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UK EDITION

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YOUR 8-WEEK BODY PLAN

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YOUR 8-WEEK BODY PLAN

GET A SIX PACK IN 8 WEEKS

by **Ben Ince** and **Rich Phillipps**

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Kelsey shop: shop.kelsey.co.uk/subscription/MEG
Back issues: 01959 543747

DISTRIBUTION IN GREAT BRITAIN
Seymour Distribution Limited
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DISTRIBUTION IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
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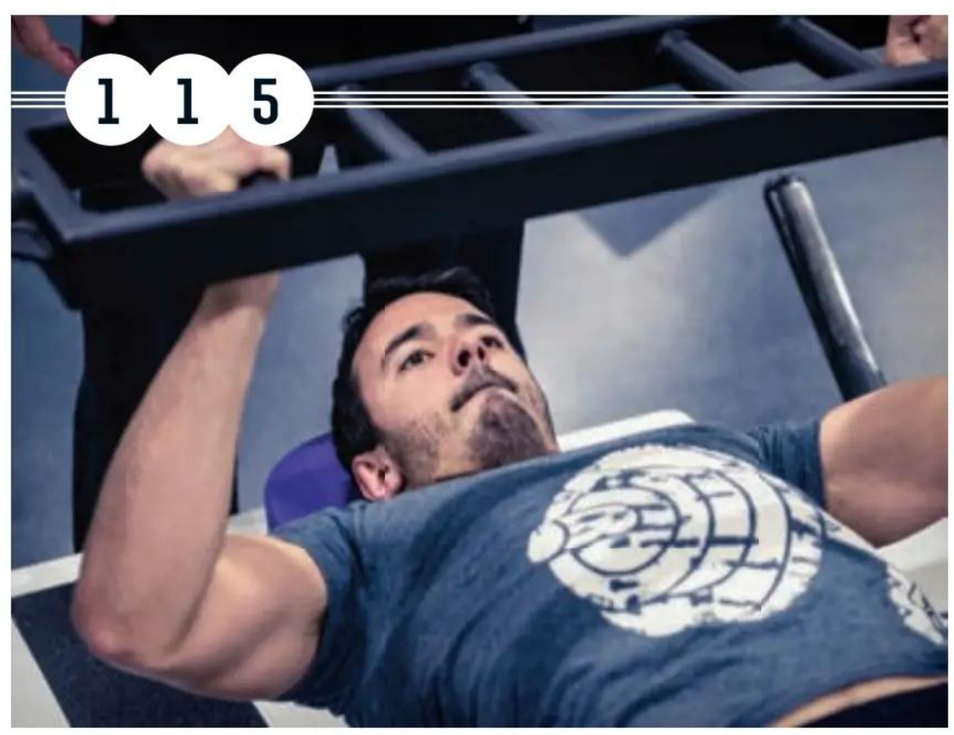
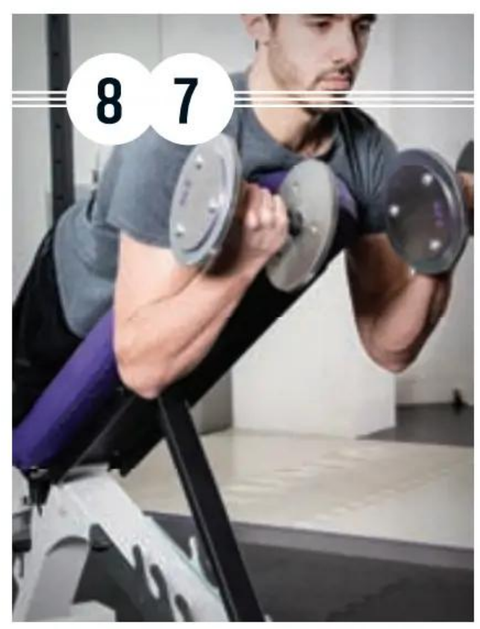




ABOUT THIS BOOK

HERE'S WHY THIS BOOK IS THE ONLY GUIDE YOU'LL EVER NEED TO GET THE SIX-PACK YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED

The fitness industry is filled with personal trainers and authors who claim they can dramatically change the way you look with minimum fuss or effort. This book is a bit different. That's because genuine transformations require hard training with utter dedication and commitment to building the body you've always wanted.

Trust me, I know. I trained under the guidance of Rich Phillipps to discover how radically I could transform my physique in just eight weeks with the right training and nutrition plan.

THE COMPLETE GUIDE

This book contains the complete programme that I followed for eight weeks, detailing every single workout and when to do it. As well as the nutrition plan Rich created for me, there's a comprehensive overview of how you can eat better and smarter for a stronger, leaner body. It also includes a complete guide to the best supplements available to support muscle building, fat burning and general health.

So if you want to get ripped, build muscle and reveal your abs, this is the book for you. And the beauty is that, if you follow this programme to the letter, you're going to achieve all this in just eight weeks.

Ben Ince

GETTING STARTED

BRAND NEW YOU

Here's how you're going to get leaner and stronger

This first chapter explains in detail everything you need to know before you begin the eight-week programme to get a ripped physique with a granite six-pack. It's essential you understand exactly how it all works so you can execute everything with precision. Then get stuck in to the workouts – it's that simple.

GETTING STARTED Before you begin

INCLUDING

08 PRE-WORKOUT WARM-UP

16 NUTRITION FACTS

22 YOUR MOTIVATION

24 HOW IT WORKS

25 PROGRESS TRACKER

1 Upper spine foam roll

Form guide

1. Place the foam roller under your upper back. Keep your knees bent and feet flat on the ground.
2. Interlock your fingers behind your head.
3. Lower your head until it's just above the floor and try to wrap yourself around the foam roller, extending your upper spine over the roller.
4. Roll slowly up and down the vertebrae, focusing on your thoracic spine only.

2 IT band foam roll

Form guide

1. Lie on your side using your arms for balance and position the roller on your thigh just below your hip joint.
2. Roll from your hip down to your knee, avoiding your knee joint.
3. To decrease the pressure, have your opposite leg flat on the ground. To increase the pressure, place the opposite leg directly on top.
4. Continue to roll up and down the side of your leg.

3 Shoulder mobility drill

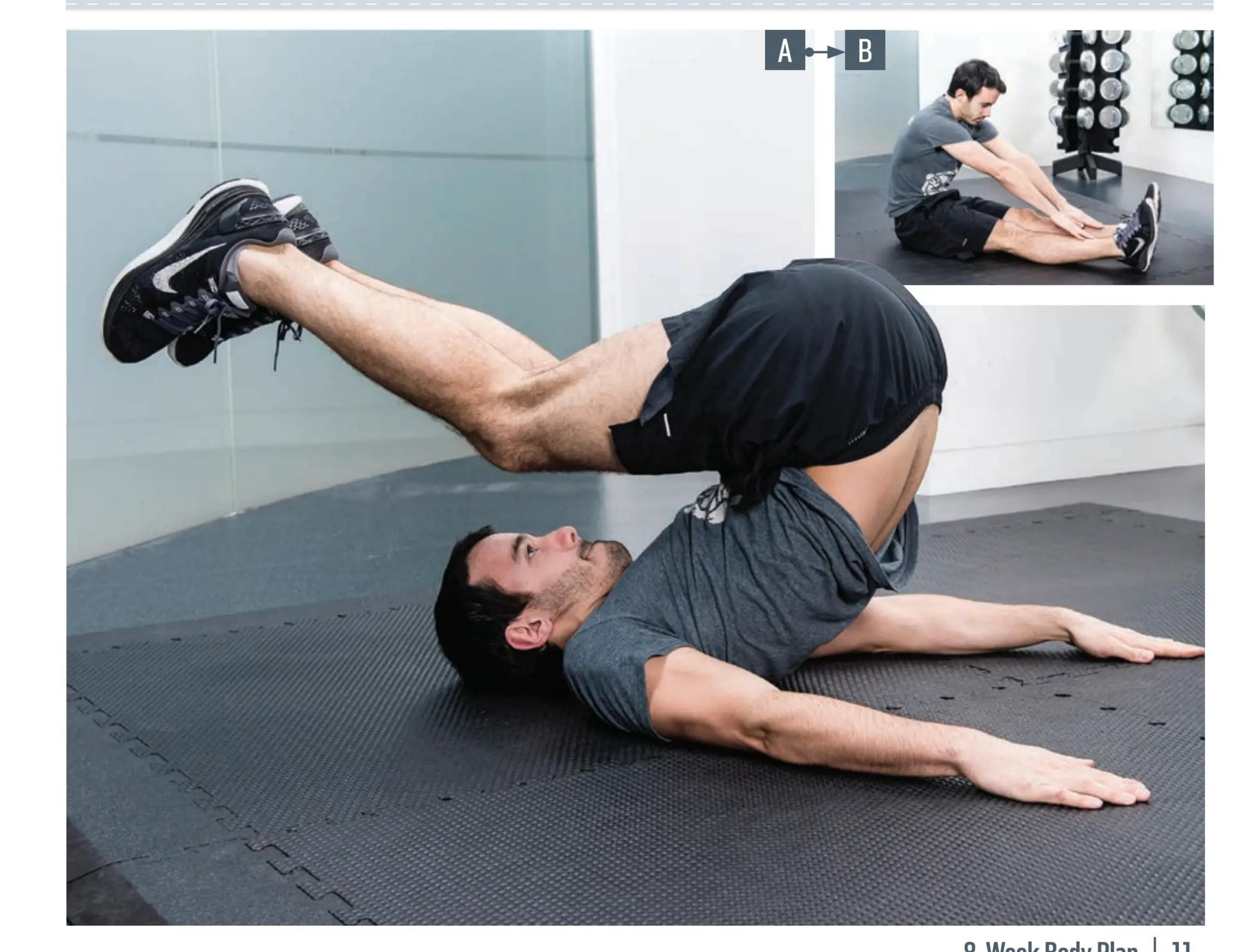
Form guide

1. Gently grip the inside of the resistance band with your thumbs pointing down.
2. Start by taking the band over your head and behind your body, applying lateral tension so you feel a stretch in your chest and shoulders.
3. Hold for 20 seconds.
4. Smoothly bring the band over your head in a wide arching motion, maintaining lateral tension on the band.
5. Continue to move the band from front to back in a smooth motion to mobilise the shoulder joint.

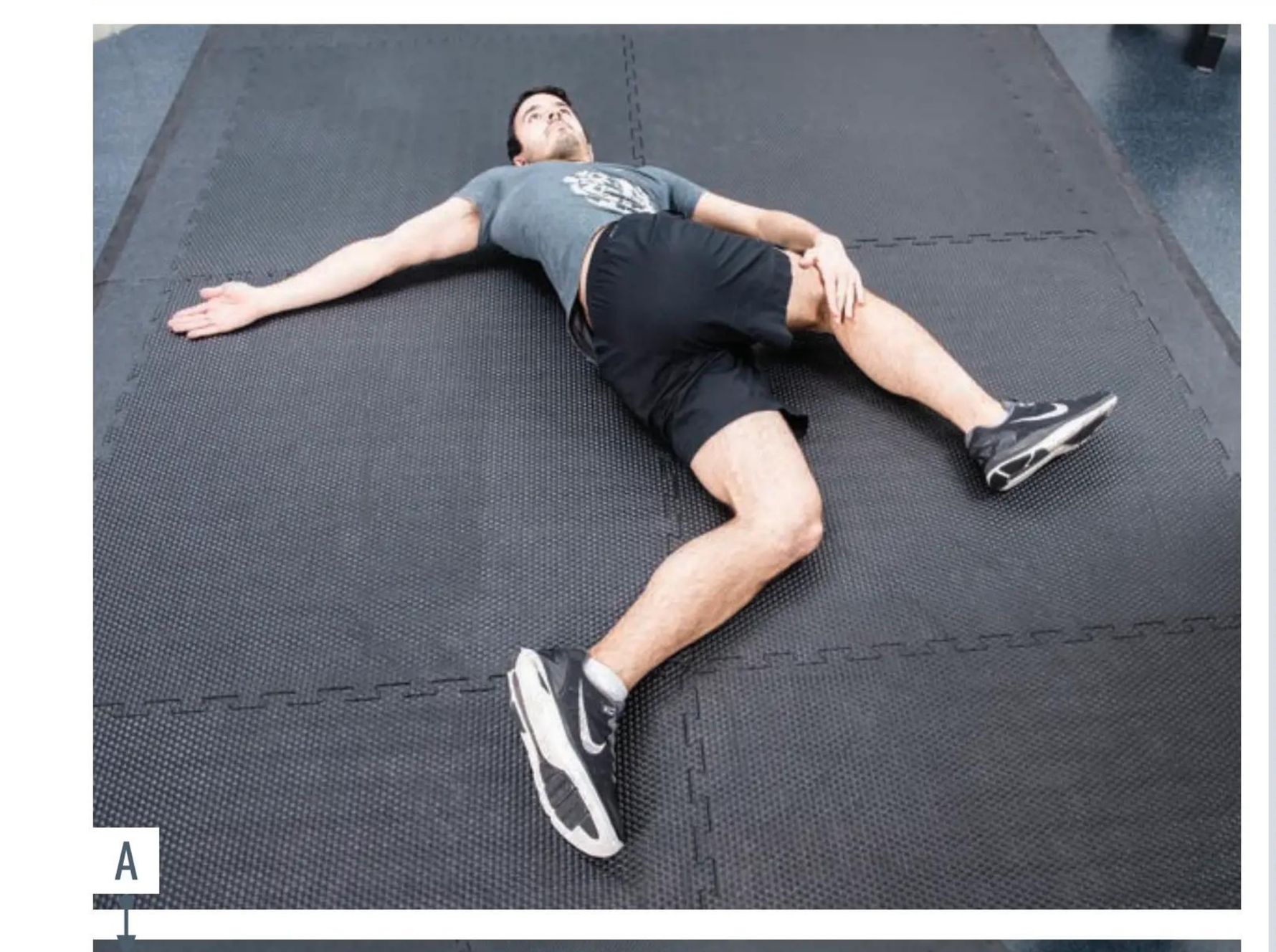
4 Lower back and hamstrings drill

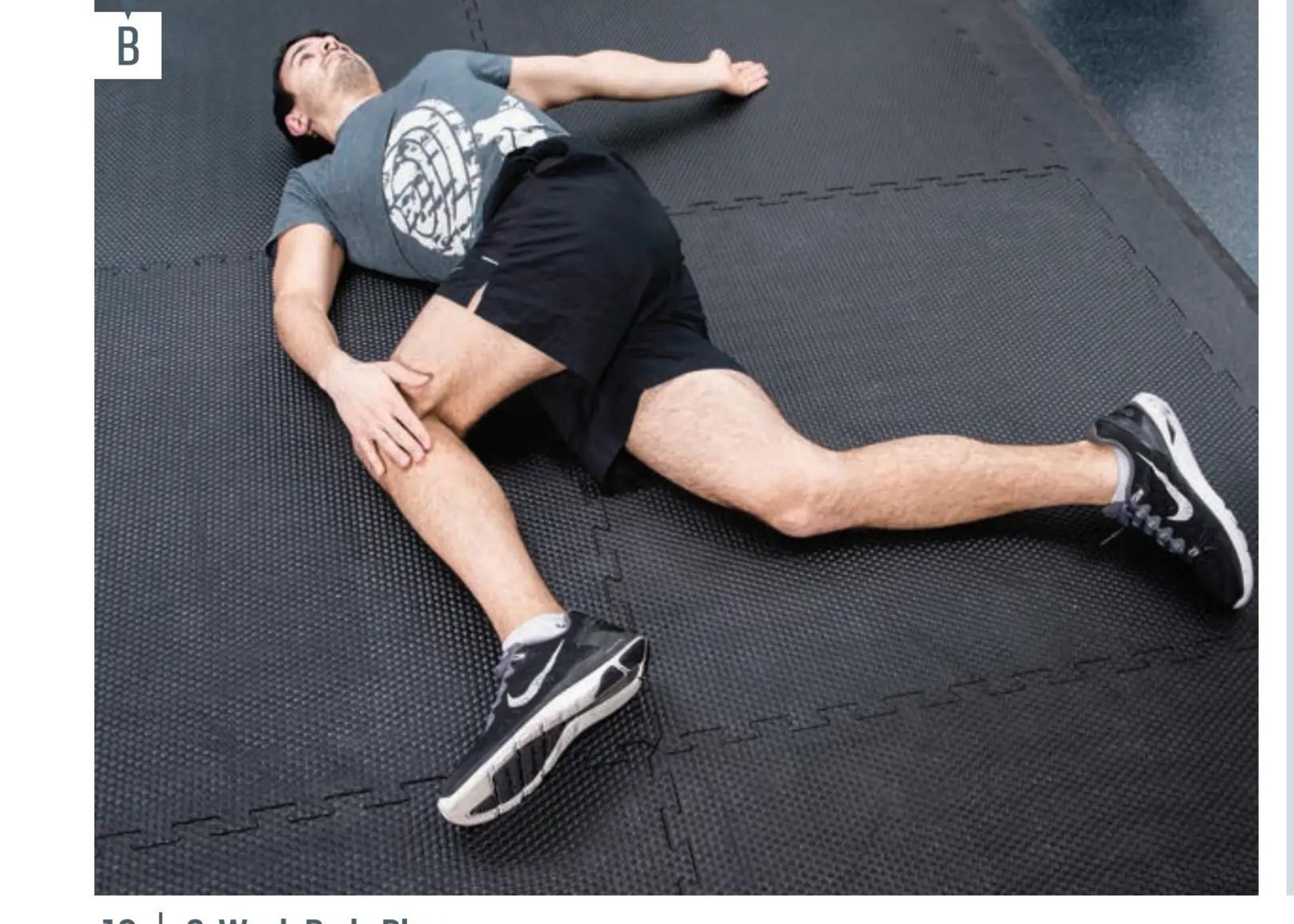
Form guide

1. Lying on your back with your hands by your sides, swing your knees toward your chest and your legs overhead.
2. Return your legs to the floor, then sit and reach forward to stretch your hamstrings.
3. Continue to oscillate back and forth.



5 Lower back and hip stretch





Form guide

1

Lie on your back and bring your leg across your body to the floor. Keep a 90° bend in both knees.

2

Keep the opposite arm and shoulder against the floor.

3

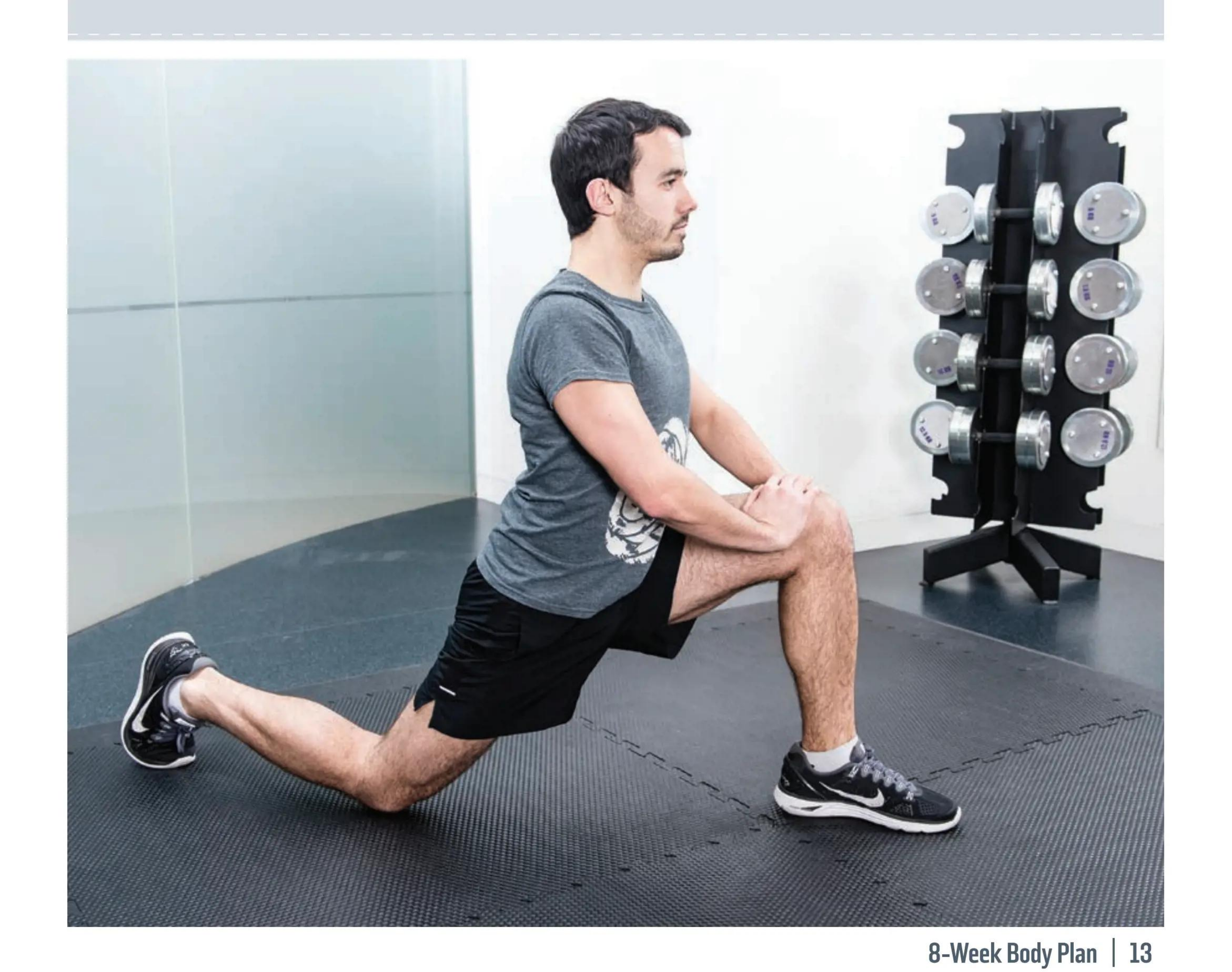
Gently pull your knee towards the floor with your hand. Repeat on the other side.

6 Hip flexor stretch

Form guide

1. Kneel on a mat and bring one knee up so your foot is on the floor. Extend the opposite leg out behind you so your toes are on the floor.

