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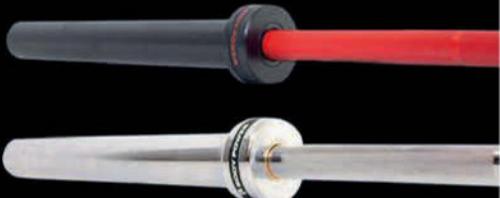
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EDITOR'S LETTER

ISSUE 280
AUGUST 2023



Whatever your reason for reading Men's Fitness, I'm going to assume you know all about the benefits of regular exercise. Even if it remains a bit of a slog, chances are you continue to keep at it because you know it helps you look, feel and act like the best version of yourself. However, any fitness fan worth their salt will know that exercise is only half the battle.

Because while it might not be as gratifying or immediately rewarding, good nutrition is every bit as important. Which is where this issue, hopefully, can help: including tips on what to eat pre- and post-workout, our pick of the best electrolyte drinks for hydrating during sweaty summer sessions, pre-workout

powders to energise your efforts, and even the antioxidant-rich foods to keep you looking as young as you feel.

Away from nutrition, our lead feature pulls up a chair to look into the world of work – specifically, how our increasingly sedate working lives are damaging our collective health and, crucially, what can be done about it. We've also got the best exercises for powerful glutes, workouts to build both size and strength, and the finest expert-tested training tops for tackling them in.

Isaac Williams, Editor
isaac.williams@kelsey.co.uk

INSIDE: HOW TO...



1
Move more at work

How to combat the damage of increasingly sedate working lives



2
Stay hydrated

The best electrolyte powders for sweaty summer workouts



3
Build and burn

Workouts for muscle size, strength, fat loss, power and more



4
Grow stronger glutes

PT Luke Worthington introduces the most effective glutes exercises

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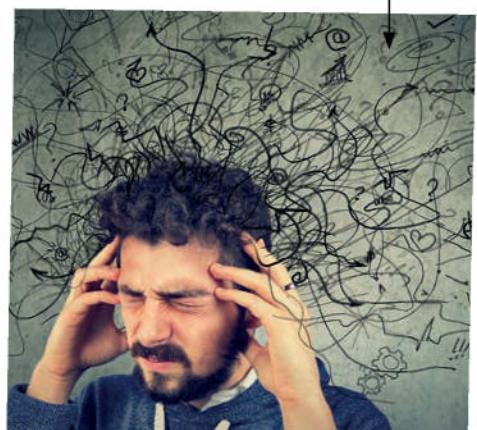
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UPDATES

BUILD AND BURN

with high-intensity functional training

 HIFT has gained popularity as an effective workout protocol combining functional movements, weight lifting and aerobic exercise. HIFT workouts create a unique training stimulus that can promote both muscle growth and fat loss.

Just like the more established high-intensity interval training (HIIT), HIFT requires an all-out approach, and results published in *Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation* show that participants experience elevated heart rates and lactate levels. The former indicates that the cardiovascular system is working harder, leading to improved cardio fitness and heart health. The increased energy expenditure associated with higher heart rates also contributes to calorie burn and fat loss. Elevated lactate levels, meanwhile, stimulate the activation of fast-twitch muscle fibres, promoting muscle adaptation and growth.

The study does, however, highlight the need for further research on biochemical responses and energy demands during HIFT, as the current measurement methods have limitations that hinder a comprehensive understanding of its impact.

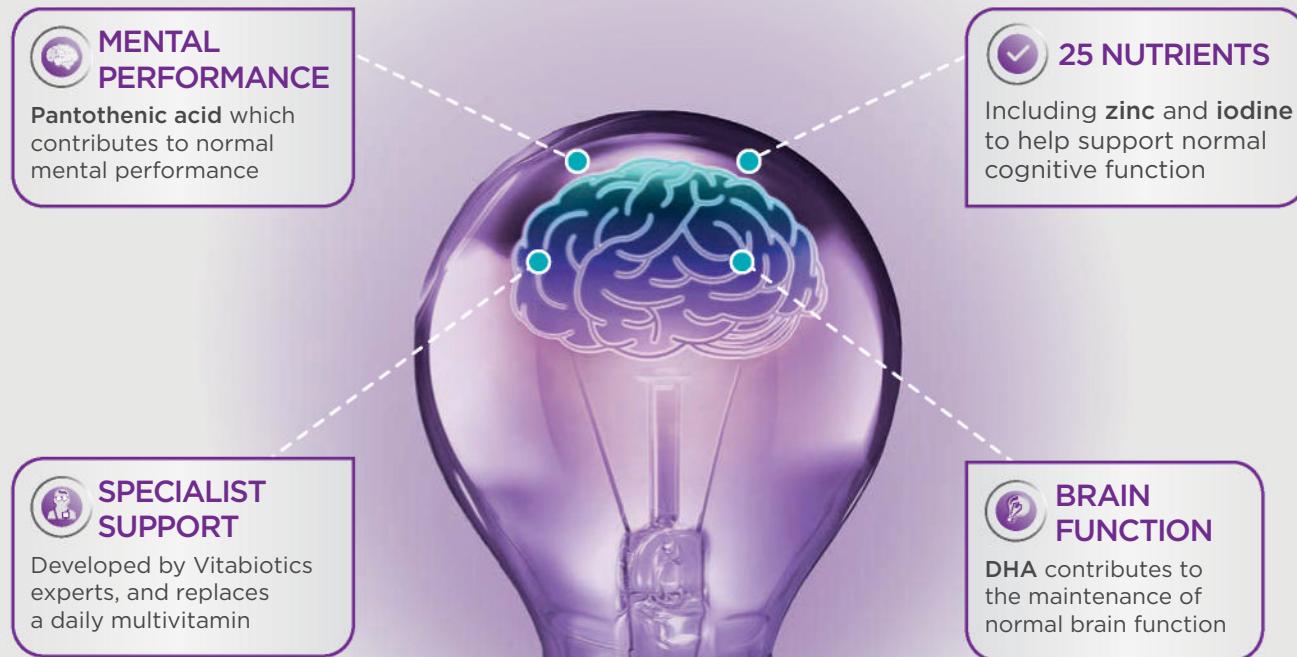
SAMPLE SESSION

Complete the following as a continuous circuit and aim for 3-4 total rounds

- 1a. Kettlebell swing x 10
- 1b. Press-up x failure
- 1c. Jumping lunge x 10
- 1d. Overhead ball slam x 12
- 1e. Barbell bent-over row x 12
- 1f. Plank x 60 secs



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“WHEN I WAS 13, I BENCHED 100KG”

Ollie Clarke on his journey from battling anorexia to competing at World's Strongest Man

Ollie Clarke is one of the strongest men on the planet. The 22-year-old from Bishops Stortford was smashing powerlifting world records when he was 15, and has spent the following years competing in powerlifting and strongman events on both sides of the Atlantic. But his journey to the top of the sport didn't have the best foundations.

Bullied at school for being “quite fat and chubby”, Clarke suffered with body dysmorphia: a mental health condition that caused an obsession with losing weight. Over the years, it developed into anorexia, and it wasn't until he was old enough to join the gym when he was 11 that a switch was flicked, and Clarke shifted his focus from losing weight and dropping body fat to being as strong as he could be.

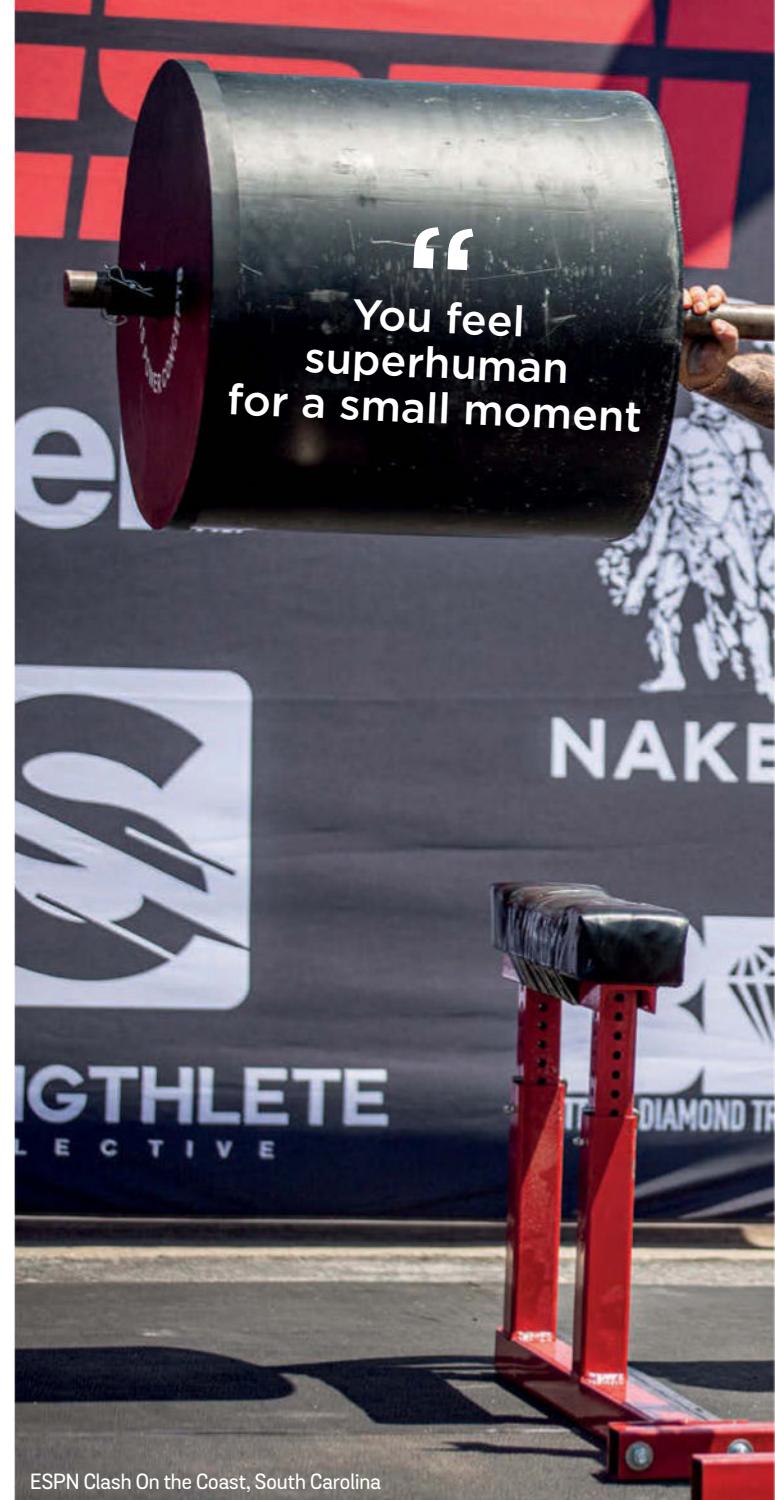
From his first set of weights, to dreaming of joining the World's Strongest Man tour, Clarke shares his journey to becoming a strongman...

When I was in primary school, I was really overweight and bullied because of it. I didn't want to be fat any more but, being so young, I didn't have any idea how to diet or exercise safely. I developed some really unhealthy habits and obsessions with losing weight, and over time it developed into anorexia. I was seeing counsellors and doctors, [I was] in and out of hospitals, but nothing really helped until I was old enough to join a gym.

I was interested in bodybuilding. Seeing people like Arnold Schwarzenegger in movies, I couldn't understand how they got that big and muscley. Coming from the anorexia stuff, and being body-focused and having body dysmorphia, I just wanted to gain loads of muscle and look big and powerful. But by actually doing that and training, I got more interested in the idea of building and having functional strength. Standing on stage posing didn't really appeal to me as much as lifting, competing and being more of an athlete.

When I was 13, I got a powerlifting coach and did a competition four weeks later. At that first competition, I benched 100kg, which was a British record at the time. From 13 to 17, I competed in powerlifting and went to the

“
You feel superhuman for a small moment



ESPN Clash On the Coast, South Carolina

World Powerlifting Championships for 15 and 16-year-olds. I won that and broke a few world records. When I turned 17, I wanted a new challenge, so I did a strongman competition. I was hooked.

A powerlifting competition is just testing the squat, bench press and deadlift. Strongman is a little bit different, which is what I like about it. You've got to be testing your strength as well as your speed, because you've got to do a lot of running events, throwing events – there are even jumping events, a lot of cardio and a lot of endurance.

The feeling that you get is hard to describe. You feel superhuman for a small moment – like you're doing things



no one else has done and no one else can. That rush and adrenaline buzz is addictive.

The biggest squat I've done is 340kg, which was when I was 18. I would say grip events are my weakest, because I've got quite small hands not suited to gripping.

Too many people go too heavy, too quickly. People say it all the time, but you don't realise how important technique is. If you learn an efficient technique, you'll soon be able to go heavier, because you're using the right muscles. Even now, World's Strongest Man athletes will do phases of going super light and practicing the best technique possible. 

Interview: Charlie Allenby

STRENGTH

TIPS

Ollie Clarke's advice for improving across the five 'big lifts'

DEADLIFT

Focus on not just using your lower back, but engaging your hamstrings. Really think about pulling with your hamstrings and legs - pressing the floor away, rather than thinking of lifting the weight up.

SQUAT

The key with the squat is building a strong core. The stronger core you have, the easier it's going to be. A lot of the time, people end up folding and failing lifts - that's because their legs are stronger than their abs.

BENCH PRESS

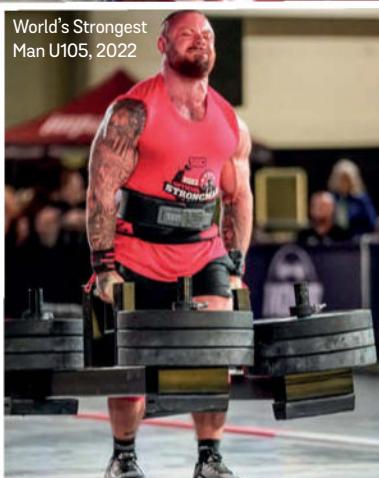
Make sure you're working the assistance muscles, like your triceps, so you can lock out the lift.

OVERHEAD PRESS

With strongman, you're allowed push press, so you can use your legs. It doesn't have to be strict. Really practise drilling the timing of the release with your legs. A lot of the time, people release with their legs first, then their shoulders catch up after, so they're not timing it efficiently.

BARBELL ROW

Pull with your elbows to activate your lats.



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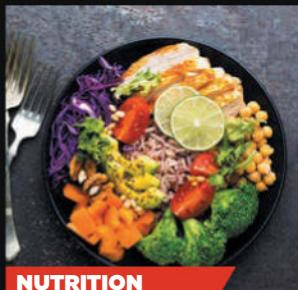
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FITNESS MYTH: SHORT REST PERIODS ARE BETTER FOR MUSCLE GROWTH



MEET THE EXPERT

Ben Carpenter is, in his own words, a 'personal trainer, research nerd, international speaker and your trusted source of no-bullshit fitness information'. Head to bdccarpenter.com

It used to be believed that if your goal was to build muscle mass, you should limit your rest periods between sets. Doing so, it was said, would maximise production of hormones that could facilitate muscle growth. As a result, it was long recommended to rest for three to five minutes between sets if your goal was to increase maximal strength, but limit your rest to just 30 to 60 seconds between sets if you wanted to build muscle mass.

While this sounds exciting on paper, it's known as 'acute research'. It examines changes in the short-term, such as measuring hormones after a single workout, but it doesn't measure long-term changes to muscle growth, which is what we actually care about.

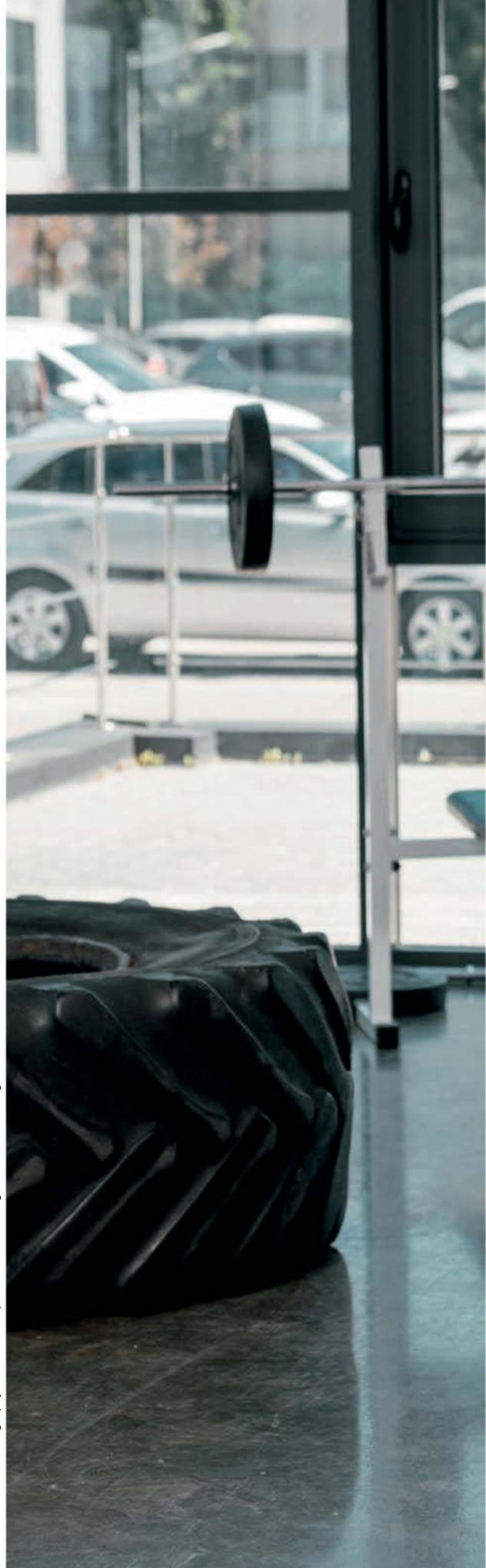
Rest assured

To see whether short rest periods are actually best for muscle growth, one research study split participants into two groups. Both followed exactly the same training programme, with only one differentiator: one group rested for three minutes between sets; the other rested for just one minute. As we would expect, the longer rest periods were better for strength gains (if you rest longer, you are more recovered for each set, so you can lift more weight). However, surprisingly, they were also better for muscle growth.¹

This is not to say that all research points in the same direction, but it does show us that rushing your rest periods isn't a sure-fire path to faster muscle growth. When looking at all the research that tests short vs long rest periods, resting longer between sets appears to be better for strength and, because you can train with heavier weights when you rest for longer, it may also be advantageous for muscle growth.

If you're a powerlifter and your only goal is to lift as much weight as physically possible, you'll want to have long rest periods between sets, as doing sets of heavy squats with only 30-second rest periods will cause your performance to drop like a sack of potatoes. On the other hand, if your goal is to build muscle tissue, know that it can be achieved with short or long rest periods. All of which means you have the flexibility to rest longer when you want to lift heavier weights; but also rest less when you're doing isolation exercises, you're in a rush to finish your workout, or simply because you prefer it.

Photography: Shutterstock | 1. Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research





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Men's Fitness is about more than rippling muscles, or chicken and broccoli dinners. These days, we've expanded our remit slightly. Our extensive collection of workouts, strength training tips and nutrition advice will help you look the part, sure, but it's an unfortunate fact that big muscles don't equate to happiness. Which is why in the pages of our monthly issues and online at **mensfitness.co.uk**, you will also find the tools you need to improve all the unseen aspects of your health, too. If you're looking for celebrity training plans or quick-fix diets, you'll be better served elsewhere. However, if you want to learn how to make a healthy way of living second nature – no matter how busy you are – we've got you covered.

Isaac Williams **Editor**

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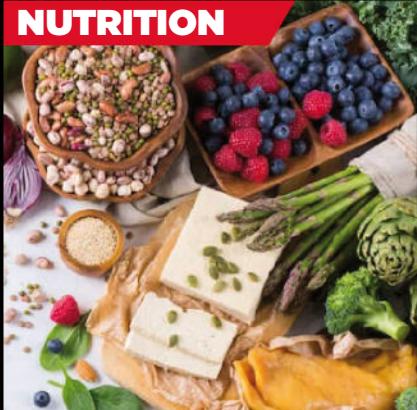
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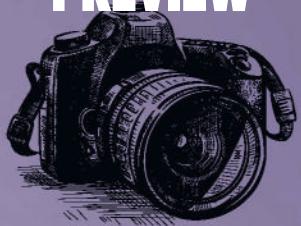
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PICTURE PREVIEW



FITTING IT IN

Inactivity is bad news for just about every aspect of our health. Which means sitting down all day at work should be avoided where possible. From bite-sized chunks of exercise, to a new breed of office cardio machines, from page 30 we explore how work and working out can go hand in hand.

Illustration: Shutterstock



TAURUS

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The Taurus Elite Multi Smith Machine is the one-stop-shop for all things strength and conditioning. Combining **Smith machine, dual pulley, power rack, and more**, this is a comprehensive all-in-one trainer. Designed and manufactured to Taurus' commercial-grade standards, the **Elite Multi Smith Machine** is powerful, durable and versatile.

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STICK A PIN IN IT

Strength training expert Roger Lockridge reviews a squat rack attachment that's perfect for anyone who struggles with conventional back squats

If you're lucky enough to own a squat rack at home, but struggle with traditional back squats, this Lever Arm Rack Attachment could be a genuine game-changer. Combined with a weight belt (which unfortunately is not included), you can perform back-friendly belt squats by loading the arm with weight plates. Rows are also an option, but it was definitely made with squatting in mind.

To see if it's any good, Roger Lockridge spent several weeks testing out the Lever Arm in his converted home gym. Here's his verdict...



MEET THE TESTER

Roger 'Rock' Lockridge has been involved in the fitness world for more than two decades: first, as a personal trainer, then as a freelance writer. You can follow him on Instagram and Twitter @rocklockridge



Signature Fitness Plate-Loaded Lever Arm Rack Attachment

£130.48, [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)

Pros:

- ✓ Squat without pressure on the spine
- ✓ Easy to store away
- ✓ Simple to set up
- ✓ Can be used for curls, rows and other exercises
- ✓ Fits on multiple squat racks

Cons:

- ✗ Requires starting from the bottom of the exercise (the hardest part)
- ✗ Can only hold Olympic plates
- ✗ Dip belt not included
- ✗ Might not fit snug on all racks

The Arm arrives as a single piece with the pin included. All you need to do is choose the position you want to place it on your rack. Once you have the attachment secured, you're ready to load up the plates. A collar wasn't included, but you may not need it since the arm won't be used in a way that makes the plates slide.

