

Workout Plans that You Can Start Right Here, Right Now!

If you want to get in shape, tone up, trim down, or even just boost your fitness and stamina levels, well, you're at exactly the right place to start.

But getting into a workout plan isn't the easiest thing in the world. If you've tried to exercise before and found that your things didn't 'work out' for you (pun intended!), then you'll undoubtedly already know that there are many ways in which things could go wrong.

Although that much is true, the simple fact of the matter is most of the problems that many people face when working out are the kinds of things that can be *avoided*.

Of course, for a relative beginner, or someone with no previous experience in workouts, it would be impossible to expect them to know enough to avoid the common problems. And so, it's fairly normal for most beginners to face one problem after another, after another.

Fortunately, with this guide, you shouldn't be in *those* shoes. What we're going to be doing is giving you access to several workout plans that you can start practically immediately, that much is true.

More importantly however, we're going to be giving you access to workout plans that are best for beginners!

One thing that you should realize, right off the bat, is that there is no 'one' workout plan that suits everyone. Each and every one of us are different, and we have different needs, different requirements, and vastly different preferences.

Taking those into account is going to form the foundation of getting started with a workout plan that actually *works* for you!

Keep this in mind. Always.

Over the course of this guide, you're going to learn about more than just workouts, and be given more than just simple 'do this', and 'do that' instructions. Instead, we're going to teach you about working out.

Armed with a thorough knowledge, you won't just be able to work out, but you'll be an expert at working out.

And once you've done that, you'll find that you're able to achieve pretty much any goals that you may already have, with great ease.

Think that you're ready to get started? Well, let's jump straight in by covering a little basic groundwork first.

Starting an Exercise Program: What You Need to Know

Before you lift your first weight, or break into a jog on the treadmill, you need to know several things that are going to form a base for you to build your efforts on.

Technically speaking, they aren't really part of your workout, but they're going to be just as important, or *more* important, than anything else you learn!

So what are these 'things' that we're talking about? Well, in many ways, they tie in to your mindset. If you get that right, then you're going to find that your workouts go a lot smoother, and your chances of success are increased tenfold.

Think of it as a mental preparation for all that is going to follow.

And the first step that you're going to take in that regard is something that is simple... yet so often overlooked.

Fitting Workouts into a Daily Schedule

Unless you happen to be a millionaire, the fact of the matter is that you're probably holding down a regular nine to five job. In fact, including all that overtime that you may have to put in every so often, it is probably more than a nine to five.

On top of that, you will undoubtedly also have other commitments to family, friends, and so on.

In short: Your time has many demands on it.

For most people in today's day and age especially, this is the very reason why they don't actually end up working out. All the time-commitments that absolutely must be fulfilled end up getting in the way.

Thus, finding a regular time at which to exercise is difficult.

But note: Difficult is *not* impossible! And your very first task is to somehow fit your workouts into a daily schedule. Depending on how busy you are in general, this could take several forms, but frankly speaking, you have a choice...

Either you *find* the time, or you *make* the time.

If you can't do one or the other, then your workout is probably doomed from the start. Sure, you might get one good session in, but then when the time rolls round for the next session, you may be too busy, and give it a skip.

After that, you may find that at the next session, you're also too busy, and things would rapidly go on a steep downward spiral from there.

Granted, you might not be able to set the *same* time every day for a workout, but fitting it in *somewhere* is vital. Also, when you start out it doesn't need to be everyday. It could be every other day, so Monday, Wednesday, Friday, or Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday.

Surely you can do that if you put your mind to it!

Whatever time you decide on, try to keep an hour or so free. That way, you'll have more than enough time to get a great workout in, and may even find that you're able to do more than you thought possible.

Key to this mental preparation is that once you set a fixed time for exercise, you must keep to it.

Do not let things get in your way, unless they're absolutely unavoidable. As much as possible, try to cut unnecessary distractions out, or push them to alternative time slots so that they don't interfere with your workout.

If you can find a time, and *commit* to it, then you're on the perfect track!

