

DIY Home Workouts

No equipment?
No problem!

by Carol Ann Weber

Think you need a gym to get an effective workout? Think again! With just a mat and a towel, you can get a full head-to-toe workout from the comfort of your own home. The secret is to focus on using your own bodyweight to provide the resistance you need to build strength, balance, and coordination. Bonus? You can work out on your own schedule, eliminate your drive time to the gym, and even delete those designer Lululemon leggings in your online shopping cart!

BODYWEIGHT EXERCISES

Bodyweight workouts are centered around strength training exercises that use your own weight for resistance against gravity. They promote increased strength, muscle tone, stamina, coordination, and balance along with increased metabolism, improved mood, and better sleep. When performing bodyweight exercises, you employ simple movements like pushing, pulling, squatting, bending, twisting, and balancing. Without equipment, there is less risk of injury and you can easily modify the intensity and repetitions to your ability level.

How effective are bodyweight workouts? Current research comparing bodyweight exercises to exercising with weight machines at the gym found that both were equally effective for stimulating muscles and building strength.

PLEASE TRY THIS AT HOME

Before diving right into the following workout, it's important to warm up for 5 to 10 minutes to improve performance and prevent injury. The more intense your workout is going to be, the longer your warmup should be. Jogging in place or doing jumping jacks are good ways to increase circulation and oxygen intake. Static stretches can increase flexibility.



Plank to Push-up: Start in a plank position except with your elbows on the floor, shoulder-width apart and forearms straight ahead. Keeping your body straight, push up until arms are straight. Then slowly lower your entire body back to the starting position while maintaining a straight line. Do three sets of 10 repetitions.

The Bridge. Lie flat on your back, keeping your knees bent and feet flat against the ground. Tighten your core, raising your hips until a straight line is formed between your knees and chest—do not arch your back. Hold for three breaths, then lower back down. Work up to three sets of 10 repetitions.



Triceps: Chair Triceps Dips: Sit on the edge of a stable chair, arms at your sides, hands grasping the edge of the seat as close as possible to your thighs. With feet flat on the floor at hip width, slide your feet out in front of you until you are off of the seat and in starting position. Lower your derrière down in front of the chair about halfway to the floor (arms bending to a 90 degree angle). As you breathe out, straighten your arms to raise your torso back up to starting position. Do three sets of 10 repetitions. ■

Body Weight Squats: Standing with your feet hip-width apart, toes forward, bring your arms out straight in front of you shoulder-width apart, fingers pointing forward. With your heels supporting your weight and keeping your back straight, lower your hips to a sitting position as deeply as you can go and still keep your balance. Come back up to starting position, keeping your arms straight in front of you. Do three sets of 10 repetitions.



Carol Ann Weber's
500+ articles have been published in magazines

such as *Fitness Rx*, *Muscle & Fitness*, *Oxygen*, and *Men's Fitness*. She has also been named the Academy of Bodybuilding and Fitness "Best Columnist of the Year." Along with weight training, she enjoys yoga and a brisk walk anywhere outdoors.