

No Money, No Gym...No Problem!

By Debi Silber, MS, RD, WHC The Mojo Coach®

Think you can't get a great workout without money for equipment or a gym membership? Think again! There are many exercises you can do which will shape, tone and sculpt your entire body without spending a penny.

Here are a few ways to get in your cardiovascular exercise:

- Got stairs? Run up and down the stairs-It's the same workout you'd get on a Stairmaster.
- Go for a walk, jog or run outside. Strive for a target heart rate zone that's challenging yet doable.
- Borrow your child's jump rope for an intense cardio blast. You can create your own "boot camp" cardio class by jumping rope to get your heart rate up, then doing upper and lower body resistance exercises to tone, sculpt and strengthen.

Here are some ways to build muscle from head to toe:

Push-ups: Push-ups are a great upper body exercise because they strengthen the entire upper body in one exercise. There are also many ways you can do them according to your fitness level ranging from wall pushups to the more advanced version. Here's how to know you're doing them correctly:

- Wall Push-ups: Stand arms length distance from a wall. Place your hands on the wall at shoulder level with feet hip distance apart. Bend arms to a 90-degree angle as you slowly press yourself towards the wall. Slowly press away to return to starting position. Work up to 3 sets of 10 repetitions then move on to moderate pushups.
- Moderate Push-ups: This time, you're on the floor, on your knees. Your back is straight, abs tight and your belly button is pulled towards the spine. Hands should be shoulder width apart. Lower for 4 counts until elbows are at shoulder level then lift for 4 counts. Work up to 3 sets of 10 repetitions then move on to advanced pushups.
- Advanced Push-ups: Same form as moderate pushups except your toes are on the floor, not your knees. Imagine a board tied to your back helping to keep it straight and tight. Work up to 3 sets of 10 repetitions.

Chair dips: Sit on a chair or bench. With legs straight, lower yourself off the chair or bench until your elbows are at the same level as your shoulders. Squeeze the triceps in the back of the arm as you lower for 4 counts then lift for 4 counts. Work up to 3 sets of 10 repetitions.

Here are some ideas to strengthen your abdominals for core strength:

Bicycle: Lay on your back with your chin up, elbows back behind your ears keeping a space between the chin and the chest. Slowly pull opposite knee towards your opposite shoulder pressing off your shoulder blades. Hold each move for 4 counts. Work up to 3 sets of 10 repetitions.

Crunches: Lay on your back with your chin up, shoulders back, elbows behind your ears and space between your chin and chest. Keep your feet hip distance apart. Press off your shoulder blades to lift your upper body. As you lift, curl your hips toward the ceiling in a pelvic tilt to contract the entire abdominals from top to bottom. Lift for 4 counts, hold for 4 counts then lower for 4 counts. Work up to 3 sets of 10 repetitions.

Plank: This abdominal exercise requires the same positioning as advanced push-ups except you're resting on your forearms instead of your hands. With your back straight and abs tight, hold for 1 minute. The key to this exercise is making sure your lower back stays straight and tight.

Here are some exercises for your lower body:

Lunges: Make sure your back is straight and your shoulders are back. Take a deep step and lower 90 degrees, making sure your knee is directly above heel, never over the toes to avoid injury. Press your weight through your heel as you slowly lower down. Contract glut muscle as your weight is pressed through your heel. Slowly lower then push yourself back to starting position by pressing through your heel and repeat. Work up to 3 sets of 10 repetitions on each leg working one leg at a time.

Squats: Imagine trying to sit in a chair that's placed very far behind you. Make sure your back is straight, shoulders back and feet are hip distance apart. Press your weight through your heels pushing your gluts way out behind you and lower 90 degrees. Your knees should be over your heels, not toes to avoid injury. Lower for 4 counts, hold for 4 counts then lift for 4 counts working up to 3 sets of 10 repetitions.

Plie: This exercise is similar to squats except by using a slightly different form you strengthen the hips and outer thighs. For this exercise, turn your toes and knees out while tucking your tailbone under. Your back should be straight and tight. Press your weight towards the outside and back of your legs. Lower for 4 counts, hold for 4 counts then lift for 4 counts. Work up to 3 sets of 10 repetitions.

Becoming fit doesn't have to mean costly gym memberships or even moderately priced home equipment. What is needed however are just a few ideas and the desire to look, feel and live your best.



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