

A person wearing purple athletic leggings and sneakers is stretching on a patterned rug. Two purple dumbbells are lying on the rug nearby. The entire image has a purple color overlay.

HOW TO CREATE A WORKOUT PLAN

BY FITNESSISTA

Hello there!

I'm so excited to share this info with you, because it's something that used to completely mystify me when I got started with fitness.

My goal is this will be helpful for those who are strength training without seeing results, and also those who love to take classes. I hope to provide insight on how to balance your plan to make sure you're getting in a mix of strength training, flexibility, types of cardio, and rest.

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- + It's a science and an art. Different bodies respond to different types of training, so trial and error will help you determine the best balance for you.
- + If you're just getting started or recovering from injury, I highly recommend meeting with a personal trainer to assess form and provide modifications. As always, check with a doctor before making any fitness or nutrition changes.

SOME OF THE MISTAKES I COMMONLY SEE:

- + Training too hard on a consistent level. (Like Barry's or Orangetheory every day). After a certain point you'll see diminishing returns from your work and increased risk of overuse injuries.
- + Training the same muscle groups day in and day out without allowing for rest. Rest = results.
- + Not alternating cardio intensities. HIIT, steady state, tempo work, LISS, hill training.
- + Not maximizing time at the gym. If you're busy, I highly recommend supersets or circuit training, unless you have a lot of time to spend or you're working on heavy muscle gains.
- + Skimping on strength training. Cardio might shrink your body; strength training will SHAPE your body.
 - Protects bone density as we age.
 - Lean muscle is "hungrier" so the higher proportion of muscle density we have, the more calories we burn at rest. Increases our metabolism.
- + You will not get bulky from strength training. (Babies and purses weigh more than 8 lbs!)
- + Benefits increase as we age.



Let's roll into the weekly plan:

- + Write down the days of the week.
- + Pick 1-2 days that you want to have OFF each week. OFF doesn't necessarily mean watching Netflix all day; enjoy the day off from formal exercise. Do something you enjoy to promote muscle recovery such as walking, yoga, stretching, or napping.
- + Next, write down your strength training days and label them. Pick 2-4 days each week you want to strength train. I feel like the magic number is 3 but choose 4 if you're working towards specific training goals, or 1-2 if you're recovering from an injury or a beginner.

Guidelines: *The weekly recommendation for resistance training is 2 or more days per week with exercises for all the major muscle groups (minimum of 1 set of 8-12 repetitions for each muscle group). Flexibility and neuromotor exercises (balance, agility, coordination) are also recommended at least twice per week.*

Example: (3-day split)

Sunday: OFF

Monday: Strength day 1

Tuesday:

Wednesday: OFF

Thursday: Strength day 2

Friday:

Saturday: Strength day 3

- + Next, label each strength day by the type of workout you're going to do:

For strength training splits, we have SO many different ways to set this up, but here are my very faves:

Antagonist (opposing muscle groups)

Upper/lower split

Synergistic (complementing muscle groups)

Total body circuit

Remember that each muscle group needs 48 hours of rest in between training. Splitting the muscle group allows for adequate rest in between training sessions.

2 days of strength each week:

- + 1 upper, 1 lower
- + 1 total body split, 1 total body split (non-consecutive days)

3 days of strength each week:

- + 1 upper, 1 lower, 1 total body
- + 3 total body splits (non-consecutive days)
- + 1 day shoulders, chest, and triceps; 1 day legs and core; 1 day back and biceps (synergistic split)
- + 1 day chest, shoulders, and back; 1 day legs; 1 day biceps and triceps (antagonistic split)



4 days of strength each week:

- + 1 day upper, 1 day lower, 1 day upper, 1 day lower
- + 1 day shoulders, chest, and triceps; 1 day legs; 1 day back and biceps; 1 day legs (emphasis on leg training)
- + 1 day chest, shoulders, and back; 1 day legs; 1 day biceps and triceps (antagonistic split)
- + 1 day chest and biceps; 1 day legs and lower back; 1 day back and abs; 1 day shoulders and triceps

