30-minute walk in the morning, afternoon, and evening.
4. Form the habit of making most journeys bipedal or by bike. This subtle intervention is better for your health, your bank balance, and the environment!

5. Join a sports club – peer pressure and a monthly membership fee are great motivational forces.
6. Buy a cheap exercise bike (airdyne bike, elliptical machine, or treadmill) and exercise while watching TV.
7. Better still, stop watching TV and instead go cycling around the countryside.

Dietary and lifestyle action plan

- First, over a one-month period, aim to cultivate a food environment conducive to health. Do this by reducing, removing, or eradicating all processed foods, refined carbohydrates, and animal protein.
- Ensure that all meals are cooked from fresh. This simple change alone, argues Michael Pollen, is one of the strongest indicators of long-term health. Those who cook at home and from fresh typically are at a healthier weight and suffer fewer lifestyle-related diseases and illnesses.
- Establish three mealtimes – breakfast, lunch, and dinner – and stick to them.
- Stop snacking – certainly on undesirables. Snacking is seemingly innocuous: *What's wrong with an occasional chocolate bar or bag of crisps?* Probably not much. However, monitoring how frequently these calorie-dense foods are consumed is tricky. The solution to the slippery slope of snacking is not to start.
- Consume clean liquids – herbal and fruit teas, fresh ground coffee (without milk and sugar), water, and naturally flavoured water (infusing sliced citrus fruits)
- Remove alcohol completely from your lifestyle.
- Move more – much more! Make a habit of integrating activities into your daily routine. The seven sedentary-busting steps above outline how to do this.
- Use the meal and lifestyle plan below and get started today >

	AM	Noon	PM	Achieved
Monday	10 to 30 min walk/run Plant-based porridge + berries or quinoa and steamed veg	Homemade plant-based lunch: salad/fruit/nuts 10 to 30 min walk	30 to 60-min workout: mixed methodology = cardio-resistance-circuit Homecooked evening meal 10 to 30 min physical activity	Y/N
Tuesday	10 to 30 min walk/run P Plant-based porridge + berries or quinoa and steamed veg	Homemade plant-based lunch: salad/fruit/nuts 10 to 30 min walk	30 to 60-min workout: mixed methodology = cardio-resistance-circuit Homecooked evening meal 10 to 30 min physical activity	Y/N
Wednesday	10 to 30 min walk/run Plant-based porridge + berries or quinoa and steamed veg	Homemade plant-based lunch: salad/fruit/nuts 10 to 30 min walk	30 to 60-min workout: mixed methodology = cardio-resistance-circuit Homecooked evening meal 10 to 30 min physical activity	Y/N
Thursday	10 to 30 min walk/run Plant-based porridge + berries or quinoa and steamed veg	Homemade plant-based lunch: salad/fruit/nuts 10 to 30 min walk	30 to 60-min workout: mixed methodology = cardio-resistance-circuit Homecooked evening meal 10 to 30 min physical activity	Y/N
Friday	10 to 30 min walk/run Plant-based porridge + berries or quinoa and steamed veg	Homemade plant-based lunch: salad/fruit/nuts 10 to 30 min walk	30 to 60-min workout: mixed methodology = cardio-resistance-circuit Homecooked evening meal 10 to 30 min physical activity	Y/N
Saturday	10 to 30 min walk/run Plant-based porridge + berries or quinoa and steamed veg	Homemade plant-based lunch: salad/fruit/nuts 10 to 30 min walk	30 to 60-min workout: mixed methodology = cardio-resistance-circuit Homecooked evening meal 10 to 30 min physical activity	Y/N
Sunday	10 to 30 min walk/run Plant-based porridge + berries or quinoa and steamed veg	Homemade plant-based lunch: salad/fruit/nuts 10 to 30 min walk	30 to 60-min workout: mixed methodology = cardio-resistance-circuit Homecooked evening meal 10 to 30 min physical activity	Y/N

Recommended further reading

The China Study (author Collin. T. Campbell, Ph.D.)

The science is clear. The results are unmistakable. You can dramatically reduce your risk of cancer, heart disease, and diabetes *just by changing your diet*. More than thirty years ago, nutrition researcher T. Colin Campbell and his team at Cornell, in partnership with teams in China and England, embarked upon the China Study, the most comprehensive study ever undertaken of the relationship between diet and the risk of developing disease.

How Not To Die (Michael Greger MD.)

How Not To Die gives effective, scientifically-proven nutritional advice to prevent our biggest killers – including heart disease, breast cancer, prostate cancer, high blood pressure and diabetes – and reveals the astounding health benefits that simple dietary choices can provide.

The Starch Solution (John A. McDougall MD)

John A. McDougall and his kitchen-savvy wife, Mary, prove that a starch-rich diet can actually help you lose weight, prevent a variety of ills, and even cure common diseases. By fueling your body primarily with carbohydrates rather than proteins and fats, you will feel satisfied, boost energy, and look and feel your best.

Nutrition and Physical Degeneration (Western A. Price)

A compendium of ancestral wisdom, *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration* is a ground-breaking work in nutrition. Price liberally included illustrations and wrote in non-technical language to make the book as accessible as possible.

