

Take advantage of at-home workouts

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If you work from home, are on a time crunch, or you just don't enjoy the gym, exercising at home will allow you to break a sweat effectively. Find workouts that challenge you based on your fitness level and incorporate them into your exercise routine. A physical therapist at Baylor College of Medicine offers different exercises to do at home with little-to-no

equipment.

"If you're just starting to work out, the most important thing to do is start at the right fitness level for you and do something that will challenge you and give you a good workout," said Melanie McNeal, physical and occupational therapy manager in the Joseph Barnhart Department of Orthopedic Surgery at Baylor.

Whether you have a large or small space, you can still build strength and endurance in the home without equipment. Bodyweight exercises are just as effective as using weights. McNeal suggests a three-[exercise](#), whole body workout you can do at home to repeat four times:

- 25 squats
- 10 pushups (if you can't do regular pushups, do them on your knees)
- 60-second plank

Other bodyweight core exercises include a plank progression: side planks progressing to side plank clams or side plank leg lifts; sit backs and sit-ups. If you are a beginner, lay on your side and make circles with your top leg and lift your leg up and down. Then, do 20 squats and do the other side and repeat this three times. If you're a high-level fitness person, you can add pushups, burpees, squat jumps and hold planks for up to three minutes.

"You can always make bodyweight exercises harder by increasing the number of reps, the number of sets or the length of time an exercise is held. Incorporate lunges, side lunges, step ups on a chair, walking out to a pushup position, jumping jacks and butt kicks. You don't need equipment," McNeal said.

Sitting is the worst position for the spine, so if you work remotely and sit a lot, McNeal suggests getting a standing desk so the back is extended

while you load your joints and burn calories throughout the day.

Cardio/HITT

Take a walk or ride your bike to get the body moving during the day. If you have access to a pool, swimming is a great form of cardio and is also good for core strengthening.

High intensity interval training (HIIT) gets your heartrate up with short periods of rest. For a max of 20 minutes, you can incorporate cardio in different HIIT exercises, such as:

- 25 jumping jacks
- Running in place (30 seconds)
- 10 walking lunges on each leg
- 10 burpees
- 20 air squats
- One 60-second plank

Rest for a short period and repeat each exercise for a total of 20 minutes.

To incorporate cardio, strength and core training in your HIIT workout, McNeal suggests picking one cardio exercise (such as jumping jacks, running in place or burpees), followed immediately by one strength exercises (such as lunges or squats), followed immediately by one core exercise (such as a plank), then resting for 30 seconds. You can do as many rounds as possible for 20 minutes.

Strength training

"As we get older, we have a higher chance of developing osteoporosis or osteopenia, especially females. Strength training and loading the joints

will help prevent that," McNeal said. "Giving stress to the bones while lifting body weight or weights will stretch the bones so they get stronger."

You can have adjustable dumbbells that go up to 25-50 pounds, or smaller weights if you prefer.

A strong, at-home dumbbell workout can include:

- Squats with dumbbells: 15 reps
- Bicep curls: 15 reps
- Step-ups: 10 reps on each leg
- Bench press: 10 reps
- Overhead skull crushers: 10 reps

McNeal suggests doing this back-to-back three times before taking a break.

If you prefer exercising with equipment, you can use different items that will not take up too much space in the home. Resistance bands that loop around the legs can be used for squats, side-stepping and leg kickouts. Resistance band kits with handles allow you to stick them on a door or wall to mount them, offering different types of workouts. There are various exercises you can do with a Swiss ball to work the upper body, lower body and core. A small medicine ball can be effective for lifting.

McNeal also stresses the importance of balance exercises. As you age, you start to lose your balance. Balance on one leg with the knee slightly bent and try to do that for one minute. Do this on a [flat surface](#) and challenge yourself by closing your eyes while trying to balance.

Memberships

Memberships to [online platforms](#) give you access to a database of different exercises based on time as well as body-specific workouts. If you choose not to pay for memberships, many online memberships have a free cancelation policy, so you can try doing different memberships month-to-month to find the routine you like. You also can work with a personal trainer in-person or via Zoom.

"The American Heart Association says to get 150 minutes of exercise per week. You don't need a lot of equipment or space to do a good workout at home, so do what works best for your [fitness level](#)," McNeal said.

Provided by Baylor College of Medicine

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