

KIOSK

A woman in a teal tank top and black leggings is stretching on a paved road. She is leaning forward, holding her right foot with her hands. She is wearing white earbuds and a black wristband. The road is bordered by a metal guardrail on the left. The background shows a clear blue sky and some greenery.

Healthy Body

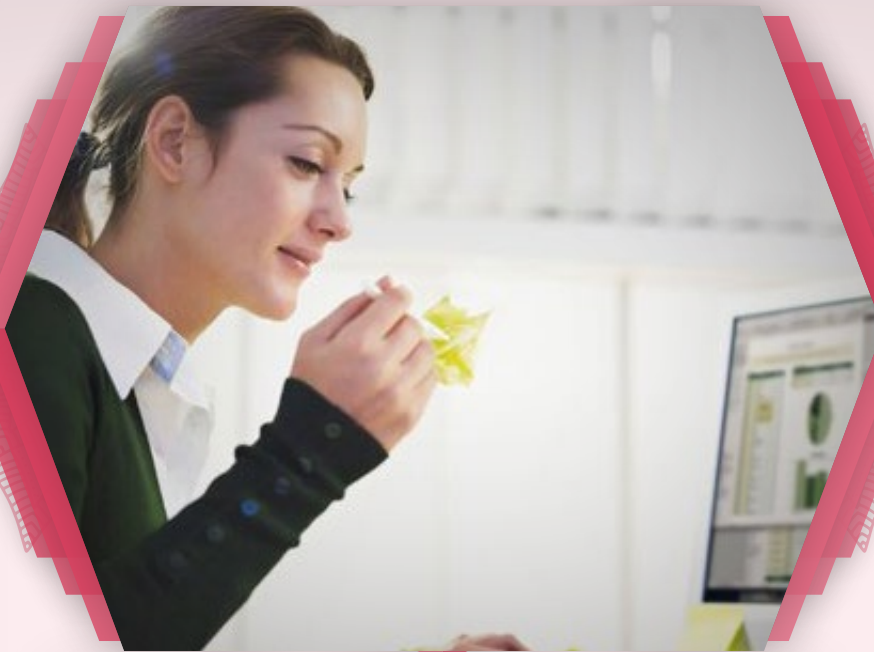
Countdown to Your
Best Body



ESTABLISH A BASELINE

A successful workout program requires tracking and progression, says Brynn Jinnett, owner of the Refine Method in New York City. By keeping tabs of your fitness, you'll be more inclined to improve it. Create a baseline fitness test, making sure to include moves that measure the

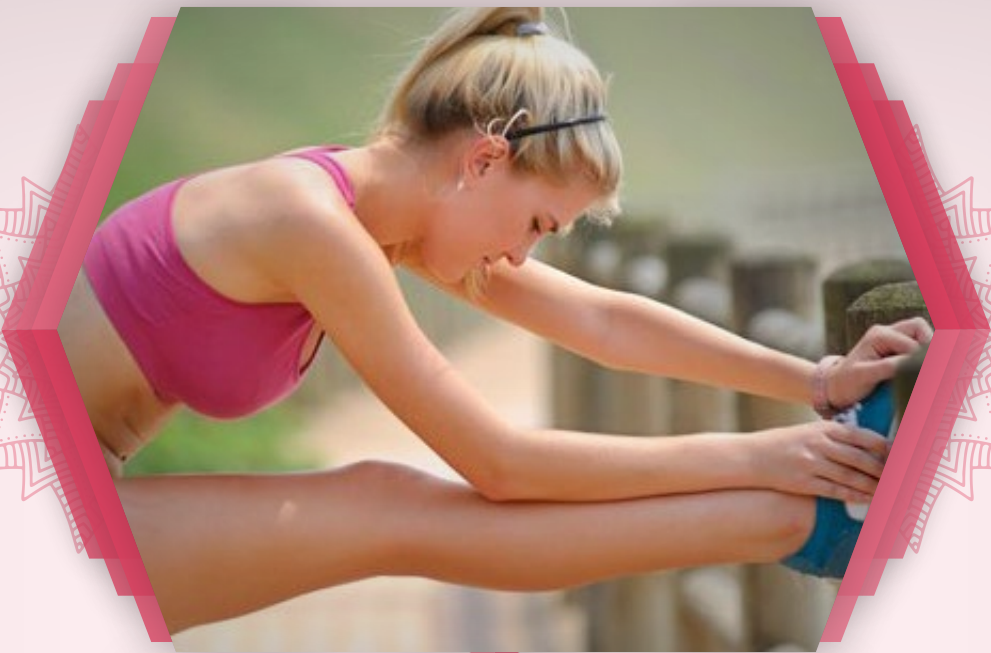
strength of all of your major muscles. Maybe you gauge things like the number of pushups you can do, how long you can hold a plank, how many lunges you can do in 60 seconds, and how long you can hold a wall squat. Then make it your goal to beat those numbers one month from now.



