

The 7-Minute Workout



If you've ever promised yourself that you would get back in shape just as soon as you could find the time, then the 7-Minute Workout may be for you. It's a short, rapid-fire series of exercises that use your own body weight.

The order of exercises does matter: You should alternate working opposing muscle groups, and follow exercises that crank your heart rate up with those that cool it down a bit. Check with your doctor before taking on any new exercise routine, to make sure it is right for you.

There are 12 exercises. Each should take 30 seconds, with a 10-second "break".

It's called the "7-Minute Workout," but you really get maximum benefit from repeating the circuit at least three times.

If you're new to exercise, or it's been a while, it's a good idea to get a gym instructor or other fitness pro to help you with proper form.

JUMPING JACKS

Start with something you learned in elementary school: jumping jacks. Stand up with your legs spread and your hands touching overhead. Then as you jump, bring your legs back together and put your arms to your sides. You can speed these up or slow them down to suit your fitness level. Do this for 30 seconds, take a 10-second break, and go right to the next move.

WALL SITS

Stand with your back to a wall, feet hip-width apart and slightly in front of you. Lean back into the wall, and slide down like you're sitting down into a chair. Your knees should finish above your ankles, bent at 90 degrees. Hold this position for 30 seconds.

PUSH-UPS

Get into a "plank" position on the floor or mat, feet together with toes tucked under, hands planted flat below your shoulders. Slowly bend your elbows and lower your body toward the floor, as far down as you can go keeping back and hips level. Then press back up and repeat for 30 seconds. You can make this easier by resting your weight on your knees instead of your feet. To boost intensity, try resting your feet on a low bench or step instead of the floor.

AB CRUNCH

Start with a basic crunch: Lie flat on your back, with your knees bent and feet on floor. Tighten your core. Press your lower back into the mat and reach toward top of knees. Return to starting position but keep core tight and repeat for 30 seconds.

STEP-UP

Stand facing a sturdy chair or bench. Step up onto the chair or bench with your left leg, coming all the way up to stand on it with both feet fully. Then step back down and come back up, starting with your right leg this time. Do as many as you can in 30 seconds. Get your heart pumping!

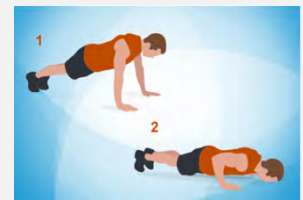
JUMPING JACKS



WALL SITS



PUSH-UPS



AB CRUNCH



STEP-UP



(Continued on other side)

SQUAT

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and toes forward. Bend your knees as you hinge at the hips, shifting them back and down like you're about to sit in a chair. Lower yourself as far as you comfortably can, keeping most of your weight on your heels. Stand back up. Repeat for 30 seconds.

TRICEPS DIP ON CHAIR

Sit on the front edge of a stable and sturdy chair or bench, and put your palms on the edge, fingers pointing forward or slightly toward you. Ease off the chair, supporting your weight with your heels and your palms. Slowly bend your elbows as you lower yourself toward the floor, then push back up. Repeat for 30 seconds. You can make this exercise more challenging by supporting yourself on one leg at a time.

PLANK

Lie on your stomach on an exercise mat, with your elbows close to your sides, palms down and fingers facing forward. Lift your torso and thighs off the floor, keeping your body straight. Rest your weight on your elbows and your feet, with toes tucked toward shins. Use your core muscles, and stay in this position for 30 seconds.

HIGH KNEES

Run in place for 30 seconds, bringing your knees up as high as you can with each step. Focus on lifting your knees up and down rapidly. Try holding your palms out in front of you at waist height, working to "smack" your knee into your palm with each step. Research has found that this kind of training may help more with fat loss than classic aerobic or strength training.

LUNGES

Stand with your feet together. Step forward on your right foot, dropping your pelvis down toward the floor (not forward), lowering yourself until both front and back knees are bent as close to a 90-degree angle as possible. Then push back with the front leg and return to your starting position. Switch legs. Repeat for 30 seconds. You can make this more challenging with reverse lunges, or make it easier by not lowering your body as deeply.

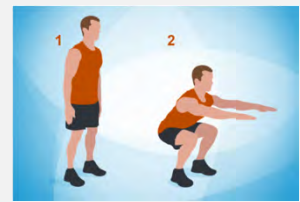
PUSH-UP & ROTATION

Start in a standard push-up position. Begin a traditional push-up, but as you come back up, shift your weight onto your left side. Rotate your upper body and extend your right arm straight up toward the ceiling. Return to your starting position, then repeat with right side. Repeat for 30 seconds.

SIDE PLANK

Lie on your right side on a mat, with your legs straight and your left leg stacked directly on top of the right. Keeping your ankles, knees, hips, and trunk in a straight line, push your weight up on your bent right elbow, which should be directly under your shoulder. Lift your hips, knees, and trunk off the mat. Hold the position for 15 seconds. Then switch sides.

SQUAT



TRICEPS DIP ON CHAIR



PLANK



HIGH KNEES



LUNGES



PUSH-UP & ROTATION



SIDE PLANK