A dip belt is required for belt squats, but there isn't one included. The attachment is very durable, though, and it takes less than a minute to set up. You may need to stand on small steps or boards to get a full range of motion for squats or deadlifts, depending on your height. Overall, it will hold up with a lot of weight, and it will be out of the way when you're not using it.

Removing it from the rack is just as easy: take out the hitch pin, then the connecting pin, and the Lever Arm is free.

Room for improvement

There are a few small issues with this attachment. You have to start by connecting the belt at the bottom of the exercise, which may be inconvenient for some lifters. You also need to have your own dip belt, and it only supports plates with two-inch holes.

Is it worth buying?

If you want an alternative for lower-body training, or a way to perform different exercises with limited space, this is a solid item. It won't take up much space, it's budget-friendly and can hold a lot of weight.

TEE TIME

Just because you can throw on any old t-shirt for your gym session, doesn't mean you should. For those who want to train in comfort and style, these are the top tees for the job

 Whether you're swinging heavy metal, plodding pavements or sweating out demons in a hardcore spin session, it's hard to get in the zone unless you feel comfortable and confident. As anyone who has experienced chafing and discomfort in a sweaty cotton tee will tell you, dropping a few extra quid on a good technical top a smart move.

Time to get technical

Unlike regular cotton t-shirts, technical workout tops tend to be made from more advanced moisture-wicking fabrics, or sometimes high-end merino wool. They are designed to be light, to move with your body, and to keep you cool and dry during even the most intense sessions.

So, when you're knocking out your umpteenth burpee or that final sick-making interval – and cursing yourself and the universe – your gym kit won't add unnecessary discomfort, chafing and soggy misery into the already challenging mix.

It's not just moisture-wicking that makes technical workout t-shirts the smarter option, though. They often come with other features that make them a worthwhile investment. That includes breathable mesh panels that improve airflow and ventilation; and a workout-friendly fit that guarantees a good, unrestricted range of movement, leaving you to concentrate on the task at hand.

**BEST FOR VERSATILITY**

Under Armour Rush Seamless Legacy Tee

£53, underarmour.co.uk

For the ultimate in functional workout tees, pull on one of Under Armour's Rush Legacy tops. The Rush line features special minerals embedded in the fabric, to reflect your body's far infrared (FIR) heat 'energy' back into the muscles, to create deeper warmth and aid recovery.

Add to that the Legacy's seamless, soft-knit, four-way stretch design and mesh ventilation zones, and you have a gym shirt that will keep you cool and comfortable.

Fit: ★★★★★ **Comfort:** ★★★★☆ **Sweat-wicking:** ★★★★★ **OVERALL:** ★★★★★

Materials: 52% nylon, 48% polyester

Sizes: Small to XXL

Features: Celliant IR technology / four-way stretch material / mesh ventilation / iridescent logos

Colours: Black / Orange Blast / Pitch Grey / Harbour Blue / Sonar Blue / Chakra

Pros:

- ✓ Great flexible fit
- ✓ Good breathability

Cons:

- ✗ Infrared benefits aren't all that noticeable

BEST FOR STYLE



Tracksmith Strata Tee

£108, tracksmith.com

Tracksmith is fast gaining a reputation for making some of the most stylish running gear around. Its New England-inspired kit, in a wealth of gloriously retro colours, takes a leaf from *Chariots of Fire* and the halcyon heyday of track athletics.

That's not to say performance is anything other than 21st century. The Strata tee is silky soft, fitted and impressively breathable, with an anti-microbial treatment to stay fresher for longer. It also boasts 30+ UV protection.

Fit: ★★★★★ **Comfort:** ★★★★★

Sweat-wicking: ★★★★★ **Overall:** ★★★★★

Materials: 78% nylon, 22% elastane

Sizes: Small to XL

Features: UVA/UVB protection / bonded seams / bacteria and odour-resistant

Colours: Ocean / White / White Ocean

Pros:

- Smart retro style
- Can be worn away from working out

Cons:

- Expensive

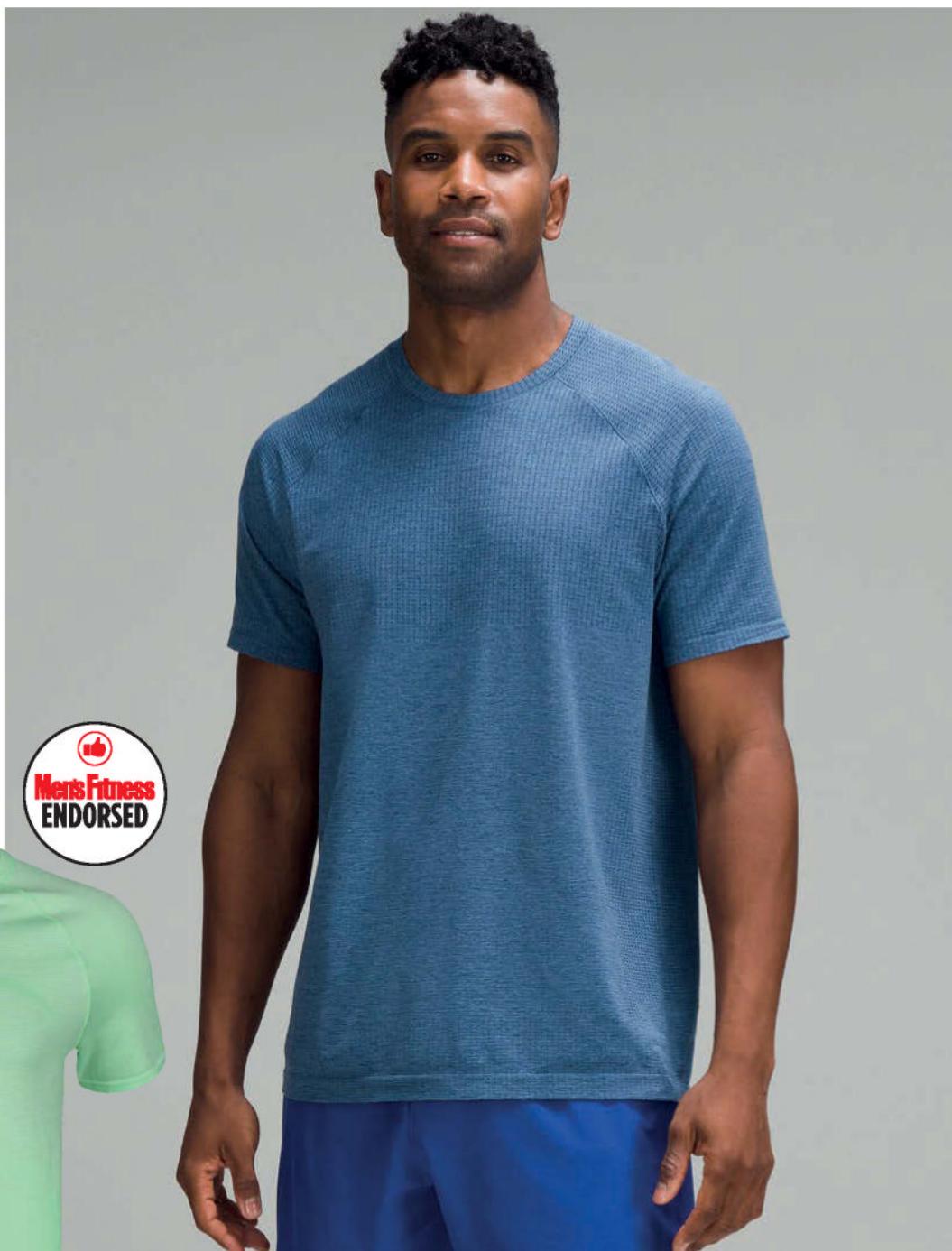


BEST FOR HOT WEATHER

Lululemon Metal Vent Tech Tee
£68, [lululemon.co.uk](https://www.lululemon.co.uk)

With a fantastic fit and some of the best sweat-wicking performance around, this Lululemon tee is a good option for handling those hotter workouts. It helps you stay cool and comfortable, however hard your intensity.

It features a soft, smooth, stretchy fabric with plenty of flex (enabling a full range of motion) and is cut longer in the back for better coverage.

Fit: ★★★★★**Comfort:** ★★★★★**Sweat-wicking:** ★★★★★**OVERALL:** ★★★★★**Materials:** 53% nylon, 40% recycled polyester, 4% elastane, 3% X-Static nylon**Sizes:** XS to XXL**Features:** Breathable mesh construction / minimal seams / bacteria and odour-resistant**Colours:** 14 colours available**Pros:**

- ✓ Great sweat-wicking and cooling
- ✓ Lots of colour options

Cons:

- ✗ Fairly expensive

BEST FOR RAPID DRYING**66North Gretter Tee**£50, [66north.com](https://www.66north.com)

Who better to turn to for kit for big outdoor sessions than Icelandic adventure clothing king, 66North? Its super-light multi-purpose Gretter tee is made for everything from running and hiking to cycling and climbing. It's versatile enough to be a great option for indoor gym sessions, too. With a snug baselayer feel and fast-drying fabric with an anti-odour treatment, it's a top you can wear in comfort for long periods, even under layers. The top utilises Polartec's Delta fabric, made up of interwoven synthetic and natural fibres. The natural fibre absorbs and distributes water (sweat) around the top to keep you cool; the synthetic fibre resists water, to create zones of breathable dryness. An added bonus is 66North's repairs for life scheme, making this even better value.

Fit: ★★★★☆ **Comfort:** ★★★★☆ **Sweat-wicking:** ★★★★★ **Overall:** ★★★★★

Materials: 51% polyester, 45% Tencel, 4% elastane

Sizes: XS to XXL

Features: Breathable mesh fabric / odour-resistant / repairs for life scheme

Colour: Pro Orange

Pros:

- ✓ Incredibly lightweight
- ✓ Repairs for life

Cons:

- ✗ Sizing comes up small
- ✗ Only one colour option

**BEST LONG-SLEEVED TOP****Castore Anatomic Mesh Mix****Panel Training Tee**£70, [castore.com](https://www.castore.com)

If you're looking for a technical tee with long-sleeve coverage, this Castore number is a top choice for tackling intense workouts. Strategically placed panels make for a flexible, ergonomic fit and allow ease of movement – ideal for dynamic outdoor drills.

It goes for a looser fit rather than baselayer-style snugness, so it's more flattering on anyone who's not quite in cover model shape. Elsewhere, mesh back panels improve air flow around your shoulders, with laser-cut eyelets keeping things aerated across the front.

Fit: ★★★★★ **Comfort:** ★★★★★ **Sweat-wicking:** ★★★★★ **Overall:** ★★★★★

Materials: Polyester, elastane

Sizes: XS to XXL

Features: Flat seams / mesh back panel / reflective laser-cut eyelets and logo

Colour: Navy

Pros:

- ✓ Flattering, looser fit
- ✓ Long-sleeve coverage

Cons:

- ✗ Too many seams

BEST FOR YOGA

**Smartwool Intraknit Active Short-Sleeve Tee**

£89.99, smartwool.co.uk

A sustainable alternative to man-made materials like nylon and polyester, merino wool gym shirts can pack just as much of a performance punch as synthetics. The Smartwool Intraknit's merino-Tencel mix ensures it's not only soft, comfortable and a good moisture wicker, but also hard-wearing and versatile.

It's a heavier duty top than most, with a supportive fit and minimal seams. There's plenty of flex for mobility work, and strategic mesh panels to keep air flowing when you crank up the heat.

Fit: ★★★★★ **Comfort:** ★★★★★ **Sweat-wicking:** ★★★★★ **OVERALL:** ★★★★★

Materials: 51% merino wool, 22% polyester, 21% Lyocell, 6% elastane

Sizes: Small to XXL

Features: Mesh ventilation zones / bacteria and odour-resistant

Colours: Lead / Black

Pros:

- ✓ Incredibly comfortable
- ✓ Almost seamless design

Cons:

- ✗ Tight fit
- ✗ Pricey

**Picture Organic Dephi Tech Tee**

£45, picture-organic.com

Another versatile training top suitable for everything from running to lifting, Picture Organic's Dephi Tech Tee hides its high-performance spec behind a classic cotton tee disguise. Those subtle tones and classic styling mean it's a good option for kicking back pre- and post-adventure.

Innovative Poly-Tencel fabric means it's not only soft, comfortable and breathable, but also durable and environment-friendly. There's odour-fighting antimicrobial tech and UPF50+ ultraviolet protection built in, too.

Fit: ★★★★★ **Comfort:** ★★★★★

Sweat-wicking: ★★★★★ **OVERALL:** ★★★★★

Materials: 40% recycled polyester, 48% polyester, 12% Tencel

Sizes: Small to XXL

Features: Ethical and sustainable design / antimicrobial treatment / UPF50+ UV protection / reflective details

Colours: Darkest Spruce / Cashew / Dusky Orchid

Pros:

- ✓ Made from sustainable materials
- ✓ Relaxed, airy fit

Cons:

- ✗ A shade heavy for some workouts



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HERE'S THE BRIEF

The best moisture-wicking underwear designed to give you ultimate support and comfort

► Men, listen up. We know you can hit the gym with your old cotton not-so-tighty whiteys and survive. But life's too short to be suffering uncomfortable pants when you're putting your shoulder to the workout wheel. Whether you're pushing for a squat PB, or you've got everything hanging from the chin-up bar, you deserve the ultimate comfort and unshakeable support you get from a proper pair of the best moisture-wicking underwear.

Wicking benefits

When it comes to exercise, your underwear may not be the first thing on your mind. But discomfort and a lack of support are not what you need when you're working hard. Sporting the right undies during

your sweat sesh not only offers superior comfort and support, but moisture-wicking materials like polyester, nylon, polyamide and merino wool keep you cool and dry, cutting your risk of chafing and irritation.

Some longer baselayer-style briefs even offer compression for targeted support for your muscles, improving circulation and reducing fatigue. Then there's fit. Sports underwear is designed to move with you. Whether you're running, jumping or lifting weights, the last thing you want is to be constantly adjusting your boxers mid-set. With a snug fit and stretchy material, sports underwear stays put without feeling restrictive, so you can focus on your workout without distractions – or wedgies. And let's not forget about hygiene. Sweaty, damp

underwear is a breeding ground for stink-making bacteria. Some sports underwear features antimicrobial fabrics that combat odour. Though you're still going to need to wash them regularly and the best workout smalls survive multiple spin cycles without losing their shape.



MEET THE TESTER

Kieran is a freelance writer and editor working in the space where health, fitness, sports and technology collide. He's also a borderline obsessed runner, who put these briefs through their paces through a combination of pavement pounding and gym-based workouts.

BEST FOR ENDURANCE

CXP Ultralite XP Compression Shorts
£50, cxpofficial.com

The CXP Ultralite XP shorts are more baselayer-style compression shorts than workout boxers, so offer mild compression benefits as well as superb support and comfort. Bonded seams mean zero chafe risk and a multi-panel waistband spreads pressure out evenly.

They're the lightest on test, yet durability and moisture management are first-class. Whether you wear them for regular workouts or sports, longer sessions or multi-hour endurance events, you really can't go wrong with these CXP shorts.

Support: ★★★★ ★ **Comfort:** ★★★★★ **Durability:** ★★★★★
OVERALL: ★★★★★



Materials: 86% polyamide, 14% spandex

Colour: Black

Sizes: Small to XL

Pros:

- ✓ Mildly compressive
- ✓ Bonded anti-chafe seams
- ✓ Excellent durability

Cons:

- ✗ Fairly expensive



BEST FOR SUPPORT**Saxx Kinetic HD**£34, saxx.com

For dynamic workouts, Saxx's trademark BallPark pouch means everything stays put no matter how much you move in these Kinetic HD shorts. That means no rubbing or chafing even during all-out cardio efforts, helped by numerous flatlock seams and good sweat-wicking performance. The long 8-inch inseam gives them a baselayer-like feel, with plenty of stretch without losing their shape. For those that prefer a boxer-style brief, there's also a shorter 5-inch version. If you want moisture-wicking underwear to tackle box jumps, burpees and sprints, look no further than the Saxx Kinetic HD.

Support: ★★★★★ **Comfort:** ★★★★★ **Durability:** ★★★★★ **Overall:** ★★★★★

Materials: 85% nylon, 15% elastane**Colours:** Black / Grey / Grey Stripes**Sizes:** XS to XXL**Pros:**

- ✓ Unique BallPark pouch support
- ✓ Selection of leg lengths

Cons:

- ✗ Slightly scratchy waistband
- ✗ Can struggle to move sweat

**BEST FOR HOT-WEATHER WORKOUTS****Lululemon Always In Motion Boxers**£58 for 3, lululemon.co.uk

Lululemon's wood-based Modal fabric helps produce some of the lightest, comfiest moisture-wicking underwear on test. These 5-inch shorts are versatile enough to wear all day, every day. They have minimal seams and great moisture management, making them the ideal choice for sweat-soaked cardio sessions.

Support: ★★★★★ **Comfort:** ★★★★★ **Durability:** ★★★★★ **Overall:** ★★★★★

Materials: 91% Modal™, 9% elastane**Colours:** 10 colours available**Sizes:** XS to XXXL**Pros:**

- ✓ Incredibly comfortable
- ✓ Subtle crossover styling

Cons:

- ✗ Not the most supportive

**BEST FOR VERSATILITY****Under Armour Tech 6-Inch Boxerjock**£31 for 2, underarmour.co.uk

Under Armour's Boxerjocks feel snug and supportive in all the right places without being tight or restrictive, making them some of the best pairs of moisture-wicking underwear we tried. Their one-piece design means very few seams to chafe delicate skin when you start to sweat, and lightweight material wicks moisture away well, to increase comfort levels. A soft waistband and elastic leg cuffs ensure these boxers stay put no matter how energetic your workout.

Support: ★★★★★ **Comfort:** ★★★★★ **Durability:** ★★★★★ **Overall:** ★★★★★

Materials: 90% polyester, 10% elastane**Colours:** Black / Blue / Red / Grey and Blue / Grey and Red**Sizes:** XS to XXL**Pros:**

- ✓ Comfortable one-piece design
- ✓ Good versatility

Cons:

- ✗ A bit loose for intense workouts



BEST VALUE

Reebok Performance Boxer Briefs

£17 for 3, [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)

If you can't stand splashing out on invisible functional kit like undies, how about these great value Reebok briefs? For less than £6 each, you get comfy do-it-all workout pants that'll double up as regular boxers. There's nothing basic in terms of fit, comfort, support or breathability, as Reebok's boxer briefs perform as well as most on test when your workouts turn tough. For budget underwear, their durability is pretty impressive, too.

Support: ★★★★☆ **Comfort:** ★★★★☆ **Durability:** ★★★★☆

OVERALL: ★★★★☆

Materials: 92% polyester, 8% elastane

Colours: Black / White / Grey Marl

Sizes: Small to XL

Pros:

- ✓ Reinforced supportive pouch
- ✓ Plenty of flexibility

Cons:

- ✗ Flat seams are quite chunky



BEST FOR MOISTURE WICKING

Smartwool Merino Boxer Brief

£44.99, [smartwool.co.uk](https://www.smartwool.co.uk)

If you're after a natural solution to under-short support, we recommend giving Smartwool's Merino Boxer Briefs a go. Merino wool is hard-wearing, versatile and sustainable, and feels luxuriously soft against the skin. The natural properties of wool also mean this pair of underwear has great moisture-wicking properties, as well as being ace at regulating temperature and resisting odour. Nylon reinforces their shape while keeping plenty of stretch in all directions.

Support: ★★★★☆ **Comfort:** ★★★★☆ **Durability:** ★★★★☆ **OVERALL:** ★★★★☆

Materials: 88% merino wool, 12% nylon

Colours: Black / Light Gray Heather / Deep Navy / Sage

Sizes: Small to XXL

Pros:

- ✓ Reinforced supportive pouch
- ✓ Good flexibility

Cons:

- ✗ Lacks lock-tight support
- ✗ Loose leg cuffs can ride up



BEST FOR A SHORTER FIT

Gymshark Sports Tech Boxers

£22 for 2, gymshark.com

Another great-value pair, Gymshark's Sports Tech briefs are simple but effective. Their textured finish gives them extra breathability, sweat-wicking and quick-drying performance.

They offer good support, stretchiness and flexibility, and show no signs of chafing or rubbing when the going gets tough. For those that prefer a shorter-legged boxer, Gymshark's briefs should be in the running.

Support: ★★★★★ **Comfort:** ★★★★★ **Durability:** ★★★★★

OVERALL: ★★★★★

Materials: 87% polyester, 13% elastane

Colour: Black

Sizes: Small to XXXL

Pros:

- ✓ Reinforced supportive pouch
- ✓ Comfortable, wide, soft waistband

Cons:

- ✗ Short legs can ride up
- ✗ Fat flat-lock seams

BEST FOR RUNNING

Runderwear Running Boxers

£49.50 for 3, runderwear.com

These 5-inch boxers carry Runderwear's no-chafe guarantee and deliver support where it matters most to runners of any distance. The circular-patterned fabric feels smooth and comfortable against the skin - a prerequisite if you're logging serious miles. Heat and moisture management are first-class, too, with reliable sweat-wicking performance and impressive breathability. It's no surprise that for serious runners, Runderwear's boxers have got you covered.

Support: ★★★★★ **Comfort:** ★★★★★ **Durability:** ★★★★★ **OVERALL:** ★★★★★

Materials: 92% recycled polyamide, 8% elastane

Colours: Black / Blue / Teal

Sizes: Small to XXL

Pros:

- ✓ Chafe-free seamless design
- ✓ Good durability

Cons:

- ✗ Silicone leg grips sometimes irritate





MAKE IT WORK

With mounting evidence around the damaging effects of sedentary working lives, **Joe Phelan** explores how exercise and general movement can be incorporated into office hours

Most of us build our days around our work. Full-time employees in the UK spend an average of 36.4 hours every week engaged in their primary occupation. That's almost 2,000 hours a year. By contrast, UK adults only spend around 90 minutes every week doing moderate physical activity – a mere 78 hours annually, and half as long as we spend sat on the toilet.

Lack of time is often cited as a key hurdle stopping people from exercising more frequently. From having too many social responsibilities, to being overburdened at the office, many are, understandably, guilty of putting other responsibilities ahead of their exercise routine. But what if those long hours at work could be utilised more effectively?

The body keeps the score

Before fully assessing the viability of effectively combining work and working out, it's important to understand and appreciate how the body can be negatively impacted by hours spent staring at a screen and remaining slumped in a chair.

"Research has shown that people who sit for hours on end develop chronic diseases, including diabetes, heart disease and dementia, as well as several types of cancer, at much higher rates than people who move throughout their day," notes Keith Diaz, assistant professor of behavioral medicine at Columbia University Medical Center. "They are also at much greater risk of early death. The reality that we are learning is that your body wasn't designed to be idle for long periods of time. Sitting for hours on end at work is an occupational hazard that cannot be undone by exercising



for 30 to 60 minutes either before or after work."

