

Exercise Philosophy

Before you begin, take a look at the principles behind *the* exercise plan that will help you maximize the hormonal and fat-burning benefits:

- 1.) **Keep it short and sweet.** All workouts are 30 minutes (maximum 40 minutes).
- 2.) **Give every workout your all.** High intensity and maximal effort – to the point where you just can't squeeze out one more rep – is a *must* for effective fat burning and hormonal benefits. When you're pushing yourself hard in the gym (or wherever you exercise), just remember your workout is short and it will all be over soon!
- 3.) **Complete your exercises with little rest between each circuit.** Circuit training keeps your heart rate high throughout your workout. When you use this method, you basically get your cardio workout and resistance training all in one shorter session. Circuit training is also the best type of workout for improving insulin response, boosting testosterone and stimulating growth hormone. So you spend less time spent exercising but realize even more benefits.
- 4.) **Work multiple muscle groups with each strength training session** This approach is designed to increase growth hormone and stimulate more muscle groups at once. It also lets you complete more work in less time and ensures your muscles get the proper recuperation time they need *between* sessions.
- 5.) **Keep cardio sessions short and use intervals.** Remember, intervals are a series of shorter periods of intense exercise separated by periods of brief rest or lighter activity. This method of training offers the most fat-burning potential and the greatest health benefits. It increases the intensity of your training too, which once again means greater benefits with less time spent exercising! Even cardiac patients can use interval training to improve their fitness.
- 6.) **Use yoga for its hormone-enhancing effects.** Besides challenging and stretching your muscles, yoga can lower blood cortisol levels, reduce adrenalin and stimulate brain-calming GABA.
- 7.) **Consume the right stuff before and after your workouts for hormonal effects.** Always consume a blend of protein and carbohydrate (but no fat) about an hour before and within 45 minutes after your resistance training sessions. This combination is proven to stimulate more growth hormone release and encourage more muscle gains. You can do cardio on an empty stomach (though you don't have to) but eat your snack of protein and carbs (no fat) within 45 minutes of finishing your session, Drink only water during your workouts, no sports drinks allowed!

Tools of the Trade

Whether you choose to work out in the gym, outside or at home, you will need a few key pieces of equipment to get the job done. Most gyms provide these items for you. Otherwise, you may want to purchase them for yourself. Here's all the equipment you will need to complete your weekly exercise routine:

- **A stability ball** – these come in different sizes, so be sure to purchase/use the proper one for your height.
- **A set of dumbbells** – 3, 5, 8, 10, 12 and 15 pounds for women; 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 pounds for men.
- **A support bench** – a weight bench or other stable bench is helpful. A bench is not necessary if you have a stability ball.
- **A medicine ball** – if you do not want to buy one, you can use a dumbbell instead.
- **Options for indoor cardio** – a stationary bike, treadmill, stepper or elliptical machine for home use. (You can also walk, bike or run outside when weather permits.)

- o **Music** – listening to your favorite tunes while you work out can be a great motivator, so have an IPOD or other player on hand.

Suggested Weekly Workout Schedule

For maximum health and hormonal benefits, I recommend you exercise six days a week. You will do three types of workouts each week:

1. Three days a week you will complete 30 minutes (maximum of 40) of strength training.
2. Once a week you'll do cardio. A second cardio session is optional (20 to 30 minutes).
3. Once a week, preferably twice (but not on your strength training days), do yoga for 30–90 minutes.
4. One day a week you will rest and do *no* exercise. ☺

A sample schedule of your weekly workouts may look something like this:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Rest	Day 1 circuit workout	Cardio Interval Training * Yoga**	Day 2 circuit workout	Yoga**	Day 3 circuit work	Cardio (Optional - 20-minutes of cardio at a steady pace or interval)*

*If you wish to do cardio and weights on the same day, split them into two different workouts (e.g., weights in the morning and cardio in the afternoon).

** Avoid yoga on the same day as your weights. A yoga class or a yoga DVD at home are both excellent options. As far as the type of yoga is concerned, I prefer hatha or ashtanga, but I leave it up to you to decide which you like best.

The Strength Training Circuit Workout for Beginners

If you have never exercised or have been inactive for a long time, you should follow the routine outlined below for 4–6 weeks before advancing to the next level. It involves full-body circuit training three days a week. You will complete two cardio workouts per week and try yoga as well.

The exercises are to be done consecutively in sequence with no rest in between. Rest for one minute at the end of each circuit and then repeat the circuit. This workout should take you about 30 minutes, even when you have worked your way up to three sets (by then your fitness level will have improved and you'll be able to finish the exercises faster). Warm up by riding the bike, walking or jogging for 4–5 minutes before beginning your strength training session.