BECOME A FRONT-LOADER

If you're trying to slim down, consume a majority of your calories before 3 p.m., says Paul Arciero, D.P.E., a professor of nutrition and exercise science at Skidmore College. People who eat their biggest meals early in the day shed more

weight than those who eat the same number of calories with a majority of them later in the day. So keep your dinners light and don't let lunch get pushed back into the late afternoon.



STRETCH FOR STRENGTH

What will majorly sideline your quest for a bikini body? An injury that could easily have been avoided. “The power of stretching is vastly underrated and oftentimes forgotten,” says Joey Hays, a certified GX cycle instructor in Portland, OR. “As we age, the elasticity of our muscles decreases and is accelerated by sports that can overuse and overwork

muscles through repetitive motion.” This overuse can lead to aches, pains, and injury. That’s why it’s important to develop a stretching routine that targets the muscles you use the most—probably the ones in your legs and butt. After your cool-down, devote about five minutes to static stretching, making sure to hold each stretch for about 30 seconds.



JUICE UP YOUR DIET

Skip the high-cal, butt-widening, sugar-spiked baked goods and sip this hydrating, nutrient-packed juice from Eric Helms, founder and owner of Juice Generation, when you want a sweet snack that sneaks in servings of produce to boot: In a juicer, combine 2 to 3 carrots (greens removed), 1

seeded apple, 1/2 small beet, and 1/4 peeled lemon. This combo will boost your vitamin A levels while also giving your skin a rosy glow and providing a little natural SPF for your skin thanks to all of the caroteoids packed in the beets and carrots.



TURN YOUR A.M. ROUTINE INTO A YOGA ROUTINE

You can get the mind-body benefits of yoga without even rolling out a mat: Just work some poses and pauses into your morning grind, says Erin Moone, co-owner of StarCycle, an indoor cycling studio in Portland, OR. “Think ‘yoga’ from the time you rise until you walk out the door for work—it’s a mediation in motion.” Do some shoulder

openers in the shower while shampooing, blow-dry your hair upside down to stretch out your hamstrings, and lunge into a warrior III while making your bed. The more you find time to fit in, the better—stress causes your body to hold onto more fat, so devoting your mornings to erasing any anxiety can help your weight-loss efforts in the long run.



BROWN-BAG IT

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ating lunch at a restaurant can make it harder to lose weight. In fact, in one study, women who dined out midday at least once a

week shed five fewer pounds than those who ate food from home. Pack your own noon meal and you'll not only save calories, you'll save cash too.



START YOUR WORKOUT WITH A JOLT

Anyone who's ever sipped a coffee before exercising knows that the drink can add some extra oomph to exercise. But java is good for more than just powering your runs or plyo sessions: Research shows it can also help protect your

body from the harmful effects of the sun, although you still need to slather on sunscreen. For a real treat, make your pre-warmup an iced coffee so the energizing effects of the caffeine peak when you hit the hardest part of your workout.



CONSTITUTE FITNESS FRIDAYS

The end of the week often means meeting the girls for happy hour—and downing tons of calories between the beers and nachos. Have just as much fun (and maybe more!) without all the junk by joining your friends for a different fitness class each Friday evening, suggests Giselle McInnis, a

former NFL cheerleader and co-owner of barre3 UTC/La Jolla, a studio in San Diego. Or if Sunday brunch is your weakness, turn those dates into Skinny Sundays. Even if you go out after your workout, you'll likely be less hungry for anything heavy—and if you are, you've already burned off some of those calories!