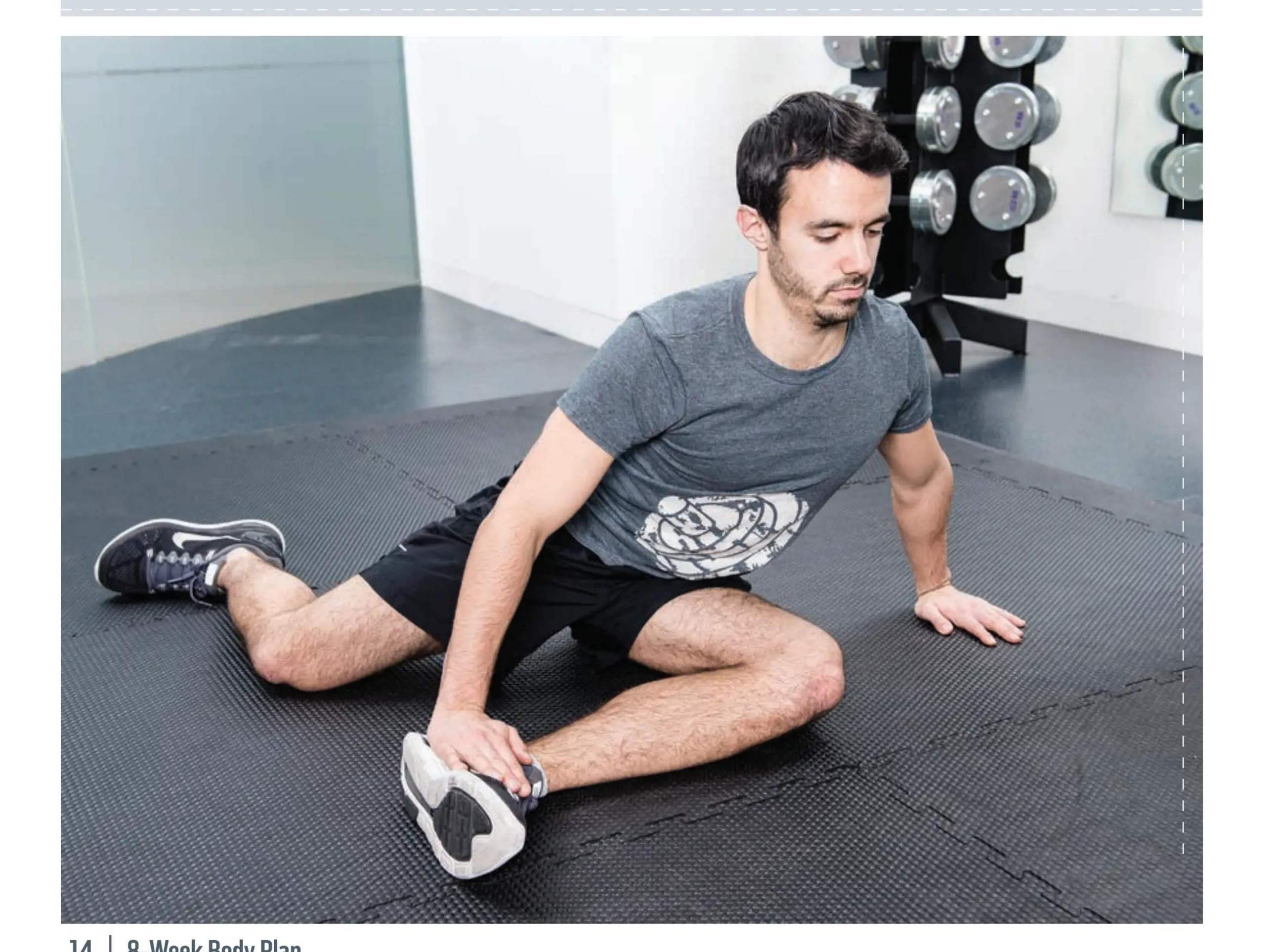
2. Lean forward, maintaining the angle of your pelvis until you feel a stretch in your hip.



7 90/90 glute stretch

Form guide

1. Sit with both knees bent at 90°, with your torso rotated towards your front leg.
2. Hold your ankle with one hand and place the other on the floor.
3. Maintaining a neutral spine, gently lean into the forward leg until you feel a stretch in your glutes.
4. Switch legs and repeat on the opposite side.



8 Lower back stretch

Form guide

1. Lean over a gym ball resting one side of your upper body on the ball.
2. Extend your top arm. Grasp it with your bottom arm, then gently pull to stretch.
3. Straighten your top leg, keep your bottom leg bent.
4. Repeat on the opposite side.

9 Pec stretch

Form guide

1. Kneel down with the gym ball at your side.
2. Place one hand on the ball with the arm fully extended and slightly lower the upper body.
3. Bend at your hip so your torso is parallel to the floor.
4. Repeat on the opposite side.

NUTRITION101

HEALTHY EATING DOESN'T NEED TO BE COMPLICATED, PROVIDED YOU FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE GUIDELINES

If you want washboard abs, what you do in the kitchen is just as important as what you do in the gym. But knowing what advice to follow can be tricky. Every week sees new fad diets emerge, while nutritionists and scientists contradict each other on a regular basis. To guide you through this confusing subject, we've distilled the wisdom of the world's leading nutrition experts into easy-to-follow guidelines. Every chapter of this book contains a meal plan, but the following advice will help you understand the principles underpinning your meals. So read on, digest and tuck in.

1 GREEN IS GOOD

There's no such thing as too much veg, especially if you're talking about vegetables grown above ground. The Food Standards Agency's (FSA) 'eatwell plate', the government-endorsed illustration of what to eat, suggests roughly a third of your diet should come from fruit and veg. But it also suggests another third should be made up of 'bread, rice, potatoes and other starchy foods'.

This is not the way to a hard, lean body, because simple carbohydrates cause sudden and prolonged rises in blood sugar, which provokes a slew of biochemical imbalances that lead to weight gain, type 2 diabetes and other nasty health problems. Make sure your carbohydrates are from a more nutritious source with slower sugar release, which is almost every vegetable apart from potatoes.

It's also an oversimplification to put fruit and veg together. If you're getting your five a day from fruit alone, your blood sugar levels are going to be going crazy throughout the day from the high fructose (fruit sugar) content. Veggies don't contain fructose, and are more nutrient-rich than fruit, so aim to eat as many portions as you can, and save fruit – ideally berries, which are rich in antioxidants and low in fructose – for after you've feasted on the green stuff.

The simple version *Make vegetables the foundation of your diet and vary them as much as you can.*

STICK TO A TWO-TO-ONE RATIO OF VEG TO PROTEIN IN EVERY MEAL

2 EAT PROTEIN WITH EVERYTHING

Sooner or later, you'll run into someone at the gym, office or all-you-can-eat buffet who raises an eyebrow at the amount of protein you're ingesting. Some may even tell you confidently that it can be bad for your health. Here's the truth: the only studies that have ever suggested that protein can cause kidney problems were done on people with pre-existing kidney problems.

Protein is one of the most important components of the diet and when you eat a high-protein diet, you're generally less hungry, eat less and lose weight as a result.

So what's the right amount? Estimates vary from one to four grams per kilo of bodyweight, per day, but most nutritionists agree that two grams is the minimum. As for how much you can digest at one sitting, at least 20-25g is required for muscle protein synthesis, although recent studies have found that the body can use nearly double that amount to build muscle. Plus protein-rich foods are generally very filling, so a large serving will help you avoid the temptation to snack.

So what does this boil down to when you're making your dinner? Stick to a two-to-one ratio of vegetables to protein in every meal, by sight.

The simple version It's almost impossible to eat too much protein, although you could easily not be getting enough. Eat it with every meal.

3 DON'T BE AFRAID OF FAT

Although most of us know that eating some fat is essential to a healthy diet, it's all too easy to make a mental connection between eating fat and *getting* fat, so you end up skipping it. Trouble is, that usually means eating something that's worse for you.

One possible issue the FSA has with fat is that at nine calories per gram, it's more calorific than carbohydrate or protein, which only contain four. But if you're worried about your weight, the key is to eat foods that are genuinely satisfying, such as fat, because you'll eat less of them.

There's also the issue of saturated fat, which is demonised as a cause of high cholesterol and heart disease. Recent research suggests, however, that saturated fat actually raises 'good' HDL cholesterol levels while making 'bad' LDL cholesterol benign. After all, humans have evolved to eat saturated fats, and they play key roles in the body, so it seems strange that only in the last 50 years have they become bad for us.

The naturally-occurring fats found in oily fish, avocados, nuts, seeds, olives, olive oil and coconut oil provide the body with essential fatty acids. These are used for key functions such as metabolism and hormone synthesis, whcih are critical to your ability to burn fat.

The fats you should worry about are the man-made, hydrogenated variety found in processed foods and junk food, as research links them to a variety of illnesses and health issues, including heart disease and obesity.

SATURATED FATS PLAY KEY ROLES IN THE BODY

The simple version Eat naturally occurring fats – including saturated fat – but avoid all processed, hydrogenated fats, especially trans fats.

4 STICK TO FREE RANGE

Just in case bulk buying cage-raised eggs is starting to look tempting, allow us to remind you that favouring free-range – or even better organic – eggs, meat and fish is the healthier choice.

For instance, free-range chickens have a more varied diet and obtain more exercise than battery-farmed animals, so they develop more muscle. Their meat tends to contain more zinc, vitamins B, A and K, amino acids, iron, selenium and phosphorus.

Also, farm-raised salmon have been found to contain up to eight times the level of carcinogens as their wild brethren, thanks to cramped conditions and poor-quality feed, while grass-fed beef tends to have much higher levels of conjugated linoleic acid and omega 3 fatty acids than the kind fed on grain and beef tallow. Eating free-range feels less like a frivolous luxury if you think of it this way: it's so nutritionally dissimilar to cage-reared that it's basically different food.

The simple version Eat free-range chickens, grass-fed beef and wild-caught salmon when you can. If you don't know where it's from, chances are the answer isn't good.

ONE OPTION IS TO GO CAVEMAN AND THINK LIKE A HUNTER-GATHERER

5 EAT REAL FOOD

This is the key. If you do this, you'll end up following all the other rules almost by default.

A simple rule of thumb is only eat food that grows out of the ground or food that once had a face.

Another option is to simply go caveman and think like a hunter-gatherer. When you're looking at something on the shelf, ask yourself if it would have existed 5,000 years ago. If the answer's no, it probably isn't anything that you should be eating.

Another good healthy eating strategy is to stick to the outer aisles of the supermarket, which is where all the fresh produce is usually kept for ease of transportation, and away from the interior where everything's canned, processed or packed full of preservatives. Avoid food containing preservatives that you can't spell or ingredients you wouldn't keep in the kitchen. And eat things that will rot eventually, so you know they're fresh.

The simple version Eat food, rather than products pretending to be food.

6 DON'T COUNT CALORIES

Calories: the government is encouraging restaurants to put them on menus, women frantically add them up in the Tesco Express snack aisle, and people still treat the amount they burn off as the only thing that matters to fat loss.

That isn't the case, because calories are not a good indication of what a food is like and the effect it's going to have on your metabolic rate. Would you say a couple of poached eggs are the 'same' as a can of Coke because they contain a similar number of calories?

Also, counting calories makes it easy to justify bad dietary decisions. Ever heard a friend say they can eat what they want because they'll burn it off at the gym? They couldn't be more wrong. In fact, the more active you are, the better your nutrition needs to be.

Arguably more important than calories is your food's glycaemic load (GL), which indicates how much of a blood sugar spike it'll give you – but manufacturers aren't required to put GL on packaging. But if you're following our rules this shouldn't be a problem. Steering clear of starchy food (such as pasta) and sugar means you're already avoiding foods with high GL.

You can also slow the absorption rate of high-GL foods, helping prevent blood sugar wobbles, by eating them with protein-heavy foods like chicken or tuna.

The simple version Think quality, not quantity. Eating nutritious food is better than sticking rigidly to a 2,000-calorie-a-day limit.

COUNTING CALORIES MAKES IT EASY TO JUSTIFY BAD DIET DECISIONS

7 START AS YOU MEAN TO GO ON

Skipping breakfast won't necessarily have a negative impact on fat loss, as the standard advice used to say, but it's an ideal opportunity to pack in some nutrients. However, you won't get the right things if you listen to the FSA's recommendation that you 'base your breakfast on bread or breakfast cereals,' and 'wash it down with some fruit juice'.

Eating a high-carb breakfast will give you low blood-sugar by mid-morning, making you more likely to snack on more high-carb foods, which creates a vicious circle of unhealthy snacking.

Instead of toast or cereal, have something low-carb that's more nutritionally sustainable, such as a plain full-fat yoghurt with berries and nuts or scrambled eggs with smoked salmon or ham. Avoid fruit juice too, because it's high in fructose but contains very little of the fibre found in whole fruit.

The simple version
Think of breakfast like any other meal: you need a blend of protein, fats and fruit or veg.

8 LOSE THE BOOZE

It may sound obvious, but cutting back on your alcohol intake will have a huge impact on your attempts to lose weight and build muscle.

On a basic level, consuming large quantities of alcohol adds a huge amount of nutritionally empty calories to your diet.

But the problems don't end there: alcohol stimulates your appetite when you're at your weakest – would you find a doner kebab appealing otherwise? What's more, the inevitable hangover will leave you feeling far less inclined to train the following day.

Which isn't to say that you shouldn't drink at all. A number of studies have found red wine offers tangible health benefits, thanks to its high polyphenol content that protects your heart from cardiovascular disease. But don't get too carried away – all the studies agreed that consuming more than two glasses a day would negate its positive effects.

The simple version
Drink less booze. If you do drink, stick to a glass or two of red wine per session.

STAY ON TRACK

EIGHT WEEKS WILL BE HARD. USE THE LATEST RESEARCH ON MOTIVATION AND PSYCHOLOGY TO KEEP GOING

Need constant motivation? Finding it tough to eat right or hit the gym? Don't worry. Recent studies have shown willpower isn't something that you have – it's something you build, through practice. Here's how to get it done, and make your new good habits automatic.

1 ACCEPT THAT HABITS RULE YOUR LIFE

Don't try to resist habits: try to change them. A study published by Duke University in the US found that 40% of participants' daily actions weren't the result of conscious decisions, but ingrained habits. Not having to make decisions all the time will also help you conserve your brain power to focus on other things. The take-home message: make your habits good ones and life will be better.

2 WORK WILLPOWER LIKE A MUSCLE

Multiple studies have shown that, in the short term, depleting willpower with one task will make less available for another – so if you have to force yourself to go to the gym, you'll have less reserves to turn down a post-work pint. Crucially, though, exercising your willpower daily will give you more reserves of it. So while you're working on one new habit, you're building up the willpower for new ones.

3 THE MAGIC NUMBER

It's not quite the number of the beast, but 66 is the average number of days it takes to make a new habit automatic, according to research from University College London. The good news? Missing a day had no effect – in fact, researchers theorise that believing it makes a difference was a key reason for falling off the metaphorical wagon.

4 IGNORE THE DON'TS

According to research from Holland's Utrecht University, focusing on what you aren't going to do can lead to a 'behavioural ironic rebound' – or, more simply, if you resolve to stop eating cake, you'll eat more cake. Instead of negatives, focus on positives such as resolving to eat more veg and protein.

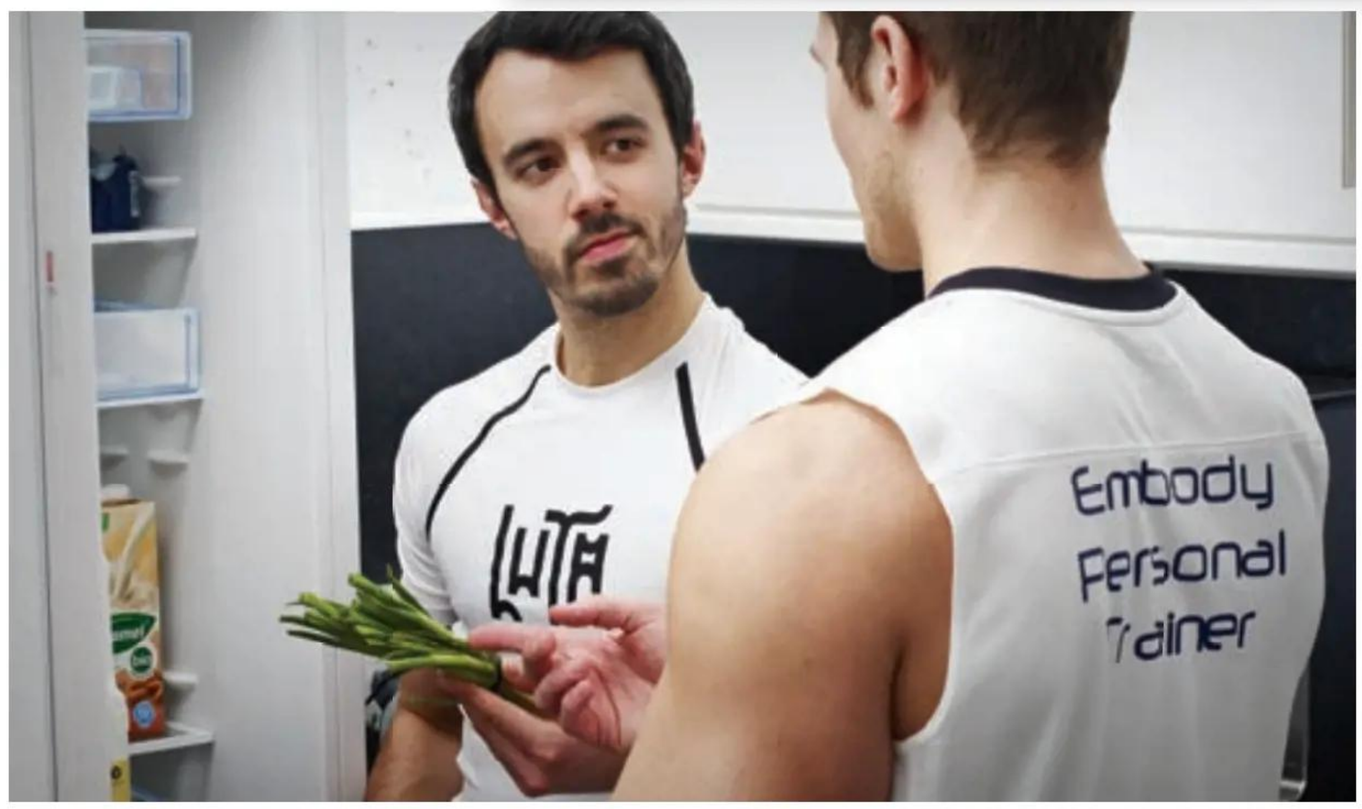
5 USE IF>THEN PATTERNS

Programme your brain like a computer, and you won't need to constantly flirt with temptation, says Professor Mark Conner of the University of Leeds. 'Set up cues that prompt your planned behaviour,' he suggests. 'If I feel hungry before lunch then I will eat an apple, not a chocolate bar, for instance.' Bonus: conserving willpower in this way means you'll have more left over for other things.

PROGRAMME YOUR BRAIN LIKE A COMPUTER AND YOU WON'T FLIRT WITH TEMPTATION

6 ENLIST HELP

Partnering up will boost the chances of sticking to your resolutions, according to research from the University of Leeds. When groups were told to make If>Then plans with and without the help of friends, those who used a support group were more successful. Embarrassed to ask friends for help? Sign up to habitforge.com, which will email you daily to check up on your progress.



7 DISRUPT THE PATTERN

According to Duke University psychologist David Neal, you 'outsource' your activities to your environment – so sitting on the couch might trigger a bout of gluttony, while passing Starbucks makes you want a frappuccino. The key is to disrupt the pattern – change your route to work or watch TV from a different chair.

8 AVOID WEAK TEMPTATIONS

In a study published in the *European Journal Of Social Psychology*, 'weak' temptations were found to be more likely to lead dieters astray than strong ones. Translation: you know a trip to Vegas is bad, but it's the quick after-work pint that's more likely to derail your weight-loss plans.

9 DON'T FOCUS ON SHAME

Don't think about how ashamed you'll be if you cave in to your bad habits – focus on the pride you'll feel if you stick to your guns instead. In studies at the USC Marshall School of Business, volunteers who focused on the pride they'd feel from sticking to resolutions reported much less desire to eat slabs of cake.

10 COMMIT YOURSELF

Use what psychologists call precommitment – tell friends your intentions and get them to help. And up the ante – when psychologist Dean Karlan committed to losing 17kg, he told a colleague he'd give up half his earnings if he failed. He's now founded stickk.com, which you can use to donate money to charity if you don't stick to your plans.

11 LOOK LONG TERM

Indulgence is often a result of people trying to improve their mood, says one report from the University of Chicago – and people who act on impulses often believe it's the only way to cheer up. Wrong. 'If you're feeling unhappy, focus on reasons why those feelings will pass,' says Aparna Labroo, co-author of the study. A booze bender isn't going to make it better anyway.

12 NOT NOW, BUT LATER

That's the ultimate four-word way to stop yourself obsessing over food, says psychology researcher Nicole Mead. The so-called Postponement Strategy temporarily helps you get over temptation, but it's unlikely you'll cave at some unspecified future time when your craving is in the past. Promise yourself a pizza 'at some point' – chances are you'll never eat it.

13 AVOID SAYING CAN'T

Say 'don't' instead, advises the *Journal Of Consumer Research*. Consumers who responded to offers with the D-word were more likely to be able to resist them – probably because it symbolises determination, not deprivation.

14 ...AND REMEMBER: YOU'VE CHANGED

You can't refrain from doing something you like. You can, however, change into someone who likes different things. Using willpower won't work forever.

HOW IT WORKS

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAMME

The beauty of this training programme is that everything is laid out for you for the next eight weeks. It's the exact workout plan that Ben followed to get ripped. Here's how to do each of the workouts and what the key terms mean plus page references so you can follow them with ease.

REPS
The number of the repetitions of the move you must complete

SETS
The number of sets of the move you must complete

TEMPO
The speed at which you must perform each repetition (see Glossary, p161)

REST
The time in seconds you rest after completing the move

EXERCISE
The names of the moves you are going to do in the order they need to be performed

VISUAL GUIDE
Ben demonstrates the start and end position of each move

FORM
Clear and detailed written descriptions of how to perform each move

TRACKING YOUR PROGRESS

RICH PHILLIPPS'S GUIDE TO HELPING YOU STAY ON TOP OF YOUR TRANSFORMATION

1 WEIGH YOURSELF

It's important to jump on the scales before you start the plan and continue to do so throughout to help monitor your progress. Ideally use the same scales every time and weigh yourself first thing in the morning to get the most consistent feedback. Bear in mind that it's common to not lose any weight at all on this programme as you will be making some quality muscle gains at the same time as stripping away fat. While Ben dropped a huge amount of body fat over the course of the eight-week plan, he only shed a modest 3kg of weight overall.

2 SKIN FOLD CALIPERS AND TAPE MEASURE

Your mission is to lose body fat and the most practical way to measure this is by using skin fold calipers or a tape measure. Any fitness professional should be able to carry out a caliper test to establish the thickness of the skin folds on your belly, love handles, chest, triceps and upper back. But if this isn't something you have access to then don't worry. A good old-fashioned tape measure will still allow you to monitor your body composition changes. Record your measurements around the following areas: your chest (across the nipple line); your arms (with the biceps flexed;) and your stomach (around your belly button). Take measurements from the same sites each week. If everything's going to plan, your chest and arms will increase while your gut shrinks.

3 TAKE PHOTOS

Everyone loves stats and measurements, but when it comes to tracking body composition changes, the most important feedback you can get is from photographs. Take a photo of yourself with your top off once a week on the same day at the same time, or get someone else to take it for you, if that's possible. Be sure to include a shot of your back as this is often the area that shows the most change.