Creating Goals to Motivate Yourself

It would be a fairly safe bet to assume that you already have some goal or other that you want to accomplish with your workout. Pretty much everyone does, and more often than not, it involves losing weight, or looking better.

Don't be ashamed – these are valid goals!

Still, it would probably help you to put it in numbers, roughly. That way, you can have something to measure yourself against, sort of like a yardstick as to the progress that you've made with your workouts.

And on top of that, it would definitely be a good idea to come up with a plan that details *what* you expect to achieve, and *when* you expect to achieve it by.

To do this, one of the best ways is to start by stringing together a bunch of short-term goals that work in tandem to achieve a long-term goal.

Now, your long-term goal is probably the easy part. Basically, it should be whatever dream you have that you want to achieve, as far as your workouts go, that is. So if you want to have a 6-pack – that's your long term goal. If you want to lose 20 kg, that's your long-term goal too!

Really, your long term goal could be anything and everything that you want to end up achieving at some point in time. It is the 'dream' that you're going to be working towards.

On the flipside, your short-term goals are slightly different.

These are going to be weekly, biweekly, or even monthly goals that form a roadmap to take you towards your long-term goal. And they're irreplaceably important in that regard because they're going to be the 'plan' that you use to get to where you want to be!

So if your long-term goal is to lose 20 kg, then your short term goal set could be to lose 4 kg a month, every month, for 5 months.

See now why using figures is very effective?

Anyway, to form up your short-term goals, simply spend a little time thinking about your long term goal and what you'll need to accomplish to achieve it. Then, plan things out in a realistic, but challenging fashion.

Don't make things too easy on yourself, or there'll be no real motivation from your goals.

And of course, don't make things too hard, or you'll just never achieve your goals.

Once you've formed your goals, you may find that you need to revise them from time to time, either to make them more challenging, or more realistic. Don't be afraid to do so. At the end of the day, it's more important that your goals are very real, and motivational, than strict and unchangeable.

After your goals are sorted, you're almost done with your preparation... the mental part anyway.

Determination, Desire, Willpower

These three ingredients are going to stand at the very core of your efforts to get a workout going. Having a plan is great, having a fixed time to work out is great too, but finally, you need to be able to stick to both to succeed!

Armed with a combination of determination, desire, and willpower, you'll find that you're relatively unstoppable in this regard.

Course, it can sometimes be easier said than done, what with all the hurdles that stand between you and your goals. But these hurdles make it all the more important that you really have enough grit to pull through.

Want to know what the good news is? It gets *easier* as you go along!

Really, it's true. As you start working out, and start to feel the rewards, you'll find that you're more energized, and will also find that the 'feel good' factor of working out comes into play very often.

In fact, there should come a time when you actually look forward to your workouts!

Yes, this may be hard to believe right now – but stick with it, and you'll get there eventually.

Now that we've covered most of the mental preparation that you'll need, or at least the basic version of it, it's time that we swap theory for practice and move on to the actual exercise.

Still... as much as you need mental preparation, you also need *physical* preparation.

Getting Started by Warming Up and Stretching

If you jump straight into the deep end of the pool, you're going to end up getting yourself hurt.

Remember this, because it is ever so easy to sometimes forget, or overlook the simple fact that your body is not equipped to just go right into strenuous exercise routines without so much as a fair warning.

Warming up, and stretching, is the part of your workout that gets your body ready and set to really get going. Without it, you could possibly still work out, but you'd open yourself up to a greater risk of getting injured in the process.

On the other hand, by spending even as little as 5 to 10 minutes warming up, your body is going to be in the right gear to begin any sort of exercise. With your blood circulation going, and your muscles limber, you're all set to start.

Naturally, there are further benefits to stretching, including an improved range of motion, posture, and even less joint stiffness.

Basically, after you've gone through a short warm up and stretching routine, any exercise that you do will be that much safer, and you'll probably find that it is a whole lot *easier* to carry out than otherwise.

In short: Don't ever, ever forget to warm up or stretch.