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Plant-Based Recipes

The link between diet and disease is so strong that we can confidently say that ‘our diet is the number-one cause of premature death and the number-one cause of disability,’ (Greger 2017). And some nutritional scientists suggest that upwards of 90% of all disease and illness is the result of poor dietary choices. So, with that said, how can we shape a diet that promotes health while providing the essential nutrients the body needs to sustain an exercise program?

First, we must purge our diet of meat and processed foods. For some, this is extremely difficult. I’ve known people who stated emphatically that they would *never* quit eating meat, even if it does increase their chances of developing bowel cancer and cardiovascular disease.

However, if you have been consuming meat with almost every meal, which is a characteristic of the Western diet, you don’t have to – if you’ll excuse the phrase – go cold turkey. Instead, strive to reduce consumption by eating meat only once a day and then, when you have grown accustomed to this reduction, introduce meatless days. This is one of the most important steps toward a healthy diet.

The next requires that you cut down on processed and ultra-processed foods (UPF). In some ways, this can be even more challenging for the fact that it’s not always easy to distinguish which foods qualify as ultra-processed. In his book *Ultra-Processed People*, Dr Chris van Tulleken warns us that food-producing companies conspire to conceal the extent to which their products are adulterated, and they use clever

marketing tactics to bamboozle the customer. To help distinguish processed from non-processed food, Tulleken outlines a simple guideline to follow: if the product contains ingredients that you wouldn't find in a typical kitchen, it's probably ultra-processed.

Michael Pollan, author of *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, recommends refraining from eating anything that your nineteenth-century ancestors would not recognise as food. So, when you next find yourself scratching your head over whether the food you are contemplating buying is acceptable fare, look at the ingredients list and ask yourself: *Would my great-grandmother recognise the ingredient high fructose corn syrup or monocalcium phosphate or propylene glycol alginate or polysorbate 80?* Then ask yourself: *Do I even know what they are?* Of course, if the answer is *No*, and unless you're a food engineer by trade the answer's always going to be *No*, then put it back on the shelf and quietly walk away.

You will soon begin to realise that healthy food, fresh vegetables, fruit, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds (in their unadulterated natural state), do not possess such ingredients. And, moreover, they do not shout for your attention; they do not promise something that they cannot deliver. There is not a billion-dollar marketing strategy behind boosting the sales of broccoli or courgettes.

To get you started on your journey towards shaping a healthy diet, I have compiled 14 whole food plant-based recipes for every occasion. From breakfast to lunch, dinner and pudding, there is a healthy recipe. The meals that follow contain no unhealthy ingredients, additives, refined, or processed foods. *Bon appétit!*



VERY BERRY PORRIDGE

You've got to stop making breakfast out of a box and try this super-healthy wholesome recipe. Few other breakfast meals pack the nutrient punch as does porridge, nuts, seeds and berries.

Ingredients (serves 4)

1 cup of porridge oats (120g)
50g strawberries
50g blackberries
50g raspberry
20g milled linseed
20g milled hempseed
50g assorted nuts (crushed)
2 medulla dates
Natural honey

Method

- 1.** Pre-cook preparation: thoroughly rinse the fruit; drain and dry. Hand-mill the linseed and hempseed in a pestle and mortar (or buy a packet of mixed milled seed and save yourself time and arm ache). Chop and crush the nuts. Slice the dates.
- 2.** Add to a pan one cup of oats and two cups of water. Place on high heat and continue to stir until the porridge is vigorously bubbling. Stir throughout. (Never microwave your porridge – that is sacrilegious!)
- 3.** Once the porridge has taken on your desired consistency remove it from the heat and leave to rest for five minutes. Stir intermittently.
- 4.** To serve: spoon the porridge into bowls. Drizzle over natural honey then add the seeds, nuts, dates, and fruit.



50:50 SMOOTHIE

Most mass-market smoothies contain as much sugar as coke. To make matters worse the 'ruffage' – or insoluble fibre – has been removed thus further reducing the goodness.

It's for these reasons, and a few more besides (plastic bottles or plastic-coated cardboard cartons), that you should always make your own smoothies. And, to avoid excessive sugar content, you would be wise to stick to a ratio of 50% fruit to 50% veg.

Ingredients(serves 2)

- 1 banana
- 1 cup of blueberries
- 1 avocado
- A generous handful of washed spinach
- 1 tablespoon of linseeds
- 1 tablespoon of rolled oats
- 1 cup of alternative milk – almond/oat/coconut
- ½ cup of water
- 6 Ice cubes

Method

- 1.** Throw all the ingredients, except the water, into a blender.
- 2.** Blend.
- 3.** Add the water in stages to get that perfect smoothie consistency. (Personally, I like mine so thick that you need a spoon.)
- 4.** To serve, pour the smoothie into large jars and top with a sprinkle of oats, linseed, and sliced blueberry pieces.

ZINGY LIME THAI NOODLES

This dish is nothing short of a nutri-shot. And as well as being super-nutritious it is both easy to cook and full of flavour.