4 KEEP A DIARY

This book clearly lays out everything you need to do in terms of exercises, sets, reps, tempo and rest, but only you can accurately track the amount of weight you're lifting over the course of the plan, so be sure to keep a detailed training log of every set and rep, using the ready-made diary on p152. This will enable you to see how you are progressing and keep you focused before each set. Small measurable gains each session will eventually lead to significant increases in strength and size.

PHASE ONE

WEEKS 1-2

START STRONG

Kick off your muscle-building mission with this whole-body conditioning workout

The first two-week phase is built around total-body conditioning workouts, using big bang-for-your-buck exercises that will flood your body with hormones that improve your ability to burn fat. Repeating this workout three times a week for the first fortnight will give you adequate time to technically master each exercise while you get progressively stronger and improve your work capacity. The workout is split up into supersets, pairing key muscle groups together such as your chest and back, shoulders and legs, and biceps and triceps. Training in this fashion allows you sufficient recovery time to maintain the loads being lifted while achieving a greater overall volume per workout. Push yourself hard but pay close attention to the training parameters and you'll turn your body into a fat-burning furnace.

WEEK 1

BEN'S WEIGHT
72kg

BEN'S BODY FAT PERCENTAGE
18.5%

HOW TO DO THESE WORKOUTS

Repeat this workout three times a week during the first two weeks of the plan. Leave at least one rest day between each workout. Aim to increase the weight each workout. If you fail to complete the number of reps or you break form, reduce the weight in your next session.

WHOLE-BODY CONDITIONING WORKOUT

WARM-UP	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST
Upper spine foam roll	1	20	slow	–
Lower back and hamstrings drill	1	20	dynamic	–
Hip flexor stretch	1	holds	20sec	–
Shoulder mobility drill	1	20	medium	–

	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST
SET 1	1A Trap bar deadlift	3	13-15	2 1 X 0	60sec
	1B Neutral-grip dumbbell bench press	3	13-15	3 0 2 0	60sec
SET 2	2A Dumbbell single-arm row	3	13-15	3 0 1 0	60sec
	2B Elevated dumbbell split squat	3	13-15	3 0 2 0	60sec
SET 3	3A Seated dumbbell shoulder press	3	13-15	3 0 1 0	45sec
	3B Farmer's walk	3	50m	–	45sec
SET 4	4A Seated dumbbell biceps curl	3	13-15	3 0 2 0	30sec
	4B Lying dumbbell triceps extension	3	13-15	4 0 1 0	30sec

1A Trap bar deadlift

Form guide

1. Stand in the centre of a trap bar. Squat down to grip the bar with palms facing.
2. Use your glutes to power the initial lift.
3. As the bar passes your knees, push your hips forward. Keep your shoulders back.
4. Reverse the movement back to the start.

1B Neutral-grip dumbbell bench press

Form guide

1. Lie on a flat bench holding dumbbells at shoulder height with your palms facing each other.
2. Keep your feet on the floor and upper back on the bench.
3. Press the weights directly above your head but don't lock out your elbows at the top.
4. Slowly lower, flaring your elbows out to the sides.

2A Dumbbell single-arm row

Form guide

1. Place one knee and hand flat on a bench, with your opposite leg out to the side, holding a dumbbell in the hand on that side.

2. With a natural arch in your back and your core braced, pull the weight up towards your side, leading with your elbow.

3. Pause at the top before returning to the start. Complete the same number of reps on each side.

2B Elevated dumbbell split squat

Form guide

1. Holding a dumbbell in each hand, place your front foot on a step 25cm off the floor.
2. Bend your front knee to a 90° angle, keeping your torso upright.
3. Lower your body until your rear knee nearly touches the floor.
4. Drive back up through your front leg to return to your start position.

3A Seated dumbbell shoulder press

Form guide

1. Sit on an upright bench holding a dumbbell in each hand at shoulder height.

2. Keep your feet flat on the floor, core braced and back against the bench. Keep looking forward.

3. Press the weights up powerfully until your arms are fully extended then return slowly to the start.

3B Farmer's walk

Form guide

1. Stand in front of a long, clear pathway, holding a weighted bar or dumbbell in each hand.
2. Keeping your core braced, walk as quickly as you can down the track.
3. At the end, turn around and walk back quickly to the start.

4A Seated dumbbell biceps curl

Form guide

1

Sit on an upright bench holding a dumbbell in each hand with your palms facing forward.

2

Keeping your back flat against the bench and your elbows close to your sides, curl the weights up to shoulder height.

3

Squeeze your biceps at the top of the move then slowly return to the start.

4B Lying dumbbell triceps extension

Form guide

1. Lie flat on a bench, holding a pair of dumbbells above you with straight arms.

2. Slowly lower the dumbbells towards your shoulders by bending your elbows, which should end up pointing at the ceiling.

3. Without arching your back, slowly return the dumbbells to the start position by straightening your arms.

PHASE ONE

NUTRITION

If you want a great six-pack, what you eat is just as important as what you do in the gym. For the first two weeks of this plan, you'll be eating a high-protein diet with all your carbohydrates coming from green vegetables. This will kick-start your metabolism and create a drop in insulin levels, allowing your body to burn fat and build muscle.

THE AMOUNT OF PROTEIN RECOMMENDED IS ESSENTIAL TO GAIN MUSCLE

If you're going to get shredded in eight weeks then your nutrition has to be spot-on. For the first two weeks of the plan you will be eating a high-protein diet containing no carbohydrates, with the only exception being green vegetables. Restricting your carbs in this fashion will create a drop in your insulin levels, which at the most basic level allows you to efficiently burn fat rather than store it. You must do this strictly for the first 14 days, as any slip-ups will really set you back.

Initially you may experience slight brain fog, sweet cravings and mild headaches as your body starts to shift to a more effective state of fat burning. This experience is different for everyone, but stick with it, as this will soon pass and it will be well worth it by the end of the two weeks.

The amount of protein recommended is essential if you want to gain muscle and burn body fat. It will help you recover from training and repair and grow new muscle tissue while stabilising your blood sugar and supporting your immune system.

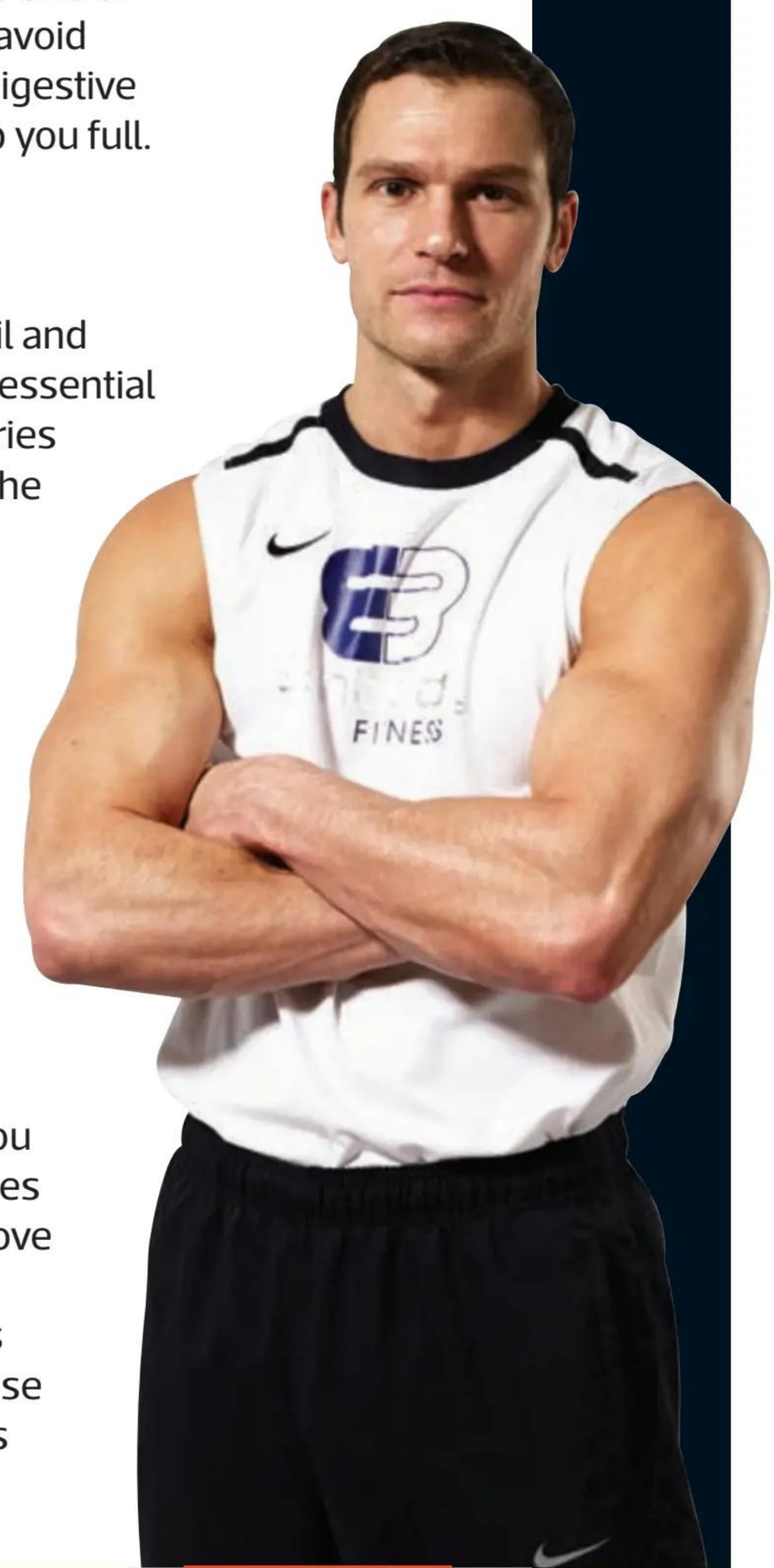
Be sure to eat plenty of green veg too, as this will be your only real source of fibre. A common complaint with low-carb diets is constipation, which is normally a side effect of not eating enough fibrous vegetables. Be sure to include one or two handfuls in each meal to avoid this. This will also keep your digestive system healthy and help keep you full.

THE RULES

Cooking with butter or olive oil and snacking on nuts will provide essential fatty acids to replace the calories you're missing out on due to the lack of carbs. A mistake often made on low-carb diets is not eating sufficient fats and ending up on a low-carb/low-calorie diet. This is a disaster and at the very least will make the diet almost impossible to stick to.

Focus on drinking good quality water and herbal teas such as liquorice, mint and green tea. Black coffee is allowed, but you can only consume it 30 minutes before training. This will improve your drive during workouts.

A word of warning – fruit is not included in the diet, because the fructose sugars it contains are not conducive to fat loss.



KEY INGREDIENTS

Macadamias

Salmon

Asparagus

PHASE 1 Weeks 1-2

MEAL PLAN

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
BREAKFAST	250g minced meat with a handful of macadamia nuts	3 egg omelette with spinach and 1tsp butter	250g beef steak with a handful of mixed nuts	200g salmon with one poached egg and half an avocado
MID MORNING	150g chicken breast with 50g mixed nuts	100g pistachios	150g cold cut beef	150g chicken breast with 50g mixed nuts
LUNCH	200g chicken breast with broccoli and an olive oil and lemon dressing	250g North Atlantic prawns with green salad and walnut oil dressing	200g turkey with watercress, spinach and an olive oil and lemon dressing	200g beef stir fried with pak choi, garlic and ginger
SNACK	150g chicken breast with 50g cashews	100g walnuts	150g cold cut beef	150g chicken with 50g cashews
DINNER	200g tuna steak with asparagus	250g salmon with roast green vegetables	200g lamb steak with seasonal greens	200g beef mince with chilli, garlic and spring onion

The portion sizes in this meal plan are designed for a man who is 1.8m tall and weighs 75kg. If you are significantly smaller or bigger than this, adjust the portion sizes accordingly.

Friday	Saturday	Sunday
250g beef mince with a handful of macadamia nuts	3 egg omelette with spinach and 1tsp butter	200g salmon with one poached egg and half an avocado
3		
100g pistachios	150g cold cut beef	150g chicken breast with 50g mixed nuts
200g chicken breast with broccoli and olive oil and lemon dressing	250g North Atlantic prawns with green salad and walnut oil dressing	200g turkey with watercress, spinach and an olive oil and lemon dressing
100g walnuts	150g cold cut beef	150g chicken with 50g cashews
4		
200g tuna steak with asparagus	250g salmon with roast green vegetables	200g lamb steak with seasonal green veg

PHASE TWO

WEEKS 3-4

TWICE AS NICE

This phase features two workouts using a body part split strategy to target key muscle groups

Now you've built some strong foundations and developed solid technique, it's time to break things up a little. Phase two consists of two workouts aimed at building lean muscle while furthering your fat loss progress. The aim is to place more focus on specific muscle groups, introduce new exercises and usher in some progressive adaptations to rep ranges, which will facilitate strength gains and muscle growth. You'll also be including an extra session focusing on cardio and abs. This allows you to dedicate some time to targeting your abs, while the interval-based cardio work will keep the fat burning process in full effect. You'll continue with these workouts for weeks three and four of the plan. Expect to see significant changes in your body composition by the end of this phase.

WEEK 3

BEN'S WEIGHT
71kg

BEN'S BODY FAT PERCENTAGE
15.5%

HOW TO DO THESE WORKOUTS

Perform workouts 1 and 2 three times a week, alternating between them. Leave at least one rest day in between each workout. Aim to increase the weight each workout. Do the cardio workout as an extra session on whichever rest day you feel most energised.

CHEST, BACK AND TRICEPS WORKOUT

WARM-UP	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST
Upper spine foam roll	1	20	slow	–
Lower back and hamstrings drill	1	20	dynamic	–
Pec stretch	1	hold	30sec	–
Shoulder mobility drill	1	20	medium	–

	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST
SET 1	1A Rack deadlift	4	8-10	3 0 X 0	90sec
	1B Flat bench press	4	8-10	4 0 1 0	90sec
SET 2	2A Pull-up	3	10-12	3 0 1 0	60sec
	2B Incline dumbbell bench press	3	10-12	3 0 1 0	60sec
SET 3	3A Dumbbell single-arm row	3	11-13	3 0 1 0	45sec
	3B Incline dumbbell flye	3	11-13	3 1 3 0	45sec
SET 4	4A Lying dumbbell triceps extension	3	10-12	2 2 1 0	10sec
	4B EZ-bar decline triceps extension	3	10-12	4 0 1 0	90sec

1A Rack deadlift

Form guide

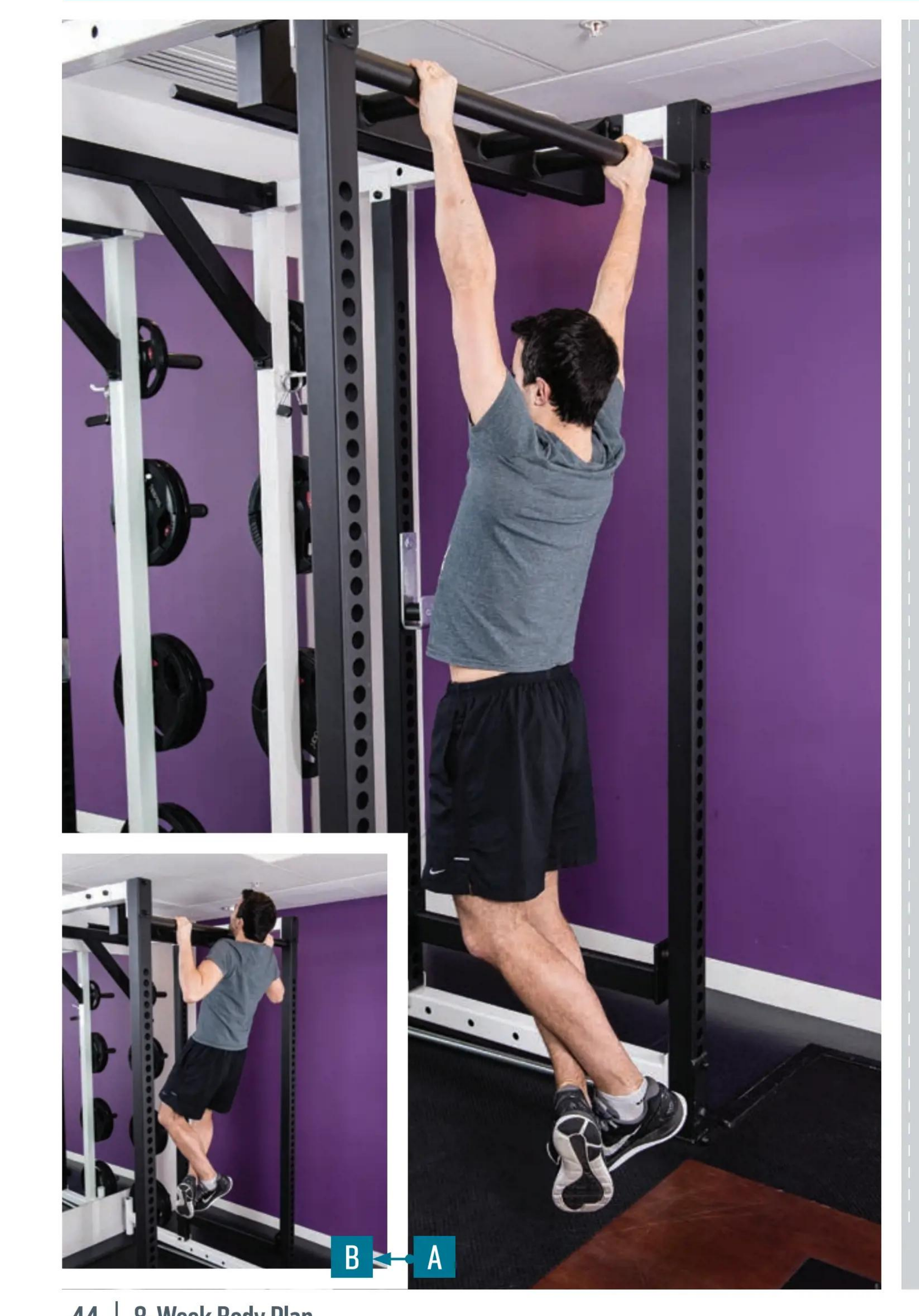
1. Set the safety bars on a squat rack to mid-shin level.
2. Take a shoulder-width grip on the bar, with back flat, core braced and shoulders back.
3. Use your glutes to power the lift, pushing down through your heels.
4. As the bar passes your knees, push your hips forward then lower.

1B Flat bench press

Form guide

1. Lie on the bench with your feet on the floor directly underneath your knees.
2. Hold the bar with an overhand grip.
3. Slowly lower the bar to your chest until your elbows are bent at 90°.
4. Drive your feet into the floor and push the bar back.

2A Pull-up



Form guide

1. Grab the bar with an overhand grip with your hands just wider than shoulder-width apart.
2. Start from a dead hang with your arms fully extended.
3. Pull yourself up by squeezing your lats together.
4. Once your chin is higher than your hands, pause briefly before slowly lowering yourself back to the start.

2B Incline dumbbell bench press

Form guide

1

Lie on a bench set at a 45° angle holding a dumbbell in each hand at shoulder height.

2

Keep your feet flat on the floor and your back against the bench.

3

Press the weights directly above your head, but don't lock your elbows at the top.

4

Slowly lower the weights back down to your chest, flaring your elbows out to the side.

3A Dumbbell single-arm row

Form guide

1. Place your left knee and left hand flat on a bench, with your right leg out to the side. Hold a dumbbell in your right hand.

2. With a natural arch in your back and core braced, lift the weight up towards your side, leading with the elbow.

3. Pause at the top before returning to the start. Complete one set, then swap sides.

3B Incline dumbbell flye

Form guide

1

Lie on an incline bench holding a dumbbell in each hand above your chest with palms facing.

2

Make sure your head and upper back are supported on the bench and your feet are flat on the floor.

3

Keeping a bend in your elbows, slowly lower the weights out to the side as far as is comfortable.

4

Use your chest to reverse the movement to raise the weights back to the top.

4A Lying dumbbell triceps extension

Form guide

1. Lie flat on a bench, holding a pair of dumbbells above you with straight arms.

2. Slowly lower the dumbbells towards your shoulders by bending your elbows, which should end up pointing at the ceiling.

3. Without arching your back, slowly return the dumbbells to the start position by straightening your arms.

4B EZ-bar decline triceps extension

Form guide

1. Lie flat on a decline bench, holding an EZ-bar above your chest with straight arms.

2. Slowly lower the bar towards the top of your head by bending your elbows, which should end up pointing at the ceiling.

3. Without arching your back, slowly return the bar to the start position by straightening your arms.

SHOULDERS, LEGS AND BICEPS WORKOUT

WARM-UP	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST
IT band foam roll	1	20	slow	–
Shoulder mobility drill	1	20	medium	–
Hip flexor stretch	1	hold	30sec	–
90/90 glute stretch	1	hold	30sec	–

	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST
SET 1	1A Seated dumbbell shoulder press	4	8-10	4 0 1 0	90sec
	1B Back squat on bench	4	8-10	3 1 X 0	90sec
SET 2	2A Push press	3	10-12	3 0 1 0	60sec
	2B Lying hamstring curl	3	10-12	4 0 X 0	60sec
SET 3	3A Bulgarian split squat	3	11-13	3 0 1 0	45sec
	3B Dumbbell lateral raise	3	11-13	3 0 1 1	45sec
SET 4	4A Seated dumbbell biceps curl	3	10-12	3 0 2 0	10sec
	4B EZ-bar Scott curl	3	10-12	2 0 2 0	90sec

1A Seated dumbbell shoulder press

Form guide

1 Sit on an upright bench holding a dumbbell in each hand at shoulder height.

2 Press the weights up powerfully until your arms are fully extended then return slowly to the start.

3 Keep your core braced and back against the bench.

1B Back squat on bench

Form guide

1 Stand with your feet placed shoulder-width apart, either side of a bench.

2 Rest the bar against the back of your shoulders.

3 Squat so you're seated on the bench. Keep your torso as vertical as possible.

4 Keep your quads and core engaged and drive back up.

2A Push press

Form guide

1

With your feet shoulder-width apart, position a bar on your upper chest, gripping it with your hands just wider than shoulder-width apart.

2

Keep your chest upright and your core muscles braced.

3

Bend at the knees to go into a quarter-squat then stand up straight and press the bar directly upwards until your arms are extended overhead.

