

10 Minute Fat Burning Exercises

This low-effort, high-impact plan will have you in your skinny jeans by spring. It only takes a minimum of 10 minutes a day.

Your doc has said it all along: 30 minutes a day of moderate-intensity physical activity improves health and cardio fitness. But what if you barely have time to call your parents or squeeze in six hours of sleep? Here's what trainers — and sports-medicine experts — have realized: You don't have to do all 30 minutes in one stretch. In fact, you can do 20 or just 10 minutes a day to reap some of the benefits, from losing weight to toning to reducing stress and clearing your mind. The secret? In the case of weight loss, you've got to move fast and hard and circuit-train; in the case of building strength, you've got to do those moves slowly, precisely, and consistently every other day. Here, high-intensity 10-minute workouts that make the most of the time you've got. Do at least one each day, or if you've got time to spare, rotate up to four for maximum benefits.

THE GROUND RULES:

- If you are target training (say, you want great arms), do the appropriate exercises for that body part consistently, every other day. If you want overall toning and fitness, mix and match the various workouts.
- How to know if you're working hard enough: "If you were to hold a conversation during these segments, you should be breathing hard, but not be completely breathless," says Gabriel Valencia, cofounder of Focus Integrated Fitness in Manhattan.
- The indicated time for each move is a suggestion. If you need more time to perform a move correctly, by all means take it.

BACKYARD BOOT CAMP

The lowdown: This is a heart-pumping, rev-your-metabolism-up workout you can do in your backyard, the gym, or a nearby park.

What you'll get in four weeks: A healthier heart and better endurance.

Special equipment: A bench, a set of stairs or step-up, a treadmill or open running space.

Extra credit:

Wear a weighted vest. Start conservatively — about five pounds, says Valencia, who created this workout.

How it works:

30 SECONDS Start with jumping jacks.

1 MINUTE Do step-ups (use a park bench if outdoors) with left foot leading for 30 seconds. Repeat with right foot leading for 30 seconds.

30 SECONDS Follow with mountain climbers: Bend over and place hands on ground about 6 inches in front of feet, hands and feet shoulder-width apart. Knees are bent, back is as straight as possible. Keeping hands on the

ground, jump up your legs and land so that right foot is in front of left; jump up again and land with left foot in front, right foot in back. Continue alternating.

4 MINUTES Do sprint intervals: Run as fast as you can for 30 seconds; jog for one minute. Repeat for three sets.

30 SECONDS Use a bench to do inclined push-ups.

1 MINUTE Continue with squats for 30 seconds. Release; repeat for another 30.

30 SECONDS Do burpees: Stand feet shoulder-width apart; jump up with your arms straight up. Land with your hands and feet on the ground (same stance as the start of the mountain climber). Now launch feet back into a push-up position, then return to start of mountain climber. Next, jump all the way up, reaching your hands to the ceiling so that you're back to the same position as in your first jump. Continue.

2 MINUTES Return to the bench and do a front plank, bracing your abs and making sure spine is straight, keeping your shoulders relaxed and away from your ears. Hold plank for a minute. Follow with side planks, holding 30 seconds on each side.

HOMEBOY MOVES

The lowdown: No gym? No problem. With this total-body workout by Nick Kempen at Sports Club/L.A. in Miami, even the office makes for a good fitness space.

What you'll get in four weeks: Toned arms; jeans that fit better.

Special equipment: A pair of 5- to 8-pound weights.

How it works:

1 MINUTE Jog in place.

1 MINUTE Stand while holding weights vertically in your hands, arms stretched out. Now pretend you're sitting down on a chair, hold for three counts, then get back up, bringing the weights toward your chest. Repeat.

1 MINUTE Holding the weights, get in a semi-squat position, spine at 45 degrees, back flat, arms hanging straight down, perpendicular to the floor. Now bend your elbows (so they're pointing up at the ceiling) and lift weights toward your chest; hold. Slowly lower weights to original position. Repeat.

3 MINUTES Take your hand weights, arms by your side. Step right foot forward into a lunge; hold as you slowly bring up your weights in a bicep curl; return to original position. Now, while pivoting, step to the left (still with your right foot); hold; return. Continue for two more rotations until you're back to where you started. Now repeat entire revolution with the left foot forward.