Ingredients (serves 4)

1 Pak choi
1 large skin-on carrot (cut into slender slices – aka julienned)
Generous bunch of purple sprouting broccoli
Generous bunch of green beans
1 large shallot diced
5 mushrooms (white, chestnut, shitake)
1 large garlic clove finely sliced
¼ of red chilli sliced into thin rounds
Cube of ginger crushed and squeeze of lime
Bunch of finely sliced coriander
600ml of stock
250g of whole wheat medium thickness noodles



Method

- 1.** To prepare the stock firstly heat a drizzle of olive oil in a saucepan. Add mixed herbs, cracked black pepper, a single turn of pink Himalayan rock salt, a big squeeze of lime and a quarter of your onions and garlic. Once softened pour into the mix 600ml of water. Replace the lid and leave to simmer on low heat.
- 2.** Next, heat a couple of tablespoons of olive oil in a large frying pan adding the rest of the onions and garlic ... but also the ginger, chilli and carrots. Leave to cool for 10-minutes spooning in some of the stock occasionally.
- 3.** Now introduce the pak choi, broccoli, green beans, and mushrooms. Replace the lid and leave for a further 5-minutes.
- 4.** It's time to introduce the stock! To do simple pour it into the frying pan. Turn the heat down to its lowest setting and replace the lid.
- 5.** To prepare the noodles, bring to a boil a pan of water. Add the noodles and reduce the heat. As they begin to absorb the water, use a fork to move them about else they will clump together. Simmer for about 5-minutes. Once cooked drain and portion across four bowls.
- 6.** Ladle onto your noodle stacks the vegetables. Also, pour the stock into the bowls: the stock contains loads of nutrients so, in true Thai fashion, it should be slurped down at the end of your meal.

VEGETABLE AND KIDNEY BEAN PIE

A hearty, healthy, and wholesome meal. The combination of spices in this dish creates a rich, flavoursome source that'll leave you hungry for more.

Ingredients (serves 4)

- 1 sweet potato
- 1 large carrot
- 2 beef tomatoes
- 4 to 6 cherry tomatoes
- 1 sweet red pepper
- 1 head of broccoli
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin, turmeric, and curry powder
- 100g spinach
- 1 large red onion
- 4 cloves of garlic
- 6 to 8 Maris Piper potatoes
- 200g tin tomatoes
- 400g tin of red kidney beans



Method

1. Preheat oven to 150°C.
2. After cutting the sweet potatoes and carrot into dice-size cubes, boil for 5-minutes. Drain then transfer to a baking tray and roast for 30-minutes.
3. In a frying pan soften the onions and garlic – ensure to season well not forgetting to include the spices. Once softened add the diced tomatoes (beef and cherry) and sweet pepper. After ten minutes pour in the tin of tomatoes and red kidney beans. Replace the lid and leave to simmer for a further twenty minutes.
4. Once the sweet potatoes and carrots are cooked mix all ingredients together and introduce into a large crockery pot and place back in the oven on low heat.
5. To prepare the turmeric mash potato topping: boil the potatoes until soft, drain and mash with oat milk and vegan butter. Season with salt, pepper, herbs and a heaped teaspoon of turmeric.
6. Remove the crockery pot from the oven and apply the mash evenly over the pie filling. After giving the mash a good forking garnish with finely diced chive.
7. The salad: blanch the broccoli florets. Drain well then include the spinach, walnuts, seasoning and olive oil.

NEED A CURRY IN A HURRY? DO SAAG ALOO!

Saag aloo makes for a sumptuous side or main course too. It's simple to cook, requires little time to prepare, and is packed full of flavour. And what's more, because saag aloo is vegan, dairy- and gluten-free, it is perfect for a dinner party.

Ingredients (serves 4)

1kg Maris Piper potatoes, peeled and cut into 3cm pieces
2 tbsp rapeseed oil
2 tsp cumin and mustard seeds
1 yellow onion, finely sliced
3 large garlic cloves, crushed
1 nub of ginger, finely chopped
1 tbsp tomato purée
1 tsp ground coriander
1 tsp hot chilli powder
½ tsp turmeric
250g spinach, rinsed and chopped
1 red chilli, finely chopped (optional)



Method

1. First, simmer the potatoes for 10-minutes. Drain and allow to steam dry.
2. Heat the oil (and a couple of tablespoons of water) in a large pan over medium heat. Add the cumin seeds, mustard seeds, onion, and garlic and cook for 10- to 15-minutes.
3. Once the onions and garlic have softened, add the tomato purée and remaining spices and cook for a further 5-minutes.
4. Now add the potatoes ensuring to fold the ingredients together.
5. After introducing the spinach and 100ml boiling water, cover and cook until the spinach wilts.
6. Serve when the potatoes are soft, and the ingredients have infused. Scatter chopped chili coils and enjoy.

ROASTED SWEET POTATO, CARROT AND CHICKPEA CURRY

To bring out the flavours in this wholesome dish cook it the day before. Also, when cooking curries and substantial meals that require considerable cutting and preparing, make extra so that you can freeze a few batches for the next couple of weeks.