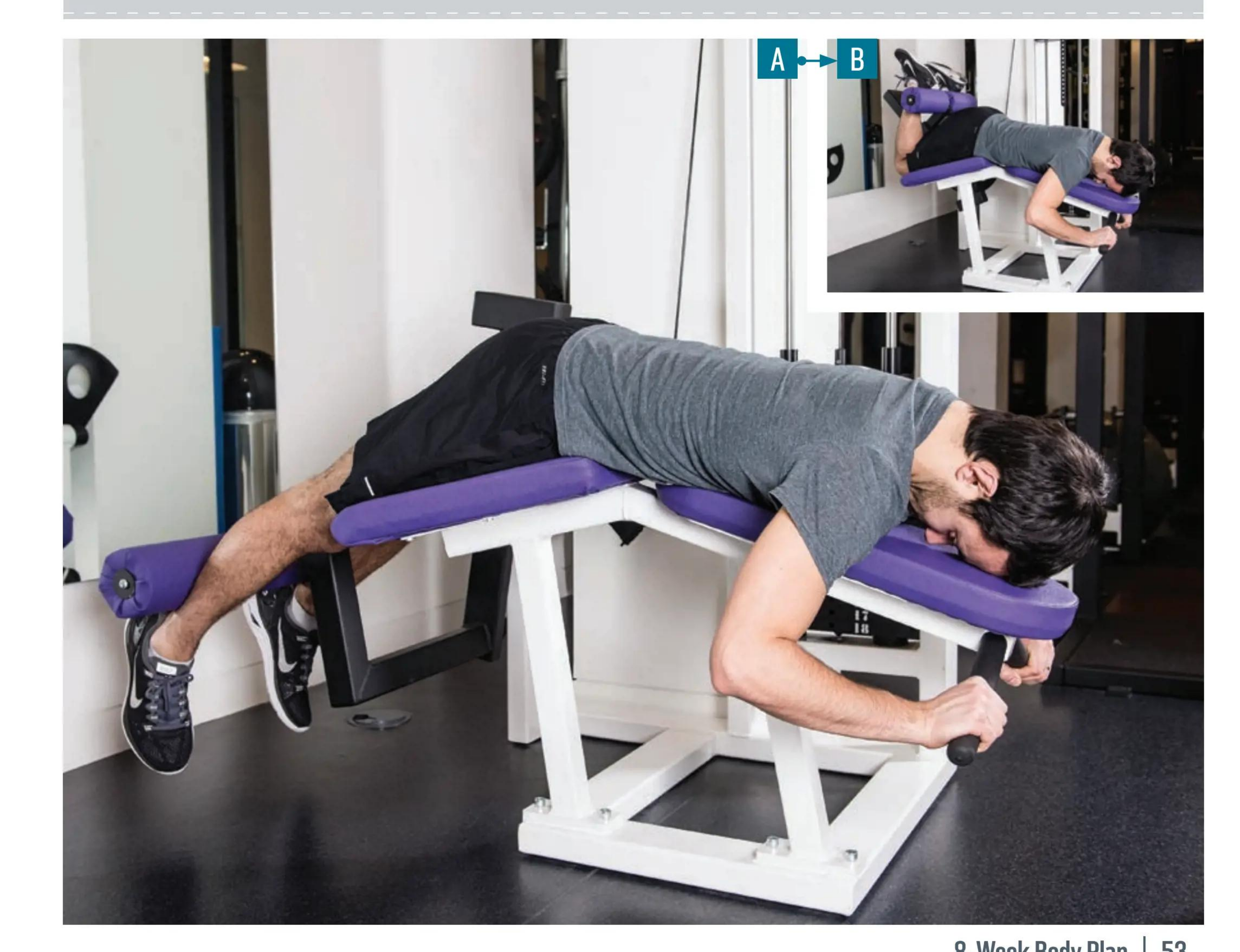
4

During the lift, keep your core braced and don't tilt your hips forward. Lower the bar back down to your chest.

2B Lying hamstring curl

Form guide

1. Lie on the machine, following its instructions to position yourself correctly and safely.
2. With the pad against the back of your lower calves, raise it up by contracting your hamstrings.
3. Return slowly to the start.



3A Bulgarian split squat

Form guide

1

Stand holding a dumbbell in each hand.

2

With your torso upright, core braced and hips straight, rest your back foot on a step 25cm off the floor. Your leading leg should be at least 50cm in front of the step.

3

Lower until your front thigh is horizontal, keeping your knee in line with your foot.

4

Don't let your front knee travel beyond your toes. Push through your front foot to return to the start.

3B Dumbbell lateral raise

Form guide

1

Stand tall with your core braced and feet apart, holding a light dumbbell in each hand by your sides with palms facing one another.

2

Leading with your elbows, raise the weights to the sides using your muscles and not momentum.

3

Stop at shoulder height then slowly return to the start.

4A Seated dumbbell biceps curl

Form guide

1

Sit on an upright bench holding a dumbbell in each hand with your palms facing forward.

2

Keeping your back flat against the bench and your elbows close to your sides, curl the weights up to shoulder height.

3

Squeeze your biceps at the top of the move then slowly return to the start.

4B EZ-bar Scott curl

Form guide

1. Hold the EZ-bar with your hands around 20cm apart.
2. Hold the back of your upper arm against the bench.
3. Lift the bar towards your chin maintaining the tension at the top.
4. Lower the weight down slowly until your elbows are fully extended.

CARDIO AND ABS WORKOUT

WARM-UP	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST
Upper spine foam roll	1	20	slow	–
Lower back and hamstrings drill	1	20	dynamic	–
Lower back stretch	1	hold	30sec	–
Lower back and hip stretch	1	hold	30sec	–

	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST
	1 Interval rows	8	20sec	–	10sec
SET 1	2A Supine foam roller torso hold	4	3	–	60sec
SET 1	2B Accentuated crunch on a bench	4	3	4 1 1 0	60sec
SET 2	3A Kneeling cable woodchop	3	3	2 0 1 0	60sec
SET 2	3B Dumbbell gym ball crunch	3	3	3 0 2 1	60sec

1 Interval rows

Form guide

1. Start with the seat close to your heels and hold the handle with straight arms.
2. Keep your back straight and drive powerfully through your feet to straighten your legs, but don't lock them.
3. Pull the handle close to your sternum and lean back slightly.
4. Slowly reverse the movement, arms first then legs, to the start.

2A Supine foam roller torso hold

Form guide

1. Lie with a foam roller placed in the small of your back just above your pelvis.
2. Keep your knees bent at 45°.
3. Crunch up until your torso is parallel to the floor.
4. Try to keep your chin in a neutral position and hold.

2B Accentuated crunch on a bench

Form guide

1. Set a bench at about 50° with an adjustable cable in line with the top of the bench.
2. Lie holding the rope directly above your shoulders.
3. Crunch up until your torso is vertical. Raise your arms then slowly lie back down.
4. Return the rope to the start position and repeat.

3A Kneeling cable woodchop

Form guide

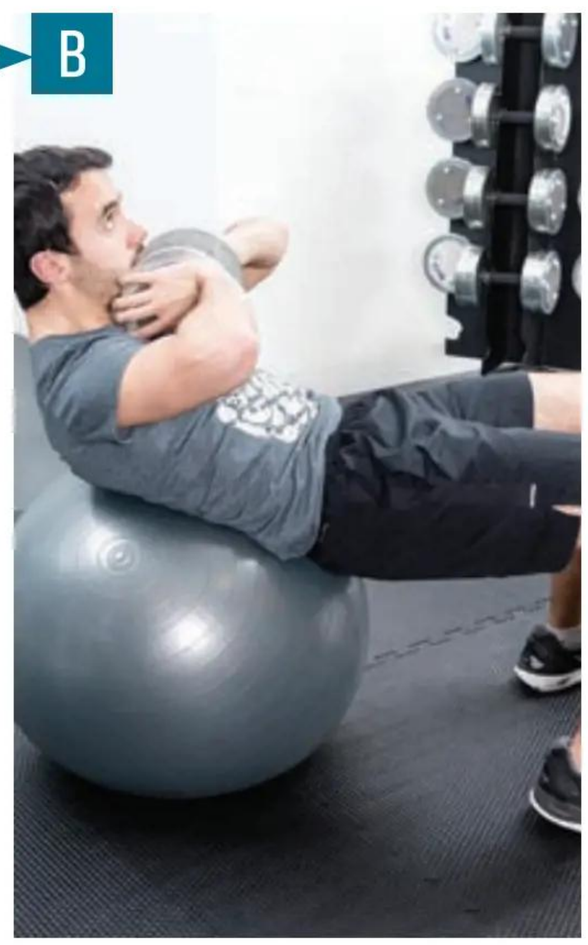
1 Hold a cable attachment to one side of your body with your torso rotated to 45°.

2 Keep your arms extended in line with your chest.

3 Rotate using your core muscles to 45° on the opposite side.

4 Slowly return to the start position.

3B Dumbbell gym ball crunch



Form guide

1 Lie with your mid and lower back and top of your pelvis on a gym ball.

2 Keep your torso parallel to the floor with your knees at 90°.

3 Hold a dumbbell on your chest and crunch up, rolling the dumbbell towards your neck.

4 When you get to 35°, squeeze your abs then lower.

PHASE TWO

NUTRITION

After the no-carb shock of the first fortnight, your body will be primed for burning fat and building muscle. In phase two you'll be reintroducing a small amount of carbs, which will help you achieve both these goals. You'll also be sticking to the key principles outlined in phase one: plenty of protein and green veg with healthy fats.

ADDING CARBS WILL PROMOTE GLYCOGEN STORAGE TO HELP FUEL THE MUSCLES

The lack of carbs in weeks one and two, combined with the intense workouts, will have kick-started your metabolism and improved your body's receptiveness to insulin. Now it's time to reintroduce a small amount of carbs back into your diet to help build muscle as well as burn fat.

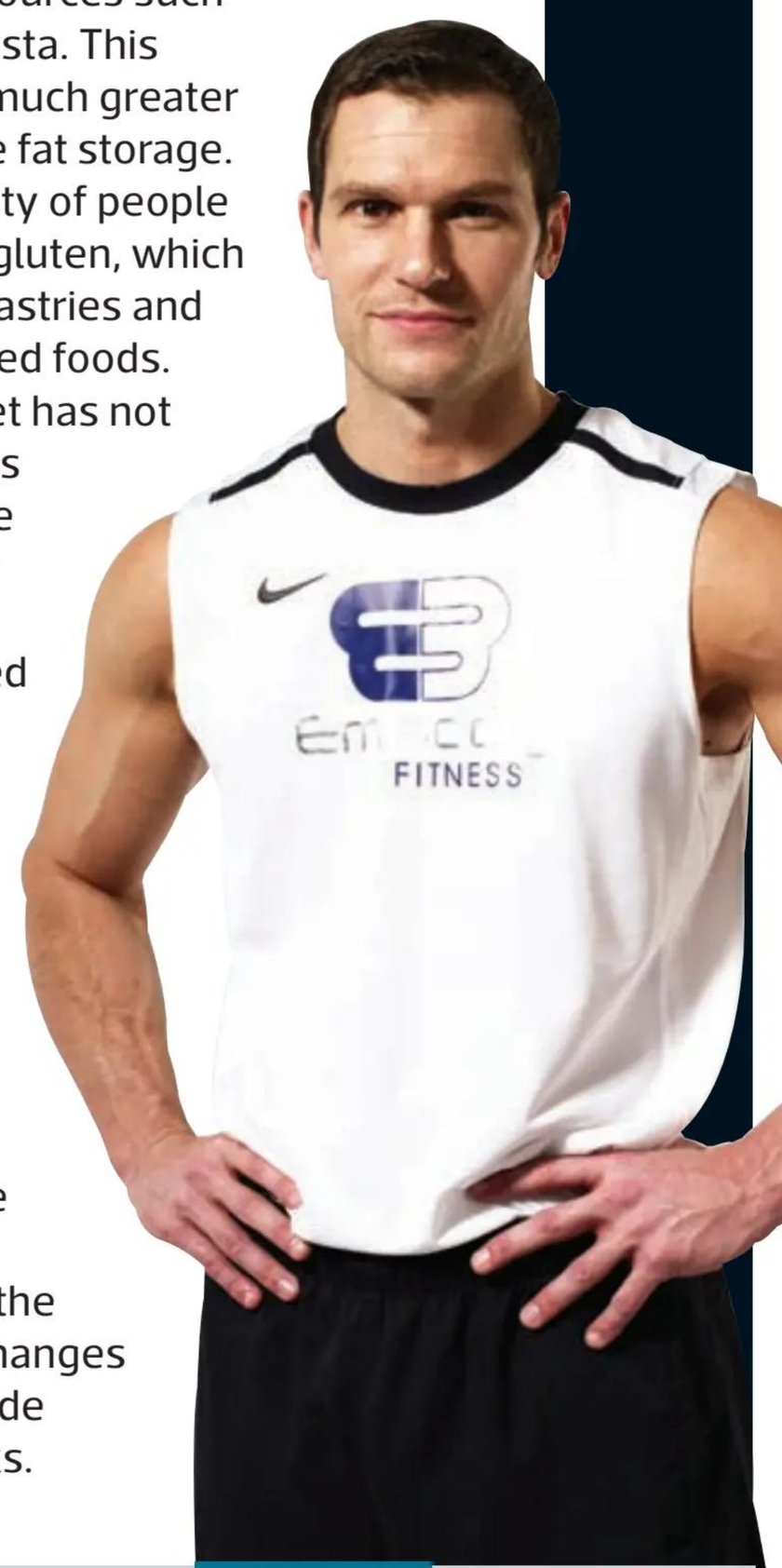
Adding one small portion of carbs with lunch on Monday to Saturday will promote glycogen storage to help fuel the muscles for your daily workouts, while also helping to ward off any potential stress hormone issues if you have a hectic lifestyle.

You will be adding one high-carb/low-fat day at the weekend, which we will refer to as a 'refeed day'. And you will still maintain your overall calorie intake while replenishing your glycogen stores and ensuring that your thyroid doesn't become sluggish – which would affect your metabolism, resulting in a negative impact on fat loss – thanks to constant low carb eating.

WHAT TO EAT

On this high carb day it's important to stick to clean carb sources only, such as oats, sweet potatoes and brown or wholemeal rice. These carbs are lower glycaemic index foods, which cause much less of an insulin spike than carbs from simple sugar sources such as white bread or pasta. This means they have a much greater potential to promote fat storage. Also, the vast majority of people do not react well to gluten, which is found in breads, pastries and many other processed foods.

Ultimately the diet has not changed much at this stage, apart from the addition of one daily serving of sweet potato and the refeed day on Sunday. You should still be focused on regular protein-based meals with plenty of green vegetables. There has also been a reduction in overall calorie intake because you won't need as many after the body composition changes you should have made in the first two weeks.



KEY INGREDIENTS

Sweet potato

See Wednesday lunch

Chicken

See Monday dinner

Olives

See Thursday snack

MEAL PLAN

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
BREAKFAST	3 egg omelette with onion, pepper and 1tsp butter	200g beef steak with 1tsp of butter and a handful of spinach	150g smoked salmon with half an avocado and 1 poached egg	3 egg omelette with onion, pepper and 1tsp butter
MID MORNING	40g mixed nuts	150g olives	150g cold cut beef	40g mixed nuts
LUNCH	200g chicken breast with leafy herb salad and 1 sweet potato	300g turkey with 120g mixed green veg and 1 sweet potato	300g prawns with 1tbsp coconut cream wrapped in lettuce leaves with 1 sweet potato	200g chicken breast with leafy herb salad and 1 sweet potato
SNACK	150g olives	150g cold cut beef	40g mixed nuts	150g olives
DINNER	150g chicken breast with mixed, steamed green veg	200g gar-lic-and-gin-ger-marinated tuna steak with steamed green beans	200g baked cod with smoked paprika and mixed, steamed veg	150g chicken breast with mixed, steamed green veg

The portion sizes in this meal plan are designed for a man who is 1.8m tall and weighs 75kg. If you're significantly smaller or bigger than this, adjust the portion sizes accordingly.

Friday	Saturday	Sunday
150g smoked salmon with half an avocado and 1 poached egg	200g beef steak with 1tsp of butter and a handful of spinach	150g porridge oats with 300ml chocolate coconut milk
150g olives	150g cold cut beef	200g chicken breast with 250g brown rice or couscous
300g turkey with 120g mixed green veg and 1 sweet potato	300g prawns with 1tbsp coconut cream wrapped in lettuce leaves with 1 sweet potato	200g chicken breast with 250g brown rice or couscous
150g cold cut beef	1 avocado	200g cod with 1 sweet potato and green veg
200g garlic-and-ginger-marinated tuna steak with steamed green beans	200g baked cod with smoked paprika and mixed, steamed veg	200g cod with asparagus

PHASE THREE

WEEKS 5-7

THREE'S THE KEY

This phase features three workouts using a body part split strategy to target key muscle groups

Phase three of the programme is where things really start to get interesting. You'll now be cycling three workouts with even more emphasis on specific muscle groups. The first superset of each workout now provides the opportunity to lift much heavier loads, firing up your nervous system and ensuring your strength gains don't plateau. The split will consist of chest and back in one session, shoulders and legs in another and arms in a third. Up until now your arms have been taking a backseat, so expect to see the weights soar during the opening sets, then enjoy a tremendous pump from the tri-sets that follow. As in phase two, you'll be doing an extra cardio session involving some intervals on the bike followed by a new abs routine to shake things up a little and support your six-pack-building efforts. This phase will see you through weeks five, six and seven of the plan.

WEEK 5

BEN'S WEIGHT
71kg

BEN'S BODY FAT PERCENTAGE
12%

HOW TO DO THESE WORKOUTS

Perform workout 1, 2 and 3 in order, every week, leaving at least one rest day between each. Aim to increase the weight each workout. If you fail to complete the reps, drop the weight in your next session. Do the cardio workout on the rest day you feel most energised.

CHEST AND BACK WORKOUT

WARM-UP	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST
Upper spine foam roll	1	20	slow	–
Shoulder mobility drill	1	20	medium	–
Lower back and hip stretch	1	hold	30 secs	–
Pec stretch	1	hold	30 secs	–

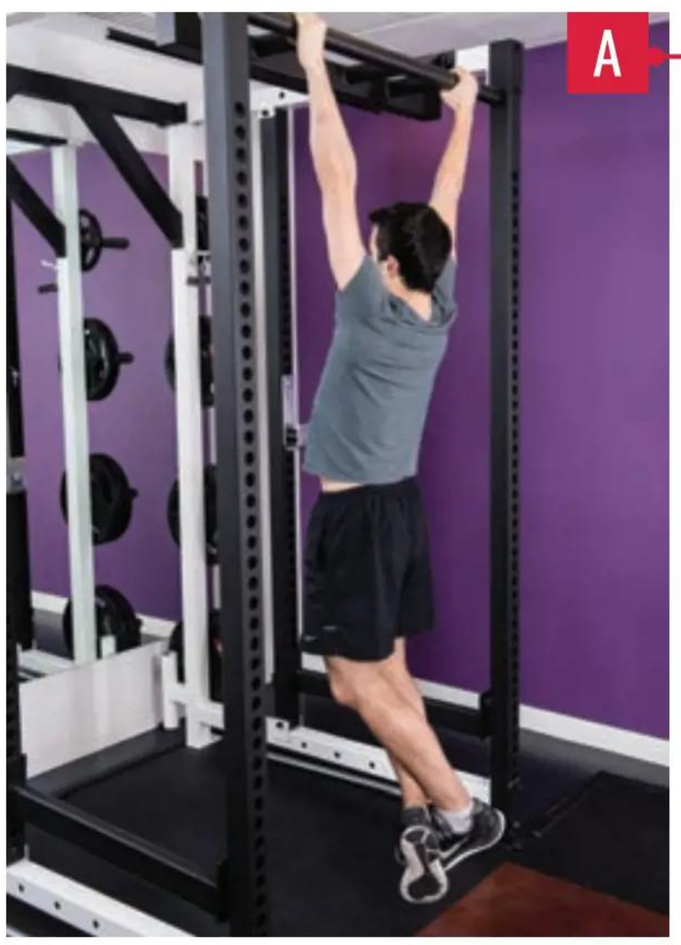
	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST
SET 1	1A Incline dumbbell bench press	4	5-6	4 0 1 0	90sec
	1B Pull-up	4	5-6	3 1 X 0	90sec
SET 2	2A Flat bench press	3	8-10	3 0 1 0	60sec
	2B Deadlift	3	8-10	4 0 X 0	60sec
SET 3	3A Incline dumbbell flye	3	10-12	3 0 1 0	45sec
	3B Seated machine row	3	10-12	3 0 1 1	45sec
SET 4	4A Cable chest flye	3	10-12	3 0 2 0	10sec
	4B Parallel-grip lat pull-down	3	10-12	2 0 2 0	2min

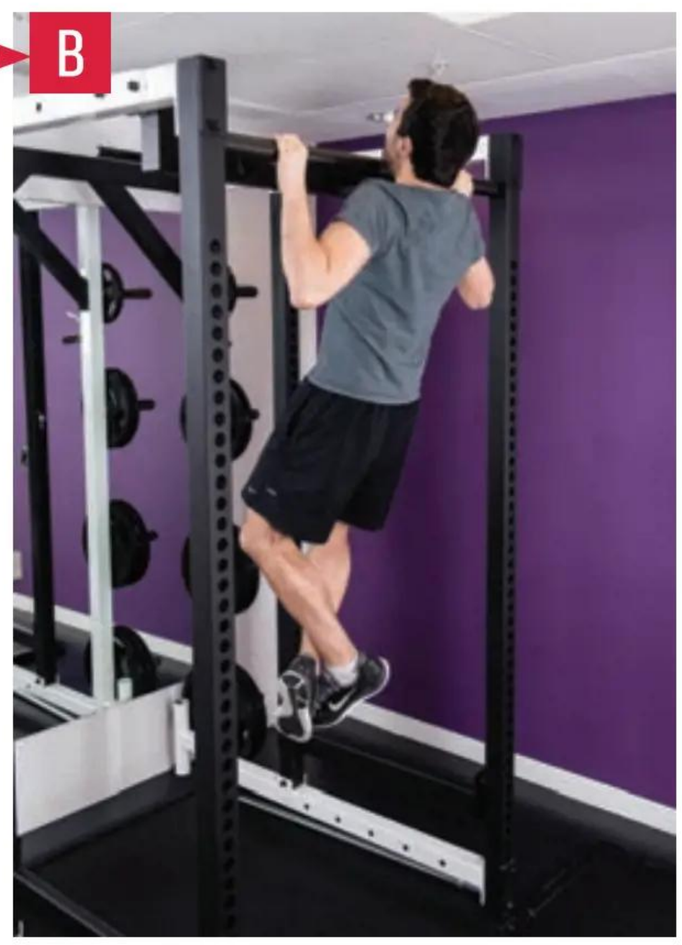
1A Incline dumbbell bench press

Form guide

1. Lie on a bench set at a 45° angle holding the dumbbells at shoulder height.
2. Keep your feet on the floor and your back on the bench.
3. Press the weights directly above your head, but don't lock your elbows at the top.
4. Slowly lower the weights down to your chest.

1B Pull-up





Form guide

1. Grab the bar in an overhand grip with your hands shoul-der-width apart.
2. Start from a dead hang with your arms extended.
3. Pull yourself up by squeezing your lats together.
4. When your chin is higher than your hands, pause briefly before slowly lowering.