1 MINUTE Do push-ups on the floor or against the wall.

3 MINUTES Drop to the floor for a core hold: With forearms and toes on floor, keep spine straight and abs held in. Hold for one minute. Then release and stretch back into a yoga child's pose: Sit back on your shins and reach your arms to the floor in front of you. Repeat core hold.

TENNIS TRAINING

The lowdown: Put your old racket and balls to use with these heart-pounding, court-inspired drills designed by Whitney Kraft, director of tennis at the U.S. Tennis Association Billie Jean King National Tennis Center.

What you'll get in four weeks: Better coordination, balance, and stamina; a new obsession with tennis skirts.

Special equipment: Tennis racket; three tennis-ball cans; two balls.

Extra credit:

During rest periods, 'dribble' the ball with your racket.

How it works (Note: instructions assume right-handedness; reverse if you're left-handed):

30 SECONDS Place two cans 4 feet apart in a vertical line in front of you; sprint around them, making figure-eights.

1 MINUTE Rest for 30 seconds. Repeat figure-eights for 30 seconds with racket — alternating between swinging in forehand position and backhand position.

1 MINUTE Place two tennis balls in front of you. Hold the racket in forehand position as you tap the right ball with your right foot; return to starting position. Tap again for 15 seconds, then touch the right foot to left ball, holding racket in backhand position, for 15 seconds. Repeat tapping sequence with left foot.

30 SECONDS Arrange the three cans in a triangle as wide as your stance. Stand with each heel in front of a can so you're facing the one remaining 'point can'. Now step left foot behind point can and swing a forehand shot; return to starting position. Now step right foot behind point can and take a backhand shot. Continue alternating sides.

2 MINUTES Rest for 30 seconds. Continue the above exercise, pretending to hit a low volley for 30 seconds. Repeat with high volley. Then alternate high and low volleys.

5 MINUTES Rest for 30 seconds. Repeat circuit, starting with exercise 2.

QUICKIE YOGA

The lowdown: A vinyasa-flow exercise (not for novices) that works the heart, builds core strength and flexibility, and centers the mind, created by Bethany Lyons, Crunch Group Fitness regional manager, New York City.

What you'll get in four weeks: Tighter abs and butt; harder thighs and shoulders; triceps definition.

Special equipment: Yoga mat.

How it works:

1 MINUTE Start with chair pose: feet shoulder-width apart, arms stretched up, spine straight, knees bent, and buttocks pointing back; hold for 30 seconds. Now straighten knees and lower arms. Take three deep and slow breaths, inhaling and exhaling through your nose.

6 MINUTES Do three sets of sun salutations. (For a detailed explanation and photos of this sequence, go to iyogalife.com.)

30 SECONDS Assume the downward dog position, come forward into a plank, making sure your abs are held in and spine is straight; use knees if necessary while still engaging core; hold.

30 SECONDS Bend elbows so you're in a low push-up position. Hold for eight counts. Push up to regular plank, and then into downward dog. Take three slow breaths.

30 SECONDS From downward dog, jump feet through your arms into a seated position and come to boat pose: Legs and upper body are stretched up at 45 degrees; arms are stretched forward so your body looks like an upside-down A. Abs are in; spine is straight. Hold. Take five deep breaths.

1 MINUTE Now lie on your back, raise your feet, knees bent, and do slow-flow bicycles.

30 SECONDS Lie down in corpse pose. Take three deep breaths; hold.

NBA DRILLS

The lowdown: A high-intensity, basketball-inspired workout that'll make it clear why pro ballers get paid so much.

What you'll get in four weeks: Stronger shoulders; shapelier calves; better coordination.

Special equipment: Basketball; basketball court.

Extra credit:

Grab a friend and pass the ball back and forth while doing the side-shuffle exercise below.

How it works:

1 MINUTE Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, then pass the ball around your waist continuously in a circular motion from right hand to left. Switch directions every 10 revolutions. "Let those muscles direct and control the movements," says Sean Green, a trainer at Chelsea Piers in NYC and former NBA player.