Ingredients (serves 4)

2 sweet potatoes
2 large carrots
4 big beef tomatoes and 8 cherry tomatoes
1 large red onion
2 cloves of garlic and a nub of ginger
400g chickpeas
200g brown rice
Species: garam masala (or curry powder), turmeric, cumin



Method

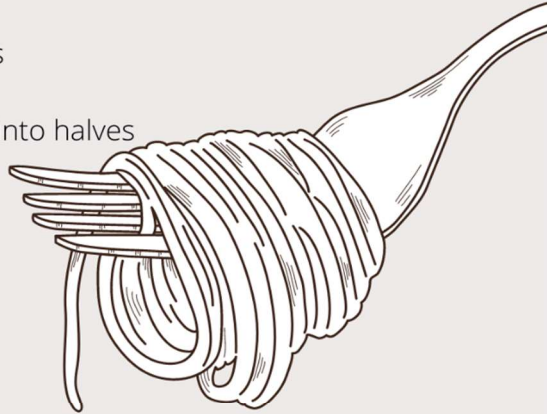
- 1.** To make the curry sauce first slice and dice the onions and garlic then soften in a large pan – use olive oil. Once softened add the ginger (finely diced) and spices; a level teaspoon of each – and perhaps a pinch of salt.
- 2.** While the spices are infusing begin to prepare the tomatoes; wash, dry, chop and add to the pan. Cover and leave on medium heat for 10- to 15-minutes.
- 3.** Meanwhile, wash the sweet potatoes and carrots (peeling is optional) and cut into thumbnail-sized cubes. Once cut to size introduce into a pan of boiling water. After 5-minutes drain and air.
- 4.** The final stage in preparing the curry sauce: ladle the mix into a large glass jug and blend until the consistency is smooth.
- 5.** Re-oil the pan previously used for the sauce and place on medium to high heat. Transfer the sweet potatoes and carrots. Fry for 5-minutes before spooning in the sauce. Now add the chickpeas and a generous bunch of finely diced coriander. Reduce the heat and cover ensuring to leave a gap.
- 6.** Rinse the rice in cold water. Add to a pan ensuring to stick to a ratio of 1-part rice to 2-parts water. Cover, bring to the boil then simmer for 15- to 20-minutes.
- 7.** To serve: place the rice in bowls ensuring to create a well in the centre. Spoon the curry into the well and garnish with toasted almonds.

VEGGIE BOLOGNESE

This dish is like serving up a slice of the Mediterranean. It is best accompanied by wholewheat pasta and a couple of slices of rustic ciabatta.

Ingredients (serves 4)

- 1 large aubergine cut into strips
- 1 large courgette cut into dice-sized cubes
- 1 large red pepper cut into strips
- 1 carrot (unpeeled) cut into small cubes
- 2 large sliced red heirloom tomatoes
- 10 to 15 vine-ripe cherry tomatoes cut into halves
- 5 diced chestnut mushrooms
- 1 large red onion
- 2 cloves of garlic
- A handful of spinach and fresh basil



Method

1. Pre-heat oven to 150°C.
2. Place the sliced aubergine and red pepper strips into a container and drizzle over olive oil then season generously with pepper and mixed herbs (but go easy on the salt – just a pinch!).
3. Once the oven has reached temperature empty the seasoned veg onto a baking tray and pop it into the oven. Roast for 30-minutes being mindful to turn the veg every 10-minutes or so to stop it sticking and the edges burning.
4. Into a pan pour a drizzle of olive oil and more seasoning (no salt). Place the pan on medium heat and introduce the onion, garlic cloves and diced carrot. Soften for 5-minutes then add the courgette. Cook for a further 5-minutes.
6. Now introduce the tomatoes and mushrooms into the pan along with the basil, a glug more oil and seasoning (again, no salt). Continue to cook on medium heat for 20- to 30-minutes ensuring to stir occasionally.
7. After the veg is cooked and a rich tomato sauce has formed, turn the heat to low and allow to simmer for a further 10- to 15-minutes.
8. By this time the aubergine and pepper should be nice and soft and present that appetising grilled appearance.
9. To serve spoon the spaghetti into large bowls and layer the roasted vegetables on top. Garnish with spinach and a touch more mixed herbs.

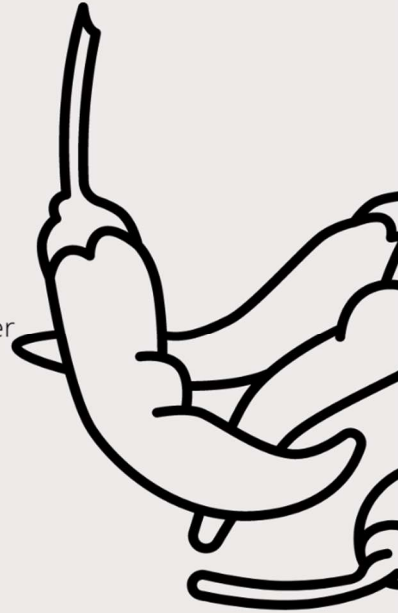
RED LENTIL AND COCONUT DAHL

Legumes – lentils, beans, and pulses – are high in fibre and protein. So healthy are they that legumes feature on Dr Gregor's 'Daily Dozen' list – a checklist of the healthiest foods that should form part of our daily diet.