2A Flat bench press

Form guide

1. Lie on the bench with your feet on the floor directly underneath your knees.
2. Hold the bar with an overhand grip, hands shoul-der-width apart.
3. Slowly lower the bar to your chest until your elbows are bent at 90° and the bar is almost touching the middle of your chest.
4. Drive your feet hard into the floor and push the bar back strongly to the start position.

2B Deadlift

Form guide

1

Stand in front of a barbell and squat down to grip the bar with an overhand grip outside your knees.

2

Keeping your core braced and your shoulders retracted, use your glutes to power the initial lift, pushing down through your heels.

3

Keep the bar close to your body and, as it passes your knees, push your hips forward. Keep your shoulders back throughout the move.

4

Reverse the movement back to the start.

3A Incline dumbbell flye

Form guide

1

Lie on an incline bench holding a dumbbell in each hand directly above your chest with palms facing.

2

Make sure your head and upper back are supported on the bench and your feet are flat on the floor.

3

Keeping a slight bend in your elbows, slowly lower the weights out to the side as far as is comfortable.

4

Use your chest to reverse the movement to raise the weights back to the top.

3B Seated machine row

Form guide

1

Sit on the machine with your sternum against the pad, gripping the handles in each hand.

2

Pull the handles towards your body, keeping your elbows close to your sides and squeezing your shoulder blades together.

3

Return slowly to the start.

4A Cable chest flye

Form guide

1

Stand in the middle of a cable machine with feet shoulder-width apart, holding a D-handle attachment in each hand, with the cable set above shoulder height.

2

Keeping a natural arch in your back, core braced and upper body still, bring your hands down in an arc to meet in front of your chest.

3

Pause briefly and squeeze your chest muscles before returning slowly, and in full control of the weight, back to the start.

4B Parallel-grip lat pull-down

Form guide

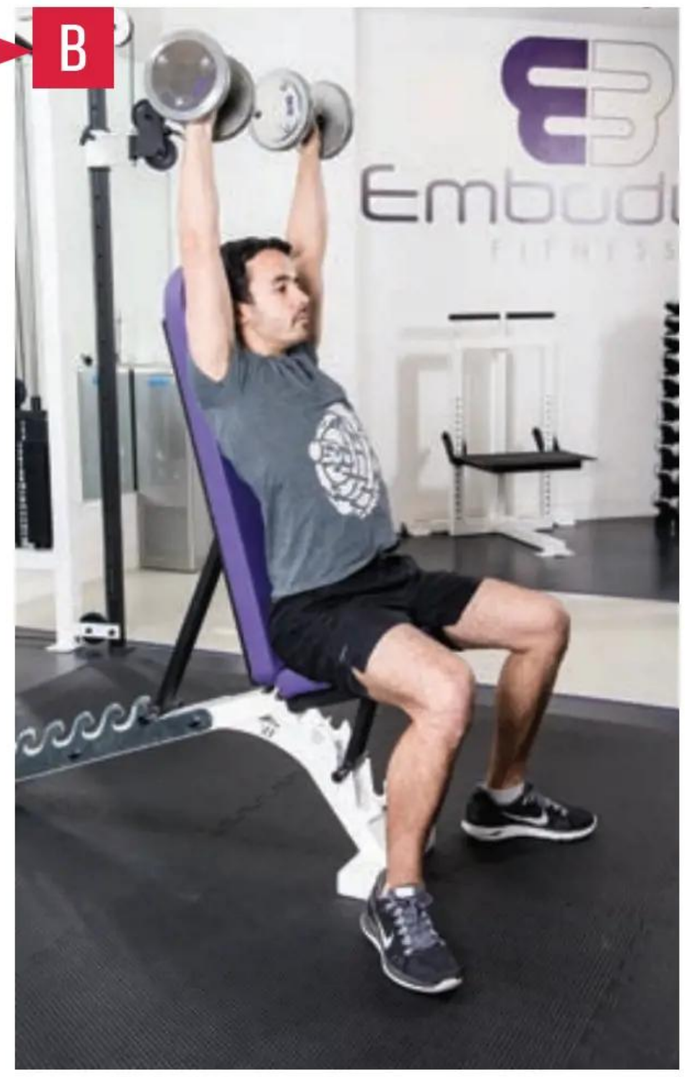
1. Sit on the seat and hold the bar with as wide a grip as possible.
2. Look forward, retract your shoulder blades and keep your torso upright.
3. Pull the bar down in front of you until it reaches your upper chest. Don't lean back to aid the movement.
4. Squeeze your lats at the bottom of the move and return the bar slowly to the top.

SHOULDERS AND LEGS WORKOUT

WARM-UP	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST
IT band foam roll	1	20	slow	–
Shoulder mobility drill	1	20	medium	–
Hip flexor stretch	1	hold	30sec	–
90/90 glute stretch	1	hold	30sec	–

	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST
SET 1	1A Seated shoulder press	4	5-6	4 0 1 0	90sec
	1B Back squat	4	5-6	4 0 1 0	90sec
SET 2	2A Push press	3	10-12	3 0 X 0	60sec
	2B Farmer's walk	3	50m	–	60sec
SET 3	3A Dumbbell lateral raise	3	10-12	3 0 2 0	45sec
	3B Lying hamstring curl	3	10-12	5 0 1 0	45sec
SET 4	4A Seated rope face pull	3	13-15	2 1 1 0	30sec
	4B Barbell hip thrust	3	20-25	2 0 X 1	30sec

1A Seated dumbbell shoulder press



Form guide

1 Sit on an upright bench holding a dumbbell in each hand at shoulder height.

2 Keep your feet on the floor and your core braced.

3 Press the weights up powerfully until your arms are fully extended then return slowly to the start.

1B Back squat

Form guide

1 Rest the bar on the back of your shoulders holding it with an overhand grip.

2 Your feet should be just wider than shoulder-width.

3 Squat until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor. The deeper you can squat, the better.

4 Drive back up through your heels.

2A Push press

Form guide

1

With your feet shoulder-width apart, position a bar on your upper chest, gripping it with your hands just wider than your shoulders.

2

Keep your chest upright and your core muscles braced.

3

Bend at the knees to go into a quarter-squat then stand up straight and press the bar directly upwards until your arms are extended overhead.

4

During the lifting phase, keep your core braced and don't tilt your hips forward. Lower the bar back down to your chest.

2B Farmer's walk

Form guide

1. Stand in front of a long, clear pathway, holding a weighted bar or dumbbell in each hand.
2. Keeping your core braced, walk as quickly as you can down the track.
3. At the end, turn around and walk back quickly to the start.

3A Dumbbell lateral raise

Form guide

1

Stand tall with your core braced and feet apart, holding a light dumbbell in each hand by your sides with palms facing.

2

Leading with your elbows, raise the weights out to the sides using your muscles and not momentum.

3

Stop at shoulder height then slowly return to the start.

3B Lying hamstring curl

Form guide

1. Lie on the machine, following its instructions to position yourself correctly and safely.
2. With the pad against the back of your lower calves, contract your hamstrings to raise it up.
3. Return slowly to the start.

4A Seated rope face pull

Form guide

1. Sit with an upright posture and your knees bent to about 20°.
2. Hold the rope attachment with an overhand grip, palms facing down.
3. Pull the rope towards your forehead, squeezing your shoulder blades.
4. Return to the start.

4B Barbell hip thrust

Form guide

1. Position yourself with your bum on the floor, your shoulders resting on a bench and a barbell sitting in your hip crease.

2. Raise the bar off the floor by squeezing your glutes, extending your hips and pushing through your heels.

3. At the top your body should be in a straight line from shoulders to knees.

BICEPS AND TRICEPS WORKOUT

WARM-UP	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST
Upper spine foam roll	1	20	slow	–
Shoulder mobility drill	1	20	medium	–
Pec stretch	1	hold	30 secs	–

	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST
SET 1	1A Seated dumbbell biceps curl	4	5-6	4 0 1 0	90sec
	1B EZ-bar triceps extension	4	5-6	4 0 1 0	90sec
SET 2	2A EZ-bar Scott curl	3	6-8	3 0 X 0	10sec
	2B Incline bench Zottman curl	3	4-6	3 0 2 0	10sec
	2C Incline dumbbell hammer curl	3	8-10	3 0 2 0	2min
SET 3	3A Decline lying triceps extension	3	6-8	5 0 1 0	10sec
	3B Dip	3	4-6	2 1 1 0	10sec
	3C Reverse cable triceps extension	3	10-12	2 X 1 0	2min

1A Seated dumbbell biceps curl

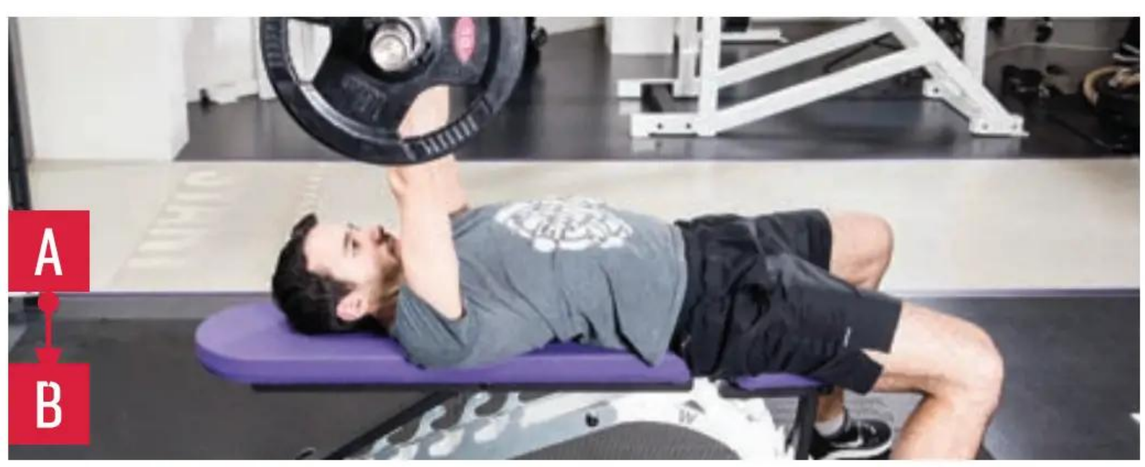
Form guide

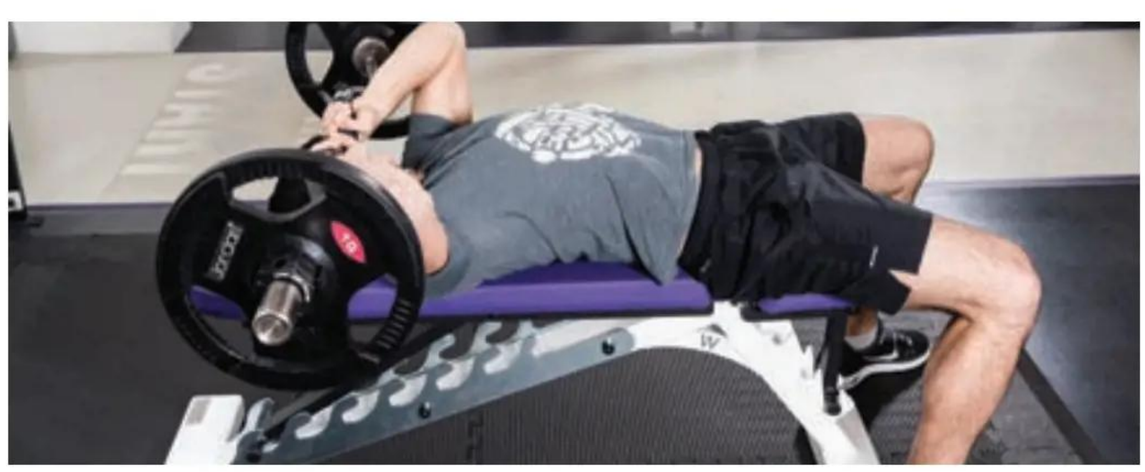
1 Sit on an upright bench holding a dumbbell in each hand with palms facing forwards.

2 Curl the weights up to shoulder height.

3 Squeeze your biceps at the top of the move then slowly return to the start.

1B EZ-bar triceps extension





Form guide

1 Lie flat on a bench, holding an EZ-bar with a narrow grip directly above you with straight arms.

2 Slowly lower the bar towards your head by bending your elbows.

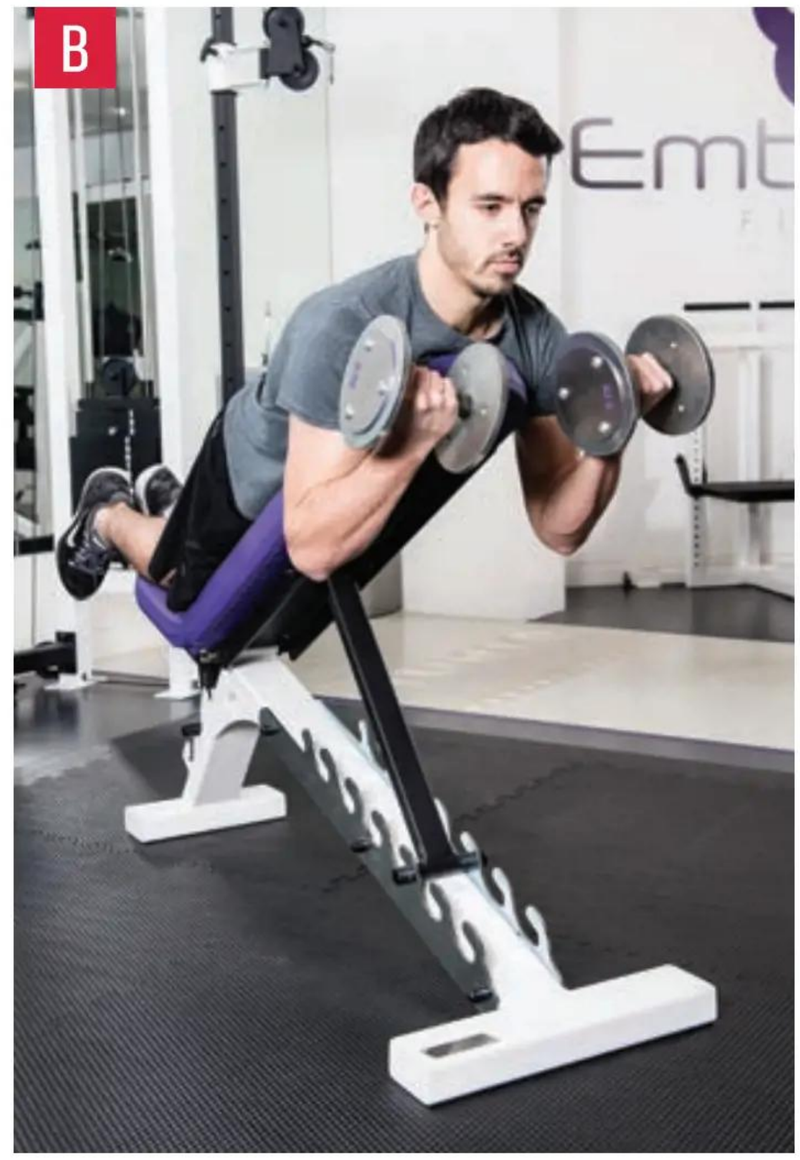
3 Press the bar back to the start position by straightening your arms.

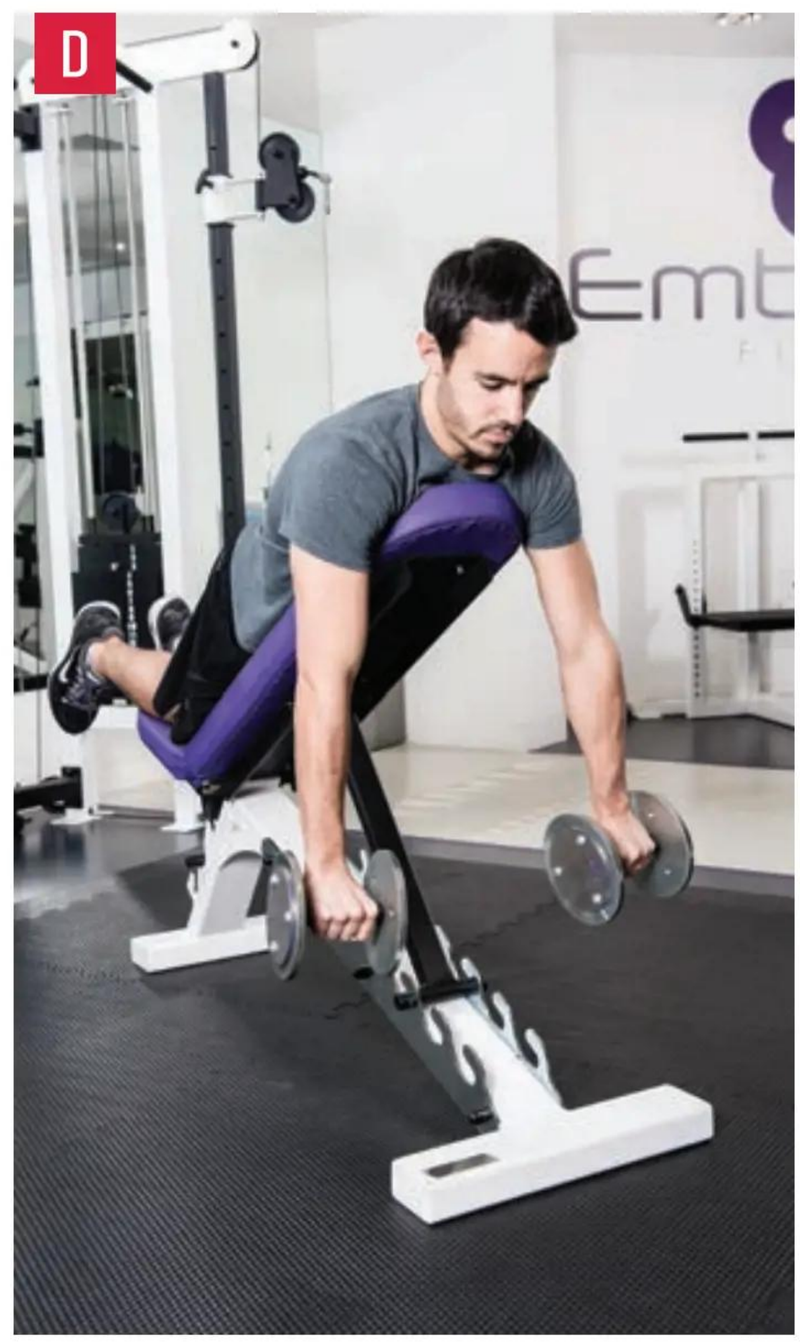
2A EZ-bar Scott curl

Form guide

1. Hold the EZ-bar with your hands around 20cm apart.
2. Hold the back of your upper arm against the bench.
3. Lift the bar towards your chin maintaining the tension at the top of the lift.
4. Lower the weight back down slowly until your arms are fully extended.

2B Incline bench Zottman curl





Form guide

1. Lay face down on a bench that's at around 50°.
2. Hold the dumbbells with your palms up and curl them towards your chin.
3. At the top of the lift rotate the dumbbells till your palms are facing down and lower the weights slowly.
4. Rotate the dumbbells back to the starting position.

2C Incline dumbbell hammer curl

Form guide

1. Set a bench at about 70°. Hold a dumbbell in each hand, palms facing.
2. Curl the weights towards your shoulders keeping your arms close to your body.
3. Lower the weights back till your elbows are fully extended.

3A Decline lying triceps extension

Form guide

1. Lie on a decline bench, holding a dumbbell in each hand above you with straight arms.

2. Slowly lower the weights towards the top of your head by bending your elbows, which should end up pointing at the ceiling.

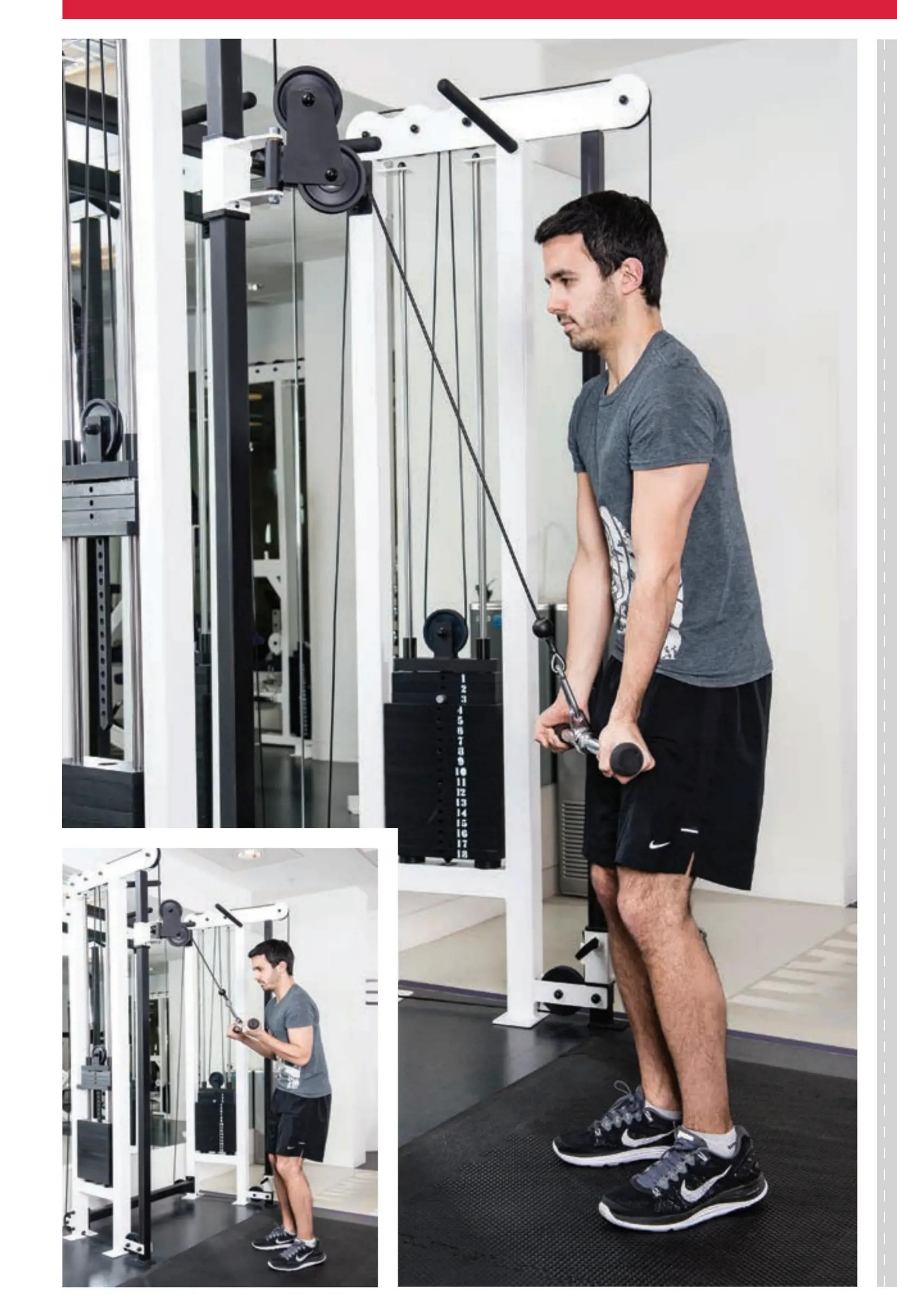
3. Without arching your back, slowly return the weights to the start position by straightening your arms.

