

A man in a red tank top and blue shorts is running on a track. The background is a blurred green field and a white fence.

THE CHEAT'S GUIDE  
TO SPRING HEALTH

# The *speed* workout

No time to exercise? Well, make 30 minutes and try this simple workout to get your body (and mind) in shape.

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PRICE explain

**N**o time to exercise? This is undoubtedly the most common excuse for not exercising. But that's the thing — it's an excuse, not a barrier. You don't need much time to exercise if you're smart about the way you move.

Essentially, there are four things you can change: frequency, duration, intensity and type. Changing the type of exercise you do is certainly a good idea in that it reduces the chances of overuse injuries, continually challenges your body in different ways and stops you from getting bored with the same old routine.

However, if you want to maximise the amount of energy you expend to control your weight and improve your health, the first three factors are what you need to consider.

Think of the total number of kilojoules you expend during exercise as the product of frequency x duration x intensity. In other words, to maximise fat burning and kilojoules spent you can (a) work out more often, (b) make each exercise session longer, or (c) make your workout harder by increasing the intensity. Walking is a great way to burn fat — if you have at least an hour every day to do it. But if you are short on time (who isn't?), make your walk tougher by walking up hills or jogging in parts to make you fitter, faster.

The bottom line is the less time you have for a workout, the harder the session should be. Our advice is to work as hard as you can for the time you have.

To help you gauge the intensity of your workout, you can use what's called rate of perceived exertion (RPE). Just as a doctor might ask you to rate your pain on a scale of 1-10, PRE asks you to rate how hard you are working on a similar scale. Finally, you'll need a wristwatch with a timer or a stopwatch to time each section of your workout.

The wonderful thing about RPE is it works for athletes and complete beginners — it's all down to how you feel. This means an RPE of 8 may be from fast running for some, but to novice exercisers this may be brisk walking. See our table (above right) for more information.

We have devised this speed workout to give you a challenging, intense workout in 30 minutes. You don't need to go to the gym. You can do this from home or your office (or

## HOW HARD ARE YOU WORKING? Test your rate of perceived exertion

Level	Exertion	How I feel
1	None	Relaxed and sitting comfortably.
2	Minimal	Could do this all day.
3		Getting warmer.
4	Moderate	Starting to sweat and can feel my heart rate increasing but feeling good. I could do this for a while.
5		Sweating, breathing harder but still able to talk.
6	Strong	Can still talk but am getting a little breathless.
7		Breathing and sweating hard, this is tough.
8	Very strong	Could no longer hold a conversation. Can only keep this up for a very short time.
9	Very, very strong	My legs feel heavy, I'm gasping for air and can only last a few seconds.
10	Maximal	Absolutely awful! I have to slow down.

anywhere you happen to be, making it useful even on holidays).

Spend eight minutes warming up (working at an RPE level of 3-5), 12 minutes exercising more intensely (at an RPE level of 6-9), then 10 minutes strengthening, toning and stretching in four exercises.

### Phase 1: The warm-up

Start walking at an RPE of about 3. After a couple of minutes as you start to feel warm, increase your pace, and again after another couple of minutes until you are on about level 5. That is, you should be starting to sweat and feel your breathing and heart rate increasing. Maintain this pace to the eight-minute mark.

### Phase 2: Get intense

When you hit the eight-minute mark, pick up your pace dramatically to an RPE of about 8 or 9 — you couldn't keep this up for more than a few minutes. Maintain for two minutes.

Use the next two minutes to recover while still working at an RPE of about 6 (i.e. your pace should still be above warm-up level). Repeat this cycle a further two times, i.e. three intervals lasting 12 minutes in total. After the last two-minute recovery, move into phase three.

### Bad knees? Tricky feet?

Getting fit is sometimes not as easy as it sounds and often the thing that will stop you is not your lack of fitness but a flare-up of old knee or foot problems. This can be really frustrating.

If you find even brisk walking on the flat stirs you up, try to work in some gentle hills to get your heart rate up (and stay on the grass rather than the road). Another alternative is a mini trampoline in the backyard to help increase the shock absorption.

If that is still terrible, try some jogging on the spot in a pool. This lets gravity take the load off your joints but still allows you to work on your RPE.

### Phase 3: Strengthen, tone and stretch

As you have already worked your legs hard during your walk and/or run, the focus here is on upper body and core (including abdominal) strength.

Try the exercises on the next page to give your muscles a workout.