Really, there's no reason why you shouldn't warm up and stretch, seeing as it is one of the easiest things in the world to go about. And here's just how you can get it done:

Basic Stretching and Warm Up Essentials

To perform a good stretching and warm up routine, you'll need to be sure that you've covered all your bases. Unfortunately, this is where many people end up making mistakes, so pay close attention!

As you should well know, the idea behind warming up and stretching is to get your body in the right form to begin exercising. But you should also be aware that this means that you need to get your entire body, from head to toe, stretched.

More often than not, some people end up forgetting various muscle groups, and this can be a major weakness in your routine. After all, if you're going to stretch, you would want to ensure that you're stretching *right*.

Some of the best rules to follow when stretching include:

1. Stretch both sides of your body evenly

In many cases, there is a tendency to stretch more on one side than the other. Largely, this is due to the fact that most people tend to be slightly more flexible and stronger on one side of their body.

Be aware of this, and make certain that you pay equal attention to both sides.

2. Work your way through the major muscle groups

When you're stretching, one great way to ensure that you hit all the right targets is to develop a system, and stick to it. Either work your way from top to bottom, or bottom to top.

As you learn more, you'll see how this can be accomplished.

3. Don't ever over-stretch your muscles

Another common mistake is to stretch to the point where it feels painful. Some even feel that if they don't feel that sharp pain that can come with over-stretching, they aren't doing it right.

This is a myth, and worse still, over stretching can actually damage your muscles!

4. Carry out slow, measured stretches without jerking

Every stretch you perform should be carried out in a measured, slow fashion. Not only will this help ensure that you're stretching every muscle evenly (on both sides of your body), but it will also ensure that you don't injure yourself.

How? Well, jerking is a surefire way to over-stretch your muscles, which as you already know, is definitely something that you want to avoid.

Now that you know all of this, you're pretty much set to actually learn a few great stretches to perform. Mind you, despite the fact that we're going to be recommending some stretches in particular, this doesn't mean that there are *no* alternatives.

Just check these stretches and warm up steps as a great place to start off, and later, you may even find that you want to adapt them to suit your own needs!

Carrying out a Basic Stretching and Warm Up Routine

Okay, let's get started stretching and warming up. If you can, you may find it beneficial to actually try out some of these actions as we describe them, just so you can get a better picture of what we're describing.

So get ready, we're about to begin!

1. Neck Stretches

Contrary to popular belief, it isn't best to rotate your neck in circles. Instead, simply tilt your head right, and hold for a few moments, then tilt left, and hold again. Do the same upwards and downwards too – and then rinse and repeat a few times!

2. Shoulder and Back of Upper Arm Stretch

Place your right hand on the left shoulder. Then, with your left hand, pull the right elbow across your chest towards the left shoulder, and hold it there for a few moments.

Switch hands, and perform it for the other side too.

3. Shoulder, Mid-Back, Arms, Wrists, and Finger Stretch

Interlace your fingers so that they're locked together. Then, turn your palms outwards so that they're facing away from you and extend your arms to the front of you at the level of your shoulders.

Hold a while, then retract your arms, and repeat the process as needed.

4. Triceps, Shoulder and Waist Stretch

Grab hold of your right elbow with your left hand, and hold your arms overhead. Then, with the force of your left hand, pull the elbow behind the head gently, and lean to the left until you feel a slight stretch. Be careful not to overstretch.

After holding for a few moments, relax, and then switch sides and repeat.

5. Mid-back and Waist Stretch

Place your hands on your hips, and rotate your torso at the waist in one direction until you feel a slight stretch. Hold that position a few moments, and then rotate back so that you're facing the front. Then, rotate in the other direction.

Repeat this a few times.

6. Quadriceps (front of thigh) Stretch

Stand facing a wall, and use your right hand to support yourself against it, if you find that you need it.

With your left hand, reach behind and grasp the top of your right foot, which you should have bent at the knees so that you could do this. Then, slowly pull it towards the buttock area and hold for a while.

Switch your hands (and feet) and repeat this stretch.