Legumes are a perfect meat alternative because they are a rich source of protein, and they add substance to light vegetarian meals. Also, 'they have plenty of flavour without needing much added to them, and they cook in less than 30 minutes.'⁴

Ingredients (serves 4)

- 1 large yellow onion, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, diced
- 1 large tomato
- 4 cherry tomatoes
- 1 nub of ginger
- ½ red chilli (optional)
- 1 tablespoon of turmeric, cumin, and curry powder
- 2 cups of red lentils (rinse first)
- 3 cups of water
- 1 cup of coconut milk
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Zest and a good squeeze of 1 lemon



Method

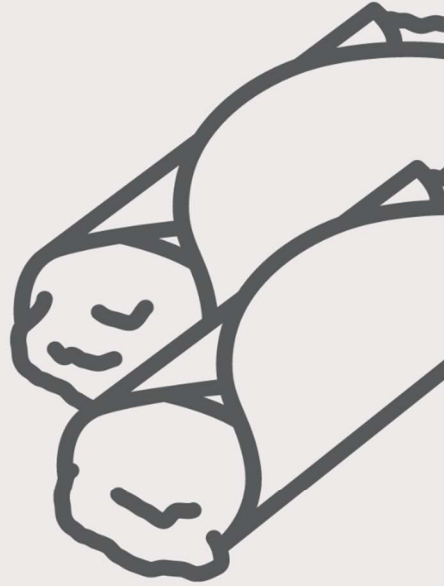
1. Sauté the onions and garlic over medium heat until soft. Add the spices including the ginger and chilli. At this stage introduce half a cup of water. Cook for 5-minutes before adding all the remaining ingredients. Mix together well. Bring to the boil then reduce heat and leave to simmer for 30-minutes – or until the lentils have softened.
2. For the perfect accompaniment with your dahl, you'll need a side order of soft, fluffy brown basmati rice. Simple. Add to a pan one cup of rice, two cups of water, two cardamon pods (cracked), and one star anise. Cover then bring to a boil. Once boiling, reduce heat and simmer for 15- to 20-minutes. Check that the rice is soft before draining and serving.

FAJITAS

Who doesn't love Fajitas? Not only are they tasty and healthy, but they also provide a source of entertainment during mealtimes; especially when dining with friends – there's always someone who is incapable of assembling their fajitas.

Ingredients (serves 4)

12 corn tortillas
1 medium red onion thinly sliced
1 medium red pepper seeded and sliced
1 large tomato
4 to 6 cherry tomatoes
4 chestnut mushrooms cut into strips (grilled)
2 garlic cloves finely sliced
½ red chili (optional)
½ teaspoon ground cumin
Zest and a good squeeze of lime
1 cup of red kidney beans



Method

1. Before preparing the fajitas filling, wrap your tortillas in aluminum foil and place in the oven on medium heat.
2. Sauté the onion, garlic, courgette, and red pepper in a large frying pan for 5-minutes. Add a couple of tablespoons of water to prevent the vegetables from sticking to the pan.
3. Now add the rest of the ingredients, ensuring to fold gently. Cook for a further 10-minutes. Remember, for fajitas filling we're only par-cooking the veg – firm vegetables are more compliant when assembling. Remove from the heat while preparing the tortillas.
4. Serve the fajitas mix with homemade guacamole (mashed avocado, finely sliced red onion, cherry tomatoes, and seasoning), and salsa.





PASTA SALAD

'Let this be the first pasta salad of the sprint when asparagus and sugar snap peas are fresh in the farmers' market,' says Ray Sroufe, author of the international bestselling cookbook *Folks Over Knives*.⁴

Ingredients (serves 4)

½ pound asparagus, trimmed and cut into ½ -inch pieces
½ pound sugar snap peas, trimmed
12 ounces whole-grain penne
4 green onions, thinly sliced
¼ cup finely chopped chives
¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

Method

1. First, prepare an ice bath – a container of water with a tray of ice cubes in it will suffice. Boil the asparagus and sugar snap peas for 2- to 3- minutes. Drain then plunge them into the ice bath. Drain again then set to one side.
2. In a small bowl, combine the balsamic vinegar, Dijon mustard, and seasoning.
3. When the dressing is ready, mix in a large serving bowl the pasta and blanched vegetables. Now include the vinegar and mustard mix.
4. Gently fold together before serving.





GREEK SALAD

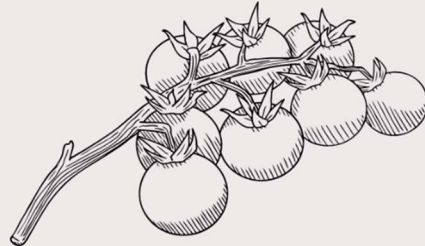
Traditional Greek salads include soft cheese, usually feta. However, these healthy meals for weight loss are all plant-based. So, the Greeks are going to have to make a special dispensation for this recipe. But honestly, this adaptation is so full of flavour and fresh ingredients, the cheese won't even be missed. Promise!