Numerous studies support Diaz's statement. Remaining static in an office chair for an extended period is not something our bodies deal well with. Sitting for prolonged stretches can promote a sedentary lifestyle, something that's linked to various health problems, from weight gain and obesity to an increased risk of cardiovascular issues. Additionally, poor posture can cause back, neck, and shoulder pain; negatively impact blood sugar regulation, blood pressure and cholesterol levels; and impair blood circulation, leading to an increased risk of blood clots.

"There is growing evidence that spending large periods of the day inactive and sitting down can be bad for our health," adds Dr Richard Pulsford, a senior lecturer in physical activity and public health at the University of Exeter. "A good example of this is the impact on how we process blood sugar. When we're up and moving, the use of our muscles helps to keep our blood sugar levels down, because sugar is moved into the muscles to fuel the work they are doing. When we sit down, particularly after meals, our blood sugar levels stay higher, and

that's linked with a risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

"If working from home means a more inactive day, that could certainly have a negative impact on people's health. However, working from home may also provide some opportunities. For example, the extra time gained by not commuting can leave time for more active or health-promoting pastimes. I get up from my desk a couple of times an hour and try to vary my posture, while I'm also lucky enough to have a height-adjustable standing desk at home. But my job is largely inactive, and at times long periods of sitting are unavoidable."

No pace like home

This is a point built upon by Dylan Thompson, a professor of human physiology in the Department for Health at the University of Bath.

"One of the unintended negative consequences of working from home," he says, "is that you lose the physical activity that is associated with going to and being at work. This incidental activity might not sound like much, but it all adds up – potentially to hundreds of calories over the course of a day. The walk to and from the

car/bus/tube, the short walks around buildings to meet with colleagues, going for lunch, even walking to the loo. At home, everything is so close, so if you are working from home, it's really important to build these things back in, so that you don't become more inactive than you would be in the office."

Diaz admits that while he is very aware of the problems associated with lack of movement, and though he spends much of his life studying and highlighting the issues, he finds that he still needs to put in a concerted effort to work in a way that doesn't cause harm. It is, he points out, easy to forget to move if it isn't embedded in your routine:

"I try to fit it into the natural rhythms and routines of my work. For example, if I have to take a phone call, I walk and talk. For work meetings, whenever logically possible, I have walking meetings, where we walk the halls or walk outside. Instead of typing an email to a colleague, I walk to their desk and talk to them in-person. However, what's important to remember is that it's OK to sit for some parts of your workday – just not all of it."

OFFICE UPGRADES

These pieces of kit can help you burn calories while you work

WalkingPad R1 Pro 2in1 Folding Treadmill

£699, uk.walkingpad.com
The R1 Pro is foldable, sturdy, and perfectly designed for people who want to add a little bit of cardio into their work routine. Complete with a digital monitor that simultaneously displays time, speed, steps and calories burned.



Anneka Office Under Desk Bike

£369.99, furniturebox.co.uk
This easy-to-use cycling desk chair provides a simple way to release mood-boosting endorphins and increase your heart rate. It's fully adjustable, and has a handy battery-operated display that shows average speed, time spent cycling and calories burned.



FlexiSpot Cycle Desk Bike V9 Pro

£299.99, flexispot.co.uk
It's like your classic static exercise bike, but with some space for your laptop. Simple to construct and with plenty of adjustability, this bike offers the perfect way to inject a cycle into your otherwise sedentary working day.



Cubii Seated Elliptical Trainer

£130, argos.co.uk
This compact seated elliptical makes exercise easy, regardless of age, fitness level or office location. It comes with eight levels of resistance and a simple built-in monitor.



Rise of the machines

With the side effects of inactivity becoming increasingly difficult to ignore, a new breed of workout equipment has been spawned: the office exercise machine. But are treadmill desks and the like actually capable of helping people remain healthy at work, or are they little more than an expensive fad? Do they have a role to play, or would it simply be more beneficial to get up and take a brisk walk?

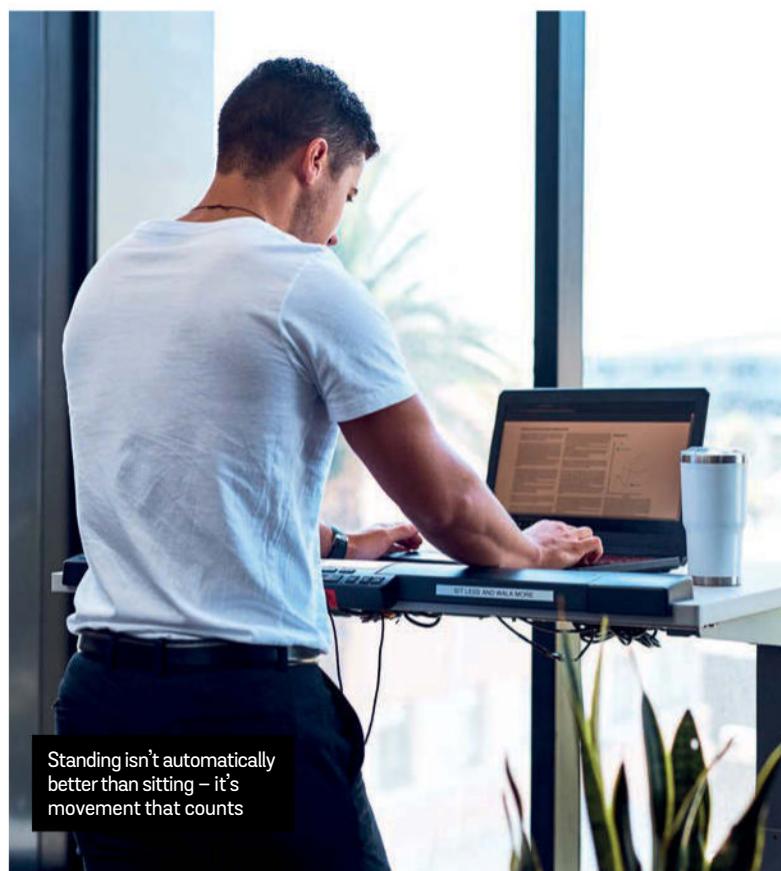
"Active workstations, like treadmill desks and cycling desks are, I think, an effective solution to helping workers combat the health harms of sitting," Diaz says. "But the key here is the word 'active'. Using a standing desk or exercise ball to sit is not an activity. Your body is still not moving, and that's unhealthy. Unfortunately, I think standing desk manufacturers have capitalised on the news headlines that 'sitting is the new smoking' and have largely succeeded in convincing the public that standing is a healthy alternative to sitting.

"There is no great scientific evidence yet that standing is any healthier. Some studies actually suggest it could be more harmful, especially if you stand still for



long periods of time. So, if you're looking to upgrade your workstation to reduce the time you spent sitting, go with active workstations that get your body moving."

According to research published in the *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, study subjects burned 80 calories an hour while sitting, while those who stood burned about 88 calories every hour. Walking, on the other hand, burned 210 calories in the same time period. Being active, as Diaz states, is far more impactful than choosing to either stand or sit while in the office. Equipment can, undoubtedly, play a role in promoting a healthier work life, but merely purchasing the



Standing isn't automatically better than sitting – it's movement that counts

kit is not enough – it needs to be properly utilised.

"The use of some of this technology does fit well with scientific studies that show accumulating more movement in simple ways can benefit your health," Dr Pulsford adds. "The evidence for simply standing up, however, is less clear in terms of benefits to metabolic markers like blood sugar. There is some evidence that prolonged and sustained standing [at desks] may cause musculoskeletal issues. However, if standing helps you move more, then further benefits could follow."

The bottom line

There is no magic piece of equipment that immediately delivers results in terms of wellbeing. Health improvements can be achieved while in the office or working from home, but it's entirely dependent on a willingness to move and the ability to effectively insert activity into a working day.

"The reality is that many people have jobs where they have no choice but to sit for eight hours or more a day," admits Diaz. "The best thing they can do is to find ways to move outside of work. Different combinations of exercise and movement can be used to offset the harms of sitting. People can adopt a mix of activities that work best for them. Exercise in the morning for an hour and do light activities for a few hours in the evening. Even things like housework, playing with the kids or walking the dog can make a real difference. All movement counts. While it's OK to unwind at the end of the day to watch TV or surf your phone, don't do it for hours after you've already sat all day at work."



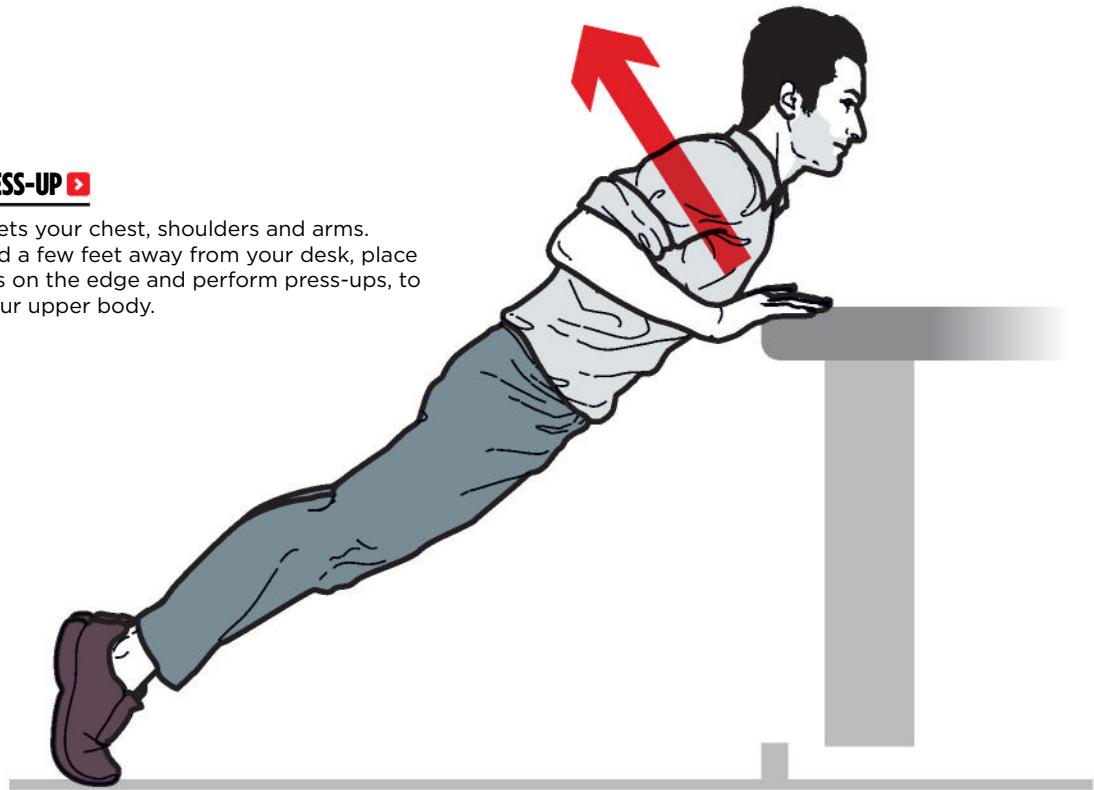
OFFICE EXERCISES

Break up your working day with these bodyweight movements

1. DESK PRESS-UP

Why: Targets your chest, shoulders and arms.

How: Stand a few feet away from your desk, place your hands on the edge and perform press-ups, to engage your upper body.

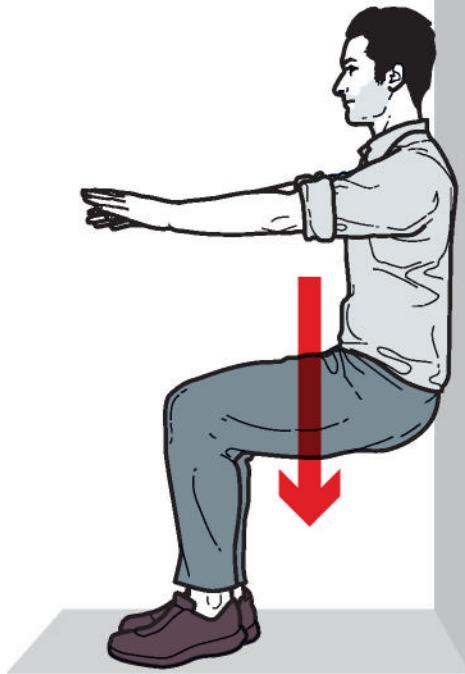


2. CHAIR DIP

Why: Chair dips primarily work your triceps.

How: Sit on the edge of a sturdy chair, place your hands on the edges beside your hips, and lower your body by bending at the elbows.

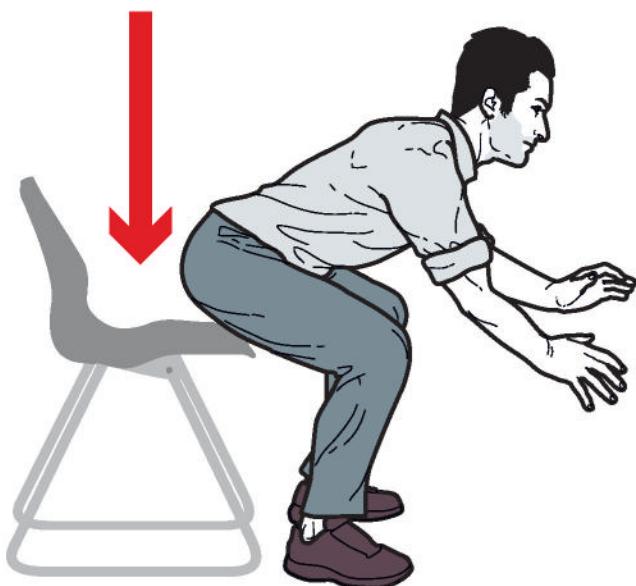




3. WALL SIT

Why: Wall sits engage your quads, hamstrings and glutes. By holding a static position with your knees at a 90-degree angle, you'll build strength and endurance in your legs.

How: Stand against a wall and slide down until your knees are at a 90° angle, as if you were sitting in an invisible chair. Hold.



4. SQUAT

Why: The ultimate compound exercise, targeting multiple muscle groups, including your quads, hamstrings, glutes and core.

How: Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, hinge at the hips to lower your body as if sitting back into a chair, then rise back up and squeeze your glutes as you stand.



5. LUNGE

Why: Lunges primarily target your quadriceps, hamstrings and glutes. They also engage your core and improve balance.

How: Step forward with one leg, lowering your body until both knees are bent at a 90° angle. Alternate legs and repeat to work your lower body and improve proprioception.



6. DESK PLANK

Why: By assuming a plank position with your forearms on the desk, you engage your abs, lower back and other smaller stabilising muscles.

How: Place your forearms on your desk, extend your legs behind you and hold a straight plank position.





7. CALF RAISE

Why: As the name suggest, this is an isolation movement to target your calf muscles.

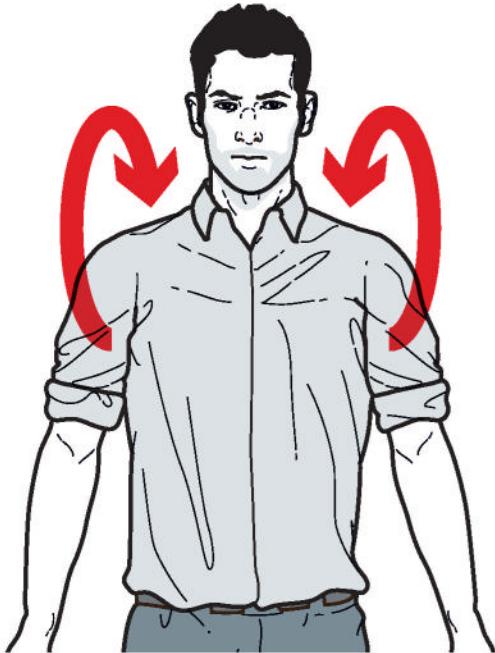
How: Stand with your feet hip-width apart, rise onto your toes, hold for a few seconds, then lower your heels back down.



8. DESK LEG EXTENSION

Why: Primarily to target your quads.

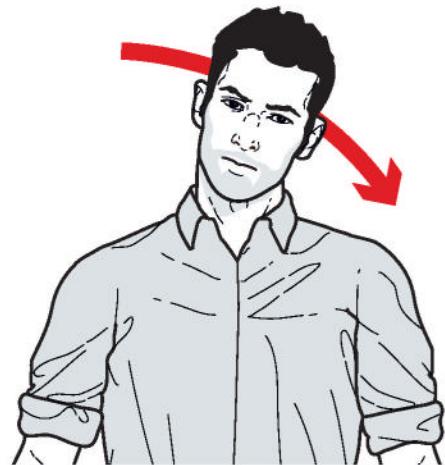
How: Sit on a chair and extend one leg forward, keeping it parallel to the ground. Hold for a few seconds, then lower it back down and repeat with the other leg.



9. SHOULDER ROLL

Why: Shoulder rolls help to alleviate tension in your shoulder and neck area, reducing stiffness and improving flexibility. They can also enhance posture and reduce discomfort caused by sitting for extended periods.

How: Sit or stand tall, then roll your shoulders forward and back in a circular motion.



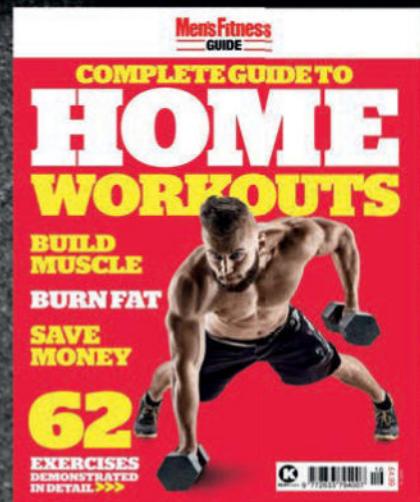
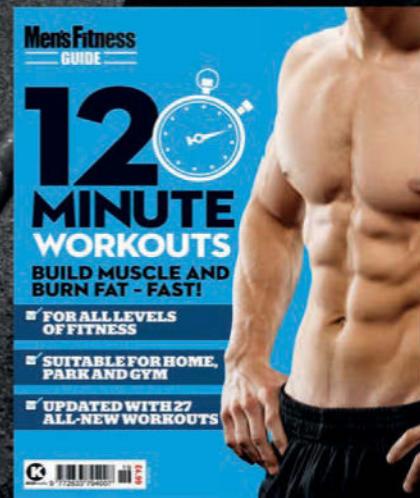
10. NECK STRETCH

Why: Neck stretches help to relieve tension and improve flexibility in the neck and upper back. They can also reduce discomfort caused by poor posture and sedentary work.

How: Gently tilt your head to the side, bringing your ear closer to your shoulder. Hold for a few seconds, then repeat on the other side.

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CAMPING CONTENT

Why the secret to happiness could be
nights under the stars



In 2022, UK residents took an estimated 16.7 million camping and caravanning trips. It's a classic British holiday: a back-to-basics experience that encourages simplicity and self-reliance.

With dual cost-of-living and environmental crises continuing to take their toll, camping's popularity is continuing to rise. And research recently conducted by Liverpool John Moores University and Sheffield Hallam University found that it has benefits beyond fresh air and its relative affordability – it concluded that camping actually makes us happier.

The study, which included a survey of nearly 11,000 campers and non-campers, assessed individuals' attitudes towards all types of camping. The researchers wanted to discover how engaging in camping impacts people's stress levels, happiness and overall wellbeing. For those who camp regularly, the positive findings are unlikely to come as a surprise.

The report discovered that 97% of campers participate in the endeavour primarily to feel happy, with 93% saying they value camping for the benefits it provides to their health and wellbeing. Almost half (48%) of campers said they feel happy every day – even when not camping – compared with around one-third (35%) of non-campers. Additionally, 44% of campers were deemed to have 'optimal' mental health, compared with 31% of non-campers; while 88% of camping enthusiasts were found to have 'higher levels of psychological wellbeing' than their non-camping contemporaries. ➤

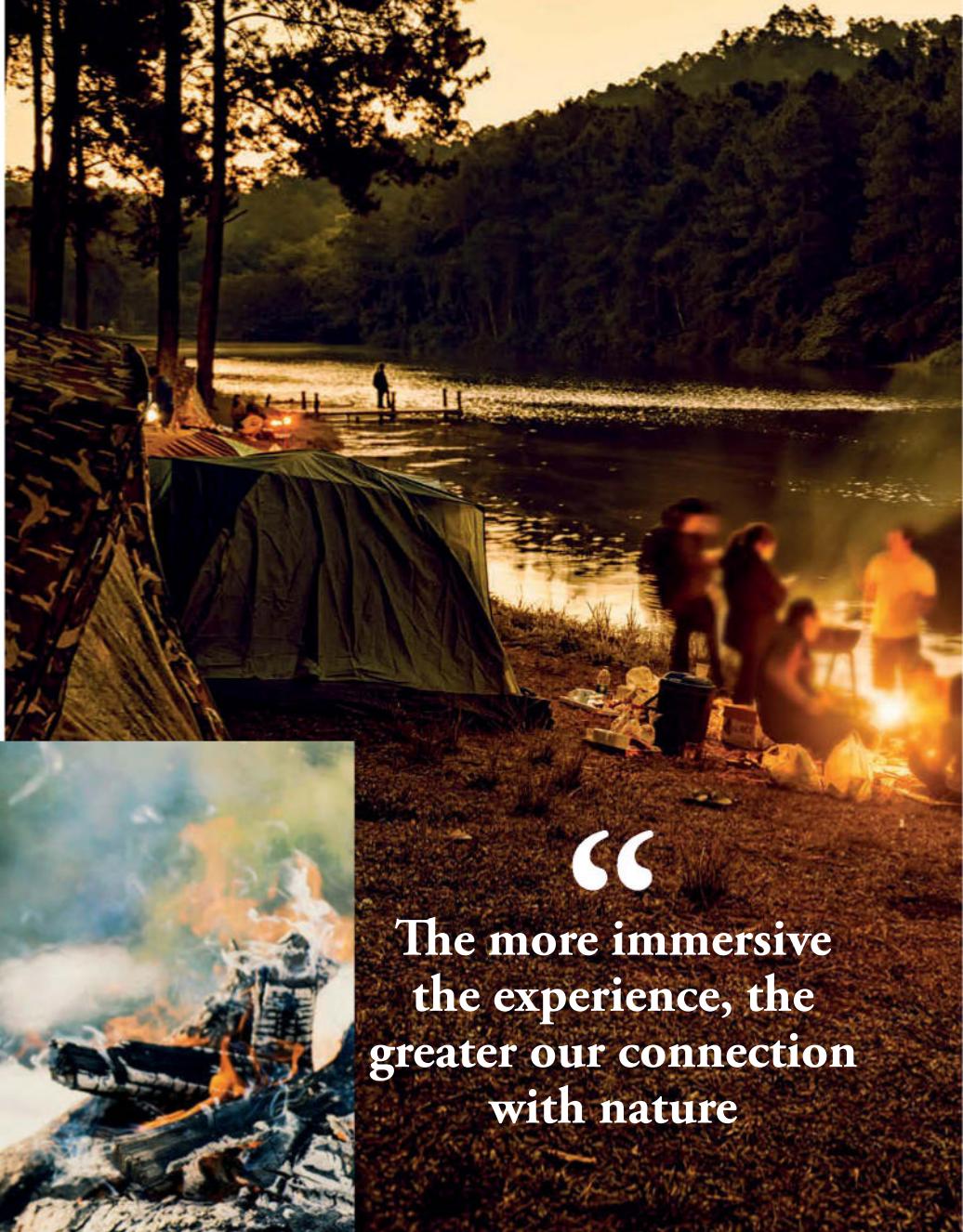


Nurtured by nature

"We are evolved mammals who have an innate need to connect and be surrounded by nature," explains Justin Hollander, a professor of urban and environmental policy and planning at Tufts University, Massachusetts. "Socio-biologists call this 'biophilia', from the Greek for 'love of nature'. Numerous studies have shown that seeing nature and greenery helps make humans calmer, relaxes us, improves our mood and can hasten recovery from illness."

