

## Shaping up doesn't have to mean hours trapped on a treadmill. Fitness editor **Martha Lourey-Bird** reveals five easy and effective ways to slim down faster.

**T**hese days, everyone is busy. Who doesn't want to get the best possible workout – in the shortest possible time? If you really want to supersize your fitness results, then short, sharp bursts of speed are key, according to research carried out at the University of New South Wales (UNSW). Why? Scientists say it's because intermittent high-intensity training causes a big increase in adrenaline, which stimulates fat usage. This type of exercise also reduces insulin levels, important because high levels can block fat burning. However, one word of warning: progress gradually. If you're unfit or new to exercise, then a 30-minute sprint session probably isn't the best place to start. Build up your overall fitness first, before introducing speed, then try the following easy ways to boost your session.

### *Interval training*

Supercharged interval training is ideal when you're working to lose weight, or maintain your weight loss, according to Dr Gail Trapp, lecturer in exercise science at the UNSW and author of *The 8 Second Secret* (Allen & Unwin, \$32.99). Her 2008 study showed that women who alternated just eight seconds of high-intensity exercise with 12 seconds of low-intensity activity for 20 minutes lost three times as much fat as women who exercised at a continuous, regular pace for 40 minutes. Start with five minutes of intervals, then slowly work your way up to 30 minutes each time.

### *The DIY circuit session*

Whether you exercise outdoors or in the gym, small tweaks to your circuit session make a big difference. Spend 30-60 seconds working as hard and as fast as you can on each exercise station continuously. Join in a class or make one at home using hand weights and chairs. You can also include extra stations that require no equipment at all – such as crunches, push-ups, air punching and running on the spot.

### *Beginner's hill sprints*


Hill sprints are great for your cardio fitness and involve running as hard as you can up a hill, walking back down to recover and repeating for as long as your fitness allows. Start with five minutes at first and only a small hill then, once you've mastered that, move on to longer and bigger.

### *Spin yourself slim*

These high-energy indoor group exercise classes – where everyone pedals constantly on a stationary bike, led by a cycling instructor – is a guaranteed way to get a great

overall workout. You're taken through a program of varying intensities, speeds and terrains while listening to upbeat music in a darkened room. A fantastic (and fun) fat-burner made even better by the fact it doesn't require coordination!

### *Swimming bursts*

Swimming as hard and fast as you can for one lap, followed immediately by a recovery lap, is an ideal way to get fit. Try it continuously for five minutes at first, then progress from there. Pick a stroke you're proficient at on the fast lap (usually freestyle) to achieve maximum speed, then recover with something else, such as backstroke or breaststroke. 

## YOUR SIMPLE 7 DAY FITNESS PLAN

<b>MON</b>	<b>Interval training = 5–30 minutes</b> <b>Select your activity: walking, running or cycling</b> Whether you choose to walk, run or cycle, work at a higher intensity for eight seconds, then slow back down for 12 seconds. Start with five minutes only, then build up your fitness levels by eventually spending the whole workout changing between the eight and 12-second speeds.
<b>TUES</b>	<b>Circuit training = 45 minutes</b> <b>Select your location: at a gym or home</b> – Try a gym class for a great combo of cardio and resistance. – Join a gym with circuit machines to work heart, legs and arms. Or set up your own circuit at home, indoors or out.
<b>WED</b>	<b>Rest day</b>
<b>THURS</b>	<b>Hill sprints = 5–30 minutes</b> While these might sound daunting, they're definitely do-able. Depending on your level of fitness, do between five minutes (beginners) and 30 minutes (advanced). Sprint up the hill – and then walk back down – repeating until your session is up. Even five minutes is a fantastic place to start! Increase your duration gradually.
<b>FRI</b>	<b>Spin class = 45 minutes</b> Try a class at the gym or, if you're at home, on an exercise bike. Warm up for eight minutes, then spend 30 minutes alternating between two minutes of easy cycling and one minute of hard pedalling. Cool down for seven minutes.
<b>SAT</b>	<b>Swimming bursts = 5–30 minutes</b> Depending on your level of fitness, spend between five minutes (beginners) and 30 minutes (advanced) working on cardio fitness and building endurance in the water. Swim one 25 or 50m lap fast freestyle, then a recovery lap in between. Repeat until your session is up. Aim to increase your workout until it reaches 30 minutes long.

**THE #1 WAY TO**

# **IMPROVE YOUR WORKOUT**