Example: (write what you're going to do on each strength day)

Sunday: OFF

Thursday: Strength day 2 Lower body

Monday: Strength day 1 Upper body

Friday:

Tuesday:

Saturday: Strength day 3 Total body circuit

Wednesday: OFF

*As far as the exercises go for each strength training day, I try to hit each muscle group TWICE each week. This may be during the same workout (triceps dips and triceps extensions) or in different workouts. **To make things easy for you, head to the fitness tab on the blog and find a workout for each type of strength!** (So, if you know it's an upper body day, click "upper body," and grab a workout there. Easy peasy.)*

How many sets and reps to do for each muscle group:

Reps:

- + Stabilization/endurance: 12-20 reps with lower weights
- + Hypertrophy (lean muscle building): 6-12 reps with moderate weights
- + Max strength: 1-6 reps with HEAVY weights
- + Power (explosive) training: 8-10 reps with mostly body weight

**This is where the art of the science comes into play. While it's not possible to spot train, certain exercises will affect muscle development and shape.*

Some of my favorite exercises:

Build a Kardashian booty: 4 sets of 10 heavy weighted squats, single leg squats, heavy glute bridges, cable kickbacks, stability ball hamstring curls, and deadlifts

For chiseled abs: SQUAT, plank, deadlift, cable rotation, barre ab work

Cut-up arms: pull-ups (!!), cable biceps curls, seated heavy rows, cable triceps extensions

Lean legs: side step-ups with a leg raise, squat jumps, any single-leg weighted work (like split squats holding a dumbbell or TRX pistol squats), hip raises, walking lunges



Where do classes fit into strength training?

Bodypump and *Orangetheory* count as total body.

Barre is lower body and core.

Rock climbing is upper body.

Barry's and *Burn Bootcamp* post their splits, so you know where to add it in.

Power yoga and *challenging Pilates* work can count as total body workouts or rest depending on the intensity of the class.

Next, let's move into cardio.

I see my fitness friends doing a TON of cardio - guilty of doing the same because I love it - but too much can cause the body to dip into its muscle stores and cannibalize itself.

General rules for cardio: According to the NASM guidelines recommend at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity cardiorespiratory exercise (30 minutes 5 days a week), 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity (2 sweaty cardio classes), or a combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity exercise per week.

Plug in your cardio for the week, making sure to vary your cardio intensity. Your heart is a muscle - probably the most important one! - so we need to make sure we're not taxing it to the extreme day after day.

TYPES OF CARDIO TO ADD:

Steady state: something that will elevate and sustain your heart rate at a moderate level (biking, jogging, power walking, dancing, stairclimbing, etc.)

HIIT (MAX 2-3x a week on non-consecutive days) *benefits of HIIT

Tempo work or hill training

Classes that count as cardio: spin classes, Orangetheory, treadmill classes, Barry's can count as HIIT

Dance cardio, kickboxing, aerobics (Zumba) can count as steady state

Sunday: OFF

Thursday: Strength day 2 Lower body + Hills

Monday: Strength day 1 Upper body

Friday: HIIT

Tuesday: Steady state

Saturday: Strength day 3 Total body circuit

Wednesday: OFF

*If you do superset or circuit training strength work, you can receive cardiovascular benefits if it keeps your heart rate elevated. You don't need to do a ton of cardio!





Some things to remember:

- + Don't stress about it! Remember that movement adds up and it's important to see the forest and not the trees. If you need to skip a workout or shuffle things around, do what you need to do.
- + If you need think this is a great idea, but don't have the time/energy/desire to DIY, check out the Fit Guides on my blog. These are customized training plans based on your goals, fitness levels, and where you like to sweat. Check out the site here and you can take a free fitness quiz to determine your fitness personality.

Hit me up on the blog or Instagram if you have any questions!

XOXO
Gina

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