According to a 2019 paper, written by University of Chicago psychologist Marc Berman and his then-student Kathryn Schertz, green spaces [any vegetated land] near schools 'promote cognitive development in children',

Tea by the campfire: one of life's simple pleasures



while green views near children's homes 'promote self-control behaviours'. Proximity to greenery also benefits adults, according to Berman, who ascertained that individuals living in public housing surrounded by plenty of green space 'showed better attentional functioning' than people living in neighbourhoods without trees, parks or gardens.

And, research seems to suggest, merely thinking about nature is liable to be mentally rewarding. A 2020 study, published in the peer-reviewed journal *Frontiers in Psychology*, noted that

'more than 100 experiments' have found that simply showing people pictures or videos of natural environments, or creating 'immersive virtual environments with natural elements', can significantly boost mood, improve cognitive functions, make people less stressed and even reduce pain.

Dr Mark Leather, associate professor of education and outdoor learning at Plymouth Marjon University, is fully sold on the value of the natural world.

"Research has evidenced that green spaces and blue spaces are great for

The more immersive the experience, the greater our connection with nature

us physiologically, as well as psychologically," he says. "I have been 'self-medicating' for years; I'm happiest at the beach, on a boat, up a mountain or in the middle of high moorland."

Being in nature, according to Dr Peter Coventry, a senior lecturer in health services at the University of York, grants people the opportunity to "replenish and restore" depleted resources, such as attention, which can easily get sapped via our regular day-to-day activities.

"Nature can give rise to what might be called involuntary attention, where our focus is drawn to things without effort, prompting curiosity, enjoyment,



“CAMPING ENCOURAGES YOU TO ADOPT A MORE NATURAL CYCLE”

Wildlife photographer Phil Hall on what camping means to him

“Wildlife photography is a discipline that requires patience, diligence, and – let’s be honest – a fair bit of luck. That’s partly why it’s so rewarding when you get the perfect shot. It also necessitates immersing yourself in your surroundings; you have to blend in and cause as little disruption as possible, and that’s what makes camping invaluable. I’ve taken my camera and tent to some pretty hostile environments, from the high Arctic of Svalbard to the deserts of the UAE, and I’ve never wanted for a hotel. To some extent, camping encourages you to adopt a more natural cycle; you wake up with the sun’s rise and you sleep when it sets. It’s as humbling as it is serene. Camping has elevated every shoot I’ve been on. The camera is the first thing I pack, but my tent is always a very close second.”

fulfilment, or possibly states of mind that block out the background noise in our lives,” Dr Coventry adds. “The more immersive the experience, the greater our connection with nature. Doing things that can connect us with the outdoors, like camping, can be good for our mental and our physical health. Camping, walking, or even outdoor yoga, for example, can boost activity levels.”

Released tent-sion

Becky Angell is one of the country’s most vocal supporters of the great outdoors. She spends much of her life wild camping, trekking across the Peak



“
**The longer I spend in the
 countryside, the more I’m drawn
 to its tranquillity and peace**



District, and motivating other people to step out of their comfort zone and into the wilderness via her blog and social media accounts (@beckytheraveller). “My first experiences in rural areas were

very positive,” she says, “and as I’ve got older, I’ve found the longer I spend in the countryside, the more I’m drawn to its tranquillity and peace. I love listening to birds singing, hearing water flowing over rocks and feeling a sense of calm when outdoors. I love camping. I feel happy sitting in my tent and watching the world go by – there’s something lovely about the simplicity. I love when I’m wild camping, carrying everything I need on my back and knowing that’s all I’ll need.”

Dr Coventry, like many of those who promote the virtues of getting outdoors, is confident that the enduring popularity of camping, when coupled with a growing awareness that human

actions are damaging the planet, will play a role in motivating people to be more eco-conscious.

“The world is facing multiple crises owing to climate change and biodiversity loss,” he says. “I’m passionate about promoting the health benefits of being in nature, but also the need for people to connect with the natural world in ways that can encourage pro-environmental behaviours and more sustainable ways of living. Camping has always been popular, but there has been an increased awareness of the benefits of being outdoors since Covid, and perhaps that is spilling over into an uptick in people’s enthusiasm for more outdoor pursuits.”





Photography: Alasdair Cusick

Spreading the word

Education, Dr Leather points out, is key to getting people to adopt green approaches to living, but also in terms of getting them outdoors in the first place:

"Outdoor education is a vital approach to education. It provides authenticity of experience, allowing us to build curriculum subjects around real-life experiences. I have no doubt that outdoor activities will continue to blossom – just look at the growth of climbing walls and forest schools. Over the last 25 years, I've personally witnessed the success of outdoor education: all I have to do is go down to my local beach, regardless of the time

of the year, and see the huge numbers of people surfing."

Of course, while camping and various other outdoor pursuits are ostensibly open to all, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, especially those from inner-city areas, are far less likely to take part in camping or other rural activities.

"The hurdles can be massive," says Dr Leather. "Some of the poorest kids in Plymouth have never been to the beach, or just up the road to Dartmoor. Encouraging people into the outdoors and to green spaces if they live in a city is a challenge."

It's a point that Dr Coventry is keen to expand on:

"Access to the outdoors is not equitable. There are many groups who are often excluded from taking part in activities in nature, especially ethnic minorities or those from more deprived backgrounds. With the cost-of-living crisis impacting on people, it's also difficult for some families to take trips, or to afford what can be expensive kit needed to do things like rock climbing or canoeing."

There are over 2,000 campsites across the UK, while wild camping is



Picture yourself sitting outside your tent in the early morning, listening to the dawn chorus and watching the sun rise

becoming more popular every year, especially in Scotland where, thanks to the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, it's now legal across most of the country. However, heading into the sticks and living off your wits for a night or two can be daunting for those new to camping, so what's the best way to get started?

"Think about warmth, comfort and light," says Simon McGrath, head of communications at the Camping and Caravanning Club. "Ensure you have an adequate sleeping bag for the time of year, and a roll mat to insulate you from the cold floor and provide a more comfortable night. Also, accept that you'll probably wake up early. If you can picture yourself sitting outside your tent in the early morning, listening to the dawn chorus and watching the sun rise, then you'll be blissfully happy." 



BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

If this feature has conjured up childhood memories of freezing cold nights and claustrophobic sleeping bags, these products are proof that comfort and camping can go hand in hand

Thule Approach

£2,500, [thule.com](https://www.thule.com)

If you want the van life experience without having to buy and maintain an actual campervan, the Thule Approach could be right up your street. This rooftop tent makes adventures accessible, regardless of your ride.

First choose your spot, then install the tent on your roof-rack using the lockable mounting brackets – it takes minutes and is a complete gamechanger, significantly cutting installation time over other rooftop tents. The brackets lock it in place for added security.

The modern shape, with an outward-angled entrance, maximises interior space, so there's room for two adults (plus a child if you insist). Simply climb the handy ladder and get cosy in your sleeping bag or under a duvet. Panoramic windows make it easy to enjoy the views from your elevated position – whether it's a sunset, a clear stargazing night or a beautiful sunrise the following morning. While no one really wants to go camping in the rain, this is the UK... so if there is a major downpour, you can simply make use of the three-mode removable rain cover.

The Thule Approach opens up life off the beaten path for those of us who don't have a van. And if you really get into it, Thule also sells a compatible annex and awning.



Helinox Chair Zero

£135, [helinox.eu](https://www.helinox.eu)

The ultimate go-anywhere chair, this Helinox job weighs just 490g (510g with bag) – simply strap it to your backpack and you're good to go. With a neat pack size of 35x10x10cm, the Chair Zero features light but strong aluminium alloy poles and a single shock-corded structure, making it easy and quick to set up – and equally speedy to pack up. You'll never sit in sheep crap again.



Nemo Roamer Camping Mat

From £250, [wildbounds.com](https://www.wildbounds.com)

Proof that camping doesn't have to mean roughing it, the Roamer provides home-style comfort in a field. This self-inflating mattress uses high-volume air channels to speed up inflation and deflation, while the micro-adjustable valve allows you to fine tune firmness. The stretch-top fabric conforms to your body, and it's made of 100% recycled fabrics.



MSR WindBurner Coffee Press Kit

£26 (+ £170), msrgear.com

A fresh brew of coffee is easy to make wherever you're camping: simply turn your MSR WindBurner Stove System into a rapid (and windproof) brewing machine with the Coffee Press Kit. The press features a stainless steel strainer disc and a flexible perimeter gasket to seal out grounds for the freshest, cleanest coffee. The kit even lays flat for packing.



Night Owl Sherpa Fleece Outdoor Duvet

£70, finebedding.co.uk

Short of covering the inside of your tent with Spider-Man wallpaper, you'll never make camping feel exactly like home... but with this duvet you might come close. The soft and fluffy Sherpa fleece lining will keep you nice and warm, while Teflon EcoElite tech provides an outer layer that's water-repellent and stain-resistant.



Outwell Collaps Kettle 2.5l

£55, outwell.com

Pop up this collapsible silicone kettle when you need a camp brew, then give it a push from the top to fold it back down for space-saving storage. The tough materials ensure longevity; the wide base gives stability.



Cadac 2 Cook 2 Pro Deluxe QR

£145, cadacuk.com

Campsite cooking is as easy as being at home with this innovative dual burner. Simply lift the lid, turn on the gas and decide whether you'll use it like a traditional hob, or cook on the ceramic flat or ribbed grill plates.



CENTRE OF ATTENTION

With adult ADHD diagnoses on the rise, *MF* writer

Nathan O'Hagan reflects on his own experience of

recently being diagnosed with the disorder ➤

Those two hours were probably the longest I'd been sat in one place for as long as I can remember.

'As long as I can remember' isn't necessarily that long, however, because the reason I had been sitting in that meeting over Microsoft Teams was to be assessed for the final time by a forensic psychologist for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

The diagnostic tool psychologists use is called DSM-5. This sets out two sets of symptoms: inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity. A patient has to score five out of nine on either one of these to meet the criteria of ADHD. I was told I scored seven out of nine on both sides. Pretty conclusive, then.

At 45, I am one of a growing number of people receiving this type of diagnosis in middle age rather than childhood.

"There has been a sharp increase in diagnoses of ADHD and ASD in middle-aged people," a senior clinician in a mental health and neurodevelopmental service told me. This is largely due to

a "general growth of awareness of neurodiversity, including public figures with diagnoses, internet communities and information sharing about neurodiverse conditions; and people's kids being diagnosed in early childhood because of better awareness in schools, and then adult family members being diagnosed."

How I got here

About ten years ago, during a lengthy episode of depression and anxiety, I was referred to my local community mental health team. During conversations with a psychiatrist and a mental health nurse, it was suggested that I displayed many traits of both autism and ADHD, and I was referred to be assessed, while the psychiatrist and nurse focused on treating

my depression. I never heard back from anyone regarding the referral but, with my mental health pretty stable, it didn't seem that important. Then came lockdown.

No pub, no football, no gigs and no chance to see my mates certainly brought about the kind of introspection and self-reflection that many felt. I didn't experience any serious crisis during that time, but I don't think any of us survived those dark days with our mental health entirely unscathed, and I decided this was as good a time as any to finally pursue the referral that was now about seven years overdue. Following a visit to my GP, a wait that felt interminable followed, before I finally sat through my first online assessment.

Barely halfway through the appointment, I was told that I clearly had traits of both autism and ADHD. Due to the vagaries of the assessment systems, I was also told that at this time I would only be assessed for one condition or the other. I found this



ADHD

frustrating and difficult to understand, but a clinical decision was made that the ADHD symptoms were the more urgent, so another online appointment was set up, with the focus to be almost solely geared towards assessing that.

With the multiple-appointments format, plus the significant gap between each session, the wait felt tortuous at times. The same clinician told me that is sadly commonplace, with waits for

assessment ranging from two years, to as long as ten years in some areas. I'm a middle-aged bloke with a fairly stable life, but still the delays felt almost cruel. You can imagine how hard the process must be for a child or young person, who is genuinely struggling, facing this kind of wait.

During initial assessments, there were a lot of questions asked about my schooling. It now seems glaringly obvious that I was pretty much a textbook example of a neurodiverse child. Had I not been a product of 1980s British schooling, I would surely have been assessed accordingly, but back then, there was little to no such framework in place anywhere, and certainly not in my northern comprehensive. Words like 'neurodiverse' hadn't even been coined. Children were just lazy or disruptive.

Daily distractions

As the sessions progressed, and particularly in that final session, the emphasis was very much on what daily effects ADHD might be having on me.

The most obvious is the struggle to complete even straightforward tasks. The sobriquet 'Half a Job O'Hagan', applied by my mum in childhood, is an apt one. Whether it's housework, a piece of writing, or anything else, I can almost

guarantee that just minutes into one task I'll be distracted by another. And then another. And then I'll catch myself staring into space, lost in thought over something tangential, if not completely irrelevant. On an average day, I have about six hours while my kids are at school – six hours which, in theory, need to be divided between housework and writing. With an organised, focused mind, this would be ample: between one and two hours on the housework, the rest for writing, but I'd estimate I lose at least half of this time each day. By the time the window of time is closing, I'm usually anxious and rushing to get things done, as well as feeling angry with myself that yet again I've let a day slip away from me.

Most impactful, though, is the effect it has on conversation, where I struggle to maintain focus on anything I'm being told for more than a few seconds at a time before my mind again drifts in various other directions. I may pick up the first part, then my mind will drift far away, sometimes coming back in for the end so I'm trying to piece together shattered fragments. Sometimes I'll only come back in when asked for a response or opinion. Then I'm floundering around trying to pick out relevant bits I've absorbed, in order

SPOT THE SIGNS

Could you be an adult with undiagnosed ADHD? If these symptoms sound like you (or someone you know), it might be worth a visit to your GP

Carelessness/lack of attention to detail
Starting a new task before completing the current one

Lack of organisation

Struggling to focus/prioritise

Regularly losing/misplacing items, such as keys

General forgetfulness

Restlessness and edginess

Difficulty keeping quiet and speaking out of turn

Missing social cues, such as blurting out responses and interrupting others

Mood swings, irritability and quick temper

Inability to deal with stress

Extreme impatience







Photography: Shutterstock

to formulate a response. It's not that I'm not interested in what people have to say, it's just that every single word potentially triggers an entirely separate train of thought.

Worse still is when conversation is happening in a crowded place, such as a pub. All the above issues are hugely amplified by the distractions of background noise. If I'm part of a group conversation, it's less of an issue; I can lurk on the sidelines a little, re-joining the chat when able. It's when a larger group breaks off into separate little pockets of chat that it kicks in, because that's when there is more expectation on me individually to take in what's being said – and to contribute. Which is difficult when you find yourself unconsciously tuning into the conversation happening on the other side of your table, and then on the table next to you, and then on the sound of payment machines beeping, and then the sound of a door closing. Worse, this also happens when I'm the one speaking, so I might simply trail off mid-sentence, my attention dragged in so many directions that it becomes impossible for me to refocus on what I was originally saying. I may only realise later on that I've done it, but I'm often aware of it in the moment. I know I should simply say, "Sorry, where was I?" and attempt to resume, but when my pre-existing social anxiety disorder is added to the mix – and then further exacerbated by being a few pints deep – there's just no way back in for me. I'm left feeling self-conscious and weird – and probably appearing that way, too.

Going to the pub with my mates makes up the large majority of what remains of my social life, and knowing that will happen at least once during the course of an evening means that I can rarely look forward to it without some level of anxiety.

Which is what I hate about my ADHD: what it robs me of. It robs me of the ability to socialise anxiety-free, of the ability to engage in conversation without it feeling like a massive, exhausting task. It robs me of the ability to focus on what I need to do, like managing a household, and what I want to do, like writing. I've had three novels published, as well as various articles and features, which isn't bad by any stretch. But how much more might I have got done if I was able to sit at my laptop for more than half an hour at a time?

Mixed emotions

In the build-up to my final assessment, I was unsure how I'd feel, whatever the verdict, but when I heard confirmation, the relief was almost overwhelming. Of course, the diagnosis opens up many questions for me going forward, but in the short-term at least, it offered me some level of validation. The knowledge that, yes, I am just wired differently to most, that my brain does function differently to most people's, brought instant reassurance.

So, what next? Getting the expected diagnosis is just the first step to managing the disorder. I was offered two treatment options: medication and counselling. I chose a combination of the two, with a strong emphasis on medication. At this point in my life, I'm less interested in sitting in a room with a group of strangers than I am in taking a pill that will hopefully have some positive impact.

The pill in question will be methylphenidate, a medication used to treat ADHD in children

and adults. Frustratingly, it's likely to be another wait of three or four months before I reach the front of the waiting list and can begin treatment. Still, after a lifetime of these symptoms, and a years-long diagnosis process, what's a few more months?

It's an odd feeling to know that, in middle age,

I've discovered something quite fundamental and definitive about myself. Something which, while it answers many questions, opens up many new ones.

Then there is the matter of the autism and the tourette's I was told I probably also have. Each of these will require separate referrals and assessments, in order to receive an official diagnosis. Whether I want to face another lengthy waiting and assessment process to confirm these remains to be seen.

Part of me is convinced that one dose of methylphenidate will turn me into Bradley Cooper in the film *Limitless*, where a man is prescribed an experimental drug which instantly turns him from a struggling writer into an over-achieving, market-conquering financial genius. But, while the results are broadly very positive, methylphenidate is no miracle drug. For me, the more realistic hope is that it transforms me from a struggling writer into a slightly less struggling writer – who just about manages to get the housework done before the kids get home. ☀

When I heard confirmation, the relief was almost overwhelming

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GET FIT IN THE KITCHEN

FUEL



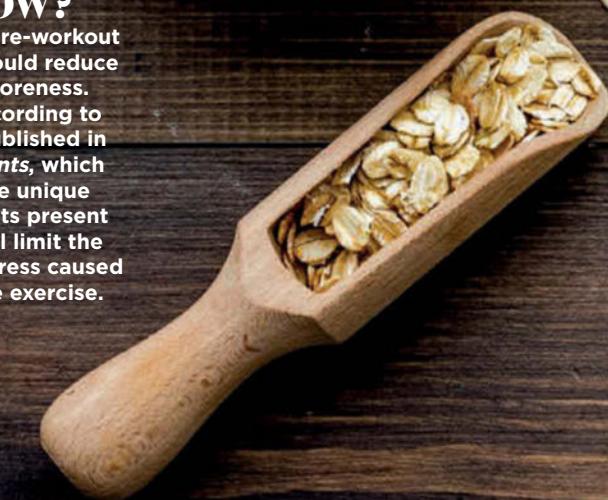
RAISE THE BAR

Why regular small treats beat overly restrictive dieting

 People who eat chocolate several times a week are slimmer than those who only eat it very occasionally, even if the chocolate in question is high in calories from sugar and fat. That's according to research published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, which also took other factors, such as daily activity levels, into account. It's thought that having a little of what you fancy isn't just good for you mentally: it may also help you to continue to burn fat, by spiking levels of the hormone leptin. This tells your brain you're getting enough energy, so it continues to release fat from cells to burn as fuel.

DID YOU KNOW?

A bowl of pre-workout porridge could reduce muscle soreness. That's according to a study published in *Antioxidants*, which found the unique antioxidants present in oatmeal limit the oxidative stress caused by intense exercise.



Five golden rules of pre-workout nutrition

You know that protein is essential for muscle recovery, but what you eat prior to exercise is no less important. If you've ever felt groggy mid-workout, or 'hit the wall' on a long run, chances are you simply didn't have enough fuel in the tank. Optimal performance requires sufficient energy, and while everyone's energy requirements are different, most will benefit from the following steps.

1. EAT CARBS

You might have heard that low-carb diets will send your fat loss into the fast lane, but here's the truth: swearing off bread, rice and oats is simply not a practical option for anyone who works out regularly. Carbohydrates are your immediate source of fuel, and they're entirely necessary to ensure that your body doesn't cannibalise your lean muscle tissue as an energy source when you work out. As a good rule of thumb, aim to get about 50-55% of your daily calories from carbohydrate sources.

2. CONTROL THE QUALITY

Carbs are not the devil's work. You can eat pasta and still build a lean body – as long as you stick to the good stuff. The better quality the food you put in your body, the better your body will perform when it comes to working out. Look out for slow-releasing carbohydrates that will keep your blood sugar levels stable between meals and leave you feeling satiated – that is the key to optimum performance. Good options include sweet potatoes, wholemeal pasta and rice.

3. SNACK SMART

If you're about to do an intense session, make sure your body is sufficiently fuelled. Eat an energy-giving snack at least 30-60 minutes before you exercise. That could be a banana with some nut butter, a sports drink, or pitta bread with humous. A snack may not be necessary if you've had a meal one to two hours before your workout, but it's worth having some handy just in case.

4. FACE FATS

You need a bit of fat to fuel your workout, too. Fat is the most energy-dense nutrient, providing nine calories per gram (compared with four calories per gram for carbohydrate and protein). Fat is the body's stored fuel. It protects your organs and helps your body to absorb and process nutrients. It also

provides many of your body's organs and tissues with energy. Most of the fat you eat should come from unsaturated 'healthy' sources, such as oily fish, nuts, seeds, olive oil and avocados. Lean meat and low-fat dairy are also good options.

