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Fitness

This is the ultimate 30 minute workout to build strength for cycling - according to a pro cyclist and personal trainer

Try this bodyweight workout when you're tight on time or without a bike - it's significantly better for your riding than doing nothing



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(Image credit: Claire Steels)

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BY CLAIRE STEELS
PUBLISHED 29 DAYS AGO

If you're tight on time and without a bike, then you can still get a lot of bang for your buck within 30 minutes from this bodyweight workout - which includes a varied mix of cardio and targeted strength exercises.

Obviously, you can't replicate the same training session as you would do on a bike, but you can do a workout which complements the training that you're doing on the bike. The following workout would also be a great addition to your training programme on an easier training day.

I'm a big fan of a time controlled format when I'm tight on time; it keeps me focused and ensures that I make the most of the time that I have. With 30 minutes I would suggest a circuit of eight exercises, completed over three progressive sets.

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MadMuscles



Claire Steels

Claire Steels is a British professional racing cyclist, who currently rides for the UCI Women's World Tour Team, Israel Premier Tech Roland. In 2023 she clinched 3rd in the Durango Emakumeen Saria, just behind Ashleigh Moolman who won this UCI 1.1 one day race in Spain.

Steels also has a background in personal training, with over 10 years of industry experience and qualifications in kettlebell and circuit training, and more.

For the first set, start off with a reduced intensity and a shorter work period. This set can be used as a warm up set, and then the next two sets are where you can step up the intensity and load. If you're just working with bodyweight exercises, then you can increase the speed or difficulty of the exercises without increasing any load.

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An example session includes this series of exercises:

1. Bodyweight Squats
2. Press Ups on knees (progress to toes for the 2nd and 3rd sets)
3. Alternate Reverse Lunge
4. Mountain Climbers (walk through for the 1st set then increase the speed for 2nd and 3rd sets)
5. Glute Bridge (progress to single leg bridges for the 2nd and 3rd set, half of the time on each leg)
6. Plank (can start on your knees for the 1st set)

7. Steps Ups (starting on a lower step for the 1st step)

8. Split Jumps / Jumping lunges (alternate forward lunges for the 1st set)

For each set, follow this pattern:

- Set 1: 30s work / 30s rest - each exercise should be completed at a slower pace to allow your body time to warm up with specific warm up modifications if applicable.
- Set 2: 40s work / 20s rest
- Set 3: 50s work / 10s rest

Take at least 60s full rest between each set.

Obviously these times are just guidelines and you can adjust them to match your fitness and energy levels. All of these exercises only require bodyweight, but you can add additional load through dumbbells etc. if you have them to hand and want to increase the intensity of the workout.

TIPS ABOUT EACH OF THE EXERCISES

1. Bodyweight squats



(Image credit: Claire Steels)

Be sure to keep your back flat, chest up and weight evenly distributed across your feet, try to avoid lifting your heels as you go down into the squat. [Here is a video showing how to do this move correctly.](#)

2. Press Ups



(Image credit: Claire Steels)

Keep a strong core throughout the movement and avoid dipping your lower back. Stay on your knees if it allows you to keep correct form. [Click here to view a video showing how to do this.](#)

3. Alternate Reverse Lunge

Keep the front foot anchored to the floor and pull through the front heel when you step forward out of the lunge. This will help to engage the hamstrings and the glutes.

4. Mountain Climbers

People often turn this into a jumping movement rather than a horizontal running movement. Keep your body in a strong plank position, shoulders over the wrists, hips level with the shoulders and then bring your knees up to the chest and back down but trying to keep your hips still and level. [Here you'll find a video demonstrating this.](#)

5. Glute Bridge



(Image credit: Claire Steels)

Keep your feet flat on the floor throughout the movement. As you lift your hips stay strong and controlled through your legs to make sure that your knees don't fall out to the sides.

6. Plank



(Image credit: Claire Steels)

The key to the plank is relaxed hands and a tight core. Don't squeeze your hands together, keep your palms open and relaxed on the floor. Shoulders over elbows, hips in line with shoulder and a flat back.

7. Step Ups

Start with a lower step and then progress to something higher but not much higher than your knees. Think about pulling up using the leg that you have stepped up with first, rather than pushing off with the foot still on the floor. Have both feet on the step before you come back down. As with all of the exercises, keep your back flat and use your core for stability and control.

8. Split Jumps / Jumping Lunges



(Image credit: Claire Steels)

This is a big favorite of mine, a serious thigh and glute burner at the same time as raising the heart rate - what's not to love!

Start in a lunge position with your left leg back and right leg forward. Then jump up, swap legs and land back down into a lunge position with your right leg back and left leg forward. Keep your chest up and avoid rounding your shoulders and back, this will make the exercise harder. It is best to just walk through the exercise on the first set to allow your body time to warm up.