GO NO-TECH

Nowadays we have heart rate monitors around our chests, GPS chips in our shoes, and MP3 players in our hands. But getting to the next level may require checking in with your body, not your metrics. “We’re wired with hundreds of natural gauges, alarms, and dashboards to measure performance,”

Hays says. “Listen to what your body is telling you to know when to push forward and when to dial it back.” Every few weeks try a (mostly) tech-free workout to see how it really feels. You may surprise yourself by going harder than before, or by realizing your current regimen is setting you up to harm your body.



TEA-SE AWAY BLOAT

Ditch the belly-ballooning carbonated drinks and brew some tea to banish bloat. Grate some ginger—which is known to soothe the digestive track—into hot water, then add a squeeze of fresh lemon juice, or steep about 5 grams of dried

dandelion leaf (a diuretic) in one cup of hot water, strain, and drink once the water cools slightly. Other varieties of tea shown to help with gas include peppermint and chamomile.



BLAST YOUR BOOTY

Diamonds are a girl's best friend, especially when they lead to leaner legs and a firmer, more lifted tush. Try this move—called “diamonds” because of the shape your legs make—from McInnis: Lie on your side with knees bent and heels about 18 inches away from hips. Squeeze legs together, then lift feet and shins in the air, keeping

bottom knee on the ground. Keep feet touching as you lift top knee toward the sky. This is the start position. Slowly lower your top knee halfway down, then squeeze the side of your seat to lift it back up. Start with 40 on each side; build up to 75 reps per side, three days a week.



CHOOSE TUNES THAT TONE

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ownload hot remixes or mash-ups of your favorite music to freshen up your playlist, Moone suggests. Only add songs that make

you want to move—a strong beat can help you pick up the pace of your cardio routine, she says.



TOP THEM ALL

It's not summer without backyard barbecues and burgers—but you don't have to miss out. Minimize the damage by passing on the cheese and bacon and opting for a few creamy slices

of avocado instead, says Keri Gans, R.D.N., author of *The Small Change Diet*. You'll save at least 100 calories all while adding extra flavor, vitamins, and those beneficial monounsaturated fats.



HIIT IT

Warmer, sunnier days can make you want to spend more time outside—but not necessarily running. Cut your mileage and enjoy the weather with high-intensity interval training, Jinnett says. Full-body circuit training not only burns a load of calories while you sweat, it also torches

additional calories in the hours after by keeping your metabolic rate high. Here's one sequence to try: Hold a heavy dumbbell or large water jug in each hand. Alternate walking lunges and pushups for 30-second intervals for a total of 5 rounds. Perform on the beach for an added challenge!



SKIP THE CHIPS

You already know that spicy foods that have capsaicin, an ingredient found in chile peppers, can help heat up your metabolism. But splurging on salsa and chips every evening isn't the best strategy for slimming down: Corn tortilla chips may be lower in fat than potato chips, but they still pack in seven grams and 140 calories per ounce,

and, let's face it, it's hard to resist diving into an entire bag once it's open! Instead, sub crispy veggies such as endive leaves or slices of red pepper or carrots, like you would dip into hummus. You'll still get that great crunch—without the extra fat and for far fewer calories.



GO ALL OUT

If you're planning to Zumba your way to a better body, be sure you're really pushing your limits in class. "The bigger the arm and leg movements, the more intense the workout," says

Fen Tung, a Zumba instructor in Boston. To get the biggest burn, exaggerate your steps, lunges, slides, and kicks to really boost your heart rate.



PICK THE RIGHT POISON

Don't ruin your diet by indulging in super sugary drinks, says Chrissy Wellington, a nutritionist at Canyon Ranch in Lenox, MA. Instead of that margarita (which can pack almost 500 calories), try a shot of one of the season's new flavored vodkas with a splash of soda and squeeze of citrus

for around 100 calories. Some of the fun varieties include Square One Organic Spirits Cucumber and Basil, Absolut Cilantro, and, for those who prefer fruity drinks, Smirnoff Sorbet Light in mango passion fruit, raspberry pomegranate, and lemon.