Selecting the Right Amount of Weight

Time and time again, I see people at the gym who fail to get results, either because they don't lift enough weight to challenge their muscles or because they're lifting too much and using improper form. Choosing the right weight and using correct form are absolutely *essential* to get the results you want and to avoid injury.

When you are just starting out, choose a weight light enough to allow you to complete all the suggested repetitions for each exercise without compromising your form. Remember, if your posture is poor or you are swinging your weights instead of lifting in a controlled manner, just so you can finish the last few reps, you are not doing yourself any favors! In fact, you can really hurt yourself. As your workouts progress you'll decrease the number of repetitions and increase your weight to the point where you can barely complete the last few repetitions.

Hiring a personal trainer may seem like a daunting or expensive proposition, but don't be afraid to try it, even for just a few sessions, if you feel you need help getting started. (Some trainers will even charge less if you do your session with a partner.) Besides, we're talking about an investment in your long-term health and wellbeing. I fully believe it's some of the best money you will ever spend.

EXERCISE	SUGGESTED WEIGHT	WEEK 1	WEEKS 2 - 3	WEEKS 4 - 6
ABS: CRUNCHES	BODYWEIGHT	1 SET, 10 REPS	2 SETS, 10-15 REPS	2 SETS, 10-15 REPS
ABS: CRUNCHES (KNEES UP)	BODYWEIGHT	1 SET, 10 REPS	2 SETS, 10-15 REPS	2 SETS, 10-15 REPS
ABS: LOW-AB LEG RAISES	BODYWEIGHT	1 SET, 10 REPS	2 SETS, 10-15 REPS	2 SETS, 10-15 REPS
BACK: SUPERMANS	BODYWEIGHT	1 SET, 20-30 REPS	2 SETS, 30 REPS	2 SETS, 30 REPS
CHEST: PUSH-UPS	BODYWEIGHT	1 SET, 10-15 REPS	2 SETS, 10-15 REPS	3 SETS, 15-20 REPS
TRICEPS: STABILITY BALL TRICEPS EXTENSIONS	5-8 LB. DUMBBELLS	1 SET, 15-20 REPS	2 SETS, 15-20 REPS	3 SETS, 15-20 REPS
FULL BODY: LUNGES WITH SIDE DB RAISES	5-10 LB. DUMBBELLS	1 SET, 10-15 REPS/LEG	2 SETS, 10-15 REPS/LEG	3 SETS, 15-20 REPS/LEG
FULL BODY: SQUATS WITH BICEP CURLS	10-15 LB. DUMBBELLS	1 SET, 15-20 REPS	2 SETS, 15-20 REPS	3 SETS, 15-20 REPS
BACK: BENT-OVER ROWS	15-20 LB. DUMBBELLS	1 SET, 20 REPS	2 SETS, 20-30 REPS	3 SETS, 20-30 REPS

<p>EXERCISE TECHNIQUE GUIDELINES</p>
<p>Crunches: Lie flat on your back with your knees bent and feet on the floor; lift your chest toward the ceiling.</p>
<p>Crunches – knees up: Lie flat on your back with your knees bent and feet off the floor; lift your chest toward your knees.</p>
<p>Low-ab Leg Raises: Lie flat on your back with your legs straight up in the air; keep your hands by your sides; raise your hips off floor, directing your feet to the ceiling.</p>
<p>Supermans: Lie flat on your stomach; extend your arms in front of you; raise the opposite arm and leg simultaneously.</p>
<p>Push-ups: Get on your hands and knees on the floor; keep your hands shoulder-width apart; lower your upper body to the floor, hold and push up; keep your back straight throughout the movement (do not allow your belly to dip toward the floor).</p>
<p>Stability-ball Triceps Extensions: Lie back on the ball with your feet planted on the floor; press the dumbbells up, in line with your shoulders; keeping your upper arms still, bend your forearms back until they are parallel to the floor; weights should be beside your ears.</p>
<p>Lunges with Side Shoulder Dumbbell Raises: Standing with your feet together and hands by your sides; take a long stride forward with 1 leg; as you return to the start position, raise the dumbbells directly out to sides until they are level with your shoulders. Alternate legs until the required number of repetitions are complete.</p>
<p>Squats with Arm Curls: Grab ball between your two hands or two dumbbells (one in each hand); stand with your feet shoulder-width apart; sit back into a squat; raise your body and lift the ball/weights by bending at the elbows.</p>
<p>Bent-over Rows: Grab dumbbells with an overhand grip; stand with your knees bent and hinge forward at the hips; keep your head up; let your arms hang to the floor; pull your elbows back, squeezing your shoulder blades together.</p>