1 MINUTE Repeat around right leg and under the knee for 30 seconds. Switch to the left leg for 30 seconds.

1 MINUTE Assume squat position, keeping chest upright. Pass ball through middle of legs in a figure-eight.

30 SECONDS Dribble with right hand for 15 seconds as you jog; repeat with left.

4 MINUTES Do diamond drill: Start by facing hoop from foul line. Sprint from foul line to baseline. Run backward to starting point. In defense stance (squat position, chest and hands up), side shuffle from foul line to right sideline; shuffle back in same position. Backpedal to half court; sprint to foul line. Shuffle again to the left and right. Repeat entire drill.

30 SECONDS Start on one side of the sideline. Jump to the other side, landing softly, and immediately bounce back to the initial side. Keep alternating sides.

1 MINUTE Repeat the sideline hopping, but this time do it on one leg, then the other.

1 MINUTE Dribble and jog.

BOXING CHALLENGE

The lowdown: A super-challenging arm, butt, and thigh workout consisting of real boxing moves created by Michael Olajide, owner of Aerospace, a boxing-inspired gym in NYC.

What you'll get in four weeks: An urge to shop for spring tank dresses early.

Special equipment: None, but use a punching bag and gloves if you'd also like to blow off steam.

Extra credit:

Box with small hand weights (3 to 5 pounds).

How it works:

30 SECONDS Start in a boxing stance with your fists up, one slightly in front of the other, knees slightly bent, and jog lightly in place. Now do a jab — a straight punch with the right arm, keeping the left bent, as the right foot steps forward. Then jab left. Continue alternating and bring the shoulder forward when you punch.

1 MINUTE Squat, feet shoulder-width apart, arms stretched forward.

30 SECONDS Repeat alternating right and left jabs.

2 MINUTES Now do slow lunges: Step left foot in front and bend your left knee; keep elbows bent and fists up. Hold for 30 seconds. Then jump straight up and land in a lunge, this time with your right foot in front. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat.

30 SECONDS Back in the boxing stance, do uppercuts: arms bent, elbows to floor, fists aiming upward. Continue alternating left and right.

2 MINUTES Repeat slow lunges.

1 MINUTE Now alternate left and right jabs with left and right uppercuts as you jog in place.

30 SECONDS Continue alternating jabs while in a squatting position.

2 MINUTES Get back up for left and right uppercuts, then squat for left and right jabs. Continue alternating.

GYMNASTICS STRETCH & CRUNCH

The lowdown: A gymnastics-inspired workout that stretches the muscles and provides a solid core workout.

What you'll get in four weeks: Better coordination and flexibility, and a smaller paunch.

How it works:

1 MINUTE, 30 SECONDS Start with a plank and hold for a few moments. Move into five push-ups (use knees if necessary), then roll onto your back and flow right into sideways crunches: Knees are bent, with left foot on right knee for stability. Bring right elbow to left knee. Repeat for 30 seconds. Repeat on other side.

1 MINUTE Repeat crunches with straight legs in V position.

1 MINUTE Get in plank position and shrug shoulders for 30 seconds. Repeat shoulder-shrugging with forearm plank.

30 SECONDS Do V shoulder shrugs: Stand with feet together, bend down with arms in front, 6 inches from toes, palms down, hands together, with fingers creating a triangle. Shrug.

1 MINUTE Lie flat on floor with legs extended in front of you. Gently rock backward into a shoulder stand. “Your body weight should be supported on your upper back, and legs should be as close to vertical as possible,” says Hector Salazar, gymnastics coach at Chelsea Piers. Support lower back with arms. Now rock back to seated straddle. Stretch gently to the left, then to the right, then middle. Continue repeating.

1 MINUTE Lunge with right leg in front. Bend forward, place palms on floor on either side of right leg. Slowly kick left leg up so that left leg is pointing close to the ceiling and right leg is perpendicular to it (like an L). Return to start position. Continue repeating for 30 seconds. Now do other side.