Ingredients (serves 4)

A plentiful assortment of fresh salad leaves
12 vine-ripe tomatoes, halved
2 big beef tomatoes, finely sliced
2 avocados, destoned and diced or sliced
4 chestnut mushrooms, finely sliced
1 large yellow pepper
4 artichoke hearts
2 cups of mixed Greek olives (Italian olives will do just fine)

Method

1. Mix the salad leaves together and separate evenly across the four bowls.
2. Over the salad leaves add the rest of the vegetables. Don't be fussy with appearances at this stage.
3. Now add the artichokes and olives.
4. Generously drizzle olive oil over the salads then, before tossing, season with pepper, mixed herbs, and a touch of salt.
5. Serve with a substantial stick of rustic ciabatta.





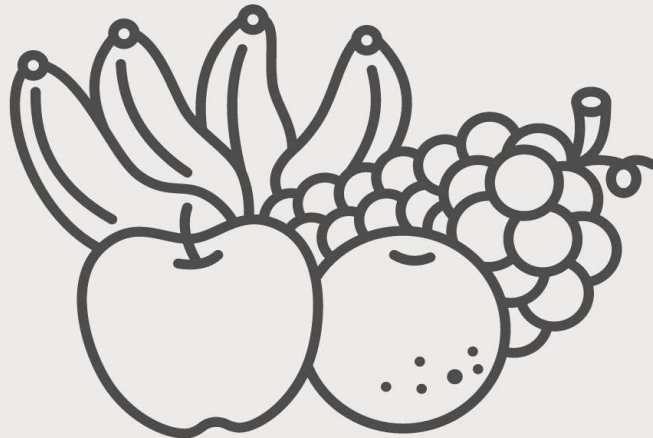
HEALTHY SNACK GOOD 'OL FRUIT SALAD

A fruit salad is a great pre/post-lunch snack. Healthy, nutritious and tasty. The combination of fruits selected I will leave to you. However, one point of note.

The nutrient quality of any fresh fruit or vegetable deteriorates once cut (if it is not cooked or preserved). Every hour the nutrient content falls by about half.

It is for this reason that the fruit should be kept in its whole state until snack time. (It's also for this reason, and a few more besides, why we shouldn't purchase pre-cut fruit from supermarkets.)

Washing your fruit in the morning will make preparing your snack salad a sinch later on. Simply chop, dice, and de-stone your fruits of choice in a bowl, add a few chopped nuts (walnuts are best), a sprinkle of milled flax, and dig in.





HEALTHY SNACK

BUDDHA BOWL

The Buddha bowl. Traditionally the Buddha bowl is an assortment of fresh vegetables accompanied by a healthy grain such as quinoa or couscous.

However, I've created a variation comprised of banana, mixed berries, crushed nuts and medulla dates. Into a bowl chop one banana and add a cup of mixed berries (blackberry, raspberry, blueberry, strawberry in any combination you like – just ensure to rinse well before consuming).

Sprinkle over 50 grams of crushed mixed nuts (and/or seeds) and top with a sliced date, drizzle of honey and a dash of sweet cinnamon.

Snacking conclusion

As I've endeavoured to show here, there's no reason to snack on unhealthy, processed foods. Preparing a healthy, hunger-quelling snack takes little to no time or effort.

To the exclusion of the courgette guacamole and hummus, the examples discussed above require less than 10-minutes of preparation time.

Thus, all that stands between you and the vending machine is a pinch of forethought and a dash of discipline.





ROASTED BUTTERNUT SQUASH, SWEET POTATO AND RED LENTIL SOUP

Preparing the veg

- 1.** After peeling the butternut squash (don't peel the sweet potato or carrot, there are a lot of nutrients in that ruffage!) cut into thumbnail-sized cubes, including the sweet potato and carrot.
- 2.** Par-boil for no longer than 5-minutes.
- 3.** Pre-heat oven to 150°.
- 4.** After 5-minutes drain the veg well. To prevent it from sticking and clumping you might want to add a drizzle of olive oil. Once prepared place in the pre-heated oven for 30-minutes (±5). Occasionally turn the veg over to prevent burning the corners.
- 5.** Once cooked – to check pierce with a knife, they should be soft – add veg to the stock.
- 6.** Mix ingredients together and turn the heat off. Leave to cool before blending.
- 7.** When you've blended the soup to your preferred consistency (smooth and silky is best), ladle however much you plan to eat into a separate pan and gently reheat. As you do so consider including a glug of oat, almond, or coconut milk; this will reduce the thickness and add a creamy texture.
- 8.** To serve add a drizzle of olive oil, a light dusting of smoked paprika, and half a handful of roasted almonds – and, of course, a sizable wedge of proper bakery sourdough bread (not that faux bread from the supermarket).

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Appendix A
8-Week Exercise Programme Blank Template

Week 1	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	

Week 2	
Monday	
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Saturday	
Sunday	

Week 3	
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Week 4	
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Wednesday	
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Week 5	
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Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
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Week 6

Monday	
Tuesday	
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Sunday	

Week 7	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	

Week 8	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	

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Br J Sports Med, 52 (20) (2018), p. 1311. For the full article follow the link:
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1440244018312702>).