3B Dip

Form guide

1. Grip parallel bars, keeping your body upright.
2. With your elbows pointing back, lower your body as far as you comfortably can.
3. Keep your core braced and don't swing your legs for momentum.
4. Press back up powerfully but don't lock your elbows at the top.

3C Reverse cable triceps extension



Form guide

1. Hold a straight bar cable attachment with your palms facing upwards.
2. Keep your elbows directly below your shoulders, close to your sides.
3. Pull the weight down, locking and squeezing your elbows at the bottom.
4. Return the weight slowly to the start, ensuring your elbows stay directly below your shoulders.

CARDIO AND ABS WORKOUT

WARM-UP	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST
Upper spine foam roll	1	20	slow	–
Lower back and hamstrings drill	1	20	dynamic	–
Lower back stretch	1	hold	30sec	–
Lower back and hip stretch	1	hold	30sec	–

	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST
	1 Exercise bike interval sprints	10	45sec	–	90sec
SET 1	2A Abs wheel roll-out	4	10-12	2 1 2 0	90sec
SET 1	2B Reverse gym ball crunch	4	13-15	3 0 1 0	90sec
SET 2	3A Russian twist	3	20	–	60sec
SET 2	3B Rope crunch	3	13-15	3 0 2 1	60sec

1 Exercise bike interval sprints

Form guide

1

Adjust the height of the saddle so your leg has only a slight bend in the knee when the pedal is at its lowest point. Strap both your feet into the pedals and grip the bars with both hands.

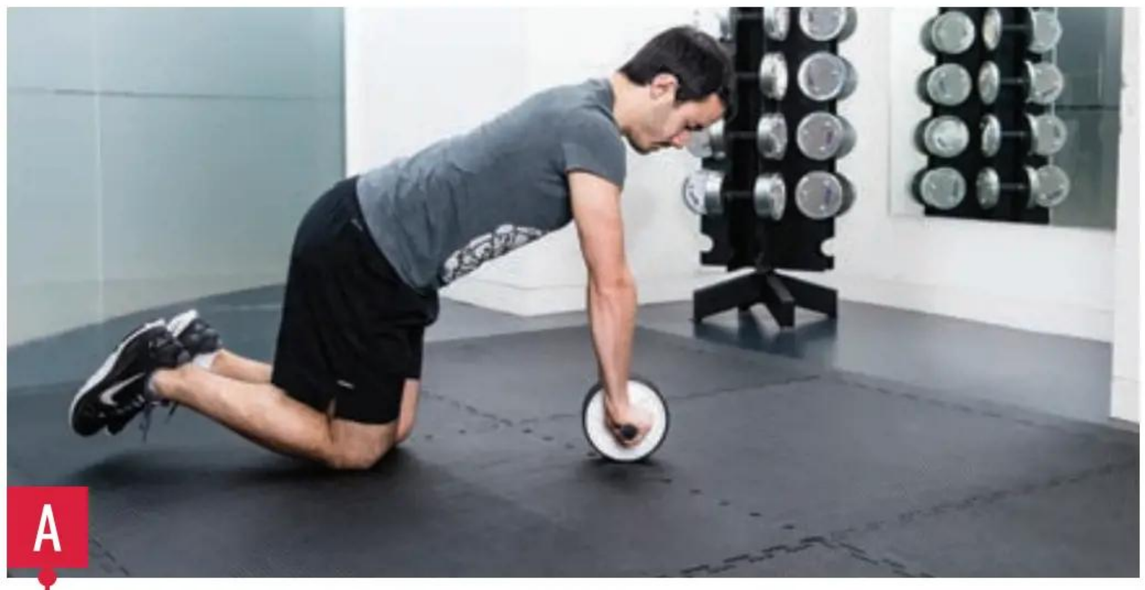
2

Make sure your knees don't flare out as you get tired.

3

Use your 90-second rest periods as active recovery by pedalling at a lower intensity.

2A Abs wheel roll-out



Form guide

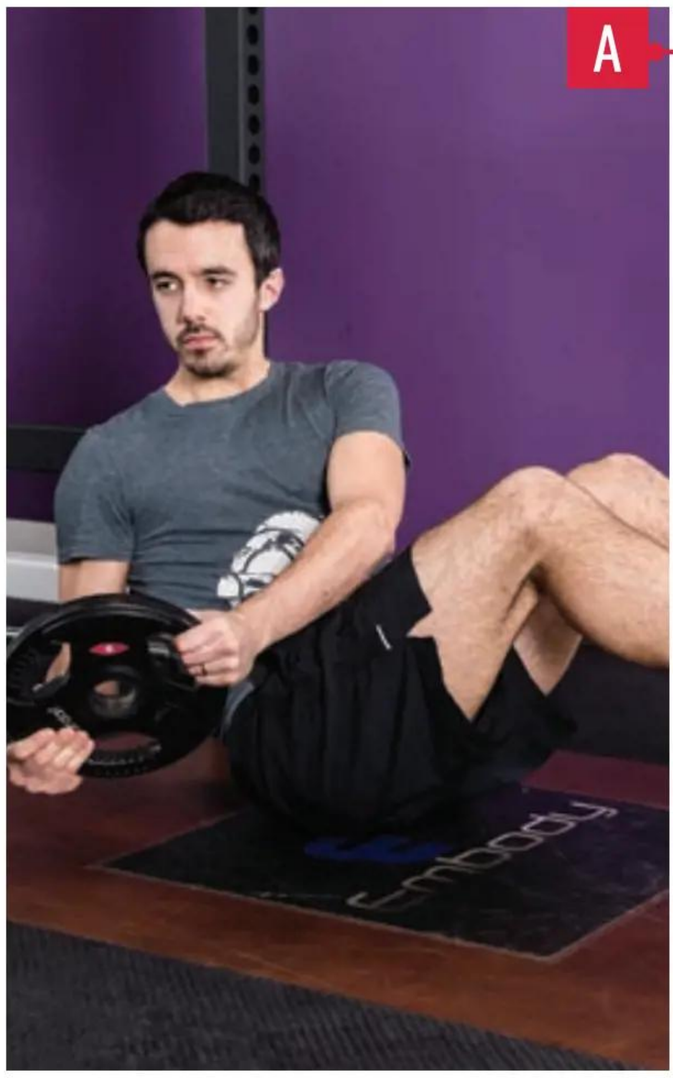
1. Kneel with your arms extended and your hands holding an abs wheel.
2. Slowly roll the wheel away from your body, keeping your core braced throughout.
3. Once your torso is parallel to the ground, contract your abs to pull the wheel back to the start position.

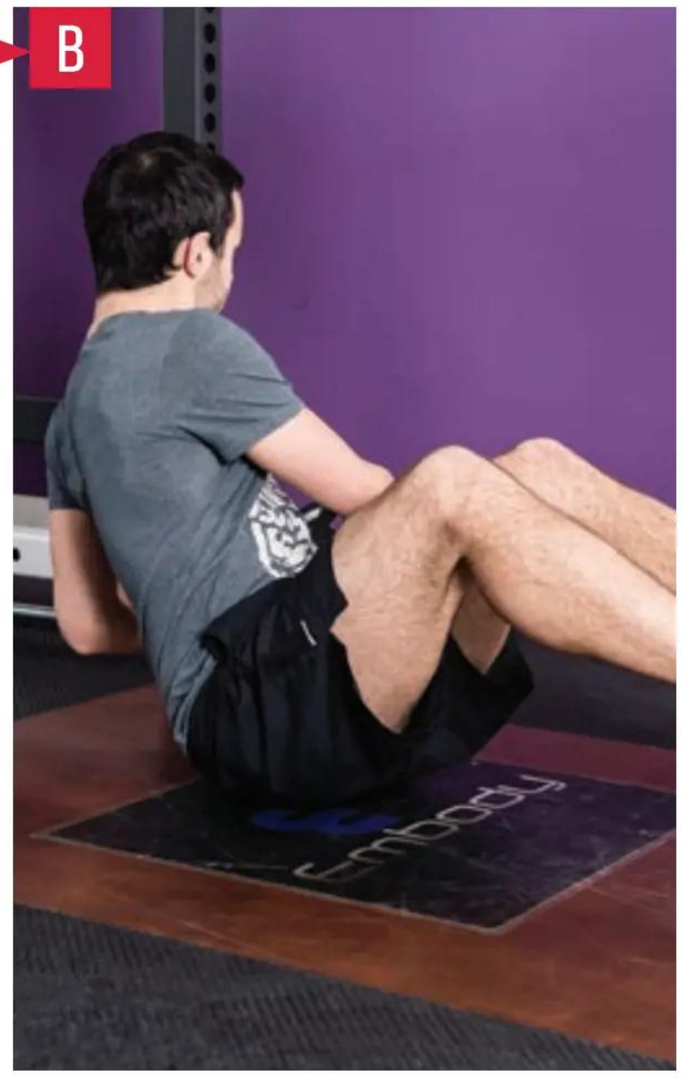
2B Reverse gym ball crunch

Form guide

1. Secure a loaded barbell in the rack.
2. Lay on a gym ball and grasp the barbell with your hands shoul-der-width apart.
3. Raise your legs half a metre by bending your knees at 45°.
4. Bring your knees close to your chest, then lower them slowly back to the start.

3A Russian twist

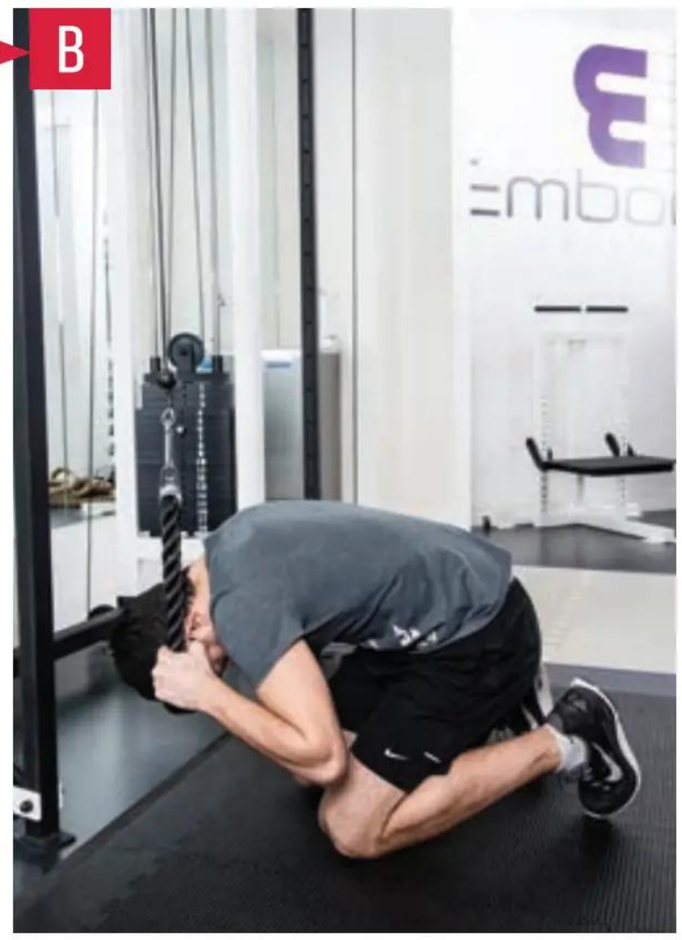




Form guide

1. Sit holding a weight plate in front of you at 70° to the floor.
2. Twist to one side.
3. Twist to the other side then return to the start.

3B Rope crunch



Form guide

1. Kneel in front of a cable system with a double rope attachment.
2. Hold the handles either side of your head. Your torso should be upright.
3. Pull the cable down, bringing your ribcage towards your legs as you pull the cable down.
4. Pause, then slowly return to the start.

PHASE THREE

NUTRITION

With your transformation well under way, it's time to up your carb intake again by adding a second refeed day at the weekend. These extra carbs will allow you to continue burning fat and building muscle and stop your efforts from plateauing. As always, your carbs are accompanied by plenty of protein and green veg.

FURTHER THE FAT-BURNING PROCESS BY ADDING A SECOND REFEED DAY

You've been following a carb-restricted diet for a month now and your body fat levels will have dropped significantly, so in phase three it's time to take the fat-burning process to the next stage by adding a second refeed day at the weekend. There are many reasons for doing this, but one of the most important is your level of the hormone leptin, which regulates appetite and is the mother of all fat burners. A failure to take this into consideration is why the vast majority of fat loss programmes eventually plateau.

As your body fat levels drop, so do your leptin levels. You already introduced one refeed day in phase two and now you'll be adding a second in order to keep your leptin levels up, which will help you preserve valuable muscle tissue and will further aid your workouts.

As with any diet, there's no one-size-fits-all solution and there's always a delicate balance of science and art behind any meal plan. The introduction of a second refeed day is only for those of you who are edging towards 10% body fat, as Ben was at this stage. Use your own judgment here, but if heading into the second weekend you feel your progress has slowed, revert back to a single refeed day for the remaining two weekends.

STAY STRONG

All the other principles of the diet remain the same during phase three. Your protein intake must remain high to build new muscle and recover from training and you need to eat plenty of green vegetables to keep your fibre intake up. Keeping your carb intake low during the week will keep your insulin levels down and allow you to optimise the effects of your refeeds at the weekend. If you've followed the plan to the letter, you'll have earned your refeeds, so enjoy the refuelling and attack your workouts with a vengeance.

KEY INGREDIENTS

Cashews

See Thursday snack

Tuna

See Tuesday dinner

Avocado

See Friday breakfast

MEAL PLAN

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
			1	
BREAKFAST	3 egg omelette with onion, pepper and 1tsp butter	200g beef steak with 1tsp butter and a handful of spinach	150g smoked salmon with half an avocado and one poached egg	3 egg omelette with onion, pepper and 1tsp butter
				2
MID MORNING	150g chicken breast with 50g mixed nuts	100g pistachios	150g cold cut beef	150g chicken breast with 50g mixed nuts
LUNCH	200g chicken breast with leafy herb salad and 1 sweet potato	300g turkey with 120g mixed green veg and 1 sweet potato	300g prawns with 1tbsp coconut cream wrapped in lettuce leaves with 1 sweet potato	200g chicken breast with leafy herb salad and 1 sweet potato
SNACK	150g chicken breast with 50g cashews	100g walnuts	150g cold cut beef	150g chicken with 50g cashews
DINNER	150g chicken breast with mixed, steamed green veg	200g gar-lic-and-gin-ger-marinated tuna steak with steamed green beans	200g baked cod with smoked paprika and mixed, steamed veg	150g chicken breast with mixed, steamed green veg

The portion sizes in this meal plan are designed for a man who is 1.8m tall and weighs 75kg. If you're significantly smaller or bigger than this, adjust the portion sizes accordingly.

Friday	Saturday	Sunday
4		
150g smoked salmon with half an avocado and one poached egg	150g porridge oats with 300ml chocolate coconut milk	150g porridge oats with 300ml chocolate coconut milk
100g pistachios	200g chicken breast with 250g brown rice or couscous	200g chicken breast with 250g brown rice or couscous
300g prawns with 1tbsp coconut cream wrapped in lettuce leaves with 1 sweet potato	200g chicken breast with 250g brown rice or couscous	200g chicken breast with 250g brown rice or couscous
3		
100g walnuts	200g cod with 1 sweet potato and green veg	200g cod with 1 sweet potato and green veg
200g garlic-and-ginger-marinated tuna steak with steamed green beans	200g cod with asparagus	200g cod with asparagus

PHASE FOUR

WEEK 8

STRONG FINISH

Deplete your muscles' energy stores to make them pop

Heading into the final week of the plan you'll be bigger, leaner and stronger. Now the emphasis changes solely to getting as lean as possible for the final day, which in Ben's case was a *Men's Fitness* cover shoot. To achieve this you'll be doing two depletion workouts designed specifically to rid your body of stored glycogen. Later in the week you'll be refueling on carbs, at which point your empty muscle cells will be like super-absorbent sponges, ready to pull large amounts of glycogen into the cells along with any remaining water. This will leave your muscles looking and feeling hard, full and as shredded as possible. The workouts are tough, as at this stage you'll be feeling tired and weak. The reps are much higher than normal with little rest, but make it over these final hurdles and by the end of the week you'll be in peak condition.

WEEK 8

BEN'S WEIGHT
68kg

BEN'S BODY FAT PERCENTAGE
8%

HOW TO DO THESE WORKOUTS

Perform this workout twice during the first half of week 8, ensuring you take a rest day between. Choose light weights for each exercise and don't concern yourself too much with reaching muscular failure in every set.

DEPLETION WORKOUT

WARM-UP	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST
Upper spine foam roll	1	20	slow	–
Lower back and hamstrings drill	1	20	dynamic	–
Pec stretch	1	hold	30sec	–
Shoulder mobility drill	1	20	medium	–

	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	TEMPO	REST
CIRCUIT 1	1A Dumbbell bench press	4	15	2 0 1 0	10sec
	1B Lat pull-down	4	15	2 0 1 1	10sec
	1C Push press	4	15	2 0 1 0	10sec
	1D Seated dumbbell biceps curl	4	15	3 0 1 0	10sec
	1E EZ-bar lying triceps extension	4	15	3 0 1 0	2min
CIRCUIT 2	2A Incline dumbbell flye	4	20	2 0 2 0	10sec
	2B Seated machine row	4	20	2 0 1 1	10sec
	2C Dumbbell lateral raise	4	20	2 0 1 0	10sec
	2D EZ-bar Scott curl	4	20	2 0 1 0	10sec
	2E V-bar triceps cable extension	4	20	2 0 1 1	2min

1A Dumbbell bench press

Form guide

1. Lie on a flat bench holding a dumbbell in each hand at shoulder height.
2. Press the weights above your head.
3. Keep your feet flat on the floor and upper back against the bench.
4. Slowly lower the weights down to your chest, flaring your elbows out.

1B Lat pull-down

Form guide

1. Sit on the seat and take a wide, overhand grip on the bar.
2. Pull the bar down to your upper chest. Don't lean back.
3. Retract your shoulder blades and keep your torso upright.
4. Squeeze your lats at the bottom of the move and return to the top.

1C Push press

Form guide

1

With your feet shoulder-width apart, position a bar on your upper chest, gripping it just wider than your shoulders.

2

Keep your chest upright and your core muscles braced.

3

Bend at the knees to go into a quarter-squat then stand up straight and press the bar directly upwards until your arms are extended overhead.

4

During the lifting phase, keep your core braced and don't tilt your hips forwards. Lower the bar back down to your chest.

1D Seated dumbbell biceps curl

Form guide

1

Sit on an upright bench holding a dumbbell in each hand with your palms facing forwards.

2

Keeping your back flat against the bench and your elbows close to your sides, curl the weights up to shoulder height.

3

Squeeze your biceps at the top of the move then slowly return to the start.

1E EZ-bar lying triceps extension

Form guide

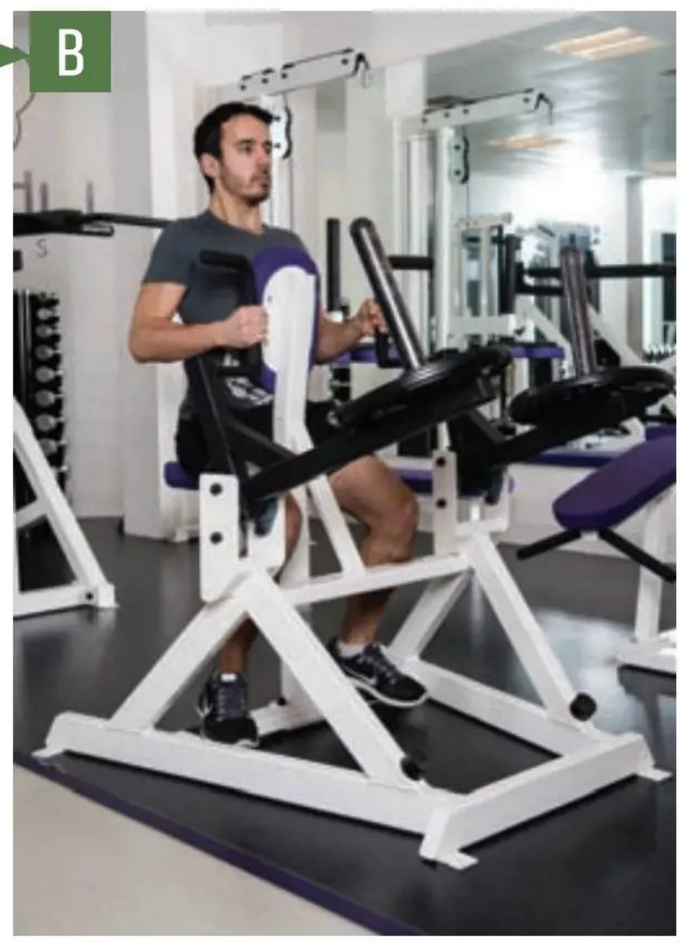
1. Lie flat on a bench, holding an EZ-bar with a narrow grip directly above you with straight arms.
2. Lower the bar slowly towards your head by bending your elbows, which should end up pointing at the ceiling.
3. Press the bar back to the start position by straightening your arms.

2A Incline dumbbell flye

Form guide

1. Lie on an incline bench holding a dumbbell in each hand directly above your chest.
2. Support your head and keep your feet flat on the floor.
3. Keeping a slight bend in your elbows, slowly lower the weights to the side as far as comfortable.
4. Use your chest to raise the weights.

2B Seated machine row



Form guide

1. Sit on the machine with your sternum against the pad. Grip the handles in each hand.
2. Pull the handles towards your body.
3. Keep your elbows close to your sides, squeezing your shoulder blades together.
4. Return slowly to the start.

2C Dumbbell lateral raise

Form guide

1

Stand tall with your core braced and feet apart, holding a light dumbell in each hand by your sides with palms facing.

2

Leading with your elbows, raise the weights out to the sides using your muscles and not momentum.

3

Stop at shoulder height then slowly return to the start.

2D EZ-bar Scott curl

Form guide

1. Hold the EZ-bar with your hands about 25cm apart.
2. Hold the back of your upper arm against the bench.
3. Lift the bar towards your chin maintaining the tension at the top of the lift.
4. Lower the weight down slowly.