5. DRINK IT IN

Water is essential for just about every bodily function. When you exercise, it helps to regulate your body temperature, maintain your blood pressure and circulate oxygen around your body. So it's not smart to start a workout feeling thirsty. Data shows that a mere 2% of dehydration affects sports performance, so keep on top of fluid intake before and after exercise. The American Council on Exercise suggests you drink 400-500ml of water two to three hours before you work out. ■

KING OF THE GRILL

Fire up the barbecue and fuel muscle growth with these quick, high-protein recipes from HECK and chef Chris Baber

CHICKEN KEBABS WITH CORIANDER MINT CHUTNEY

INGREDIENTS (serves 2):

For the kebab:

- 1 pack of HECK Simply Chicken Mince
- 2 cloves of garlic, grated
- 2cm piece of ginger, grated
- 1 small green chilli, finely chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp cumin
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp garam masala
- 1 tbsp finely chopped coriander

For the chutney:

- Small bunch of mint leaves
- Small bunch of coriander
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp cumin
- Pinch of salt
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- Splash of water
- 2 tbsp Greek yogurt

For the salad:

- 2 ripe tomatoes, seeds removed, then diced
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cucumber, seeds removed, then diced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ red onion, finely sliced
- 4 shop-bought chapattis, to serve

METHOD:

1. Place all the kebab ingredients into a mixing bowl. Using clean hands, work into a tight mixture.
2. Divide into 4 even-sized pieces.
3. Using your hands, form the chicken mix around the skewer to form the kebabs.
4. Cook on a barbecue for a few minutes on each side, until lightly charred and cooked all the way through. Alternatively, use the grill.
5. For the chutney, place all the ingredients other than the yogurt into a blender. Whizz until smooth, adding a splash more water if needed. Transfer to a bowl, then stir in the yoghurt. Adjust seasoning to taste.
6. Warm the chapattis on the barbecue or under the grill.
7. Load the warmed chapatti with salad and the kebab (removed from the skewer), then drizzle with chutney.



PER SERVING

Kcals: 547 Protein: 56.5g Carbs: 62.5g Fat: 6.5g







CHICKEN PARMESAN BURGERS

INGREDIENTS (serves 2):

- 2 HECK Chicken Italia Burgers
- 2 brioche burger buns
- 1 ball of mozzarella
- Handful of rocket
- Small chunk of grated parmesan

For the sauce:

- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves of garlic, finely sliced
- 300ml tomato passata
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1 small bunch of basil

METHOD:

1. Cook the burgers on the barbecue according to packet instructions.
2. Meanwhile, make the sauce. Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium heat. Add the garlic, fry for 1 minute, then add the tomatoes, oregano and half the basil. Season to taste.
3. Cook on a medium-high heat for 8-10 minutes, then stir in the remaining basil. Remove from the heat.
4. When the burgers are just about done, cut open the buns and toast on the barbecue, then set aside.
5. When the burgers are cooked, top each with half of the mozzarella. Cover the barbecue with a lid, and cook for a couple of minutes until melted.
6. Load the base of the bun with sauce, a handful of rocket, the burger and some parmesan. Add a basil leaf to garnish.

PER SERVING

Kcals: 560 Protein: 36.5g Carbs: 48g Fat: 29g

STEAK CHEESEBURGER WITH HOMEMADE BACON JAM

INGREDIENTS (serves 2):

- 2 HECK Steak and Butter Burgers
- 2 slices of burger cheese
- 2 brioche burger buns
- 2 thick slices of tomato
- 1 small handful of shredded lettuce

For the bacon jam:

- 1 pack of HECK Smoked Bacon, diced
- 2 large red onions, diced
- 100g soft brown sugar
- 50g maple syrup
- 200ml cider vinegar
- ½ tsp chilli flakes

METHOD:

1. Heat a splash of oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat. Add the bacon. Fry for 5-8 minutes, until crispy. Remove with a slotted spoon, leaving the fat in the pan.

- 2.** Reduce the heat slightly. Add the onions, season, cover loosely and cook for 10 minutes or until soft.
- 3.** Add the bacon back to the pan with the sugar, maple syrup and vinegar. Cook for a further 10 minutes, until you have a jam consistency.
- 4.** Meanwhile, cook the burgers according to packet instructions on the barbecue. When they are just about cooked, top with a slice of cheese. Cover the barbecue with a lid and cook for a minute, until the cheese has melted.
- 5.** Slice open the buns, spread with butter and toast on the barbecue until golden.
- 6.** Load the base with lettuce and a slice of tomato. Top with the cheeseburgers and bacon jam.



PER SERVING

Kcals: 1,010 Protein: 63g Carbs: 108g Fat: 35g

GET THIS
Weber Master-Touch
£350, weber.com



Weber's Original Kettle charcoal barbecue is an icon, but we're also big fans of the Master-Touch model, which keeps the essence of the Kettle, while serving up a multitude of improvements in the process. It's a little taller, for starters, making for a more comfortable grilling experience. The lid is deeper, too, and can be handily stored in a built-in lid holder, which is an improvement over the original's lid hook. The addition of Weber's Gourmet Barbecue System grill is another big draw, letting you swap out different modules like pizza stones for more versatility. It's easy to clean, too, thanks to a clever ash sweeping/collection system. Overall, if you're a charcoal fan, this will serve you well for years to come.



Recipes created by **Chris Baber** in association with HECK. Shop HECK's range of vegetarian and meat products at heckfood.co.uk

CREAMY PORK AND ASPARAGUS PASTA

INGREDIENTS (serves 2):

- 200g penne pasta
- 3 HECK 97% sausages
- 2 cloves of garlic, finely sliced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp chilli flakes
- 300g asparagus, cut into 2cm pieces
- 1 tbsp mascarpone cheese
- 75g parmesan cheese, grated
- Zest of $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon
- Handful of rocket

METHOD:

1. Cook the pasta according to packet instructions in salted water, saving 1 mug of cooking water when cooked.
2. Meanwhile, remove the sausages from their skin and break into small pieces.
3. Heat a large frying pan on the barbecue. Add 2 tbsp olive oil, then add the sausages. Fry for 3-5 minutes until golden. Add the garlic and chilli, then cook for another minute.
4. Add the asparagus, cook for 2 minutes, then add the mascarpone with half of the parmesan, lemon zest and 6 tbsp of the pasta water. Toss together until you have a silky-smooth sauce.
5. Add the cooked pasta to the pan and toss together.
6. Transfer to a serving dish, top with more parmesan and a handful of rocket. Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil and serve.

PER SERVING

Kcals: 825 Protein: 40g Carbs: 59.5g Fat: 50g

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

What you put in your body has a huge impact on its outward appearance...

Wrinkly skin and old age usually go hand in hand. But the truth is, there are ways to slow this process – and in some cases even reverse part of the damage – simply by taking into consideration the body's nutritional needs.

One factor that can considerably speed up the ageing process is an excessive production of free radicals and the onset of oxidative stress. Unbeknown to many, a high concentration of oxygen is actually toxic and can have a corrosive effect on our cells. Dangerous by-products – free radicals – are produced during bodily processes that use oxygen, such as the combination of oxygen with digested food. If these molecules are in abundance (oxidative stress), then the ageing process is accelerated and the onset of age-related diseases, such as arthritis, cancer, Parkinson's, premature ageing and stroke – to name just a few – is more likely. You can see a similar process happening if you cut an apple in half and leave it uncovered – the browning that occurs is oxidisation. Without protection, the apple will soon rot away.

Free radicals will always be produced naturally within the body, and some oxidation

action is necessary for life. However, environmental factors – such as industrial chemicals found in plastics and foods, cigarette smoke, excessive exposure to the sun (UV rays), pollution, excessive exercise, pesticides used in farming and an unhealthy diet (one that's lacking in antioxidants and is high in processed foods) – all contribute to the production of these damaging molecules.

In order to keep free radicals under control, the body is able to produce antioxidants. Antioxidants stop the 'rusting' of your cells by reacting with the free radicals before they have a chance to do any damage. The problem is that, in cases of oxidative stress, where there are too many free radicals being created, the body cannot produce enough antioxidants on its own. Which is why antioxidant-rich foods within the diet are key if you want to age well from the inside out.

We now know that antioxidants (along with their phytonutrient and carotenoid groups) are a major player when it comes to protecting youthful looks, but a whole host of other nutrients can help out, too...



“

Antioxidant-rich foods within the diet are key if you want to age well





“

You'll find
various forms of
vitamin A in your
dark green veg

FRESH FOOD

What to eat to look and feel your best



SALMON houses a type of phytonutrient called astaxanthin, which, according to recent research, may help to protect the skin against UV damage and prevent premature ageing. It's

also been found to contain small bioactive protein molecules that are said to support joint cartilage.



FLAXSEED OIL contains alpha lipoic acid, an antioxidant that can regenerate and recycle other antioxidants. It shouldn't be heated, though, as that can destroy its delicate essential fats

- but it should be drizzled over salads or cooked vegetables.



SWEET POTATOES

are the highest vitamin A-containing plant food available. Vitamin A can prevent dry and flaky skin, by stopping a build-up of old keratin cells. Consuming them regularly should also

help to support your immune system and vision.



TURKEY is not only a good source of collagen-boosting protein, but it also contains tryptophan, an amino acid said to aid sleep.



LEAFY GREEN VEGETABLES

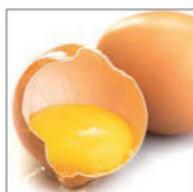
are rich in vitamin K, which is partly responsible for bone density. You'll also find various forms of vitamin A in your dark green veg - vital for maintaining eye health.



COCONUT OIL has many benefits: hair and skin care, stress relief, cholesterol-level maintenance, improved immune system, better digestion and regulated metabolism. It's also antimicrobial, antioxidant, antifungal and antibacterial.



PINK GRAPEFRUIT is rich in vitamin C, which helps to produce collagen and prevent free-radical damage from cigarette smoke and UV rays. Vitamin C may also soothe symptoms of conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis.



EGG YOLKS are high in a little-known nutrient called choline, which is required for a complicated process within our bodies called methylation. Deficits in methylation have been linked to memory loss and cardiovascular disease.



POPCORN is incredibly high in polyphenols: micronutrients that have been strongly linked to preventing heart disease and some cancers. Avoid versions coated in butter, sugar or salt - instead, pop your own and dust with cinnamon.



PUMPKIN SEEDS can boost your daily intake of zinc. Often overlooked, this essential mineral is needed for good sleep and new skin cell production. 

HYDRATION STATIONS

As the mercury rises, replace salts and minerals lost through sweat, while maintaining optimum hydration, with our pick of the best electrolyte drinks



MEET THE TESTER

Nutritionist Rob

Hobson has tested eight of the best electrolyte drinks, to help you find one to support your hydration and recovery needs. He tests them for taste, solubility and effectiveness – in terms of their hydration and nutritional benefits.

HOW THEY WORK

Sodium: The most vital electrolyte that helps to maintain body fluid volume. Sodium is often added to sports drinks alongside glucose, which increases sodium absorption, in turn facilitating water absorption.

Potassium: This mineral helps to keep your body in a steady state of equilibrium, and helps to prevent muscle cramping and weakness.

Chloride: During exercise, chloride is required for proper muscle contraction and transmission of nerve impulses.

Put simply, electrolyte drinks are specifically designed to help replenish the body's electrolytes – naturally occurring salts and minerals that help to balance our bodies' fluids. The best electrolyte drinks typically contain a blend of electrolytes, carbohydrates and other nutrients that work together to help support hydration and recovery. These drinks generally come as a powder or tablet that you dissolve in water.

Electrolytes are minerals that have an electrical charge when dissolved in water, meaning they can conduct an electrical current. The role of electrolytes is to help regulate the body's fluid balance, nerve function and muscle contraction, while also assisting with the passage of nutrients in and out of cells.

The electrolytes sodium, potassium and chloride are found in the highest concentrations in bodily fluids, such as sweat, blood and urine. The most important one concerning exercise performance is sodium, but if you're not a heavy sweater, or need to reduce your intake of sodium for health reasons, you might want an electrolyte drink with lower sodium levels (say, less than 250mg per serving).

SIS HYDRO

£8 (1 tube), scienceinsport.com

Science In Sport is a brand driven by scientific data, so it knows a thing or two about optimal hydration. Its HYDRO range has the highest sodium content per serving of any electrolyte drink on test and it's also one of the most reasonably priced.

Taste: ★★★★★ **Solubility:** ★★★★★ **Effectiveness:** ★★★★★

OVERALL: ★★★★★

Pros:

- ✓ Good amount of sodium
- ✓ Lots of flavours
- ✓ Mixes well

Cons:

- ✗ Some flavours are caffeinated
- ✗ B vitamins may not be needed
- ✗ High sodium not suitable for everyone

Serving size: 1 tablet in 500ml water

Sodium per serving: 870mg

Price per serving: 40p

Flavours: 13 flavours available



MensFitness ENDORSED

High 5 Zero

£62.99 (8 tubes), highfive.co.uk

Another trusted player in the sports nutrition market, High 5 is the go-to brand for many endurance runners. It's a good choice if you're training for extended periods, as one tablet is enough for a 750ml water bottle. They may be free from sugar, but these tabs are full of flavour.

Taste: ★★★★★ Solubility: ★★★★★

Effectiveness: ★★★★★ OVERALL: ★★★★★



Pros:

- ✓ Great taste with lots of flavours to choose from
- ✓ Good value for money
- ✓ Convenient, as mixes with 750ml water (sports bottle size)

Cons:

- ✗ Heavy, salty sweaters may want more sodium per serving
- ✗ Vitamin C is not needed for hydration

Serving size: 1 tablet in 750ml water

Sodium per serving: 250mg

Price per serving: 39p

Flavours: 9 flavours available

GU Hydration Tablets

£52.95 (8 tubes), dolphinfitness.co.uk

Ideal for larger bottles and longer sessions, GU tablets will see you through intense or prolonged training. There's a good amount of electrolytes in the mix, especially sodium, and flavours are particularly punchy.

Taste: ★★★★★

Solubility: ★★★★★

Effectiveness: ★★★★★

OVERALL: ★★★★★



Nuun Hydration Sport

£26 (4 tubes), everyhealth.com

With a good range of flavours, and available with or without caffeine, these mini tubes from Nuun are ideal for hydrating on the go. They have the most natural ingredients list of any product on test, including natural sweeteners and colouring.

Taste: ★★★★★ Solubility: ★★★★★

Effectiveness: ★★★★★ OVERALL: ★★★★★

Pros:

- ✓ Good blend of electrolytes
- ✓ Naturally sweetened and coloured
- ✓ Versions available both with and without caffeine

Cons:

- ✗ Flavour not the strongest
- ✗ Pack size is small, containing only 10 tablets

Serving size: 1 tablet in 475ml water

Sodium per serving: 300mg

Price per serving: 65p

Flavours: 13 flavours available (4 caffeinated)

Pros:

- ✓ Punchy flavours, although they may be a bit too intense for some
- ✓ Good amount of electrolytes in the mix, especially sodium

Cons:

- ✗ Pack size is limited to 12 tablets
- ✗ Contains sugar, though minimal

Serving size: 1 tablet in 750ml water

Sodium per serving: 320mg

Price per serving: 55p

Flavours: Lemon and Lime / Three Berries / Orange / Strawberry Lemonade





Ultima Replenisher Electrolyte Powder

£69.99 for 288g (90 servings), [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)

In powder rather than tablet form, this vitamin C-rich drink is ideal for everyday hydration and wellness. There's a good mix of electrolytes and a range of nine moreish flavours to choose from.

Taste: ★★★★★ Solubility: ★★★★★ Effectiveness: ★★★★★

OVERALL: ★★★★★

Pros:

- ✓ A natural blend free of artificial sweeteners, flavourings or colourings
- ✓ Good combination of electrolytes
- ✓ Mixes very well

Cons:

- ✗ Not the strongest of flavours
- ✗ Sodium levels are too low to support prolonged exercise

Serving size: 1 tablet in 450ml water

Sodium per serving: 55mg

Price per serving: 77p

Flavours: 9 flavours available

Hux Hydration Tablets

£21 (3 tubes), huxhealth.com

Hux tablets are a good low-sodium option, and are more suited to general hydration and wellness than intense workout sessions. They have a good mix of electrolytes, as well as a pleasantly sweet and tangy flavour.

Taste: ★★★★★ Solubility: ★★★★★ Effectiveness: ★★★★★ OVERALL: ★★★★★

Pros:

- ✓ Good mix of electrolytes and great taste
- ✓ Suitable for general fitness and wellness
- ✓ Reasonably priced

Cons:

- ✗ Low amounts of sodium may not be suitable for endurance sports or heavy sweaters
- ✗ Limited flavours
- ✗ Small serving size may limit its use in sports, requiring more hydration

Serving size: 2 tablets in 200ml water

Sodium per serving: 116mg

Price per serving: 70p

Flavours: Lemon and Elderflower / Ginger and Lemongrass / Watermelon



MyEndurance Hydr8

£4.99 (1 tube), [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)

Hydr8 tablets are packed with vitamins and minerals, with good sodium levels to suit endurance athletes. They're fortified with B vitamins and work out to be the cheapest electrolyte drink per serving on test.

Taste: ★★★★★ Solubility: ★★★★★ Effectiveness: ★★★★★

OVERALL: ★★★★★

Pros:

- Designed to suit endurance exercise
- Wide range of electrolytes
- Excellent value

Cons:

- Only one flavour
- A little difficult to dissolve
- Quite sweet

Serving size: 1 tablet in 400ml water

Sodium per serving: 345mg

Price per serving: 25p

Flavour: Orange



Powerbar 5 Electrolytes

£4.50 (1 tube), [powerbar.eu](https://www.powerbar.eu)

Powerbar's hydration tabs have an intense yet refreshing flavour and a caffeine kick for a pre-workout pick-me-up. They're sugar-free, too, and come in tiny tubes that are perfect for hydrating on the go.

Taste: ★★★★★ Solubility: ★★★★★ Effectiveness: ★★★★★

OVERALL: ★★★★★

Pros:

- Handy sized packs
- Good range of electrolytes

Cons:

- Needs 3 tablets to fill a 750ml water bottle
- Taste may be too sweet and intense for some

Serving size: 1 tablet in 250ml water

Sodium per serving: 250mg

Price per serving: 33p

Flavours: Raspberry & Pomegranate / Lemon Tonic / Blackcurrant / Pink Grapefruit / Mango & Passionfruit

LIFT IT

Energise your training with the best pre-workouts

Pre-workout powders are designed to deliver active ingredients and stimulants such as caffeine to prime your body for the workout ahead, increasing endurance capacity and alertness, delaying the onset of fatigue, and often providing carbs to help fuel your training. There are lots of different pre-

workouts on the market, and the number of active ingredients differs substantially between brands. Choosing the right one for you will therefore depend on the type of training you're doing. Different active ingredients will support different elements of your workout – such as citrulline, which delays muscle fatigue,

or taurine, which decreases lactate accumulation.

A word of warning to the caffeine-sensitive: though there are some exceptions, caffeine is often the main active ingredient in pre-workouts, so they're not recommended for anyone who gets jittery or feels sick after too much coffee.

foodspring Energy Aminos

£29.99 for 400g (20 servings), [foodspring.co.uk](https://www.foodspring.co.uk)

Rather than throwing dozens of natural ingredients into the mix, foodspring goes for a more selective approach with its Energy Aminos pre-workout. The ingredients list is simpler than most, but features the good stuff, including BCAAs, caffeine, and B and C vitamins.

It's one of the few pre-workouts on test to include guarana, but that makes a lot of sense, as it helps release its caffeine payload more slowly, avoiding spikes and jitters. At £1.50 per serving, this represents solid value, too.

Taste: ★★★★☆ Solubility: ★★★★★ Effectiveness: ★★★★★ OVERALL: ★★★★★

Pros:

- ✓ Simple but effective list of active ingredients
- ✓ Four flavours
- ✓ 6g BCAAs

Cons:

- ✗ Tastes quite sweet
- ✗ Slight aftertaste





MEET THE TESTER

Leading performance nutritionist Rob Hobson tested every pre-workout in this list, and judged them on how well they tasted and mixed, as well as their nutritional effectiveness. He also took other factors into account such as cost and availability.



Crazy Nutrition Intensive Pre-Train

£49.99 for 500g (20 servings), crazynutrition.com

At £2.50 a serving, Crazy Nutrition's pre-workout is the priciest on test, but subscribing to regular deliveries will give you a substantial 30% off. It's one of the tastiest, too, with three well-balanced flavours to choose from.

There are a whopping 19 active ingredients here – more than any other in this round-up – which should cover all your bases whatever discipline you're preparing for. There's a good dose of citrulline, especially, which helps deliver oxygen as your muscles start to fatigue.

Taste: ★★★★★ Solubility: ★★★★★

Effectiveness: ★★★★★ OVERALL: ★★★★★

Pros:

- ✓ Pleasant taste
- ✓ Mixes well
- ✓ Comprehensive list of active ingredients

Cons:

- ✗ Expensive
- ✗ Some ingredients not yet shown to improve performance

Protein Works Raze Extreme

£39.99 for 360g (30 servings), theproteinworks.com

This Raze Extreme pre-workout is available in three fruity, caffeinated flavours and two caffeine-free versions. At £1.25 per serving, it represents decent value, especially as it packs in 12 active ingredients and a useful 200mg caffeine.

Protein Works gets the flavours about right, with just a hint of a synthetic taste and no bitter aftertaste. There are B and C vitamins to look after your energy metabolism and immune system, too.

Taste: ★★★★★ Solubility: ★★★★★ Effectiveness: ★★★★★ OVERALL: ★★★★★

Pros:

- ✓ Good blend of active ingredients
- ✓ No aftertaste
- ✓ Mixes well

Cons:

- ✗ Low doses of active ingredients



Healthspan Elite All Blacks Pre-Workout Fuel

£29.99 for 480g (12 servings), healthspanelite.co.uk

If the All Blacks rugby team put their name to a product, it's usually because it's the business, and that's just the case with Healthspan's Elite Pre-Workout. It's a good source of BCAAs, protein and particularly carbs, making this a useful way to fuel your cardio or strength sessions.

The inclusion of taurine will help give your endurance a boost, and it decreases the need for large doses of caffeine - making this a better choice for workouts later in the day. At £2.50 per serving it's not cheap, but is high quality.