²Health benefits of exercise quote: 'If exercise were a pill, it would be one of the most cost-effective drugs ever invented.' Attributed to Dr Nick Cavill. Cited online (2022) <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/exercise-health-benefits/>

³ Lieberman, D. (2021) *Exercised: The Science of Physical Activity, Rest, and Health*. Penguin. USA.

⁴Norris. M. C (2004) *Stretching*. A & C Black. London.

⁵McArdle, W. D., Katch, F. I., Katch, V. L (2001) *Exercise Physiology Fifth Edition*. Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins

⁶Watson A. W. S (1995) *Physical Fitness & Athletic Performance*. Longman. England.

⁷Perhaps my mind was playing tricks on me, but I could have sworn that I sighted this citation: 'According to the American College of Sports Medicine a mere ten minutes of daily stretching can reduce your chances of incurring an exercise-related injury by as much as 50%' in a sports science publication a few years back. But I've subsequently been unable to locate the source of the reference. However, I will leave it in until I am corrected.

⁸Norris. M. C (2004) *Stretching*. A & C Black. London.

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⁷Duke, J. (1997) *The Green Pharmacy*. Index. UK.

⁸ Harvard Health article: *What's the beef with red meat?* (Accessed: 2021) <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/whats-the-beef-with-red-meat>

⁹World Health Organisation latest figures of global alcohol related deaths. 'Harmful use of alcohol is accountable for 7.1% and 2.2% of the global burden of disease for males and females respectively.' Full article available at: https://www.who.int/health-topics/alcohol#tab=tab_1/ (Accessed: 2021).

¹⁰NHS – alcohol support (2020). Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-support/the-risks-of-drinking-too-much/> (Accessed: 2021).

¹¹Greger, M. Stone, G. (2017) *How Not to Die*. USA. Pan ('Alcohol consumption contributes to 3 million deaths each year globally . . .' p144).

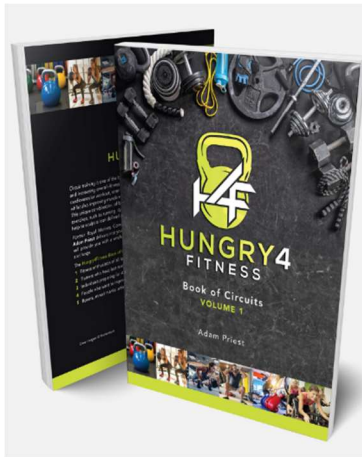
¹²National Centre for Biotechnology Information. Available at:






<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/> (Accessed: 2021).

¹³NHS England. The rising cost of alcohol consumption on the National Health Service: 'Alcohol-related admissions to hospital have grown by 17% over the last decade – in 2016/17 there were 337,000 estimated admissions – 2.1% of the total. Alcohol-related harm is estimated to cost the NHS in England £3.5 billion every year.' Full report available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2019/01/nhs-long-term-plan-will-help-problem-drinkers-and-smokers/> (Accessed: 2022).

Hungry4Fitness Additional Publications

Hingry4Fitness Book of Circuits Volume 1



-  50 circuits and workouts suitable for all levels of fitness and ability
-  Benefits of circuit training and why you should include circuits in your exercise routine
-  How to create and design your own circuit and essential training principles
-  Fitness challenges and exercise competitions
-  10-minute whole-body stretching plan

Circuit training is one of the best forms of physical exercise for maintaining and increasing overall fitness. A well-designed circuit will provide a great cardiovascular workout, strengthening the heart and lungs in the process, while also improving muscle endurance and developing functional strength.

This unique fat-burning and muscle-building combination, which singular exercises such as running, cycling, swimming or weights cannot achieve, will help to sculpt a lean physique. In addition, circuit training is recognised as the most effect exercise methodology for developing multiple components of fitness simultaneously.

The **Hungry4Fitness** *Book of Circuits Volume 1* delivers 50 tried-and-tests workouts for you to pit your physicality against. All the workouts are fully customisable and can easily be adapted and tailored to suit your training goals and objectives.

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Hungry4Fitness Book of Circuits & Workouts Volume 2



Starting to feel like Groundhog Day at the gym? Tired of the same old routine? Struggling for exercise ideas? The **Hungry4Fitness Book of Circuits and Workouts Vol. 2** is possibly the most comprehensive training manual ever produced. Packed to bursting with over 70 unique training sessions, each one professionally designed to forge superior strength, muscular endurance, and whole-body fitness.