7. Inner Thigh and Groin Area Stretch

Stand up, with your feet pointed forwards and spaced out. Normally, they should be about a shoulder's length, or slightly more, apart (but not too much!). Slowly behind the right knee a bit, and move your left hip downwards towards it, and hold for a while.

Switch directions and repeat it again for the other side.

8. Squats (Hamstring and Calves Stretch)

As the name implies, stand up, with your feet again about a shoulder's length apart, and then squat, by bending your knees slightly and slowly, before holding in that position. Rinse and repeat.

9. Toe-Touch (Back of Legs Stretch)

While keeping your legs straight, bend at the waist and stretch towards your toes. Even if you can't touch them, go as far as possible (without over-stretching) and hold there for a few moments.

10. Push Ups (Arms, Chest, and Legs Stretch)

Chances are, you already know this one, but basically lie on the ground and then push yourself upwards, supported by your arms, and legs. There are various ways in which you can do this, but the best way to start is with your arms extended outwards, in line with your shoulders, and your legs and back straight.

More advanced pushups include one-armed pushups, but don't try these until your muscles are strong enough!

Knowing these 10 stretches and warm up routine components is a huge advantage already. Of course, as we mentioned, there are alternatives, and certainly, if you want to do more stretches, there's nothing standing in your way.

Still, these should cover most of the important muscle groups that you're going to need.

Start getting used to them. As you progress, you'll find that your muscles become more limber, and your joints become more flexible. When that happens, you'll be able to stretch more, and get much more effects out of it.

Keep at it, and be sure to incorporate it into your routine.

Also, be aware that stretching after your workout is equally important, so you've just covered something that will come doubly in handy!

Anyway, now that we've discussed what you need to prepare yourself for a workout, it's time to move on to the workout itself. And this is where you're going to find that you need to make some choices.

Picking the Right Workout for Your Personal Needs!

Do you remember that earlier on we'd mentioned how there is no 'one size fits all' workout?

Well, if you do, it should come as no surprise that we're going to be talking about many different types of workouts now, and it is your job to find what fits in with your needs, requirements, and goals!

Think of it this way: If you're intend on losing weight, then you're going to want to focus on workouts that actually help you do just that. On the other hand, if you desire to tone up your muscles, there are other workouts that might work better.

On top of that, you might find that you actually prefer one workout over another, and if both provide similar benefits, you should obviously go with the one that you like more.

But in order to make an informed decision, you should have at least some idea of the options that are in front of you, so let's get started looking at those first. Later on, we'll go back to discussing how you should pick what you want to end up doing!

Cardiovascular Exercises and Aerobics

Heard of these exercises before? If you've looked into weight loss, you may very well have encountered mention of them.

Why? Well, because they're the primary recommended form of exercise for weight loss!

Anything that gets your heart rate up and going could, rightfully, be considered a cardiovascular exercise, which is why most of them are also called 'aerobic' exercises too. Granted, many things could get your heart rate going – but that alone should give you an idea of how big a bracket this is.

That is why it's going to be practically *impossible* for us to cover *all* the types of cardiovascular exercises out there.

All things considered though, it would be safe to say that you're going to be most interested in this type of exercise if you want to either:

1. Lose weight
2. Improve your overall stamina

In order to do either of those, what you are going to need is to get your heart rate within what is known as the 'fat burning zone'. Basically, you want to push yourself until your heart is pumping at that optimum rate.

Normally, this is calculated based on age, using the formula: $(220 - \text{Age}) \times (0.75)$

Be aware though, that just because this is your target heart rate, it doesn't mean that you should push yourself beyond your natural limits until you reach it. Depending on how fit you are, and how used to exercise your body is, you may find that it takes you some time until you can sustain exercising at that heart rate.

Still, that should be your aim with any cardiovascular exercise.

Take a look at the following list for some options that you could try out if you're thinking of starting a workout of this form. It should give you a better idea, at least, of what you could be doing:

1. Brisk walks
2. Jogging
3. Running
4. Cycling
5. Rowing
6. Aerobics
7. Rope jumping
8. Swimming

See how diverse a range of exercises await you? Now the only question is how you pick the one that you want to carry out. And that is, quite frankly, simple: Find one that you like!