Taste: ★★★★★ Solubility: ★★★★★ Effectiveness: ★★★★★ Overall: ★★★★★

Pros:

- ✓ Good fruity flavour that's not too sweet
- ✓ A simple but effective blend of ingredients
- ✓ Contains a good source of carbohydrates to fuel more aerobic sessions

Cons:

- ✗ Doses for some ingredients are quite low
- ✗ Slight bitter aftertaste
- ✗ Only one flavour with and without caffeine



Innermost The Energy Booster

£29.95 for 300g (30 servings), liveinnermost.com

If you love pineapple, you'll be onto a winner with The Energy Booster from Innermost. That's mainly because that's the only flavour it comes in, but also because the taste is pretty moreish. A good dollop of BCAAs will see you right, as will the inclusion of guarana - meaning less caffeine.

There's a healthy dose of vitamin B complex, as well as maca to influence mood, but the main sell is the price - at just £1 per serving, there's only one powder on test that works out cheaper.

Taste: ★★★★★ Solubility: ★★★★★ Effectiveness: ★★★★★ Overall: ★★★★★

Pros:

- ✓ Low caffeine will suit those with high sensitivity
- ✓ Vitamin B complex
- ✓ Pleasant flavour

Cons:

- ✗ Only one flavour
- ✗ Slightly odd aftertaste
- ✗ Some of the ingredients need to be taken daily to be effective



bulk Complete Pre-Workout

£49.99 for 720g,
(30 servings), bulk.com

This one comes in four tasty flavours (we recommend the Cola), and is loaded with 8.8g protein and 12g carbohydrates, as well as 12g of active ingredients per serving. At £1.67 per serving, it's not one of the cheapest powders, but if you like a shot of caffeine in your pre-workout then it definitely delivers, with the recommended 200mg to improve alertness and concentration. And it's certainly a winner on flavour, with no trace of any unpleasant aftertaste.

Taste: ★★★★★ **Solubility:** ★★★★★

Effectiveness: ★★★★★ **OVERALL:** ★★★★★

Pros:

- ✓ Contains caffeine to aid concentration
- ✓ No unpleasant aftertaste
- ✓ A good blend of active ingredients

Cons:

- ✗ You'll need to take some ingredients daily for them to be effective
- ✗ Some of the doses are not enough to be effective

Myprotein Alpha Pre-Workout

£28.99 for 600g (30 servings), myprotein.com

Myprotein eschews the carbs in favour of a caffeine kick for its pre-workout. There's a hefty 300mg in here, so make sure you don't exceed the serving recommendations. Still, it's a good choice if you're doing high-intensity workouts that require short bursts of activity.

For those who are prepping for training on a budget, Myprotein's Alpha pre-workout works out the cheapest of any powder on test, at just 97p per serving. Not bad for the equivalent of two cups of coffee.

Taste: ★★★★★ **Solubility:** ★★★★★ **Effectiveness:** ★★★★★ **OVERALL:** ★★★★★

Pros:

- ✓ Contains 300mg of caffeine
- ✓ Mixes well with water
- ✓ Good value

Cons:

- ✗ Slightly salty aftertaste
- ✗ Some of the ingredients need to be taken daily in order to be effective
- ✗ High level of caffeine good for some; too much for others



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TRAINER



MUSCLE MEMORY

 Your body is a clever old thing. The process of muscle growth is essentially your body's response to the stress of weight training. It thinks, *That was hard, I'd better do something about it so it's not as difficult next time.*

When you perform resistance exercises, microscopic tears occur in your muscles. In turn, your body responds to this microtrauma by overcompensating: the damaged tissue is repaired and more is added, making your muscles bigger and stronger, so the risk of future damage is minimised. That also means, over time, you need to

steadily increase the weight you lift, because your muscles quickly adapt to deal with the stress.

It's thought this damage to your muscle fibres is the reason for delayed onset muscle soreness, or DOMS, the symptoms of which include muscle soreness and stiffness in the days after a tough workout. That's why you should leave at least 48 hours between sessions that target the same muscle group. If you train those muscles again before they've had time to repair and rebuild, you risk overtraining, which can result in reduced gains and injury.

PERFECT PAIR

How to combine aesthetic improvements with performance gains



Photography: Shutterstock



MEET THE EXPERT

Christian Thibaudeau is a world-renowned strength coach and author, who has competed as an Olympic lifter and bodybuilder



First, let's make one thing clear. It is definitely possible to build a muscular, lean body while making strength, speed and power gains. In fact, I would say that training like an athlete and turning yourself into a performance machine is actually the best way to get an aesthetically pleasing body - you simply need to pick the right exercises and tweak the loading parameters, in order to optimise your body composition.

Lift off

If you want to build muscle, forget bodybuilding-style isolation exercises, such as dumbbell curls, and instead focus on compound lifts, such as bench presses, squats and deadlifts. Sprinters and rugby players perform these moves in sets of one to three reps, using as much weight as possible. This is optimum for building maximum strength, but if you want get stronger and add functional muscle, you need to lower the weight slightly and aim for four to six reps per set.

I recommend focusing on one compound exercise per workout. Aim to complete five sets of four to six reps of that lift, paired in a superset with

an exercise that works antagonistic, opposing muscle groups - so push presses with chin-ups, or bench presses with barbell rows. Rest for 20 to 30 seconds between the first and second exercise, then for two minutes after the second exercise to complete one superset.

Once you have finished all five, reduce the weight of the main compound lift by 30% and then complete 30 reps of it in as few sets and as little time as possible, for an extra muscle-building boost.

Walk this way

A lot of guys lift weights to pump their muscles up, and then do steady-state cardio, such as jogging or cycling on the side. However, this is not an efficient way to build a great-looking body. To get lean while maintaining muscle mass, ditch the treadmill and focus on strongman-inspired metabolic conditioning exercises, such as sled drags, farmer's walks, walking lunges or prowler pushes. These don't just work all your major muscle groups - they also develop stabilising muscles and improve your posture, ensuring you look good both when in motion and when stationary. If you want to get

as lean as possible, do these exercises using a 1:1 ratio, so you work for one minute then rest for one minute. This will make your metabolism work harder and burn more calories. Try adding five rounds of one of these strongman exercises as a finisher to each of your compound lift workouts, to improve your strength gains, too. I had a client who added 30kg to his deadlift in a month - without doing any deadlifting - because heavy carrying had improved his grip strength and reinforced his glutes and lower back.

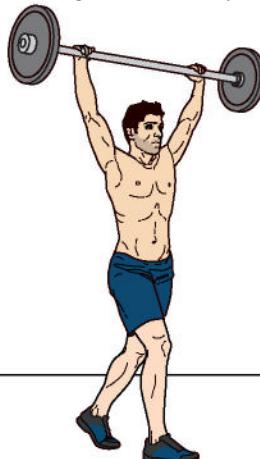
If you've got time, I would also add a weekly sprint session. As well as making you faster and more explosive, they'll get you super ripped, without sacrificing muscle mass or negatively impacting your strength gains - which steady-state running can do. Warm up, then perform six rounds of 60m sprints with 60 seconds' rest between each, then do two 200m sprints to finish. Yes, it will be tough, but if you can manage a combined six sessions per week, you will make huge strength, power and speed gains - and have a fantastic physique to show for it. ☀

STRONG TO THE FINISH

Add one of these moves as a finisher to each of your weekly workouts, to rev your metabolism and improve general conditioning

Overhead barbell walk

TIME 1 min **SETS** 5 **REST** 1 min
Keep your arms locked out throughout, to build seriously strong delts and traps.



Dumbbell farmer's carry

TIME 1 min **SETS** 5 **REST** 1 min
This move will engage your core, develop impressive grip and build big forearms.



Dumbbell walking lunge

TIME 1 min **SETS** 5 **REST** 1 min
Take long steps and lower your back knee close to the ground, to place a greater emphasis on your quads.



DIY

Don't fancy any of the off-the-peg workout plans? Putting together your own is less complicated than you might think – as long as you're honest with your answers to the following questions

How long have you been training?

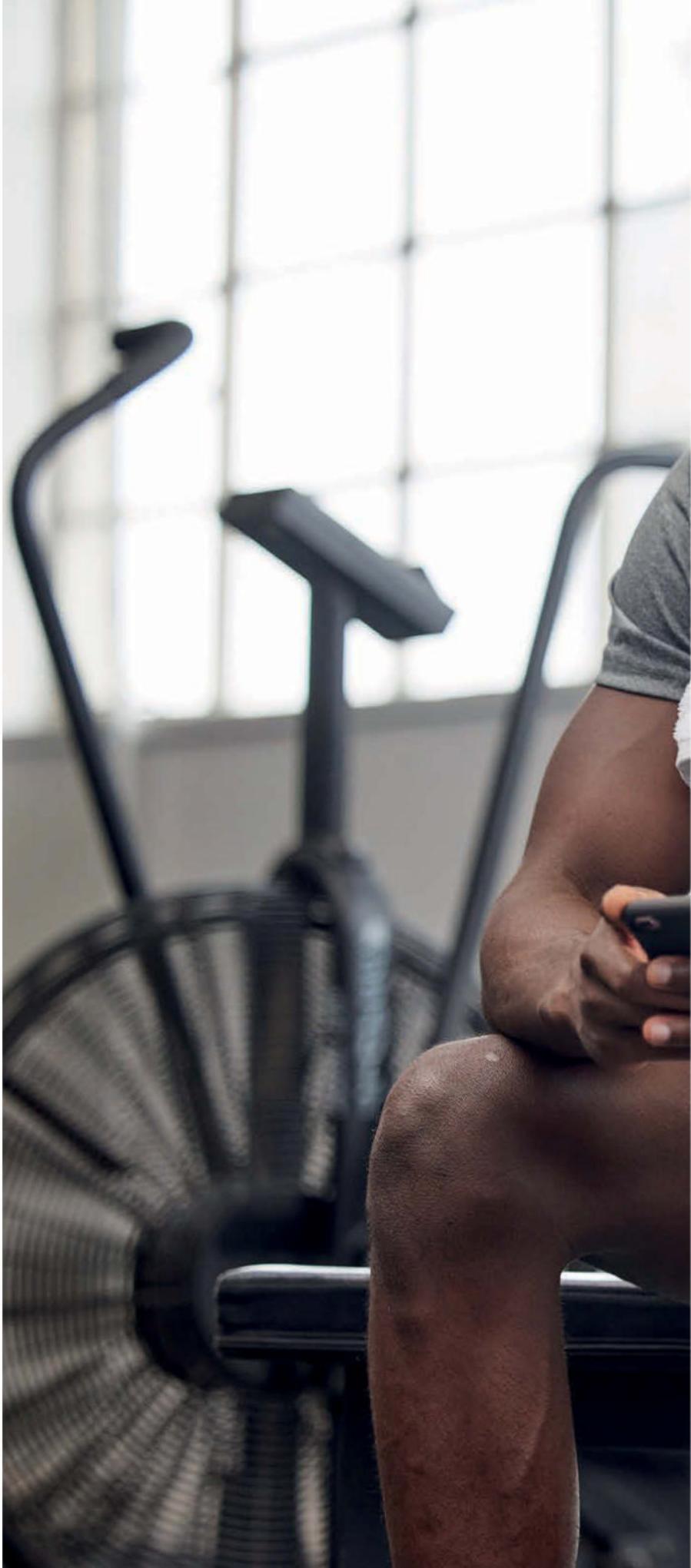
If you're a beginner, good news: you'll make progress fast. To maximise results, focus on a few key compound movements and keep isolation moves to a minimum until you've built up a decent base of strength and a tolerance to training volume. If you're more experienced in the gym, it might be time to switch up your movements to undo imbalances (concentrating on unilateral movements for a few weeks, for instance) or to target neglected areas (say, by doing Romanian deadlifts if your hamstrings are a weak spot in your squatting). Don't try to train like a Mr Olympia athlete if it's your first day in the gym.

What do you want to achieve?

Be honest about it now and you'll save time. Realistically, you can probably improve in a couple of areas at once – losing fat and building muscle, for instance, or building muscle and strength – but trying to hit more will lead to frustration and failure. If you just want to look good shirtless, that's fine: tailor your training to that, and you'll be more motivated in the long run. If your ultimate goal is long-term health, you can probably get results with minimal time in the gym and more long walks or sports sessions. So pick a goal – you can always change it later.

How often are you realistically able to train?

Don't commit to a six-day-a-week workout plan if you've never hit the gym before. You'll fail – and probably feel bad for trying. It's possible to get great results with three (or even two) sessions a week, provided you hit it hard when you're there, and pay attention to nutrition and recovery when you're not. If you can realistically only make it to the gym twice a week, for instance, focus on hitting every area of your body with big compound movements, bin off the isolation lifts and work hard on both days.





WORKOUT VARIABLES

REP Short for repetition, 1 rep is one performance of a move from start to finish. The number of reps you do in a set will vary, depending on your goals. You can build muscle at lower rep ranges and strength at higher ranges, but as a general rule, lower reps (3 to 5) done with heavy weights build strength or power, while rep counts in the 8 to 12 range are more geared to hypertrophy. Anything beyond that is normally in the territory of muscular endurance.

SET The name for a group of reps, with the number, as with reps, depending on what you want out of your workouts. The usual prescription for most goals is 3 to 4, but you might go higher (if you're training for volume, for instance, or doing lots of low-rep sets to build strength or power) or lower (doing one all-out set to failure). You'll also encounter supersets (2 sets of complementary or contrasting moves done without resting between them), tri-sets (the same method, but with three moves that usually hit the same body part) or giant sets (four or more moves, no rest).

REST Probably the most-misused workout variable. The time you take between sets can have a huge impact on your progress, and too little can be just as bad as too much. For aerobic conditioning, for instance, shorter rests (anywhere from 60 seconds down to 10) will keep your cardio output and metabolism high, while snatching a few extra seconds will give you a chance to recover. Conversely, if you're training for strength, you might need to take anywhere from 3 to 5 minutes between sets, to allow your nervous system to fully recover. Keep your watch or phone with you and be strict with your rest periods, whether they're long or short.

TEMPO When it comes to building muscle, some trainers maintain that sets and reps aren't as important as time under tension, or just how long your muscle spends straining under the weights. A handful of slow, controlled reps can often beat a dozen high-speed ones, and for that reason many growth-focused programmes include a prescription for the tempo of each move. This is usually laid out in a four-digit format, for example 4120, which means you'd take four seconds over the eccentric/muscle-lengthening portion of the lift (normally the lowering part), pause at the bottom for a second, take 2 seconds to raise the weight, then go into the next rep with no pause. If you see an X on your tempo instructions, move through this part of the move as explosively as possible. ☀

BODYWEIGHT BURNER

Keep this kit-free circuit in your back pocket whenever you need a quick sweat-soaked workout when you're away from home

 Fat loss might start in the kitchen, but it accelerates in the gym. By working at high intensity and building some muscle, you'll burn fat and ramp up your metabolism, making the process faster and easier.

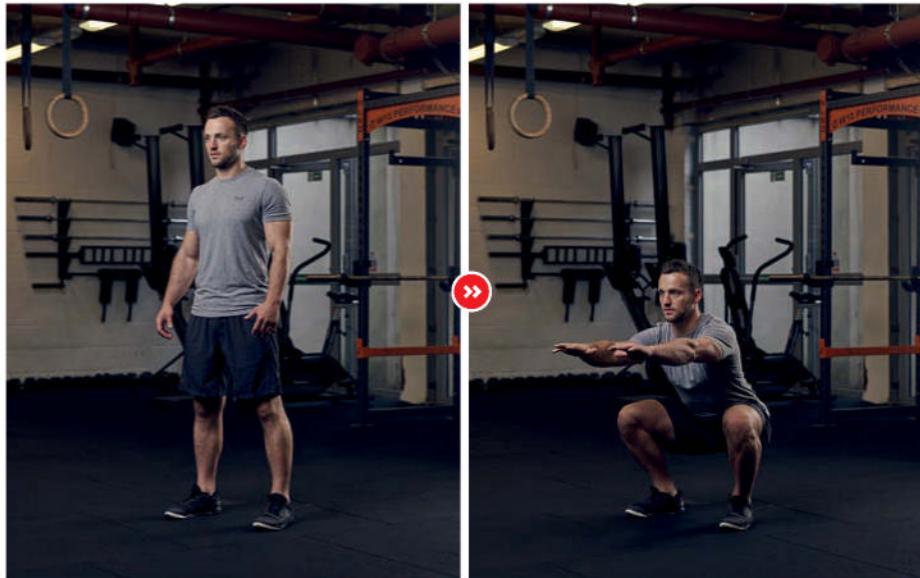
The best thing about this workout is that it requires no kit whatsoever - so leave your excuses at the door and get moving!

Workout instructions

- Perform the exercises back-to-back in a circuit format.
- Complete 10 reps of each move.
- Rest for 2 mins at the end of the first round.
- Complete 5 rounds in total.

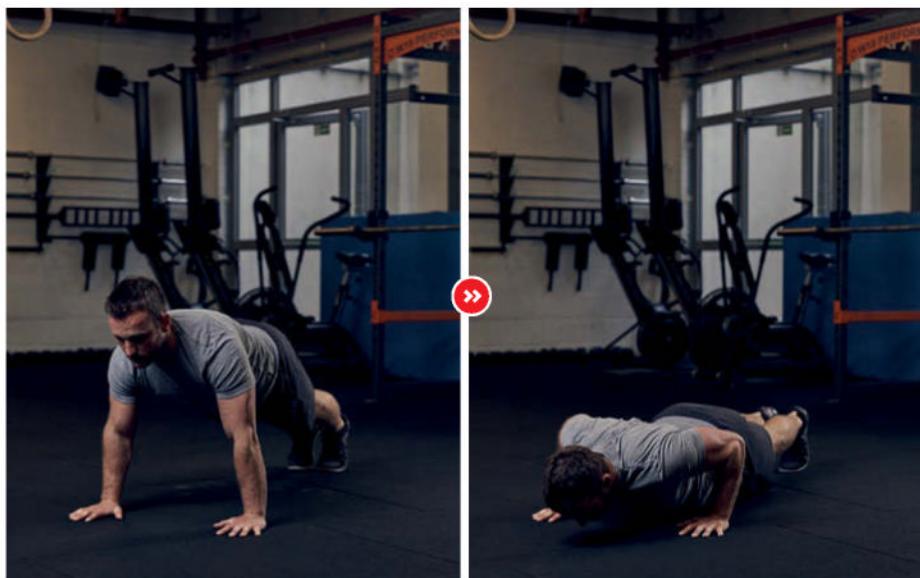
1a. JUMP SQUAT

- Stand with your feet placed shoulder-width apart.
- Brace your core, stick your bum out and squat down to parallel.
- Drive through your heels and explode up into a jump.
- Land with soft knees, then go immediately into the next squat.



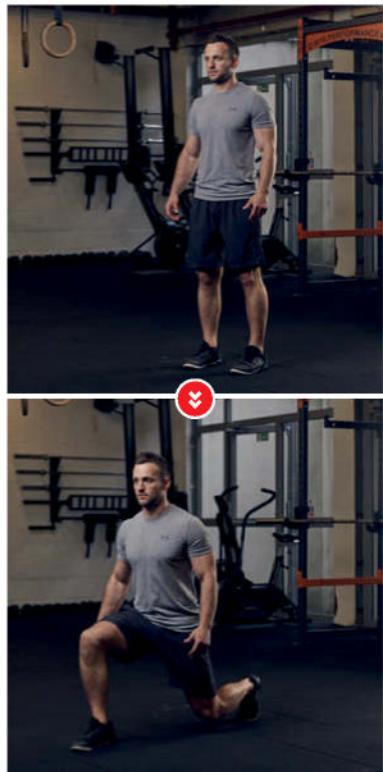
1b. PRESS-UP

- Start in the press-up position with your hands directly underneath your shoulders, your core and glutes braced, and your feet together.
- Bend your elbows to lower your chest to the ground, then press back up powerfully to return to the start.



1c. LUNGE

- Stand tall with your chest up and your core braced.
- Take a step forward until both knees are at 90°.
- Push back off your front foot to return to the start.
- Repeat the move, leading with your other leg.
- Alternate sides.



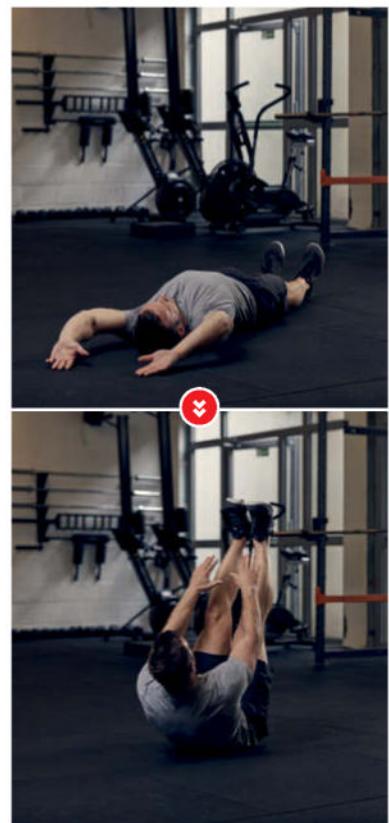
1d. MOUNTAIN CLIMBER

- Starting in a press-up position, bring one knee to your chest, then quickly switch legs.
- Perform each rep as quickly as you can, as if you're sprinting.



1e. JACKKNIFE

- Lie on the floor with your legs straight and your arms extended behind your head.
- Contract your abs and raise your arms and legs, until they touch above your stomach.
- Return to the start with control.



1f. BURPEE

- From a standing start, lower into a deep squat and place your hands on the floor.
- Force both legs back, putting you in a press-up position.
- Lower your body, until your chest and hips touch the floor at the same time, to keep your body in line.
- Drive up through your hips, jumping your feet back in towards your hands.
- Stand up and jump just high enough for your feet to leave the floor.



CHEST & BACK

Build upper-body size and strength with this six-move session

 Functional movements, compound lifts and lower-body work should form the backbone of your gym work if you value real-world benefits and long-lasting progress. However, there's no shame in wanting to look the part, too – and nothing inflates the confidence (or the upper body) quite like an old-school chest and back workout.

SUPERSET 1

1a. BARBELL INCLINE BENCH PRESS

Reps: 10-12 Rest: Straight into 1b

- Lie on a bench set at a 45-degree incline, holding a bar over your chest with your grip just wider than shoulder-width.
- Lower the bar until it's touching your chest, then press it back up.



1b. DUMBBELL BENT-OVER ROW

Reps: 10-12 Rest: 90 secs, then repeat 1a Sets: 4

- Hold the dumbbells so they are shoulder-width apart, bending your knees slightly.
- Bend at the hips, until you're at a roughly 45-degree angle to the floor. This is the starting position.
- Pull the dumbbells up to touch your sternum, then lower under control. If you're moving your upper body to shift the dumbbells, they are too heavy.