2E V-bar triceps cable extension

Form guide

1. Hold a V-bar cable attachment with your palms facing downwards.
2. Keep your elbows directly below your shoulders, close to your sides.
3. Push the weight down, locking and squeezing your elbows at the bottom.
4. Return the weight slowly to the start.

PHASE FOUR

NUTRITION

If you've followed the advice and workouts so far you should be impressively muscular, with a rock-hard six-pack. This final phase will manipulate your carb, water and sodium intake to help you look as ripped as possible. It's not a long-term eating strategy, but if you've got a beach holiday or (like Ben) a photoshoot coming up, it's a good way to bring out those abs.

THESE TECHNIQUES ARE TRADITIONALLY USED BY BODYBUILDERS AND MODELS

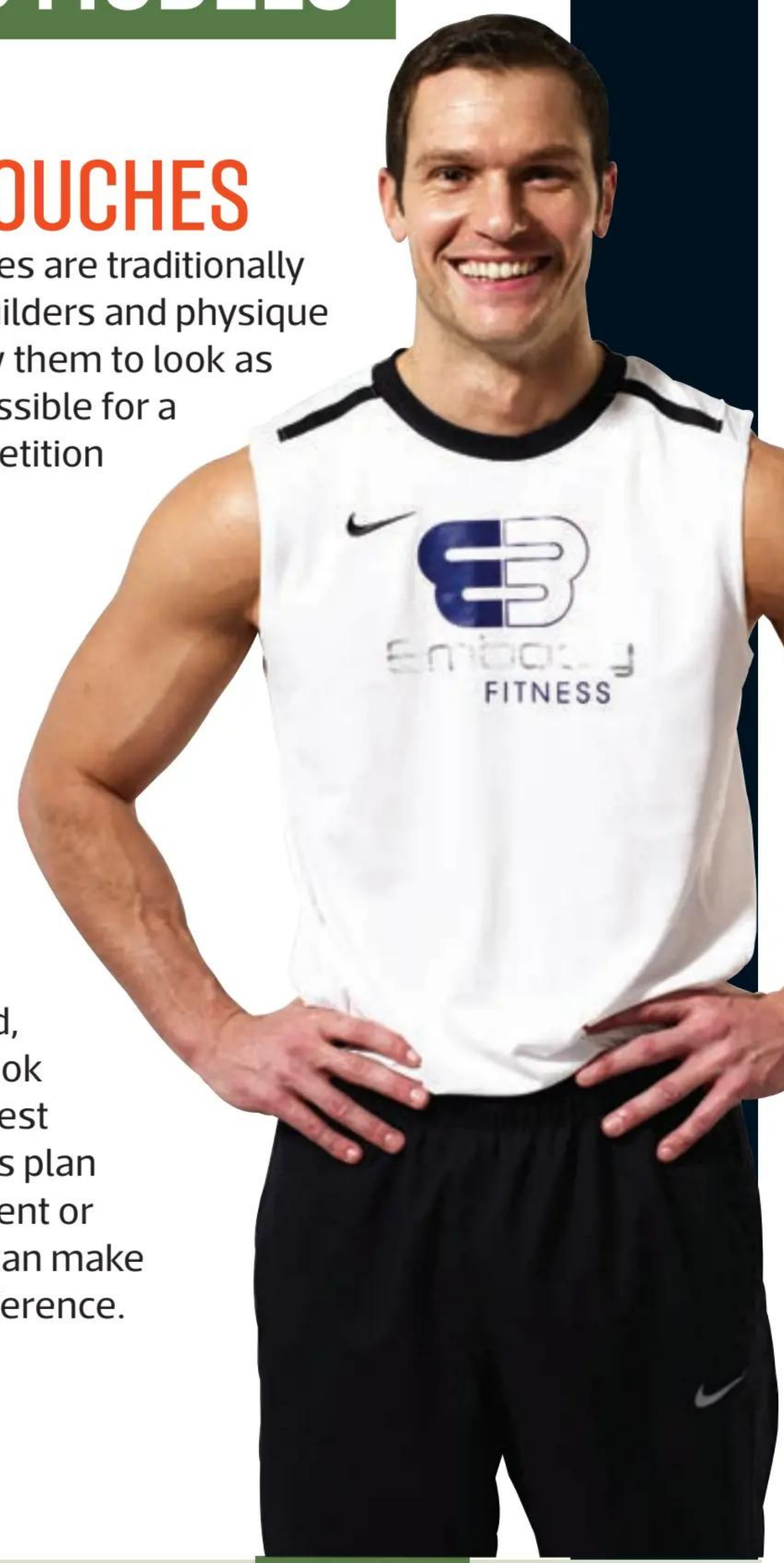
The final week involves some major adjustments to your diet, which will allow you to get as lean and ripped as possible. During the first half of the week you'll be completely avoiding carbs, which, combined with the depletion workouts, will drain all of the glycogen from your muscle cells. This will make them sponge-like and able to absorb far more glycogen than usual when you load up on carbs during the second half of the week, giving your muscles a much fuller appearance.

The other main change will be to your water intake. For the first four days, aim to drink six litres of water per day, then cut back to two litres on day five, one litre on day six and half a litre on day seven. This will manipulate antidiuretic hormones which tell the body to hold water during dehydration, allowing you to achieve a much tighter, more ripped look.

Adopting a similar approach with your sodium intake will aid this process. Aim to consume 3,000-4,000mg daily during the first four days by heavily salting your meals, then cut it out completely during the final three days.

FINAL TOUCHES

These techniques are traditionally used by bodybuilders and physique models to allow them to look as shredded as possible for a particular competition or photoshoot. However, it's extremely important to note that they shouldn't be used regularly, as they're not conducive to optimal health. That said, if you want to look your absolute best at the end of this plan for a specific event or occasion, they can make a significant difference.



KEY INGREDIENTS

Broccoli

See Monday lunch

Chicken

See Wednesday mid-morning

Apricots

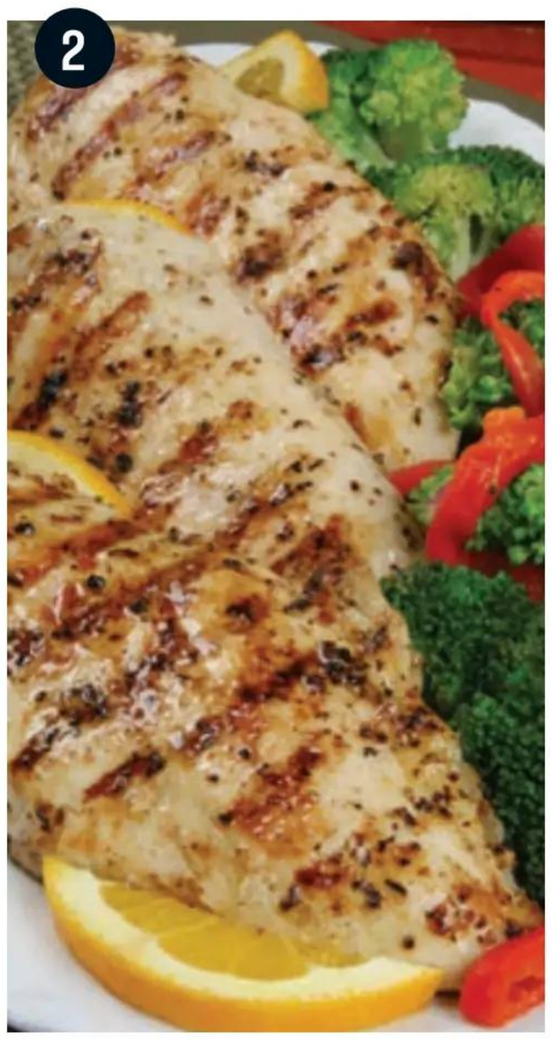
See Saturday breakfast

MEAL PLAN

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
BREAKFAST	150g grilled salmon and 3 scrambled eggs	150g grilled salmon and 3 scrambled eggs	150g grilled salmon and 3 scrambled eggs	150g grilled salmon and 3 scrambled eggs
MID MORNING	200g chicken breast and broccoli	200g chicken breast and broccoli	200g chicken breast and broccoli	200g chicken breast and broccoli
LUNCH	200g chicken breast and broccoli	200g chicken breast and broccoli	200g chicken breast and broccoli	200g chicken breast and broccoli
SNACK	200g chicken breast with asparagus	200g chicken breast with asparagus	200g chicken breast with asparagus	200g chicken breast with asparagus
DINNER	200g cod with asparagus	200g cod with asparagus	200g cod with asparagus	200g cod with asparagus

The portion sizes in this meal plan are designed for a man who is 1.8m tall and weighs 75kg. If you're significantly smaller or bigger than this, adjust them accordingly.

	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
3	150g grilled salmon and 3 scrambled eggs	150g turkey breast with 200g baked sweet potato and 50g dried apricots	150g turkey breast with 200g baked sweet potato
4	200g chicken breast and broccoli	150 grams chick-en with 200g baked sweet potato	150 grams chick-en with 200g baked sweet potato
	200g chicken breast and broccoli	150g chicken with 200g baked sweet potato with 50g dried apricots	150 grams chick-en with 200g baked sweet potato
	200g chicken breast with asparagus	150g cod with 200g baked sweet potato	150g cod with 200g baked sweet potato
	200g cod with asparagus	150g cod with 200g baked sweet potato	150g cod with 200g baked sweet potato



WHAT NEXT?

YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY. NOW YOU'VE GOT IN SHAPE, STAYING IN SHAPE IS YOUR NEXT BIG CHALLENGE

So you've trained like a demon, stuck diligently to the eating regime, made it through the eight-week plan and built the six-pack you've always wanted. Congratulations, you look great and you've earned it! But now isn't the time for complacency – the last thing you want after all that hard work is to slip back into lazy gym sessions and poor dietary choices. Instead, use this advice to build on all the progress you've made in the last two months and continue to get bigger and stronger.

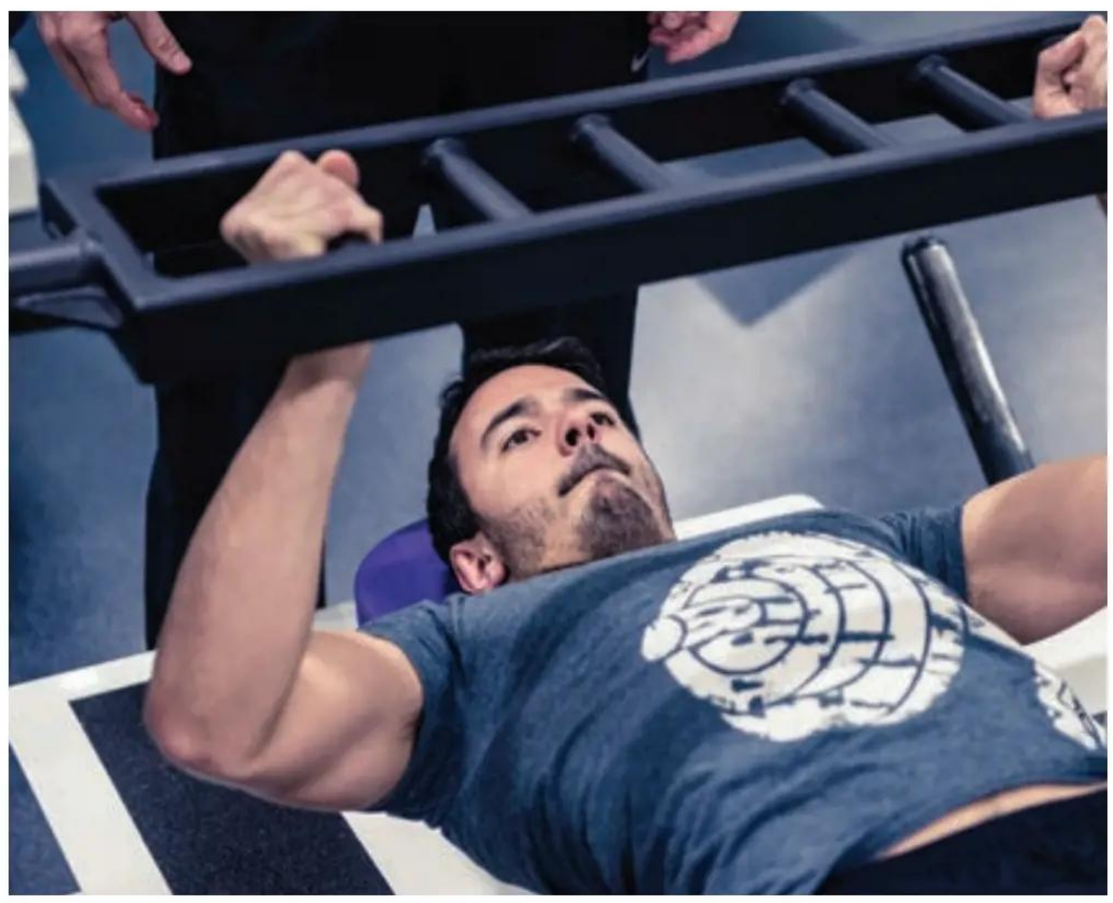
UPGRADE YOUR GYM

There's no reason why you can't complete this, or any training plan at a regular gym. However, if you want to take your training to the next level and ensure you reach your full potential, why not consider working with elite personal trainers who have the knowledge, experience and facilities to deliver the best results?

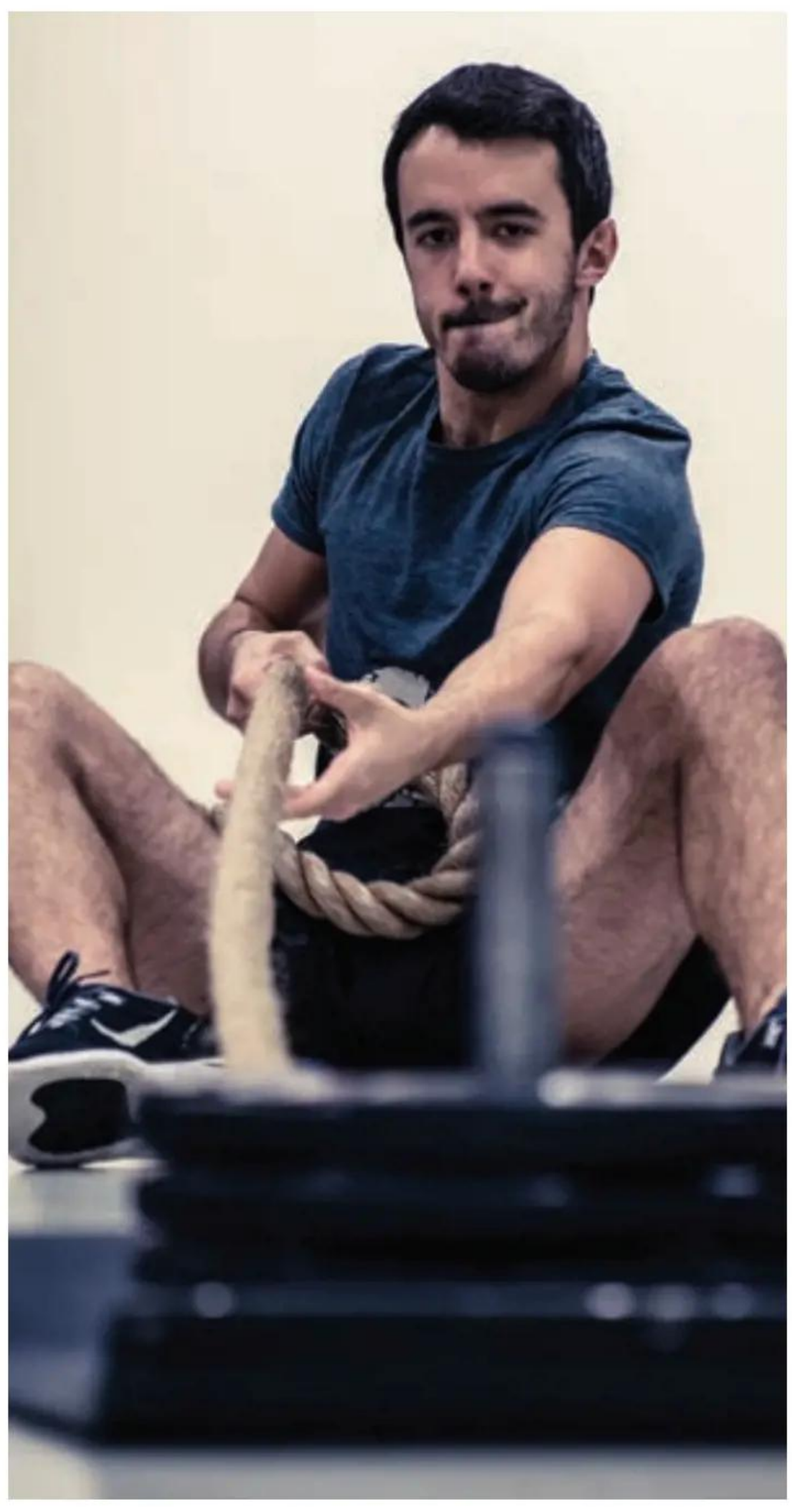
Private strength and conditioning facilities like Embody Fitness offer a wide array of specialist equipment to aid you in your quest to build muscle. By offering you space and privacy they also eliminate the frustration of a busy free weights area, which can severely hamper your ability to follow a precise workout. Private facilities are also more likely to have unusual equipment such as sleds, Swiss bars and Viking presses which can further enhance your workouts.

BUILD MORE MUSCLE

Now that you're lean, you can turn your gym efforts towards putting on some serious muscle. Do this by continuing with the diet and workouts from phase three – be sure to eat around 3g of protein per kilo of body weight to allow for adequate recovery and the building of new muscle tissue. Look to continually increase the loads you lift each week and be sure to mix up your exercise selection to keep your muscles guessing.



EAT AROUND 3G OF PROTEIN PER KG OF BODYWEIGHT A DAY TO BUILD NEW MUSCLE



MAKE THINGS HARDER

Building strength and size is all about forcing your muscles to adapt, and there are plenty of useful bits of equipment you can buy that will allow you to push yourself harder in the gym.

Grip strength can often be a limiting factor, especially in pulling and rowing moves such as pull-ups, deadlifts and heavy rows. There are lots of thick bar options available that will do wonders for your forearm development and grip strength. Inevitably you'll have to lower the weights considerably if you use them, but you'll increasingly be able to handle more load during each workout. When you finally return to normal bars you will obliterate your previous strength plateaus.

Chains and resistance bands are great for improving extension exercises such as bench presses, deadlifts, squats and triceps extensions. You'll find with these exercises that the mechanical advantage will be at the top portion of the lift. Adding chains or bands will give the exercise a completely different feel. The lift suddenly shifts and it becomes increasingly difficult to lock out at the top position, creating a different strength adaption. This can be great for furthering progress and, if nothing else, helps to keep things fresh.

WHAT SUPP?

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS

Let's get something clear from the start: do you have to take supplements while following this programme? No. Will not taking supplements mean poor results? Absolutely not! However, if you're looking to maximise your training gains, repair and build lean muscle tissue, and improve your overall health and wellbeing, you'll be seriously short-changing yourself if you don't follow a smart supplement protocol. Here are some of the key supplements Ben used in order to optimise his health.

BCAAs

HOW MUCH? 10,000mg per day
WHEN? Half directly before and half directly after training

Branched-chain amino acids (BCAAs) are made up of three essential amino acids: leucine, isoleucine and valine. These are used pre- and post-workout to help the body repair and grow new muscle tissue. Leucine activates the complex compound mTOR, which is responsible for elevating muscle protein synthesis and subsequently muscle growth. Leucine also increases insulin production, which will help to shuttle those all-important muscle building proteins to your cells post-workout. Valine combats another amino acid called tryptophan that's associated with muscle fatigue, which you definitely don't want! It reduces the uptake of tryptophan across the blood-brain barrier, which helps keep you lifting harder and longer. Look for a BCAA product with a high leucine content, ideally on a 4-1-1 or at least 2-1-1 ratio to maximise its benefits.

WHEY PROTEIN

HOW MUCH? 25g blended with 200ml water
WHEN? Immediately after training

Whey protein is made from cow's milk and comes in different forms such as isolate, concentrate and hydrolysate. The great thing about whey is that it's rapidly and easily absorbed, making it ideal to take during the critical post-workout window when your body is primed for building muscle. Whey protein can also lower hunger levels due to

its influence on the hormone ghrelin, which can be very useful when dieting. Take whey protein within 10 minutes of completing your workout to promote recovery and take advantage of the temporary rise in protein synthesis. If you're vegan or intolerant to dairy products, there are alternative non-dairy and vegan options available. Just make sure you avoid high-carb versions.

MAGNESIUM

HOW MUCH? 90mg per day
WHEN? With dinner

Magnesium is involved in more than 300 chemical processes and is the fourth most abundant mineral in the body – but people

THE BODY REQUIRES MORE MAGNESIUM IF YOU'RE TRAINING

are commonly deficient in it, and the body requires significantly more if you're training regularly. Magnesium plays a pivotal role in the detoxification of cortisol, the stress hormone partly responsible for storing body fat around your midsection. It can also improve receptiveness to the hormone insulin, helping to control blood sugar levels and promote fat loss. Perhaps magnesium's most tangible benefit is the positive impact it has on sleep by helping to stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system. Two tips when seeking a quality magnesium product: avoid products that use magnesium oxide, as it's a cheap, poorly absorbed form, and make sure the bottle states the elemental level of magnesium it contains and not just its chelates, which is another indicator of poor quality. Orotate, aspartate, glycinate, fumarate, picolinate and taurate (or a blend of all of them) are all good choices.

MULTIVITAMINS

HOW MUCH? Two capsules per day
WHEN? One with breakfast, one with lunch

A high-quality multivitamin can go a long way, and if you have to choose one supplement, it would make sense to go for this one as it'll ensure you're getting the widest variety of vitamins and minerals possible. Of course, a multivitamin won't supply the same amount of individual minerals such as magnesium and zinc as products dedicated to these nutrients, but it's still a great safety net as far as overall health and wellbeing go if your budget is tight. Your body's detoxification processes are going to be ramped up during the initial phase of the diet, and a good multivitamin will help support this.

OMEGA 3 FATTY ACIDS

HOW MUCH? 10g per day
WHEN? With breakfast
The benefits of omega 3s are numerous. They have a profound impact on your overall wellbeing by improving cardiovascular health, speeding up the detoxification of harmful substances and providing potent anti-inflammatory reactions. Omega 3s are also anabolic (muscle-building), partly due to their influence on the mTOR pathway that produces muscle growth, but also because they improve insulin sensitivity, which furthers anabolic potential and your ability to burn fat.

ZINC

HOW MUCH? 50mg per day
WHEN? With breakfast
Much like magnesium, zinc plays a variety of roles in improving health and performance. It's found in every tissue in the body and is one of the most common of all mineral deficiencies, especially in men. Having correct zinc levels allows for a stronger release of the three most anabolic hormones: testosterone, growth hormone and IGF-1 (insulin-like growth factor). If you want to capitilise on your hard work in the gym, you need to make the most of these hormones. It also has many broader health benefits, such as reducing the risk of prostate cancer, increasing fertility and libido and improving cardiovascular health. As with magnesium, you should try to avoid zinc oxide products and make sure the label clearly states the elemental levels per serving.