Don't be worried about trying out different exercises, at least initially, until you find one that seems to be preferable. Of course, what's preferable could depend on a number of things, including convenience.

If you can find an exercise that you enjoy, and is convenient, you're that much more likely to stick to, and succeed, at it!

Once you do opt for a certain exercise, all that remains is to put it into your workout schedule. Mind you, just because you're interested mostly in cardiovascular exercise, you don't necessarily have to limit yourself to just that.

As you're about to see, you could easily add more components into your workout.

For now, generally speaking, the normal prescribed amount of cardiovascular workout is about 20 to 40 minutes. End of the day though, it's up to you how much you want to do, just be sure to ease into it, especially if you haven't been exercising regularly previously.

Having dealt with our very first form of exercise, let's look at the next one...

Weight Training Exercises

Yes, lifting metal is a very popular form of exercise and for good reason too – it is everything to do with your muscles.

However, unlike cardiovascular exercises, which we just covered, you'll find that weight training takes on a slightly different form, and has various other considerations. For one thing, the type of weight training that you undertake should be based on your goals.

In other words: If you're looking to lose weight, you'd perform a different type of weight training than if you were looking to build muscle and strength.

Therefore, the big question that you need to answer is: What's your goal?

Based on earlier, when we discussed goals in general, you should already be able to answer this question fairly firmly. However, the issue that might arise is when your goals are twofold, i.e. you might want to lose weight *and* tone your muscles so that you look better.

Don't worry if this is the case, you'll soon see that it isn't too hard to adapt your weight training to cater for even the more complicated goals.

Bearing this in mind, let's discuss how you'd accomplish your weight training, based on whatever goal you may have:

1. Building Muscles and Increasing Strength

Many people, men in particular, end up going after weight training for this one simple goal. Not only do muscles look good, but the increased strength is very much something that many people desire.

In order to really build muscles and increase strength, there's only one path that you need to follow: Use a high amount of resistance.

That means that you're going to be lifting heavy weights, and pushing your strength! Of course, this does not mean that you should push too far, too fast.

Gauge the amount that you're able to lift. To do so, simply start off with something comfortable, and then slowly increase the weight. Once things get challenging, that's when you need to start pushing yourself.

Generally speaking, when you're carrying out weight training of this variety, you should be doing 3 sets of 8 repetitions each. However, if you find you can do up to 3 sets of 12 repetitions without a problem, then you should up the weight.

Not too tough, is it?

2. Weight Loss

For weight loss, there are two main ideas at work. Either you can go the strength and muscle building route, and thus end up upping your metabolism rate, or, you can choose to go another, and much preferred route.

Instead of going for heavy weights, you should focus on the opposite end of the spectrum, and go for light weights which you can do a lot of reps with, without resting much in between.

That way, your heart rate will be increased, even though you're doing weight training, not cardiovascular exercises.

Do as many continuous repetitions as you can, and keep going from exercise to exercise.

One reason why this type of weight training is much preferred for weight loss is that it does not build muscle as the former method we were discussing does. Normally, if you're overweight and you start building muscle, you might find that it actually looks worse on you.

Still, at the end of the day, this amounts to a question of preference, but it doesn't hurt to know that you have a choice!

3. Muscle Toning

In many ways, muscle toning exercises represent a mid-path between strength and weight loss. Needless to say, the intention is simply to cause your muscles to 'firm up' and gain tone, as opposed to actually growing.

Many times, this can even be better than muscle growth when it comes to looking good.

For girls, and even men who have a naturally wide frame, this could be the answer that suits them best. Still, the choice is yours at the end of the day, so just consider it wisely!

If you opt for this option, then use moderately heavy weights. That means that they should be of a weight that you can definitely feel, however does not require you to strain too much with each repetition.

Then go about doing as many sets as you can with 15 to 20 repetitions each.

