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How to Get Started Working Out at Home

By Lydia Schillinger

It is a New Year and a chance for a new and improved you. Working out at home can be just as effective as working out at a gym. There are several ways in which you may get started.

A colleague found this great website called [liverstrong.com](#). Take a few minutes to check out this article entitled [How to Get Started Working Out at Home for Beginners](#) by Lauren Bedosky. This article has step-by-step moves for each of the exercises it suggests as it takes you through the process of beginning a workout routine.

First make sure there are no hazards nearby. Find an area that is safe to move around in without hitting anything. I have a friend that did a back kick right into her stereo! Your area may be indoors or out, there are no limits to where you need to be to get started. In January it is a bit chilly to be outside for me, so I choose to be indoors. I find my perfect spot in my basement or living room and I begin with a warmup. You always want to warm up your muscles first. This will help prevent injury. Warming up your muscles literally means to warm them up by moving around. Doing jumping jacks is a great way to get your body warm. You will feel this starting to happen as you progress with each warmup exercise.

Follow the warmup and exercises in the article for instruction on how to do each move.

- Jumping Jacks
- Body-weight squats (you do not need weights to work out, using your own body weight is very effective)
- Push-ups
- Alternating front lunge

When your warmup is complete you will want to pick a series of exercises that target specific muscle groups and repeat them in what is called a circuit. A circuit is one completion of all the exercises in your workout section. I like to have multiple circuits in my workout routine. I like to a variety of exercises to target specific areas and work opposing muscle groups each day of the week. Monday I work my arms (biceps and triceps), Tuesday I do cardio (jog, go for a brisk walk, take a kick boxing class, run up and down the stairs in your house for 5 minutes, rest and repeat, whatever gets your heart rate up), Wednesday I work my legs (hamstrings and quadriceps), Thursday I do cardio, Friday I work my core (abs and back).

The article recommends the following basics to get started, but any exercises will work. (Detailed explanations of each exercise are [in the article](#)).

Circuit 1:

- Triceps dips -you can use your couch for this or simply do them on the floor.
- Alternating side lunge
- Knee to elbow plank
- Jump squat -these are a challenge, not going to lie, but they are extremely effective in getting your heart rate up and that burns calories.

Circuit 2:

- Crunches
- Plank

It doesn't mention this in the article but after every workout you MUST cool down your muscles. You just worked them out hard, now you need to let them stretch and cool down. Yoga moves - check out [VeryWellFit.com](#) - are a great way to do this. Holding poses for 10-15 seconds is a great way to help stretch your muscles making them longer and leaner, while also preventing injury. (Never bounce while you are holding a pose). A few cool down exercises I enjoy will depend on the groups of muscles I just worked. If it was arm day I like to do:

- Triceps stretch - Do a [triceps stretch](#) with your arm toward the sky, elbow bent trying to touch the middle of your back, then switch arms and repeat.
- Cross body arm stretch - Hold your arm across the front of your body, then switch arms and repeat

There are a lot of great ways to cool your body down. The point is, you want to get your heart rate back to a normal beat before you end your exercise session. Slowing back down the heartbeat gradually is key. After you have been exercising for a while your heart rate will be elevated. You will want to walk for a while to slow down your breathing and your heart rate. You want to avoid sitting down after a workout, you need to walk it off first. Stopping any exercise cold turkey could cause you to pass out. You need to keep moving around so your muscles can pump the blood back to your heart which keeps your blood pressure from dropping too quickly.

If you try any new workout moves that you love, or have a success story, please share them. You may be featured in an upcoming newsletter. ■