

Workout Frequency and Duration

Recovery is just as important as the exercise itself. Therefore, it is essential to understand that you should not over-train. Many people believe that they have to train every day in order to be lean and ripped. However, I suggest that you train around four times a week; this allows enough rest time for your body while your increased RMR does some of the work for you, and will also keep you from over-training. On the other hand, if you're only training once a week, you're not going to see the results you want.

Many people are also misinformed that longer-duration exercises are better. For example, people seem to think that two hours of cardio a day will get them ripped. But the fact is that you can achieve the same result in less time.

Beginners and non-athletic individuals can start with 30 minutes a day (cardio circuit stage 1); as you progress, extend your workouts to up to 60 minutes a day (cardio circuit stage 3). There is really no reason to exceed 60 minutes of an intense workout unless you are training to become an endurance athlete. Again, be sure not to over-train and always give your body time for a full recovery. If you over-train, you are liable to be going backwards, not progressing forward.

So, my suggestion is to train 4 days a week, beginning at 30 minutes, with a goal to obtain 60 minutes each time—especially if weight loss and maintenance is a goal. As I mentioned before, though, there will be a point when your body will become immune to these exercises and you might plateau. If this is the case then you need to mix up your workouts. That's why this e-book provides other workouts to add to your routine (such as chest blast, interval sprints, legs and buns) in order to confuse your body. These will allow you to climb your way out of any seemingly flat-lining results.

You can also change the intensity, duration, reps and sets of your workouts to throw your body off. Don't be shy about switching up your workouts; it will actually be a benefit toward your goal of getting ripped, toned and healthy. For example, if you are training cardio circuit stage 1 for several weeks and your gains have slowed, you can always increase the reps, sets or even cut out the breaks to make it more intense before you move to cardio circuit stage 2.

Typical Exercises

There are thousands of exercises you can do for your body, and people are always looking for “new” ones. Well, you don’t always necessarily need “new” exercises all the time to get ongoing results. You can stick with the same exercises below and change variables over time to keep confusing your body. What I mean by that, as I mentioned above, is to change the volume of work (reps and sets), rest periods, speed of reps, and even mix up certain angles of the exercise.

Also, as mentioned, there will be a point when your body will become immune to the workouts and you’re probably not going to add any more additional muscle. However, when you reach that point and your body fat is at the desired percentage, you can then maintain the gains that you have earned. Yes, that’s right: Your workouts can become a bit easier—but don’t slack too much! I suggest reducing your workout frequency in order to maintain, but do not stop altogether.

Working Your Core

Recently, you may have heard a lot about “working your core” without exactly knowing what that means. Well, I’m here to help you with that. Your “core” is basically the center of power for your body.

Core muscles are located around your trunk and pelvis—and “working” them has numerous benefits for your entire body. For one, it improves your balance and stability; this is important because most sports and activities (especially when bending is involved) depend on stable core muscles near your lower back, hips and abs. Not only will core exercises improve your performance, but they will also decrease the risk of lower back pain, muscle injuries and bad posture, as well as strengthening and toning underlying ab muscles (working your way toward the ever-popular six-pack).

Another great thing about core training is that it can be done at home and doesn’t really require special equipment (though medicine balls and dumbbells can be added as variables). Fifteen to thirty reps of core-training exercises (such as pushups, V-ups, squats, floor bridge, oblique dips, lunges, leg lifts, floor prone cobra, Superman, free fall, Romanian dead lifts, snake and twists, and even jumping jacks—all of which are included in the following TNT workouts) should be enough to do the trick.

So now that you know what “working your core” is all about, keep in mind that it’s an essential part of a well-rounded fitness program and is at the “core” of the TNT exercise routines.

Achieving a Six-Pack

If you want a six-pack, decreased body fat is essential (however, you cannot spot reduce; thus, total body fat will have to be minimal), followed by core exercises, especially the exercises that develop the muscles in the abdomen region (shown in the diagram above).

“Abs” have attained some type of glorified status among the public and media recently; we are constantly being pitched on buying the “new” ab gadget on late-night infomercials. But the fact is that most of our efforts are being misplaced. People think that if they do a million sit-ups or buy the latest ab gadget on the market, they will see the results they want—and that is not the case.

I do believe in doing crunches in moderation for strength, shape and definition. Besides, having a strong mid-section will lead to better performance in any exercise because it helps with balance and support. But it’s not the best way to burn abdominal fat. Here is my advice for obtaining a six-pack: Checking your body fat should be the first step before even training. I bet you didn’t know this, but you actually already have a six-pack right now; you just can’t see it! This is mostly likely because your body fat is hiding your abs. So if your body fat is too high (refer to section 2 on body fat), don’t focus on stimulating your abs with the new gadget on TV just yet. Figure out your body fat first.

The three main cardio circuits below are specially designed to cut body fat and increase lean muscle for the ultimate metabolic effect. Train to eliminate your body fat BEFORE focusing only on your abs. Once you have reached the desired body fat percentage then move into a more intense core workout, such as core blast stage 1 and 2, to further your progression and strengthen your midsection. Believe me, the six-pack you want is within your reach. You can’t get it off an infomercial—but you *can* get it with TNT.