PONY UP

0ne study found that 40 percent of African American women avoided exercise because they didn't want to mess up their hair, and trainers say that women of all races use this cop-

out. Simple fix: The oh-so-easy ponytail, which can transition from gym to office or even out on the town. Play around to find a style that's appropriate for working out and going out.



SPICE YOUR ICE

If you can't stand your iced coffee without extras, be sure to use nonfat milk and add a dash or two of cinnamon, which most shops

now offer by the sugar (that you'll skip, right?). For a 16-ounce drink, that eliminates about 110 calories compared to using 2-percent milk and flavored syrup.



TARGET YOUR MAJOR MUSCLES

During strength-training sessions, focus on your legs, says Craig Ballantyne, C.S.C.S., author of *Turbulence Training*. “Moves like squats and lunges work the biggest muscles in your

body, which means you get the biggest calorie burn during and after exercise.” You can always make these combo moves to tone the full-body. For example, add an overhead lift between each squat or do a plank row.



DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT

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Out of sight, out of mind certainly applies when it comes to mindless eating. Keeping serving dishes in the kitchen and not in the

dining room can help nix the tendency to go back for second helpings, cutting that meal's calories by about a third, say Cornell University researchers.



JUST DANCE

Pretend life is a music video—have fun all day long by imagining you're moving to your favorite song, Moone says. Add a little fancy footwork to your morning commute, shake your booty while washing dishes, or

bust out some Michael Jackson moves while sitting through a boring conference call, and you'll burn a few extra calories here and there. The next day your cheeks may hurt from smiling, and your thighs may be sore too.



STOP AND PRO

To help your muscles recover after a hard workout, reach for a snack that contains protein after each sweat session, Arciero says. Twenty-five grams is the amount required to help your muscles repair and build, and the addition

of lean muscle mass will ultimately help you burn more calories all day long. Get your fill from 1 1/2 cups edamame, 1 cup low-fat cottage cheese, or a smoothie with a scoop of whey protein powder.



TAKE FITNESS TO GO

Strapped for time to exercise? “Lump your workout in with your errands by riding your bike on trips that are within a few miles of your house,” Hays says. With the weather warming

and the days getting longer, hopping on a bike can help make a trip to the grocery store feel fun, not like a chore.



DOWN WATER

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ave a water “appetizer” before each meal. You’ll stay hydrated as the heat rises, which can make exercise feel easier, and drinking

2 cups of water before eating can help you consume fewer calories when you dig in, according to research from Virginia Tech.



REST LESS

Turn your resistance-training sessions into circuit-training workouts, Ballantyne says. By shortening your rest periods to less than 30 seconds between sets, you'll get more done faster. And

as you breeze through that strength workout, you'll also be getting your cardio in, which can burn extra calories.



DREAM ON

If you tend to crave unhealthy foods, like cookies or deep-dish pizza, the day after a late night, you're not the only one: Too little sleep leads to 50-percent higher carb cravings, according to a new study from the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Jersey. And the more

tired you feel, the stronger those cravings are because your body is literally trying to get more energy. Stay jazzed all day and kick cravings in the face by getting about seven hours of sleep a night, which research suggests is the ideal amount to feel recharged in the morning.



PAL AROUND

P eople who exercise in a group tend to work longer and harder than those who train solo, new research from Great Britain reports. At least once a week, ask a friend to join you in the

weight room, go jogging with your sister, or meet with a cycling group to make sure you're really pushing yourself.



DRESS THE PART

Pass on the creamy salad dressings and choose oil-and-vinegar-based ones, Gans suggests. Better yet, ask for all dressings on the side so you can control calories by limiting the amount you

use. And remember to skip the fat-free ones—your body need fats to feel satisfied and absorb the veggies' nutrients.



WEAR SHOES THAT MOVE YOU

You don't have to be wearing sneakers to burn extra calories. New research from Oregon State University shows that mini-exercise blasts done all day long can easily add up to the suggested 30 minutes of physical activity. The trick is to actively seek out ways to get in a little extra

exercise—you know the drill, opting to take the stairs instead of the escalator or standing on the bus, not sitting. Chances are you probably do this anyway, but if you notice that you're moving less when you wear cute but uncomfortable summer sandals and heels, switch to more-feet-friendly footwear during the day.



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