Feel free to rest in between if you need it, unlike weight loss, this isn't going to play a particularly big factor since you're not trying to keep your heart rate up as much as possible.

Depending on your body fat level, as well as the weight that you're using, it could take some time to notice results. Keep at it, week in, week out, and eventually you definitely will see some pretty apparent improvements.

Each of these three options has its merits, and as you can see, things are very much goal-oriented when it comes to weight training. As we promised earlier though, if your goals are twofold, or even threefold, you still could have some options.

One thing that is probably not advisable is to vary your weight training. Say if you do strength and muscle bulk training on a Monday, and then muscle toning exercises on a Wednesday, you won't see any good results.

Instead, the best approach, if your goals are more complicated, is to simply pick the middle route between the two goals that are most akin to yours. That means that if you want muscle tone and bulk, you could simply go for slightly less heavy weights, and slightly more reps.

In this fashion, you can accomplish your goal pretty easily, with just a few simple tweaks.

Of course, one area that we've neglected to mention is how exactly you go about weight training, and this is slightly trickier. Naturally, for each muscle group, engaging in some weight lifting exercise the works it would be sufficient.

But the big question is: What exercise?

And really, there are way too many options to properly document them in this guide. So let's look at things from a better angle.

If you're looking to get started with weight training, the best way to do so would be to enroll in a gym that gives you access to all the weight training equipment that you could need. That way, you'll be able to use the machines that correspond to each muscle group.

Also, it will familiarize you with the types of exercises, and motions, which are required.

After that, if you want to move on to free weights, you'll find that you already know what time of movements you need to be making, and it shouldn't be too hard to adapt your machine-based exercises to a free weight alternative.

Sounds pretty easy when it's put that way, right?

Before we leave you to it, let's discuss a few other options that you might want to engage in, just to round things up a little.

Further Workout Options

Although we've covered the two 'big' items as far as workouts are concerned, and given you enough so that you could actually get out there right now and start your very own exercise regime, there are a few other things that merit mention.

Thus far, we've relied on a fairly 'gym-workout' based approach, and while that is what is most commonly used nowadays, for sake of convenience, there are other options that you could opt to follow.

Check them out. Who knows, you might find something that you like!

1. Sports

Most types of sports provide some form of mix between cardiovascular and muscle training. Depending on the type of sport this could vary greatly.

Although it is a good workout option, it could be inconveniencing, especially if your sport of choice is a team game, in which case you'd actually have to find a game and arrange matches.

On the other hand, more individual-based sports such as tennis, squash, or badminton, would require you to only find one other person to play against.

Still, sports is definitely a great way to work out, mostly because it doesn't feel like a workout, but is actually 'fun'! And, as you should know by this point, if you find something fun, you're more likely to keep doing it.

2. Yoga and Tai Chi

Although there are huge differences between these two, they're worth lumping up into one category and discussing, because both promote flexibility, and can even cause increased heart rates for weight loss.

Depending on the level of yoga or tai chi that you're doing, it could be strenuous or mild, so it's going to give different results based on how good you get.

End of the day, it is worth considering, and can help in many ways.

3. Outdoor Activities

Some outdoor activities are really worth their weight in gold. Of course, things like biking are included in this bracket, but we've already discussed them somewhat.

Instead, think more along the lines of mountain climbing, trekking (a fancy way to walk!), and so on. These types of activities can make your workouts more entertaining, and would be especially useful for people who get bored easily.

See? Workouts don't necessarily have to be the dull, gym-confined verities that end up making you regret ever wanting to start. If you like, you could find a workout that is really as appealing to you as any activity!

All you need to do is to start looking in the right places.

Final Words on Starting to Work Out Right Now!

Remember, you wanted to start working out right now, so get to it! Already, you know everything that you need to know about the various options that lie before you, so there's nothing left to hold you back.

Pick one, and start!

Don't forget to stretch though, and come up with goals and a plan, if you haven't already.

After that, get right to it. The sooner you start, the faster you'll end up achieving that dream of yours, whatever it may be.

Keep at it, never give up, and don't let things get too tedious.

Good luck!