BLOOD SUGAR CONTROL

HOW MUCH? 4,000mg a day
WHEN? Half with breakfast, half with lunch
This is a combination of the herbs fenugreek, gymnema sylvestre and bitter gourd, and it's a great supplement for speeding up the fat loss process. A disproportionate amount of fat on your love handles is a good sign of insulin resistance. If this is the case, then you won't be able to get enough glucose inside your cells, which can then result in a process known as glycation. This ultimately leads to the storage of additional body fat. The ingredients in a blood sugar control supplement will help to counteract this by enabling glucose to enter your cells once insulin has bound to them.

ZINC IS ONE OF THE MOST COMMON MINERAL DEFICIENCIES

THE BEST OF THE REST

USE THESE SUPPLEMENTS TO IMPROVE YOUR ALL-ROUND FITNESS PERFORMANCE

CREATINE is metaboilsed in the body into ATP, which is used during muscle contraction. It's important to have adequate amounts in your body in order to carry out intense weight training sessions. Take 5g pre-workout and 5g with a post-workout shake. Be sure to drink plenty of water with it.

VITAMIN D is produced by the body when the skin comes into direct contact with sunlight. Deficiency – which is associated with a variety of health issues – is common in the UK. Take at least 1,000mg per day.

BETA-ALANINE is a type of amino acid that works as a lactate buffer during intense training sessions to help you force out extra reps. Take 1,500mg per day.

L-CARNITINE encourages the body to use fat as a fuel source, spares muscle glycogen and improves the anabolic hormone response to training. Take 2g per day.

SUPER GREENS provide a massive nutrient intake that would be difficult to achieve from vegetables alone, while offering antioxidant support by keeping you anabolic, due to its anti-inflammatory properties and alkalising effects. Take 30g per day.

THYROID SUPPORT, containing l-tyrosine and iodine, will help increase levels of thyroid hormones, a deficit of which can lead to a sluggish metabolism and fat storage. Take 500mg per day.

GLUTAMINE is the most abundant amino acid in the body and can be added to your post-workout shake to help with glycogen replenishment. Take 10g per day.

STAY ON TRACK

YOUR DIARY

TRAINING LOG

Use this planner to chart your progress

The only way to get the most out of every session is to know exactly what you need to do as soon as you get to the gym. That's why a training diary is important. All the exercises, sets, reps, tempos and rests are clearly detailed in each chapter, but the one thing that's unique to you is the weight you need to lift. That's where the training log comes in. Simply note down the weight you used to successfully complete all the sets and reps at the desired tempo. Then you'll know what increases you need to make next time to keep your muscles growing and avoid a dreaded plateau.

KEEPING TRACK

DO THE WORKOUTS IN ORDER AND RECORD THE WEIGHT LIFTED AS YOU GO

This training log allows you to record the weight you lift in every session in this eight-week programme so you can keep track of your progress and, if necessary, make increases when that session comes around again. Increasing the weight is a vital element in continuously building the size and strength of your muscles, while still burning fat. The numbered columns represent that session's number, which is why each column is labelled from 1 (the first session) to 28 (the final session). For details of how to perform each move and for any additional instructions, turn to the full workout plan.

WHOLE-BODY CONDITIONING WORKOUT

PHASE 1 WEEKS 1-2		WORKOUTS (Weight kg)					
	Exercise	1	2	3	4	5	6
SET 1	1A Trap bar deadlift						
	1B Neutral-grip dumbbell bench press						
SET 2	2A Dumbbell single-arm row						
	2B Dumbbell elevated split squat						
SET 3	3A Seated dumbbell shoulder press						
	3B Farmer's walk						
SET 4	4A Seated dumbbell biceps curl						
	4B Lying dumbbell triceps extension						

CHEST, BACK AND TRICEPS

PHASE 2 WEEKS 3–4		WORKOUTS Weight (kg)		
	Exercise	7	9	12
SET 1	1A Rack deadlift			
	1B Flat bench press			
SET 2	2A Pull-up			
	2B Incline dumbbell bench press			
SET 3	3A Dumbbell single-arm row			
	3B Incline dumbbell flye			
SET 4	4A Lying dumbbell triceps extension			
	4B EZ-bar decline triceps extension			

SHOULDERS, LEGS AND BICEPS

PHASE 2 WEEKS 3–4		WORKOUTS Weight (kg)		
	Exercise	8	11	13
SET 1	1A Seated dumbbell shoulder press			
	1B Back squat on bench			
SET 2	2A Push press			
	2B Lying hamstring curl			
SET 3	3A Bulgarian split squat			
	3B Dumbbell lateral raise			
SET 4	4A Seated dumbbell biceps curl			
	4B EZ-bar Scott curl			

CARDIO AND ABS

PHASE 2 WEEKS 3–4		WORKOUTS Weight (kg)	
Exercise		10	14
1 Interval rows			
SET 1	2A Supine foam roller torso hold		
	2B Accentuated crunch on a bench		
SET 2	3A Kneeling cable woodchop		
	3B Dumbbell gym ball crunch		

CHEST AND BACK

PHASE 3 WEEKS 5–6		WORKOUTS Weight (kg)		
Exercise		15	19	23
SET 1	1A Incline dumbbell bench press			
	1B Pull-up			
SET 2	2A Flat bench press			
	2B Deadlift			
SET 3	3A Incline dumbbell flye			
	3B Seated machine row			
SET 4	4A Cable chest flye			
	4B Parallel-grip lat pull-down			

SHOULDERS AND LEGS

PHASE 3 WEEKS 5–7		WORKOUTS Weight (kg)		
	Exercise	16	20	24
SET 1	1A Seated dumbbell shoulder press			
	1B Back squat			
SET 2	2A Push press			
	2B Farmer's walk			
SET 3	3A Dumbbell lateral raise			
	3B Lying hamstring curl			
SET 4	4A Seated rope face pull			
	4B Barbell hip thrust			

BICEPS AND TRICEPS

PHASE 3 WEEKS 5–7		Weight (kg)		
	Exercise	17	21	25
SET 1	1A Seated dumbbell biceps curl			
	1B EZ-bar triceps extension			
SET 2	2A EZ-bar Scott curl			
	2B Incline bench Zottman curl			
	2C Incline dumbbell hammer curl			
SET 3	3A Decline lying triceps extension			
	3B Dip			
	3C Reverse cable triceps extension			

CARDIO AND ABS

PHASE 3 WEEKS 5–7		WORKOUTS Weight (kg)		
	Exercise	18	22	26
	1 Exercise bike interval sprints			
SET 1	2A Abs wheel roll-out			
SET 1	2B Reverse gym ball crunch			
SET 2	3A Russian twist			
SET 2	3B Rope crunch			

DEPLETION WORKOUT

PHASE 4 WEEK 8		WORKOUTS Weight (kg)	
	Exercise	27	28
CIRCUIT 1	1A Dumbbell bench press		
CIRCUIT 1	1B Lat pull-down		
CIRCUIT 1	1C Push press		
CIRCUIT 1	1D Seated dumbbell biceps curl		
CIRCUIT 1	1E EZ-bar lying triceps extension		
CIRCUIT 2	2A Incline dumbbell flye		
CIRCUIT 2	2B Seated machine row		
CIRCUIT 2	2C Dumbbell lateral raise		
CIRCUIT 2	2D EZ-bar Scott curl		
CIRCUIT 2	2E V-bar triceps cable extension		

THE KNOWLEDGE

GLOSSARY

SIMPLE EXPLANATIONS

Need to know your forced reps from your drop sets?
Here's where you'll find it all explained

1RM
One-repetition maximum, or one-rep max: the maximum weight a lifter can handle for one rep of a given exercise. A useful tool for determining training loads, which are based on performing at different percentages of your 1RM.

COMPOUND LIFT
Any exercise that involves movement in two or more joints such as the squat, deadlift and shoulder press. Such lifts should form the basis of programmes where increasing muscle size and strength is the objective.

CONCENTRIC CONTRACTION
During concentric contractions the muscle shortens while generating force. Concentric muscle actions are responsible for the 'raising' part of an exercise, such as lifting a dumbbell from your side to shoulder during a biceps curl.

DOMS
Delayed-onset muscle soreness, or the aches you get the day after a workout. Often caused by severe trauma to the muscles, for instance by doing eccentrics, drop sets or forced reps.

DROP SET
A series of sets of the same exercise in which you start with a heavy weight, lift until you reach failure, then drop the weight and go again.

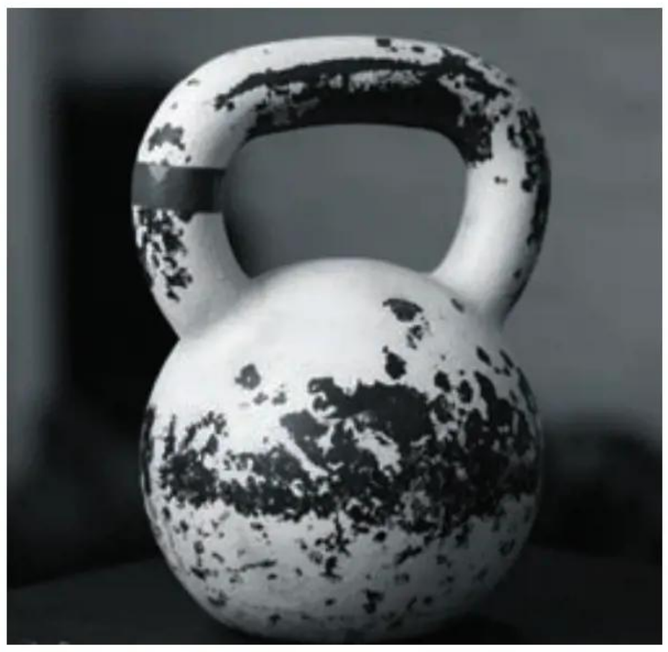
ECCENTRIC CONTRACTION
During eccentric contractions the muscle lengthens under tension when controlling a weight. This usually means the 'lowering' part of an exercise, such as the biceps elongating as you control the weight back down to the start position during a biceps curl. It's heavy eccentric loads that cause the maximum amount of damage to muscles, that's why it's important to lower weights slowly and under control: this minimises the risk of injury and makes each rep more effective.

FAILURE
Training to momentary muscular failure is a strategy in which you're unable to lift the weight with correct form on the final rep of your set. This form of overload training shocks your muscles into growing back bigger and stronger, but it's vital you have a spotter on hand when training to failure on big compound lifts to minimise the risk of injury.

FASCIA
A layer of fibrous connective tissue that surrounds muscles, blood vessels and nerves. Think of it as a sheath that encases not only each muscle cell but also each body part and even your entire body. If your fascia is too tight, your body will have a harder time stretching it to create room for a muscle to grow bigger.

FORCED REPS
Reps done past the point of failure with assistance from a partner – for instance on the bench or in a seated shoulder press. They're an excellent way to shock stubborn muscles into growth, but should be used sparingly as they're tough to recover from.

GLYCOGEN
A type of energy stored in the muscles and liver, glycogen is the primary fuel used by your body in this programme. Too little glycogen and you can start to both look and feel 'flat'.



HIIT

High Intensity Interval Training – such as doing sprints, intervals, or fast-paced bodyweight movements – can be one of the best ways of burning fat while preserving hard-earned muscle. To be used sparingly, as it draws on your resources for recovery.

HYPERTROPHY

An increase in the volume of a muscle (or organ) owing to the enlargement of its component cells. Hypertrophy occurs through either sarcoplasmic or myofibrillar growth, or a combination of the two.

INTENSITY

Refers to the percentage of your 1RM that you're lifting in a certain exercise – for instance, a workout that calls for 3x2 sets of squats at 95% of your 1RM is more intense than one that calls for 5x5 at 90%.

ISOLATION LIFT

Involves movement at one joint only, for example a biceps curl (movement at the elbow joint only) or leg extension (movement at the knee joint only). These exercises are great for the end of your workouts when you can work a target muscle group to fatigue.

ISOMETRIC CONTRACTION

During isometric contractions, a muscle generates force without changing length. Typical examples include your abs during a plank, or the muscles of the hand and wrist when you grip an object. Such contractions aren't as effective for building and maintaining muscle mass as concentric and eccentric contractions, but still form an important element of your training programme, especially for core work.

MUSCLE PUMP

When your muscles become engorged with blood after you've repeatedly shortened and lengthened them. Occurs when using weight training but sometimes can be achieved simply by flexing your muscles repeatedly as hard as possible. A good 'pump' can make you look bigger for 30 minutes.

MYOFIBRILLAR GROWTH

This is when a muscle gets bigger because of an increase in the number and size of cells within that muscle.

NEGATIVES

Reps that only incorporate the eccentric part of a move – for instance, jumping up to the top of a pull-up position and lowering under control. A great way of building strength and forcing growth, but difficult to recover from.

OVERTRAINING

The result of doing too much work with not enough recovery. Overtraining happens as a result of consistently hammering your body. Warning signs are feeling lethargic, depressed or run down – address it with better sleep, higher quality food and toned-down workouts.

PEAK CONTRACTION

A peak contraction occurs when the muscle has a full contraction against resistance for the entire range of motion, as opposed to where it might get 'easier' as the rep is completed – a cable preacher curl for example.

PLYOMETRICS

A form of training including an explosive element – for instance, box jumps or clap press-ups. If you're training for power, it's best to keep plyometric reps low and as explosive as possible.

POWER
The ability to generate force at speed – for instance, if two lifters can both bench 100kg, but one pushes the bar up twice as fast as the other, he's generating more power.

RECOVERY
Where the magic happens. Your muscles grow during recovery, not when you're training, so planning for adequate recovery should be the cornerstone of your plan.

REPS
An abbreviation of repetition, one rep is the completion of a given exercise from start to finish through a full range of motion.

REST INTERVAL
Taking rest between sets and exercises allows your muscles to replenish their energy stores. In this programme, rest intervals are manipulated in different ways to help provide ongoing muscular stimulus.

SARCOPLASMIC GROWTH
When muscle size increases because of an increase in the volume of sarcoplasmic fluid in the muscle cells.

SETS
A set is a given number of reps performed consecutively without rest. The number of sets varies depending on the workout and its goals.

SPLIT ROUTINE
Any regime in which you focus on different body parts during different sessions, as opposed to doing a full-body routine. The best-known form of split is the classic bodybuilder routine: chest and triceps on Monday; back and biceps on Tuesday, and so on.

SUPER-COMPENSATION
The period after training and recovery during which you're fitter and stronger than before training. Training again in this window will result in further gains in strength, size and fitness, but training before it can result in overtraining.

SUPERSET
Two or more moves done back to back with little or no rest between exercises. They are a great way to shock your muscles into growing because of the increased workload.

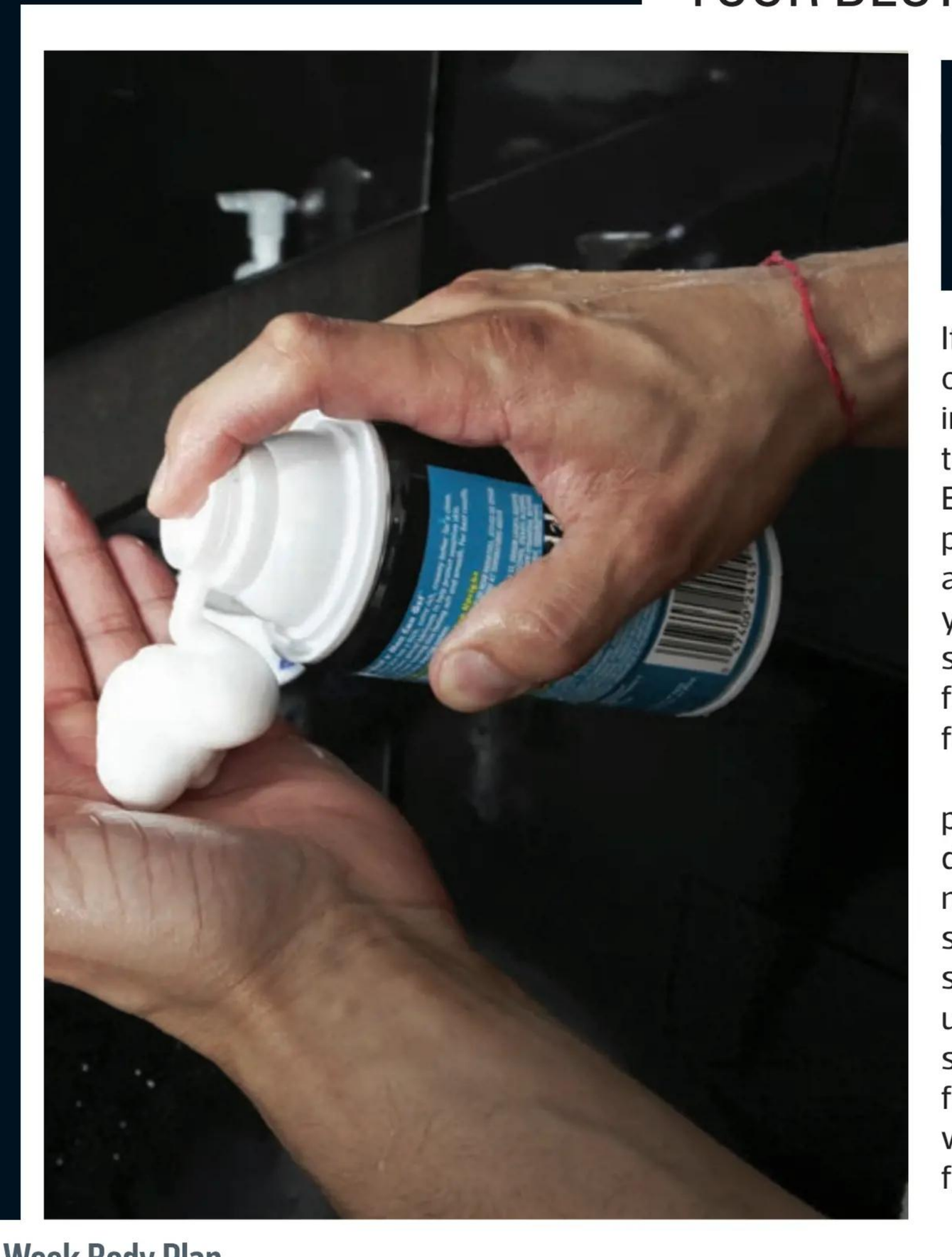
TEMPO
The speed at which you lift and lower a weight during a rep. The slower the tempo, the longer your muscles are exposed to the stress of managing the weight. Tempo is detailed by a four-digit code, such as 4010. The first number is the time in seconds the weight is lowered; the second is the time in seconds the move is held at the bottom position; the third is the time in seconds that the weight is lifted (if 'X' is shown this means lift explosively); and the final digit is the time in seconds the weight is held at the top of the move.

TIME UNDER TENSION
The duration in seconds your muscles are controlling a weight through a range of motion, as in a squat or bench press. It's dictated by the tempo of each rep and how many reps in a given set.

VOLUME
The amount of work (basically, the total number of reps) done in a session.

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

THESE TIPS ENSURE YOU LOOK YOUR BEST FOR A PHOTO FINISH



TRIM YOUR CHEST AND GET A TAN

If you're thinking of stepping in front of a camera to get some snaps of you in optimum condition, then you'll need to wax that chest rug and get a tan. Body hair will take the edge off your physique, whether it's a tuft of fluff or a full-blown Chewbacca costume. If your chest hair is a little on the thick side, it's best to trim it with clippers first before going for the ultra-smooth finish to minimise skin irritation.

Shades of tan are a matter of personal preference, but generally the darker you go, the harder and more muscular you will look. The quickest, safest and most dramatic option is a spray tan, but if you'd rather not turn up at work the next day looking like something from *TOWIE*, try three or four careful sunbeds over the two weeks prior to your photoshoot, then finish off with a subtle layer of fake tan.

PUMPING UP YOUR MUSCLES PRIOR TO HAVING YOUR PHOTO TAKEN IS ESSENTIAL

PUMP

Pumping up your muscles prior to having your photo taken is essential if you want to look your absolute best. Which exercises you use will depend on which areas you want to prioritise, but as a general rule, you can't go wrong with press-ups, dips, biceps curls, lateral raises and bent-over rows. Keep the reps high to flush as much blood into the working muscles as possible for a defined look.

PUMP IT UP

FOLLOW PHILLIPPS'S PUMP WORKOUT TO LOOK YOUR BEST ON CAMERA

Complete the exercises below, rest for 90 seconds then repeat at least three times. It's best to have a mirror nearby so you can judge how well you're pumping up. This is by no means an exact science, so if you think your chest isn't bulging as much as it could, drop down and give it another 20 press-ups.

1 Incline press-up (WITH YOUR FEET ON A CHAIR)

SETS 1
REPS 20-30
REST 45sec

2 Single-arm bent-over row

SETS 1
REPS 15-20 each side
REST 45sec

3 Lateral raise

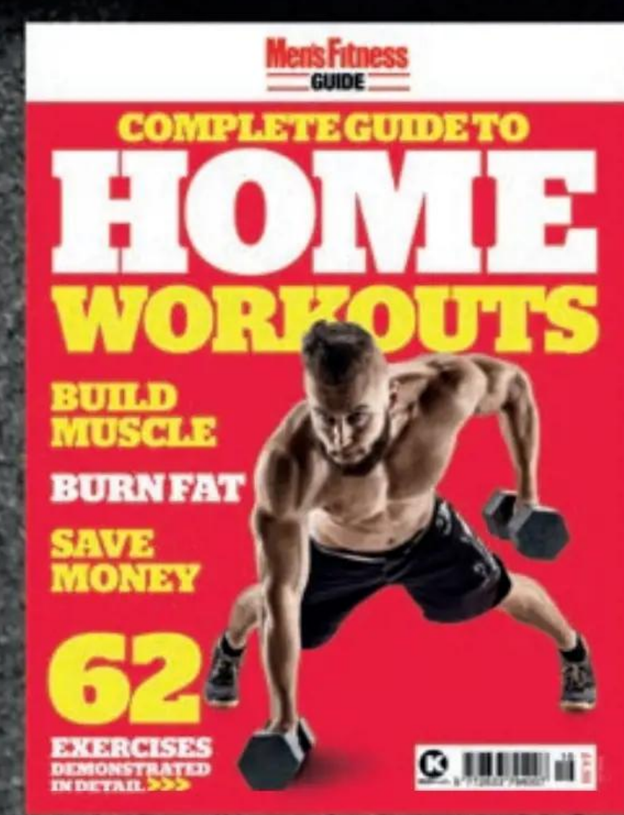
SETS 1
REPS 15-20
REST 45sec

4 Biceps curl

SETS 1
REPS 15 - 20

MEN'S FITNESS GUIDES

GET FIT FOR LIFE



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