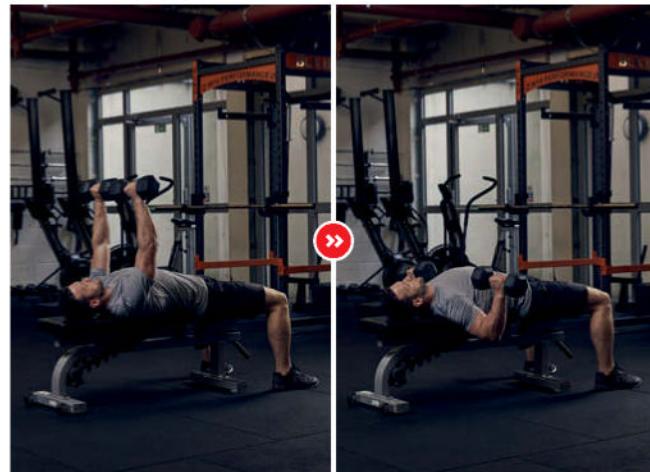


SUPERSET 2

2a. DB BENCH PRESS ↘

Reps: 10-12 Rest: Straight into 2b

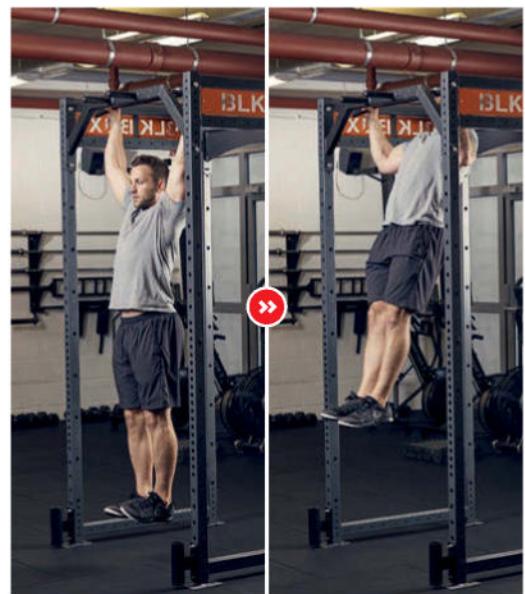
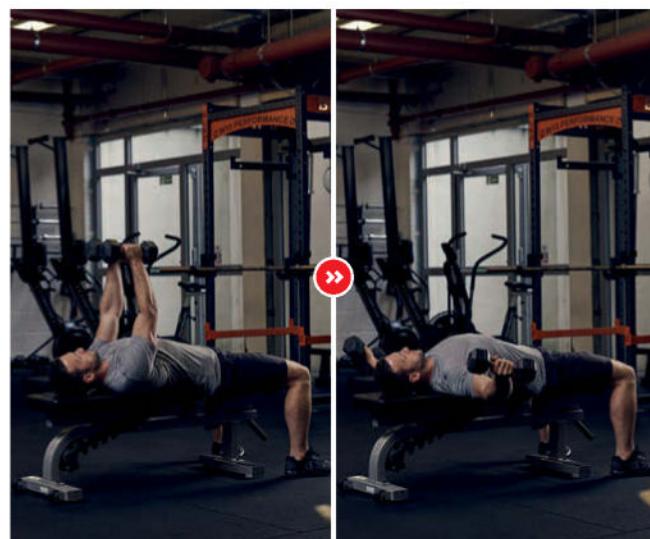
- Lie on a bench with your feet on the floor directly underneath your knees.
- Hold the dumbbells above your chest, then lower them to your chest.
- Drive your feet hard into the floor and push the dumbbells back strongly to the start position.



2b. DB FLYE ✓

Reps: 10-12 Rest: 90 secs, then repeat 2a Sets: 4

- Lie on a flat bench holding a dumbbell in each hand directly above your chest, with your palms facing each other.
- Keeping a slight bend in your elbows, slowly lower the weights out to the sides as far as is comfortable, feeling the stretch in your chest.
- Squeeze your chest to reverse the movement and raise the weights back to the top.

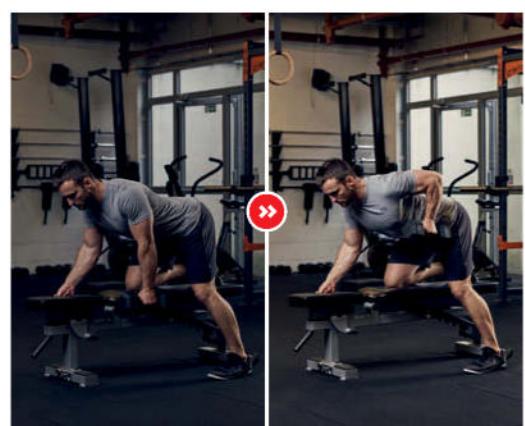


SUPERSET 3

3a. PULL-UP ↗

Reps: 10-12 Rest: Straight into 3b

- Grip the pull-up bar with your hands just wider than shoulder-width apart. Brace your abs and pull yourself up, until your whole head is above the bar.
- Lower your body under control, until your arms are straight. Keep your shoulders engaged and don't sag at the bottom.



3b. DB SINGLE-ARM ROW ↗

Reps: 10-12 Rest: 90 secs, then repeat 3a Sets: 4

- Set up with one knee resting on a bench and the other foot on the floor, leaning forwards slightly and holding a dumbbell in one hand.
- Row the dumbbell up, focusing on pulling it to your hip, not your side.
- Feel the squeeze, then lower with control.

ALL IN ONE

Target every major muscle group for time-efficient training

► Hitting your chest, back, legs and core, this workout is perfect if you only have time to hit the gym two or three times a week. In targeting every major muscle group in one session, the idea is that you can continue to see strength and muscle gains even if spare time is not on your side.

Workout instructions

- Complete 10 reps and 3 sets of each exercise
- Rest for 90 secs between sets
- Rest for 2 mins between exercises

1. BENCH PRESS **►**

- Take a grip slightly wider than shoulder-width and squeeze your lats together, to create a pressing platform before you take the bar out of the rack.
- Watch the ceiling, not the bar, to ensure you're pressing in the same line each time – then lower the bar to your chest, aiming to brush your t-shirt without bouncing.
- Press up powerfully, pause at the top, then begin your next rep.



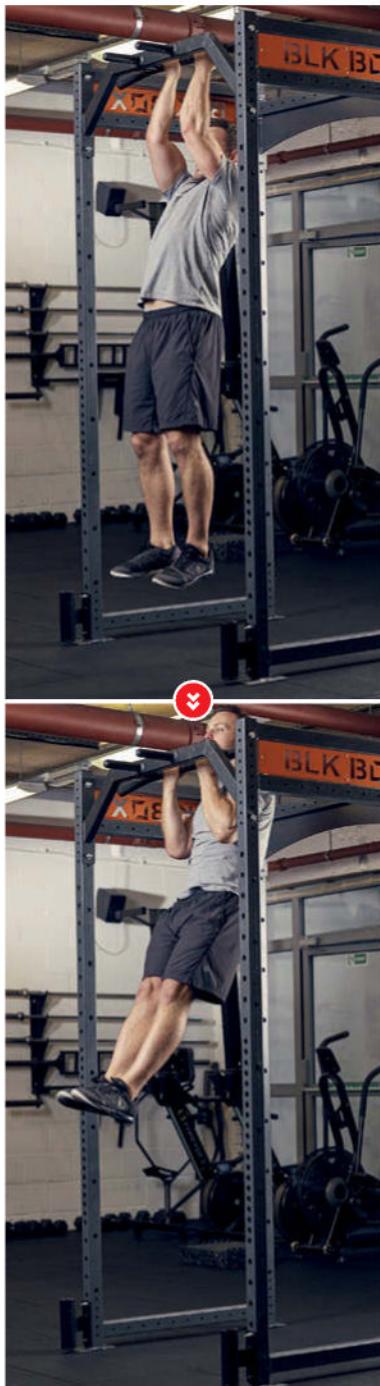
2. DEADLIFT **►**

- Standing with your feet shoulder-width apart, grasp the bar with your hands just outside your legs.
- Lift the bar by driving your hips forward, keeping a flat back.
- Lower the bar under control.



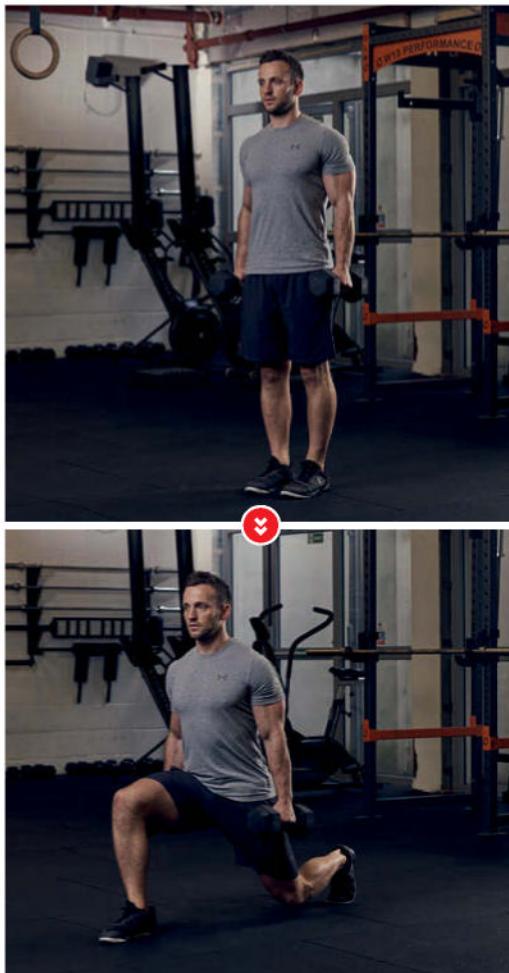
3. CHIN-UP

- Grasp the bar with your hands shoulder-width apart, using an underhand grip.
- Start from a dead hang with your arms fully extended.
- Pull yourself up by squeezing your lats together. Once your chin is above the bar, lower yourself back to the start.



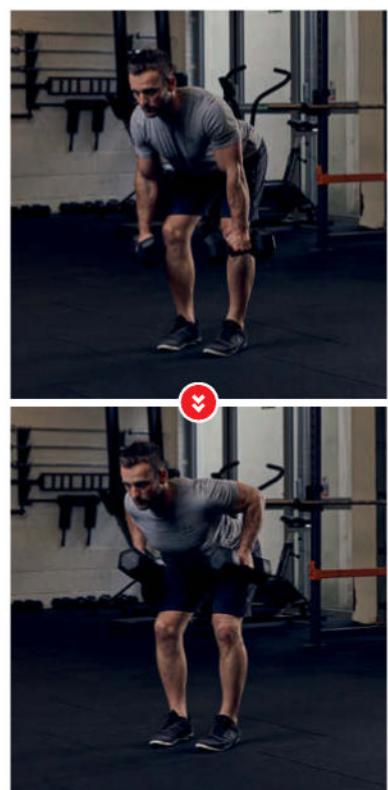
4. DUMBBELL LUNGE

- Holding a dumbbell in each hand, take one step forward and lower your body until both knees are bent at 90°.
- Then, push off your front foot to reverse the movement.



5. DB BENT-OVER ROW

- Start with your core braced, your back straight and your shoulder blades retracted.
- Bend your knees slightly and lean forward from the hips.
- Let the weights hang at knee level. This is the start position.
- Pull the dumbbells up to your lower sternum, retracting your shoulder blades to allow the weights to come up to your hips, then lower slowly to the start.



6. HANGING LEG RAISE

- Hang from a pull-up bar or handles.
- Keeping your legs straight and without swinging, use your abs to raise your legs in front of you, until they are parallel to the floor.
- Lower slowly back to the start.



POWER PLAY

Bolster athletic performance by shifting weights at speed

 This kind of workout is designed to increase your power output, which is your ability to be strong at speed. It involves explosive moves that work multiple muscle groups, and require considerable balance and coordination. If you're a beginner, it makes sense to build a strength base so that your body's equipped to deal with the demands of complex exercises, such as cleans. You also need to ensure you have good mobility, particularly in your hips (so you can get into a deep squat) and shoulders.

1. KETTLEBELL SWING

Reps: 15 Sets: 3 Rest: 60 secs

- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and push the kettlebell off your body, to start the swing.
- As you lower, hinge at the hips by pushing your glutes back.
- When you feel a stretch in your hamstrings, drive your hips forward, swinging the kettlebell up.
- Don't worry too much about how high the kettlebell gets – the snap at the hips and drive through the glutes is more important than air time.



2. BARBELL CLEAN

Reps: 3 Sets: 5 Rest: 90 secs

- Start by holding the bar with a shoulder-width grip in front of your thighs.
- Squat down slightly, then drive through your heels to explode upwards, using the momentum to help pull it up to chest height and catching it on your chest.
- Pause for a second, then lower the bar back to the start position.

3. BB BACK SQUAT

Reps: 5

Sets: 5

Rest: 90 secs

- Take the bar out of the rack and rest it across your upper back.
- Take two big steps back, ending with your feet roughly shoulder-width apart, toes pointing out slightly.
- Keep your spine in alignment by looking at a spot on the floor about two metres in front of you, then sit back and down, as if you're aiming for a chair.
- Descend until your hip crease is below your knee.
- Keep your weight on your heels as you drive back up.



4. BB CLEAN PULL

Reps: 8

Sets: 3

Rest: 60 secs

- Set up in the same starting position as a deadlift.
- Now extend at the hips to explosively lift the bar, keeping it close to your body at all times.
- The momentum should carry the bar to around chest height, with shoulders shrugged slightly at the top of the movement.



NET GAINS

Inspired by Wimbledon? Get stronger and more mobile on or off the court with these six moves

 “Tennis involves intermittent bouts of intense activity for an indeterminate time, so it can be tricky to tailor your training,” says Peck. “But the key attributes are joint mobility and stability, and explosive strength, and that’s what this workout covers. Additionally, I’d recommend multi-directional speed work over five, ten and 15m, as well as tabata sprints [20 seconds’ work, ten seconds’ rest].

“Whether you’re training for tennis or just using this as a conditioning workout, do 6 reps of each move, or 6 each side where

applicable,” says Peck. “It works for other racket sports, too, although you should tweak the duration of each move to mimic the time you spend working in that sport.

“Do the number of sets required, resting for 90 seconds between sets, then rest for 2 minutes and move on to the next exercise. If you’re doing it as a conditioning workout, complete 6 reps of each exercise and then move on to the next with minimal rest, but rest for 2 minutes between circuits.”



MEET THE EXPERT

Arran Peck is an athletic development and conditioning coach who has worked with junior, development and professional players. He has also trained pro rugby union players and Olympians.

SCALE IT

Beginner:	3 circuits
Intermediate:	4 circuits
Advanced:	5 circuits

1. SINGLE-LEG MULTI-DIRECTIONAL SQUAT

- Stand on one leg.
- Lower into a squat, extending your non-standing leg in front of you (12 o'clock), keeping your foot, knee and hip stable.
- Return to the start and repeat, extending your leg to 3 o'clock (lateral), 6 o'clock (behind) and 9 o'clock (behind your body laterally).
- That completes 1 rep.





2. SINGLE-LEG ROMANIAN DEADLIFT

- Stand on one leg holding a light dumbbell in your other hand.
- Bend forward, hinging at the hips, bending your knee slightly and keeping your back straight.
- Extend your non-standing leg behind you and let the hand holding the weight hang straight down.
- Return to the start under control.
- Complete all the reps on one side, then switch.



3. BANDED LATERAL STEP

- Stand with your hips and knees slightly flexed, with a band around your knees.
- Take a small step to the side with your left foot.
- Under control, follow with your right leg so you end up in the same stance you started in.
- Complete six steps to the left, then repeat in the other direction.

4. PRESS-UP**RENEGADE ROW** 

- Get into the top of a press-up position with feet slightly wider apart than normal, holding a dumbbell in each hand.
- Bend your arms and lower your chest towards the floor, then press back up.
- Lift one dumbbell towards your armpit in a rowing movement, then lower.
- Continue, alternating sides until you have completed all the reps.





5. MEDICINE BALL OVERHEAD SLAM

- Stand holding a medicine ball with two hands in front of your hips.
- Raise it overhead, aiming to sequentially extend at the ankles, knees, hips, trunk and arms.
- When you reach the top position, return quickly towards the start position, releasing the ball as it passes in front of your head and catching it again.



6. MEDICINE BALL RUSSIAN TWIST

- Sit with your knees bent and heels resting on the floor, holding a light medicine ball in two hands, arms extended and shoulders retracted.
- Rotate to one side under control, keeping your hips stable and your torso upright.
- Return to the start and immediately repeat on the other side.
- Continue alternating sides until you have completed all the reps.

BUNS OF STEEL

Add these glutes exercises to your weekly routine to improve lower-body strength and general posture

» Glute training isn't only for women! This is a vitally important muscle group to train and strengthen for everyone – regardless of whether the goals are aesthetic, performance, or simply to be able to move and feel better.

Glutes anatomy

The glutes attach to the posterior aspect of the pelvis and wrap around the hip joint, attaching to the upper and outer aspect of the femur. This 3D anatomical arrangement means they have the ability to produce force in all three planes of motion:

- **Sagittal:** forward and back (hip extension, moving the femur behind the body)
- **Frontal:** side to side (hip abduction, moving the leg to the side away from the midline of the body)
- **Transverse:** rotation (rotating the leg externally away from the midline of the body)

In order to train the glutes correctly, you need to train all three of these movement patterns.

Why should you train glutes?

The glutes (along with their synergistic partners, the hamstrings) play a role in extending the hip. What I mean by that is they're responsible for moving the femur (thigh bone) behind the midline of the hips. This action forms one half of the gait cycle (walking), which makes

it a fundamental building block of human movement and the foundation of any athletic activity.

However, as well as playing a dynamic role in extending the hip, the glutes also play a static role as an 'anti-gravity muscle'. If we think of the hip joint as a major pivot, and our centre of gravity (the navel) sitting above it, then we require an equilibrium of forces acting around the pivot to keep it balanced.

The job of the glutes in this balancing act is to pull down on the back of the pelvis, to counteract forces pulling down on the front. Considering most objects you lift or carry will be in front of you (and, if you are carrying excess bodyweight, it is also most likely to be in front of you), then the role of the glutes in balancing this all out is a very important one. Your glutes quite literally hold you up.

When programming for clients, I will include specific glute training for everyone, no matter their goals. It really is that important.



MEET THE EXPERT

One of the most sought-after personal trainers in the world, **Luke Worthington** is a qualified sports scientist, trainer, nutritionist, and strength and conditioning specialist, with over 20 years' experience in the health and fitness industry.

1. HIP THRUST

Recommended reps: 6-8

- Imagine you're lifting your belt buckle to your chin, to ensure there is no extension of the lumbar spine.
- Glue the chin to the chest, to ensure there is no extension of the cervical spine (neck).



2. SUMO ROMANIAN DEADLIFT

Recommended reps: 6-10

- The weight should travel in a straight line up and down, and the hips should push back behind you.
- Pointing the toes outward, at around a 45-degree angle, allows the glutes to work through more of their fibre length.



3. SIDE-LYING ABDUCTION

Recommended reps: 12-15

- Hug the bench tightly with the bottom arm. This helps to stabilise the torso and keep the movement coming from the hips.
- Leading with the heel, and not the toe, helps to emphasise the glute over the hamstrings and TFL muscle.

4. 45° BACK EXTENSION **Recommended reps:**

10-12

- Rounding out the upper back into a 'slouch' type posture as you perform this exercise lengthens the back extensor muscles.
- If you're lengthening them, you cannot be contracting them to assist with the movement, which helps to protect the lower back and keep the work in the glutes.



5. FROGGER

Recommended reps: 15-20

- Initiate the separation of the knees as soon as the buttocks lift from the floor.
- This allows you to train external rotation at the same time as extension, accessing more glute fibres with every repetition.



6. SINGLE-LEG ROMANIAN DEADLIFT

Recommended reps: 8-10

- Loading the opposite arm and leg allows you to rotate over the stance leg, training the working glute through transverse plane as well as sagittal.
- You can encourage this even more by lowering the weight in front of the grounded foot rather than beside it.
- Clenching the fist of the non-working arm helps to improve balance, by equalising tension.

KNEES UP

Protect your knee health with the help of pliability's latest pathway

 "We're excited to launch the new Knee Health pathway, with the goal of lowering aggravation in the knees, and increasing the longevity of overall knee health," says Cody Mooney, director of performance at pliability. "Using a series of routines to help build

resilience, pliability has put together short, dynamic corrective exercises that target the structures around the knee, improving overall movement quality and health."

CrossFit professional Noah Ohlsen (pictured) adds, "Through my time in CrossFit, I really understand

how important knee health is. Our knees enable us to walk, run, jump, sit and squat.

"As an athlete, pliability's new path is something that I incorporate into my everyday routine, to help reduce the chance of injury and allow me to perform at my best."



1. COUCH STRETCH

Hold: 1-2 mins

Key benefits: This is an excellent pose for relieving tightness and improving your overall mobility. This pose activates and strengthens your glutes and core.

- Begin on your hands and knees.
- Reach your left knee back to where the wall meets the floor and begin to stretch your chest up.
- Depending on your range of motion, bring your right foot up to your right hand and raise your chest up higher, increasing the stretch in the front of your hip and thigh.
- Hold for 1-2 minutes, then repeat on the other side.

2. ANKLE DORSIFLEXION MOBILISATION

Hold: 1-2 mins

Key benefits: This stretch improves the flexibility around your ankle joints and its surrounding muscular areas, increasing your overall range of motion and reducing the risk of injury.

- Begin in a half kneeling position with your left knee up.
- Keeping your knee pointed to the outside of your pinky toe, lean your torso forward.
- Place your elbows on top of your knee – once you hit your end range, you will feel a stretch in the back of your calf. Hold for the remainder of the time.
- Now switch sides, so your right leg is up in the half kneeling position, and repeat the stretch again.



3. PATELLAR MOBILISATION

Hold: 1-2 mins

Key benefits: This stretch decreases any pain or tension you may be experiencing in the knee area, restoring your mobility and improving your overall range of motion.

- Begin seated with your legs straight out in front of you.
- Gently grasp your right kneecap with your fingers.
- Relaxing your leg as much as possible, slowly move your kneecap in different directions, making sure not to overstretch.
- Continue to move the kneecap until the minute is up.
- Now switch sides.



4. KNEE FLEXION ROTATIONS

Hold: 1-2 mins

Key benefits: Any pain or stiffness you feel in the knee area will immediately loosen through the help of this pose, increasing your overall hip and lower back region mobility.

