

# your gym cheat sheet

Worried about your butt, thighs or bingo wings? Fitness editor **Martha Lourey-Bird** reveals how to tone your trouble zone.

**I**f you've never been before, going to your local gym can be an incredibly overwhelming experience. Luckily, it doesn't have to be. We take the mystery out of the gym by pinpointing the best equipment, techniques and exercise classes that will help deliver the body you want.

## **Trouble area: TUMMY**

There is no need to do hundreds of crunches as this will not shrink away belly fat. In fact, you cannot spot-reduce fat from one specific part of the body, but you can tone the muscles underneath the fat. The exercise ball is a great piece of equipment for this as you have to tighten your abdominal muscles when you're balancing on it. Try sitting on it and doing as many half crunches as you can. Pilates is another great option for the tummy area. You can choose between working on a Pilates Reformer machine or having a mat lesson. Let your instructor know if it's your first class.

## **Trouble area: BUTT**

Resistance exercises are extremely effective for toning the butt muscles, also known as the gluteals. One way to tone up this area is by doing step-ups. Find a sturdy gym bench to step up onto for one minute with each leg, or take a dedicated Step class. You can also do walking lunges while carrying a light weight in each hand, or do three sets of 12 squats with a weighted bar across your shoulders. And there's no need to use super heavy weights. If you want to define and tone your body, rather than bulk it up, put the emphasis on high repetitions with lower weight loads.

## **Trouble area: ARMS**

Tired of tuck shop lady arms? The good news is that any exercise involving your arms will help them go from flabby to firm. As well as using the gym's weight machines, you can target your upper arm area by taking a Boxercise class or working out with a punching bag. Hit the bag as fast as you can for intervals of one to five minutes. This will target the fat layer at the top, as well as the muscles underneath.

## **Trouble area: LEGS**

The best way to streamline legs at the gym is on the stationary bike. Once you've developed your confidence and have built up your fitness levels, try adding hill intervals for a further challenge. Taking regular spin classes is another excellent option. These are taught by a qualified teacher, so you'll be able to follow their instructions easily and enjoy the motivating music while giving your legs a great workout.

## **Trouble area: BACK**

Rowing is fantastic for your back as you use a variety of different muscles every time you perform the rowing action. As well as using a stationary rowing machine, try a few resistance exercises using the cable row machine or the pin-loaded machine to give shoulders a good workout, too. Aim to do three sets of 12 repetitions for each exercise.

## **Trouble area: SHOULDERS**

You use your shoulders when exercising your arms, chest and back, but to really target the shoulder muscles (deltoids), try doing specific resistance-training exercises. For example, use kettle bells to perform upright rows: with legs shoulder-width apart, pull the bell slowly up to your sternum before lowering it back down again. Or try lateral raises, which are performed by holding a kettle bell in each hand, extending your arms and raising them until they're parallel with the floor, then lowering them back down by your sides. You can also use a weighted bar or pin-loaded machine to do overhead presses, or do dumbbell shoulder presses with free weights. Aim to do three sets of 12 repetitions each.

## **Trouble area: CALVES**

Cycling, running and stair climbing are all great calf-toning exercises. Try using the stepper machine, bike or treadmill for 45 minutes in total. Do 15 minutes of moderate-to-hard exercise on each machine and remember to move swiftly between each piece of equipment to keep up the pace. 

