

The 5-minute workout that requires no equipment or extra space and will keep you fit in quarantine

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Brendon Gurd's research has identified a set of whole-body interval training with wide application that can help solve the problems for people with limited time, space, and no access to equipment. Credit: Unsplash/Jonathan Borba

With gyms closed and fitness classes cancelled, many of us are experiencing the challenge of exercising within cramped spaces. In fact, for some, it is not unlike the situation for someone stationed on a submarine for weeks at a time.

Queen's researcher Brendon Gurd (School of Kinesiology and Health Studies), an expert in how exercise improves mitochondrial functions related to health and disease, was originally inspired to discover an exercise protocol that could be performed successfully even in the most confined of spaces, like on a submarine. As Principal Investigator of the Queen's Muscle Physiology Lab (QMPL), Dr. Gurd's research has come to identify a set of whole-body interval [training](#) with wide application that can help solve the problems facing many, particularly now, of limited time, space, and no access to equipment.

Whole-body interval training incorporates exercises such as jumping jacks and burpees to engage major muscle groups for short periods at high-energy bursts. Most commonly affiliated with routines such as [high-intensity interval training](#) (HIIT), Tabata, or short-duration interval training, the appeal of this form of exercise is that it can be accomplished in as little as five minutes, requires no equipment, and can be completed in an average-sized room.

"Among the most commonly cited barriers to being physically active in most populations are time and access to equipment," says Dr. Gurd. "Our research studies demonstrate that whole-body interval training improves aerobic fitness similar to traditional endurance training (such as running on a treadmill for 30 minutes), but provides the additional benefit of improving some strength and muscle endurance outcomes."

Several of these exercises may be familiar and can be an activity for the entire family. In fact, Dr. Gurd has also been using this training protocol with his family, including his children, to stay physically active and cope with stress during this time.

"Physical fitness is an important determinant of health and disease risk," explains Dr. Gurd. "Remaining active and fit are two things that we can control. Maintaining some control in our lives through regular exercise, in addition to the direct benefits of exercise on our mental and physical health, may help us to cope with the stress associated with the current environment."

For those interested in incorporating Dr. Gurd's whole-body interval training into their health routine for their individual fitness levels, please see the following sample exercises or follow along with Dr. Gurd and his children in the video above.

A complete set includes eight [exercise](#) intervals, a combination of burpees, jumping jacks, mountain climbers, or squat thrusts, for 20 seconds each followed by a rest period of 10 seconds. A total workout can be completed in under five minutes. When completed four days a week for four weeks, the added benefit of improved muscle endurance has been found.

Provided by Queen's University

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