- Begin in a half kneeling position with your right knee up. Take your hands and place them on the knee, turning your knee to the outside.
- Keeping your hips to the inside and your knee pointed to the outside of your pinky toe, begin to lean your bodyweight forward.
- Back off the pressure, turn your knee to the inside and repeat.
- Perform these rotations for another minute.
- Switch sides, so that your left leg is up in the half kneeling position.
- If you feel a pinch in the front of the ankle or knee, back off the pressure so you only feel a slight stretch.
- Perform the rotations for the remainder of the allotted time.



5. COSSACK SQUAT

Hold: 2-3 mins

Key benefits: Cossack squats improve your lower-body range of motion, allowing your hamstrings and adductors to become more flexible. This develops your knee, ankle and hip mobility, and strengthens the adductors.

- Begin in a standing position, with your legs spread wide – wider than shoulder-width apart.
- Reach your hips back and down towards the right heel, while keeping the chest tall and the left leg straight.
- Pause at your end range, then press through the right heel, raising back up into a standing position.
- Reach your hips back and down the left heel, keeping the right leg straight.
- Pause, then press through the left heel to stand.
- Continue to alternate sides for the remainder of the time.

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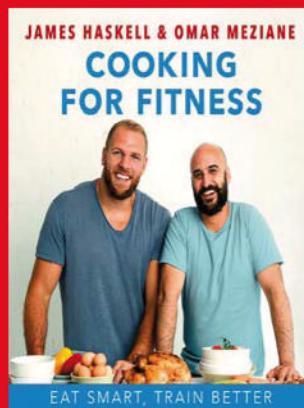
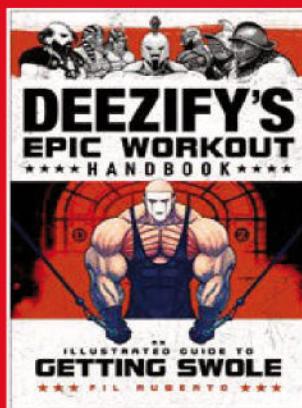
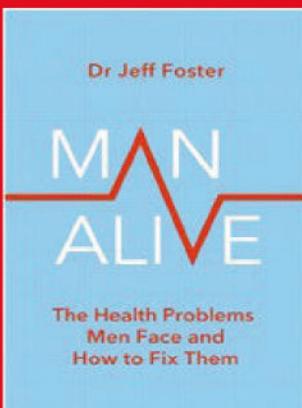
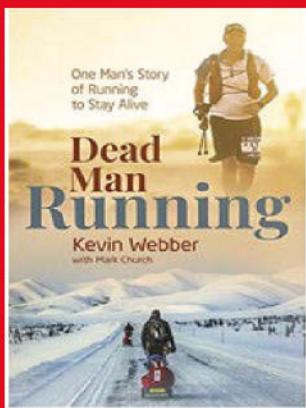
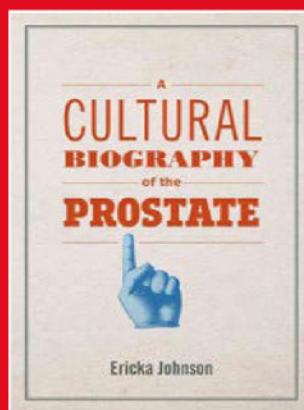
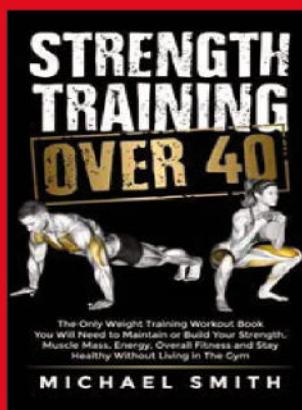
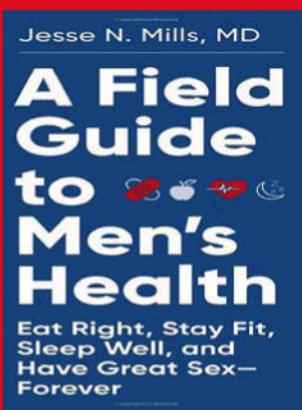
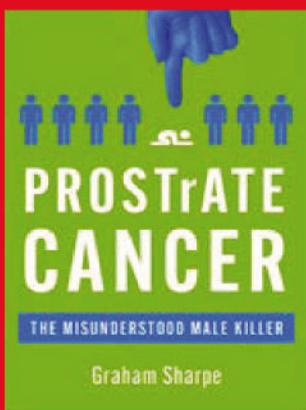
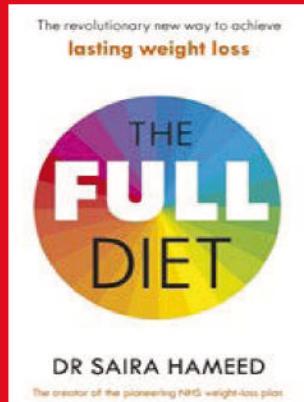
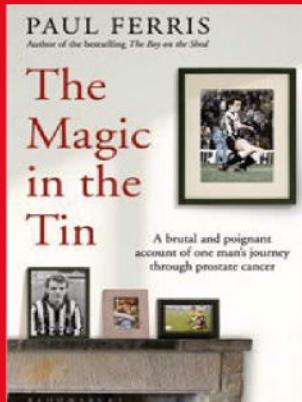
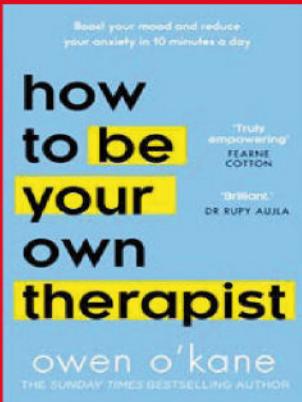
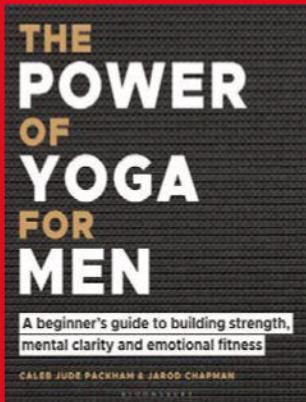
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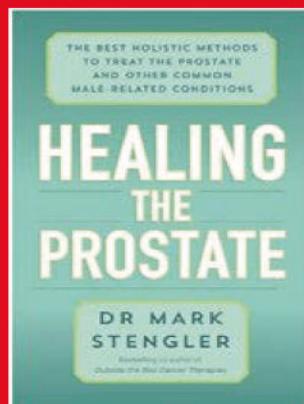
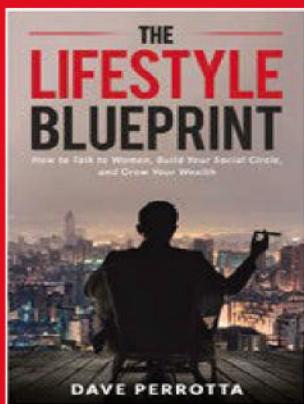
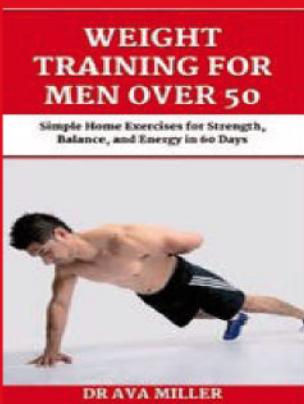
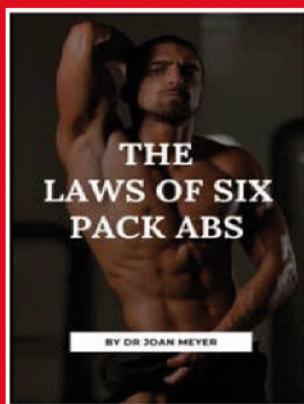
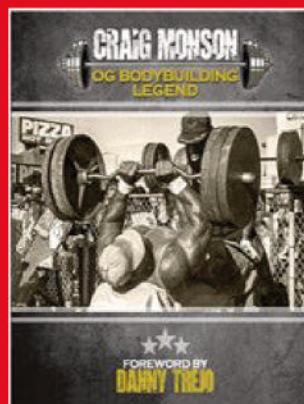
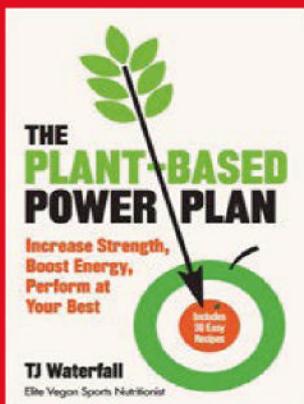
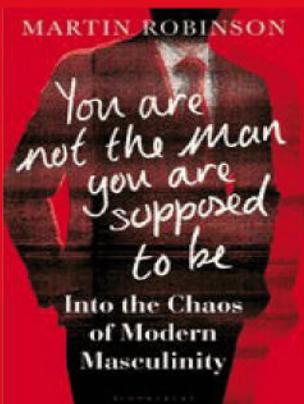
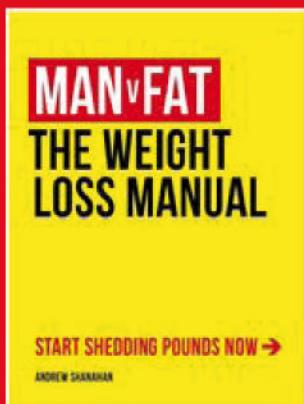
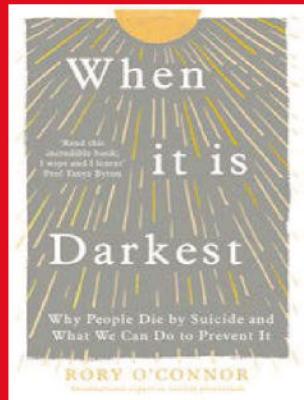
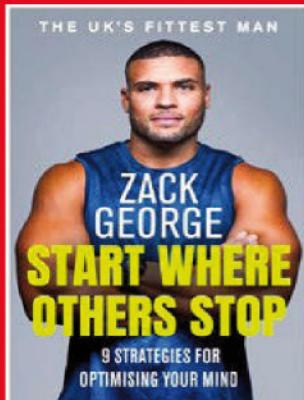
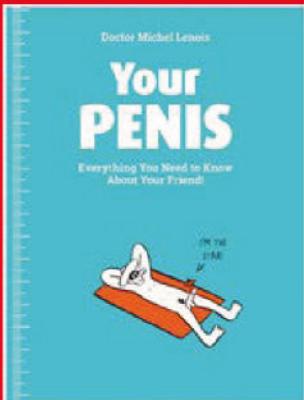
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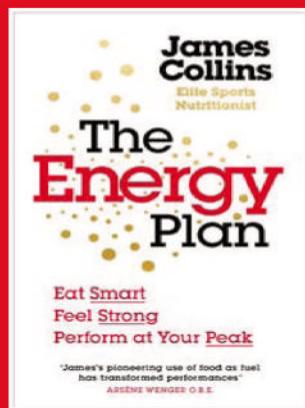
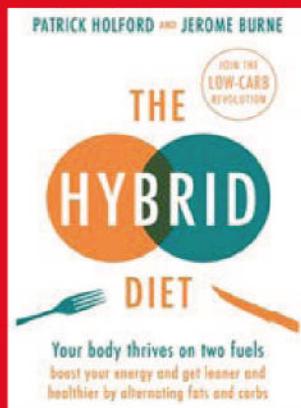
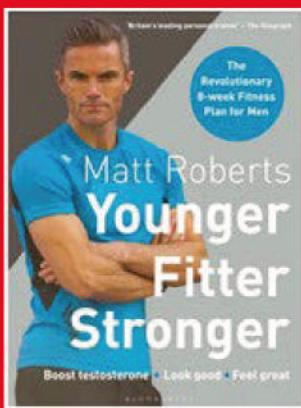
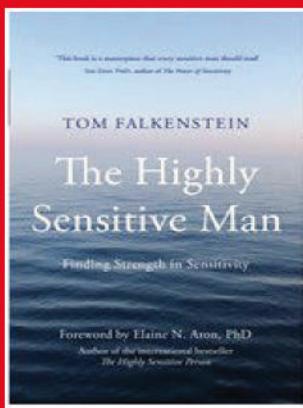
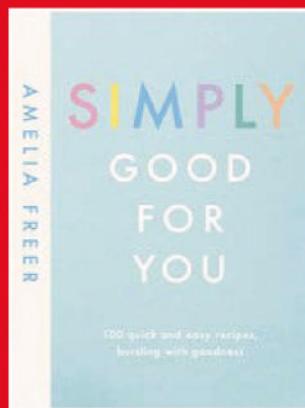
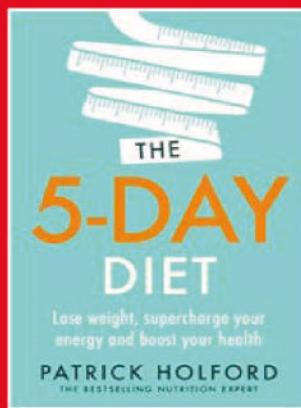
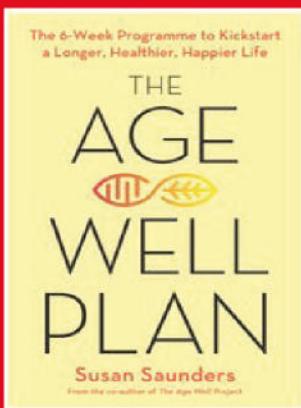
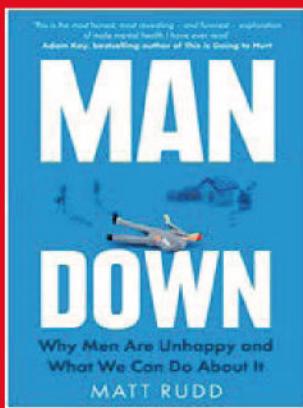
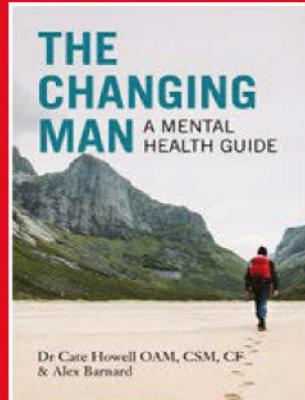
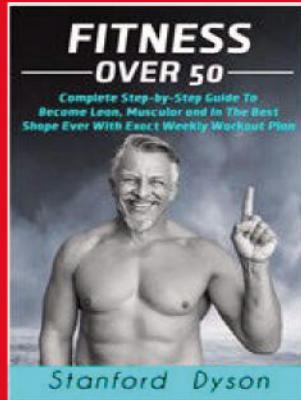
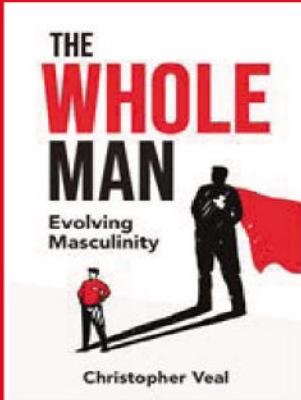
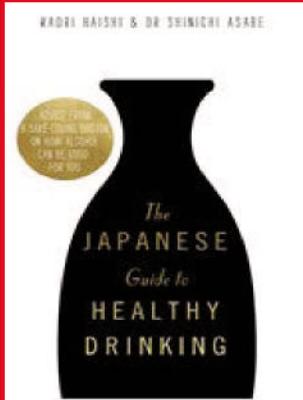
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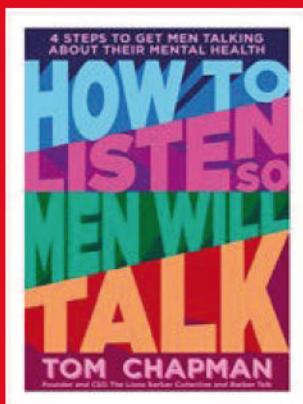
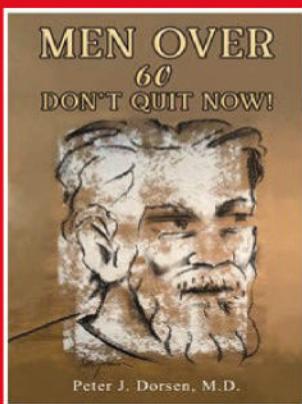
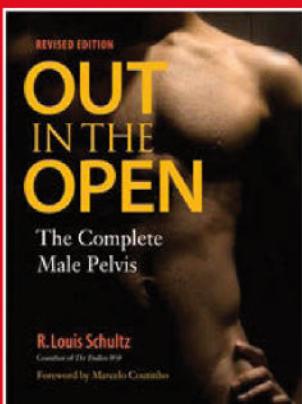
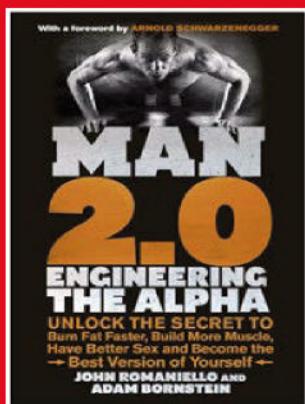
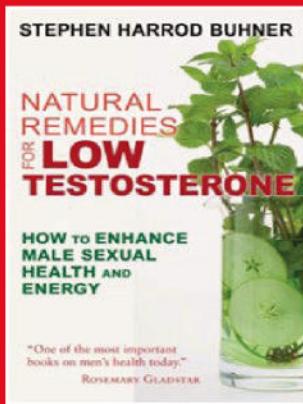
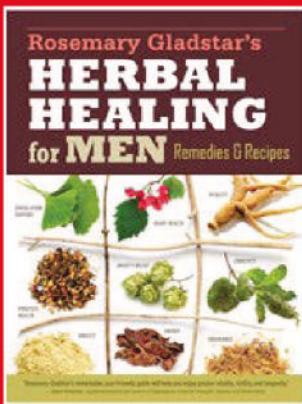
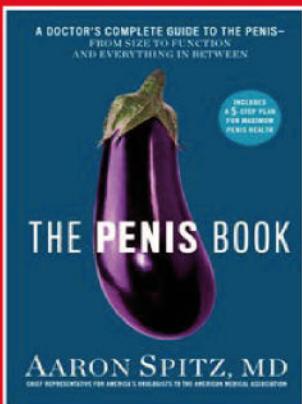
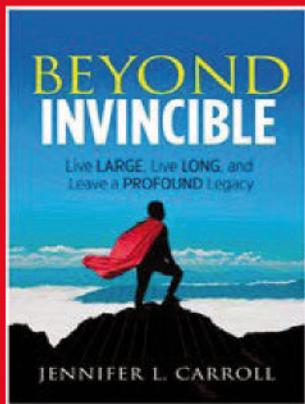
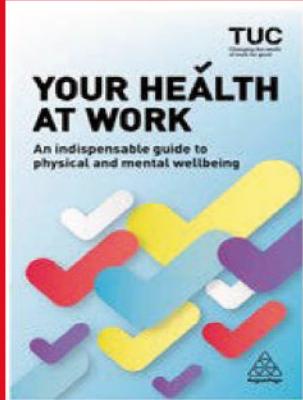
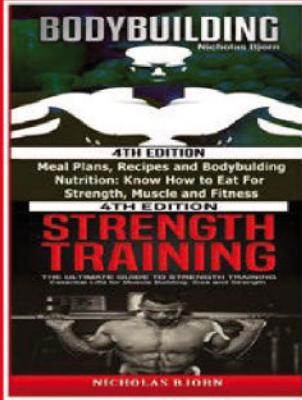
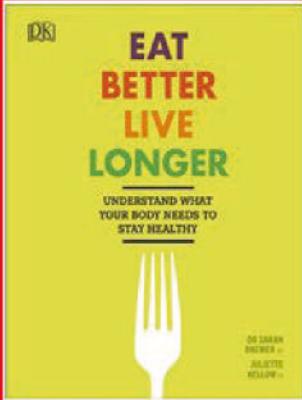
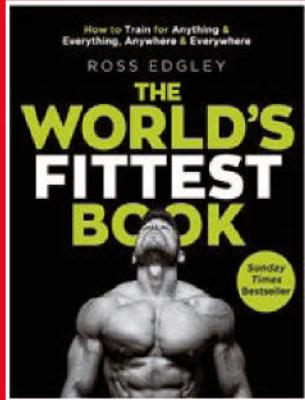
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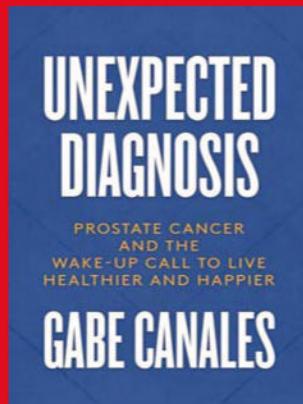
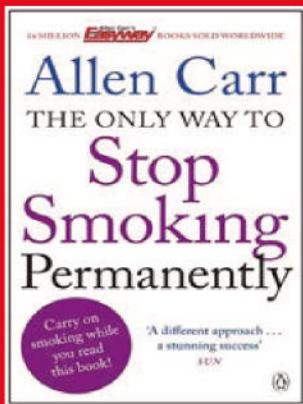
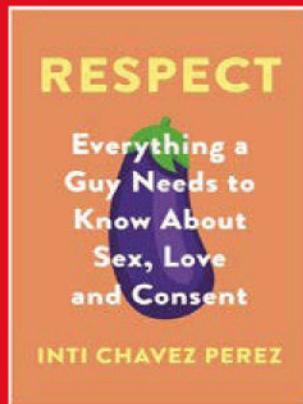
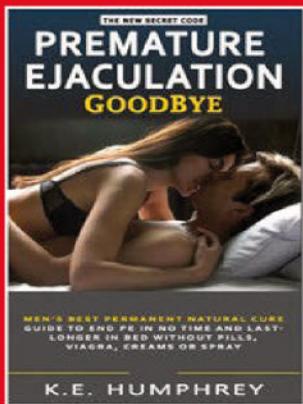
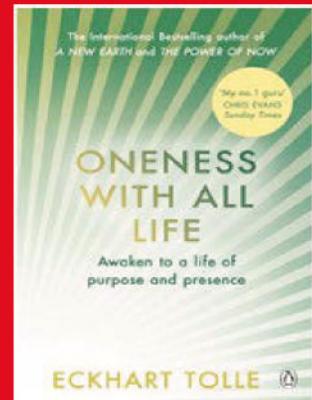
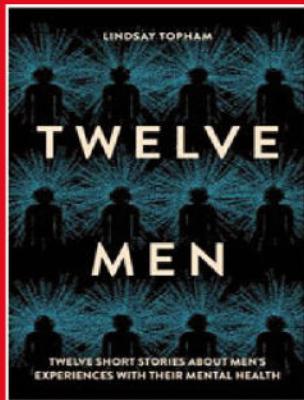
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