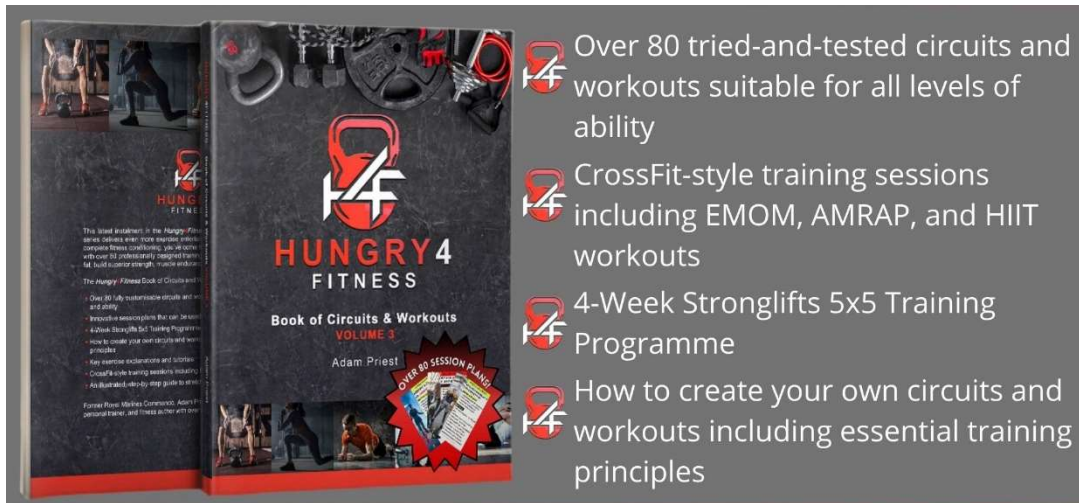
Who can benefit from the Hungry4Fitness training book series?

- 1. Fitness enthusiasts of all levels who desire a challenge** – due to their innovative designs and cross-training nature, the circuits are more than adequate to provide a challenge for all levels of fitness.
- 2. Trainers who have lost motivation and inspiration** – loss of motivation is usually caused by a lack of direction. The absence of a training goal can result in stagnation and a decline in participation. Here, within this book, you will find your lost motivation. I am positive that the circuits and workouts to follow will

provide you with a source of inspiration and aid you in discovering a new direction on your physical fitness journey.

- 3. Individuals preparing for Armed Forces recruitment** – if you are currently training for the rigours of Armed Forces selection, you will undoubtedly know that superior fitness is of paramount importance. Unlike the recruitment process for civilian jobs, all prospective military recruits must undertake and pass a barrage of fitness tests. The circuits and workouts presented in this book are perfectly suited for forging the fitness needed to meet those physical challenges. In addition, Workout 41 invites you to pit yourself against multiple fitness tests, some of which you will meet throughout military recruitment.
- 4. People who want to develop whole-body fitness** – as we discussed in the opening paragraph, circuit training incorporates a broad range of fitness components. Consequently, it is one of the most effective training methodologies for cultivating complete physicality. Including at least two circuits in your weekly exercise routine will help improve strength, muscle endurance and cardiovascular performance.
- 5. Boxers, martial artists, and MMA practitioners** – individuals who practice and/or compete in the combative arts need an abundance of strength, muscular endurance, and cardiovascular fitness. If a mixed martial artist, for example, is lacking in one of these areas they are sure to be exposed at some point during their fight career. Using these circuits and workouts as pre-fight/competition training will help you get in top shape before a contest. Thus, even if you're forced to go the distance, you'll have the fitness to do so.

The **Hungry4Fitness** Book of Circuits and Workouts Vol. 3



- Over 80 tried-and-tested circuits and workouts suitable for all levels of ability
- CrossFit-style training sessions including EMOM, AMRAP, and HIIT workouts
- 4-Week Stronglifts 5x5 Training Programme
- How to create your own circuits and workouts including essential training principles

This latest instalment in the **Hungry4Fitness** Book of Circuits and Workouts series delivers even more exercise entertainment. If your aspiration is to forge complete fitness conditioning, you've come to the right place. Packed to bursting with over 80 professionally designed training plans, *Volume 3* will help you burn fat, build superior strength, muscle endurance, and physical functionality.

- Over 80 fully customisable circuits and workouts suitable for all levels of fitness and ability
- Innovative session plans that can be used multiple times
- 4-Week Stronglifts 5x5 Training Programme
- How to create your own circuits and workouts including essential training principles
- Key exercise explanations, tutorials and an illustrated guide to stretching
- CrossFit-style training sessions including EMOM, AMRAP, and HIIT workouts

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Hungry4Fitness Definitive Weight Loss Programme



Get in the shape of your life with the **Hungry4Fitness Definitive Weight Loss Programme**. Access all the tools, teachings, and tactics needed to lose weight and sculpt a healthy lifestyle.

Also, discover the secrets of shaping a diet and lifestyle that help you stay trim for good. From this holistic weight loss programme

You will learn

- ✓ How to transform your diet so that it promotes weight loss while improving health
- ✓ The importance of cultivating healthy dietary practices
- ✓ How to identify foods that cause weight gain
- ✓ How to conduct a health screening
- ✓ How to calculate your optimal weight and track weight loss progress

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- ✓ How to engineer your lifestyle so that you achieve your optimal weight – and stay there!
- ✓ Methods of identifying barriers to success and maintaining motivation
- ✓ The importance of exercise
- ✓ How to craft and tailor an exercise programme to suit your needs
- ✓ Ten tips for weight loss, improving health and staying fit

Bonus material

- 28 healthy recipes for every occasion
- 8-Week Exercise Programme
- 8-Week Weight Loss Tracker
- 10 fully customisable workouts