

7 ELITE training tricks...

Want to know how the pros work out?
Here, a few of them reveal their own training secrets...

1 Get engaged

"When you're training, don't just do the movement," says yoga instructor and PT Svava Sigbertsdóttir (theexerciseandnutritiongroup.com). "Before you start, engage the muscle that you are working thoroughly, to ensure that it is properly activated, and throughout the exercise keep that engagement the whole time. This will work your muscle to its max and give you much results."

3 Intensify the plank

Lucy Case, director of The Body Fitness Company (bodyfitco.com) believes you should engage your whole body when exercising rather than isolating single muscles. But she does appreciate that some areas need extra care and attention! "An exercise that creates an amazing tension in the body is to assume the plank position and, from here, contract the buttocks hard so that the tail pulls under (a bit like a pelvic tilt). At the same time contract the abs hard (pulling the belly inwards)," she says. Hold for a count of five seconds, release for two and repeat five times for a really tough challenge.

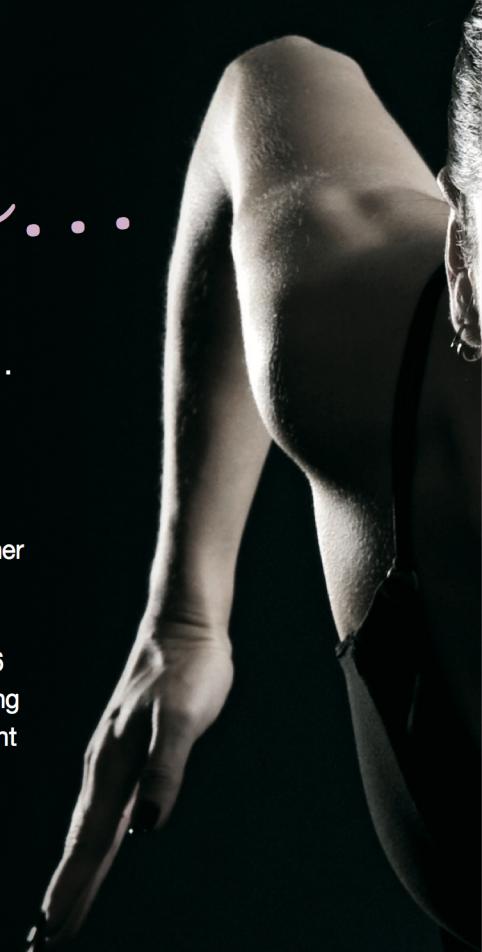
2 BREAK IT UP

During her long, steady runs, personal trainer to Colin Jackson, Tatum Nelson

(tatumnelson.co.uk) breaks up the monotony by mixing in a few faster paced bursts. "By adding 4-6 repetitions of 30 seconds it keeps the body guessing and metabolism working," says Tatum. "It's excellent for fat burn, keeps you out of a one-pace rut and sends those endorphins buzzing!"

4 Jump to it

"An effective and efficient training tip is to add a plyometric exercise for the same muscle group after a static exercise," suggests Svava Sigbertsdóttir. "For example, go from a Swiss ball chest press into jumping press-ups, or from squats into jumping lunges. This is a great way to fatigue a muscle group."





5 Crunch time

5 As a professional stuntman, diver and gymnast, Nicholas Daines spends a lot of his workout time maintaining and developing his core strength. Here, he shares a move he believes is crucial to a great core ab routine:

1 Lay on your back on a Bosu ball, positioning yourself so that your back is extended over the ball in a slightly arched position.

2 Then, with one knee at a right angle, so your foot is firmly on the ground supporting and stabilising the body on the ball, extend the other leg straight out and slightly to the side so that it is parallel with the floor. At the same time extend the opposite arm above your head and bend your other arm to support your head with your hand.

3 Perform an abdominal crunch, bending the extended arm and leg at the same time so that the elbow of the opposite arm touches the knee of the incoming leg. Aim for two sets of 25 reps on each side.

6 Sculpt your arms

According to Lucy Case, the secret to beautifully toned arms is frequency of exercising versus excellent technique throughout the exercise.

"The last rep has to look as clean and defined as the first one," says Lucy. "And the top, overall exercise for arms is the press-up. Why? Firstly, you cannot escape the weight of your own upper body – it's way more effective than a 1kg weight will ever be. Secondly, you're also working your abs, core, legs and bum and that represents excellent exercise value, and thirdly, if you shift between a wide arm press-up and a narrow arm press-up you'll be working your chest, biceps and triceps."

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RECOVER 'N' ROLL

"I use a foam roller to help my muscles recover between training sessions, releasing muscle tightness," reveals Tatum Nelson. "Recovery is the key to any successful training programme, and is all too often neglected. If you don't recover properly from a session you will be unable to optimise your performance in the next."