Why Stretching Is So Important

Here is a 10-step stretching sequence that should be performed before and after any workout listed below. Stretching is very important because it lowers the risk of injury and may decrease the occurrences of muscle imbalances, joint dysfunction and overuse of muscles. When you follow the 10-step stretches, you allow the muscles to loosen and get prepared for the movements of the workout. When you stretch, you are actually helping your body recover from an exercise and you are increasing your flexibility. It has even been shown that stretching the upper body, such as shoulders and upper back, might improve respiratory function. Stretching also increases circulation throughout the body. If you don't stretch often, it could possibly lead to muscle imbalances and postural dysfunction. It is very important to stay on top of your stretching exercises, even on your off-days. So I strongly recommend doing the stretching routine below.

Stretching Routine

1) Standing Pectoral Stretch



Proper form: Raise both arms outward at shoulder height; pull your arms backwards a bit until you feel a slight stretch in the front part of your shoulders and chest. Hold for 20-30 seconds; repeat.

2) Standing Back Stretch



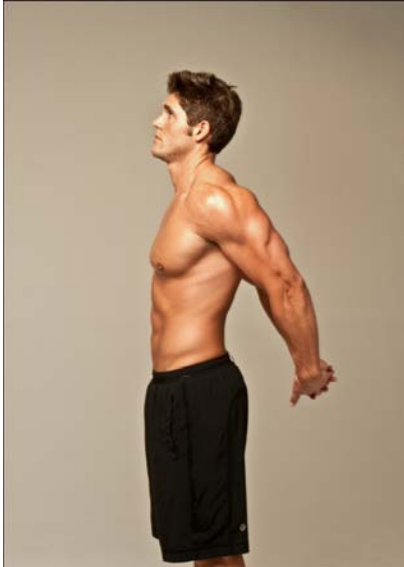
Proper form: Intertwine your fingers and stretch your arms forward in front of you at shoulder height. Hold for 20-30 seconds; repeat.

3) On the Floor Back Stretch



Proper form: Sit back on your heels and stretch your arms out straight in front of you, bending at the waist and bringing your body close to the floor. Hold for 15-30 seconds; repeat.

4) Standing Shoulder Stretch



Proper form: Intertwine fingers then stretch arms behind back, lower than shoulder height (top picture). Bottom picture: Bring one arm across your chest, holding it near the elbow with your other arm (bent). Straighten but do not lock the elbow of your extended arm. Keep your shoulders relaxed. Repeat with opposite arm.

5) Triceps Stretch



Proper form: Put one arm over your head (with your hand in back of your head); grasp its elbow with your other hand (above your head), applying slight pressure. Hold the stretch then repeat with the other arm.

6) Abs Stretch (Face-Down [Prone])

Proper form: Lie face-down on the floor with your legs extended and toes pointing out. Lift your torso up using your arms as support. Arch your back by lifting your head up and backward, stretching your abdominal region. Hold this position for 3-4 seconds; repeat.

7) Groin Stretch



Proper form: Sit up straight with your knees apart and the soles of your feet pressed together, leaning forward to grasp them with your hands (top picture). Bottom picture: Standing, extend your legs far apart and bend forward from your waist, grasping your calves with your hands (hold for a few seconds but do not bounce).

8) Quadriceps Stretch



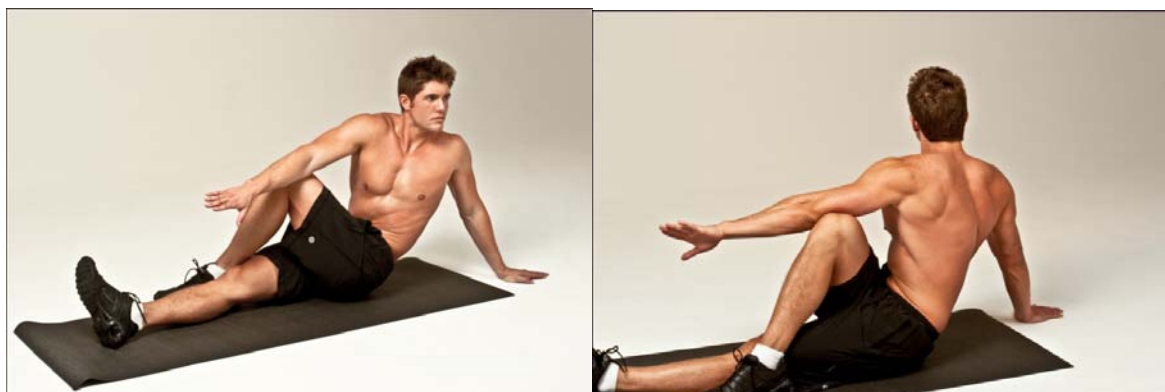
Proper form: Standing with legs at normal width apart, lift one leg behind you at the knee and grasp the top of the ankle or toes, pulling it slightly toward your rear end. Repeat with other leg.

9) Hamstring Stretch



Proper form: Sitting, extend one leg straight in front of you; bend the other leg outward at an angle (off the floor) so that the sole of your foot touches the opposite leg. Lean forward at the waist and grasp the extended foot. Switch legs.

10) IT Band Stretch



Proper form: Sitting, extend one leg forward and cross the other over it (with the knee bent and sole of foot on the floor). Twist your upper body and slide your forearm over the bent knee, applying slight pressure. Hold for 15-20 seconds; repeat with opposite leg.

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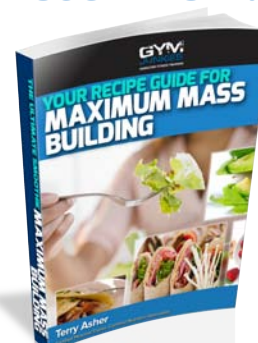
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