4 MINUTES Repeat exercises 2 and 3 twice.

JUMP AND DANCE

The lowdown: So you don’t think you can dance? No worries: Mix these easy steps with jumping rope and you’ll work your glutes, thighs, and abs, too.

What you’ll get in four weeks: Better coordination and a realization that you may not look so bad with a higher slit in your dress.

Special equipment: Jump rope.

Extra credit:

Use 3 to 5 pound hand weights, as props when dancing.

How it works:

1 MINUTE Jump rope.

2 MINUTES Plié; when you reach bottom, hold it, squeeze your glutes, pull your belly button into your spine, and isolate your rib cage, shifting it right, left, right; left, right, left; repeat four times. Now rise back up and repeat.

1 MINUTE Jump rope.

2 MINUTES Side-jump with your right foot leading; touch your left foot next to your right immediately upon landing and twirl your rope in your right hand like a lasso. Repeat to the right again. Now repeat to the left, then to the left again. Continue.

1 MINUTE Jump rope.

2 MINUTES Step to the right as you lift your left leg and right arm up to the ceiling as high as possible; your right leg is slightly bent for stability—get on your toes if you can. Bring left leg and right arm down and shuffle to the left for two steps. Now do the same to the right. Continue.

1 MINUTE Jump rope.

THE KNEE DANCE

The lowdown: This outrageously tough — but effective — workout blows the ThighMaster out of the water.

What you'll get in four weeks: A long, lean look and an elevated butt. "The quadriceps are the longest, densest muscles of the body, so you're making a big impact," says Lis Halfpapp, who codeveloped this exercise as part of her Core Fusion program, offered at the Exhale club and spa in New York.

Special equipment: Floor mat.

Extra credit:

Squeeze a 7-inch playground ball between your inner thighs at the same time during the hinge-thigh exercises.

How it works:

1 MINUTE Warm up by bending your elbows and interlacing your hands at chest level. Lift alternating legs to hands with knees bent.

1 MINUTE Now march in place, lifting knees to chest with alternating arm swings. 30 seconds -Start with hinge-thigh strengtheners. These are like the pelvic tilts that Jane Fonda did in the '80s – but much more painful. Get on your knees, shoulder-width apart, pulling in your abs. While keeping your spine straight, lean back slightly. Now tilt your hips and thighs forward; arms are stretched forward as the pelvis tilts forward; arms return to each side of your body, elbows bent, when you release.

1 MINUTE Come up from your lean and rest. Lean back again and do alternating tilts, left and right.

1 MINUTE Come up and rest. Lean back again and tilt the right hip and thigh, and hold as your right hand taps your right heel behind you. Now do the left side.

1 MINUTE 30 SECONDS Follow with a "saddle thigh" stretch: Place knees slightly wider than hips; chin is in and ears are over the shoulders. Sit on your heels, arms bent; place palms on floor behind toes a few inches. Now lift your buttocks up off your heels (but remain on your knees), pressing your hips up (again, like a pelvic tilt, but your thighs are farther apart; you should be able to draw a flat line from under the chest to the tops of knees). Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat three times.

1 MINUTE Sit on heels for a moment. Come back up, but this time, tilt just your left side and pretend you're drawing circles with your left knee in the air. Squeeze your buttocks for more controlled "drawing." Bring back down. Repeat with the right side.

1 MINUTE Sit back on heels. Now tilt up again. Now place knees closer together, as you did just after the warm-up. Repeat with alternating tilts, in the hinge-thigh exercise, as described above.

2 MINUTES Stand up, feet shoulder-width apart. Finish off with lunges: Step right leg in front, bend knee. Make sure your hips are square and level. Right thigh is parallel to the floor and back leg is extended and behind the body. Place both hands on the top of the front thigh. Lean and arch back, look up and bring arms over shoulders; hold for 30 seconds. Repeat with left side. Continue alternating left and right.

Now What?

If you find that you're consistently sticking with your 10-minute routine, not missing workouts, and eager to do even more: consider expanding the current routine into a 20, or even 30 minute routine, to reap even more fat loss and health-related benefits from your efforts.

The most important thing you can do to ensure immediate and ongoing success is to start right now!