

How to Create the Perfect Circuit Training Workout

Circuit training is one of the best ways to exercise to build muscle and burn fat at the same time.

For those of you who've never done circuit training before. Circuit training combines strength training with short bursts of cardio. You move from exercise to exercise quickly, with no rest in between. You will find it quite challenging at first. Try not to go too hard out your first time and build your intensity as you get fitter.

Circuit training is so good because there's hundreds of different ways you can do it. We will share with you a blueprint that we've had success with and all you need to do is decide on the exercises you want to do.

Here is how your routine should look:

Set 1

- upper body movement – 12 reps
- upper body movement, same muscle group– 12 reps
- 2 min cardio

Set 2

- lower body movement – 12 reps
- lower body movement, same muscle group – 12 reps
- 2 min cardio

Set 3

- core body movement – 12 reps
- core body movement, same muscle group – 12 reps
- 2 min cardio

2 minute rest, then repeat entire routine 2-3x.

Choosing Your Exercises

The best kinds of exercises are compound exercises which use larger muscle groups and more muscle groups at one time. These exercises keep your heart rate higher and give you more bang for your buck.

Examples are pushups, pullups, squats, bench press, overhead press, lunges, deadlifts, and tricep dips. Some of these exercises need weights or machines and some use your bodyweight only. For a comprehensive list of circuit exercises with explanations and pictures go to <http://www.brianmac.co.uk/exercise.htm>

- For set 1, choose your upper body muscle group – Chest/Shoulders/Triceps/Biceps/Back. Find two exercises that work this muscle group.

- Choose your cardio. This can be the same cardio after each set, or you can vary it. You can try skipping, running, sprinting or even burpees, box jumps, or step ups. If you're at a gym then any cardio machine like a treadmill, or bike will be fine.
- For set 2, choose your lower body muscle group – Quads/Hamstrings/Glutes/Calves. Again, find two exercises that work the muscle group you choose.
- For set 3, choose 2 different exercises that work your core.
- Choose your weights if you are using them. Make sure the weight is challenging enough but will allow you to perform the exercises for the entire 12 reps. You'll have it sussed after your first few workouts.

Before You Start

Be prepared. Have your routine written down and have it next to you during your workout. Time your routine and make notes when you finish - was the weight too heavy or too light? Did you complete a third set? How long did it take to complete?

Set up your area. Get the free weights you need and any equipment near you so you can move quickly from exercise to exercise.

Get Started

With your plan next to you and your equipment set up, you're ready to go. Note down your starting time and have a 2 minute timer ready to time your cardio. Begin set 1 and don't stop until you've completed all 3 sets. Take a 2 minute rest, have a drink and start the next round. Note down your finish time.

It should take you maximum 45 minutes to do 3 complete routines. If it took too long your weights or movements were either too challenging or you didn't move fast enough between each exercise. If you flew through it, then it may not have been challenging enough.

Aim for 3-5 circuits per week. It may take a few weeks to build up to that and you can do more if you can.

That's it. Push yourself and watch your body transform before your eyes!