# The exercises

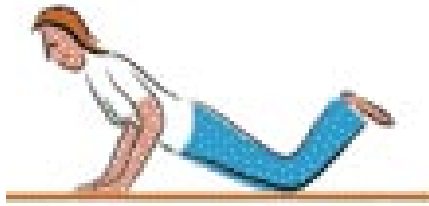
Once you have your heart racing, try these exercises to complete your 30-minute workout

## The Upper Body Toner

Get in the modified push-up position as shown (right).

Picture your ribs moving slightly inwards and your hip bones at the front drawing together. You should feel your stomach tighten. This activates your core at the front and stops your back collapsing forward like a banana.

- Keep your back in position.
- Take a breath.
- Breathe out and slowly unlock your elbows until you get to your limit of control.
- Breathe in as you come back up.
- Repeat five times.
- Have a break and then do another five.



As you get stronger, you can either increase the number of push-ups you do and/or progress to full push-up position.

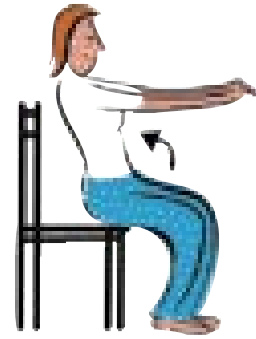
### What's your limit of control for push-ups?

- You should come back up when you:
- Shoulders lift towards your ears.
  - Chin sticks out.
  - Stomach bulges.
  - Back sways.

## The Tummy Flattener

This variation on the traditional sit-up is a great total core workout, but is also easy to cheat with. Again find your limit and build up in order to get results.

- Sit on the edge of a chair.
- Let your back, tummy and shoulders slump (easy).
- Lift your arms to 90 degrees, keeping your shoulders relaxed.
- Roll back a little then gently lift up your chest until your back



makes a straight line to the back of your head and you are leaning back from your hips.

• Hold this position for five SLOW breaths. Repeat five times.

**You'll know you are doing it right** if your stomach wall feels

hard and flat (even if you have to poke through a little creamy layer first).

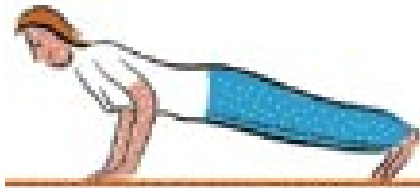
### What's your limit?

You are leaning back too far and cheating when your stomach bulges, your back sways or aches.

## The Total Body Firmer

This works all your postural muscles and will make you feel stronger and straighter.

- Progress to this one once you feel you have really mastered the Upper Body Toner.
- Assume the position as shown.
  - Push back through your heels.
  - Draw in your tummy and activate your core as in the exercise above.



- Relax your neck and shoulders.
- Unlock your elbows just a little.
- Don't let your back sway or drop.
- Hold this position for five SLOW breaths. Repeat five times.

## The Total Body Stretch

This is a brilliant stretch for your upper and lower body and is a relaxing and safe way to finish your workout. All you need is an old dressing gown cord or a long belt.

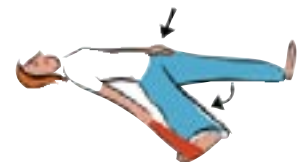


### Position 1 Hamstrings

- Lie on your back with a pillow under your neck if necessary.
- Stretch both legs out straight.
- Loop the belt around the arch of your right foot and hold the belt like reins.
- Relax your shoulders and lift the leg up until you feel a strong stretch in the muscles at the back of your leg.
- Keep the other leg straight.
- Hold for five breaths.

### Position 2 Groin

- Hold the belt in your right hand (with your leg still in the air).
- Place your left hand on your left hip to stop the hip from rolling.



- Gently drop your right leg out to the side until you feel a stretch in your groin muscles on the right.
- Hold for five breaths.



### Position 3 Spinal Twist

- Now take your leg back up.
- Transfer the belt to your left hand.
- Gently roll the leg across your body until it slowly reaches the floor and you are in a spinal twist.
- Look to the right.
- If you have a bad shoulder or neck problem, instead of extending the right arm, just keep it bent and rest your hand on your chest wall.
- Hold for five breaths.

**You'll know you are doing it right** if you feel strong stretches in your leg muscles.

## Hot physio tips

Not seeing any changes in your body? Then you are probably cheating.

Push-ups are great exercises, which is why you often see them in workouts. However, they are also very easy to cheat in and consequently become at best useless and at worst, dangerous. Before you start, try a couple next to a mirror

so you can see your body and get some feedback about your technique.

If your upper body is really weak, it's best to spend a few weeks just doing the tiniest unlock and then straighten in order to build your total core and upper body strength rather than cheating and ending up with a stiff neck, shoulder tendonitis and sore wrists.