

A group of runners is captured from behind, running on a dirt path through a grassy field. The central runner is wearing a blue sports bra and dark shorts. To their right, another runner wears a bright yellow tank top and dark shorts. The background shows trees and a clear sky, suggesting a sunny day. The text 'slim down IN TIME FOR SUMMER' is overlaid at the bottom of the image.

slim down  
**IN TIME FOR**  
**SUMMER**

## Banish the kilos with fitness editor Martha Lourey-Bird's 12-step exercise challenge.

### SAFETY FIRST

If you haven't exercised regularly in a while, remember to book a check-up with your GP before starting any new fitness program. Above all, be realistic. While you might think you'll be able to achieve your slim-down goals if you ramp up the treadmill dial or tackle an ocean swim in week one, you can actually end up doing more harm to your body than good. Safeguard yourself from injury by starting slowly, then working your way up. It's unrealistic to expect to run a marathon two weeks after implementing a daily walking routine. Set small goals instead, like being able to walk for 30 minutes without stopping or mastering a new move at Zumba.

### HELP, I'M NEW TO EXERCISE. HOW HARD SHOULD I WORK?

**1 LOW INTENSITY:** Low-intensity workouts like walking are kind on the joints and perfect for people just starting to exercise, or who've returned to it after a long break. Breathing shouldn't be elevated, you won't be sweating and you should be exercising at 60 per cent of your maximum heart rate, otherwise known as beats per minute (bpm).

#### How to calculate your heart rate:

Subtract your age from 220, then multiply it by 60 per cent. For example, if you're 40 years old, the equation is:  $220 - 40 = 180 \times 0.60 = 108\text{bpm}$ .

**2 MODERATE INTENSITY:** Depending on your fitness levels, work your way up to moderate-intensity exercises after several weeks of doing low-intensity sessions. Try power walking, swimming or team sports. You know you're performing these properly when your heart rate and breathing increase and you're sweating after 10 minutes or so. Aim to exercise at 70 per cent of your maximum heart rate.

#### How to calculate your heart rate:

Subtract your age from 220, then multiply it by 70 per cent. For example, if you're 40 years old, the equation is:  $220 - 40 = 180 \times 0.70 = 126\text{bpm}$ .

**3 HIGH INTENSITY:** During high-intensity exercises like running or cycling, your heart rate should be at 85 per cent of your maximum capacity, with lungs working hard so it's difficult to talk.

#### How to calculate your heart rate:

Subtract your age from 220, then multiply it by 85 per cent. For example: if you're 40 years old, the equation is:  $220 - 40 = 180 \times 0.85 = 153\text{bpm}$ .



## MOVE IT TO LOSE IT

A cardio workout is any exercise that elevates heart rate and gets you moving, which, in turn, helps you lose weight. Try walking, running, jogging, swimming, aerobics, spin classes, circuit training or bike riding. You don't have to do a 30-minute session all in one go. Break it down into chunks of five, 10 or 15 minutes so it fits into your day.

### WEEKS 1 & 2

**Mon, Wed & Sat**  
(20–30 minutes)

**Low-cardio exercise:** Walk, swim laps slowly or do some vigorous housework when starting out with exercise. Begin with 20 minutes in your first week and build up.

**Tue & Thurs**  
(20 minutes)

**Low resistance:** Start with eight to 10 reps of five different exercises, like arm curls, step-ups and sit-ups, that work your whole body.

**Fri & Sun**  
(as much as possible)

**Incidental exercise:** Exercise doesn't have to mean hitting the gym. Wash the car, weed flower beds or carry heavy groceries.

# MONTH 1

Keen to get fit? We're with you all the way. Get started with our simple step-by-step plan, designed to build on your fitness each week.

*Not sure how to crunch correctly? View the video at [www.mayoclinic.com/health/strength-training](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/strength-training).*

## WEEK 3

<b>Mon, Wed, Sun (30 minutes)</b>	<b>Moderate cardio:</b> Up the intensity of your session. Instead of only walking, add jogging intervals.
<b>Tue &amp; Thurs (30 minutes)</b>	<b>Moderate resistance:</b> Eight to 10 reps of seven different exercises for upper, lower and middle body.
<b>Friday (as much as possible)</b>	<b>Incidental exercise:</b> Normally drive to work? Leave the car at home and walk to the station.
<b>Saturday (60 minutes)</b>	<b>30 mins moderate cardio + 30 mins moderate resistance:</b> Eight to 10 reps of seven exercises.

## WEEK 4

<b>Mon, Wed &amp; Sat (60 minutes)</b>	<b>30 mins moderate cardio + 30 mins moderate resistance:</b> Eight to 10 reps of eight exercises.
<b>Tue &amp; Thurs (30 minutes)</b>	<b>30 mins moderate cardio:</b> Try something different, like tennis on Tuesday and netball on Thursday.
<b>Fri &amp; Sun (30 minutes)</b>	<b>As much incidental exercise as you can + 30 mins moderate-intensity resistance:</b> Eight to 10 reps of eight different exercises.

### WHAT IS RESISTANCE EXERCISE?

As the name implies, resistance exercise involves working against some form of weight, like handheld dumbbells or your own body weight, to help strengthen, tone and boost your metabolism.

- **Upper body:** Think bicep curls, tricep extensions, push-ups, chin-ups, chair dips or kettle bell lifts.
- **Mid-body:** Do sit-ups, planks, ab crunches, chest raises and oblique twists. For an added challenge, use an exercise ball.
- **Lower body:** Try doing squats, lunges, step-ups, leg extensions, or hamstring curls.



## HOW TO MAINTAIN INTEREST

Your body adjusts very quickly to exercise, so variety is key. To banish exercise boredom, vary your routine by doing different workouts – run on Monday, swim laps on Wednesday and play a team sport on Saturday. Missed a session or had a food blowout? Don't give up or write off the rest of the week. Just get active again as soon as possible. It all counts!

## WEEKS 5 & 6

<b>Mon &amp; Fri (60 minutes)</b>	<b>30 minutes moderate-intensity cardio + 30 minutes moderate-intensity resistance:</b> 10 to 12 reps of eight different exercises.
<b>Tue, Thu &amp; Sun (30 minutes)</b>	<b>30 minutes moderate-intensity cardio:</b> Challenge yourself with a new workout each day, rather than doing the same thing again.
<b>Wed &amp; Sat (30 minutes)</b>	<b>As much incidental exercise as you can fit into the day + 30 minutes moderate-intensity resistance:</b> 10 to 12 reps of eight different types of exercise.

# MONTH 2

It's time to up the fitness ante! Build on your progress over the last month to increase the intensity of your workouts for best body results.

## WEEK 7

<b>Mon, Wed, Fri &amp; Sat</b> (60 minutes)	<b>30 mins moderate-high cardio</b> (with a 1-minute speed burst) + <b>30 mins moderate-intensity resistance:</b> 10 to 12 reps of nine.
<b>Tues</b> (30 minutes)	Repeat Monday's cardio plan + squeeze in incidental exercise.
<b>Thurs</b> (60 minutes)	<b>30 mins moderate-high cardio</b> (with two 1-minute speed bursts) + <b>30 mins moderate resistance:</b> 10 to 12 reps of nine exercises.
<b>Sun</b> (30 minutes)	<b>30 mins moderate-high cardio</b> (with three 1-minute speed bursts).

## WEEK 8

<b>Mon &amp; Wed</b> (60 minutes)	<b>30 mins mod-high cardio</b> (three 1-min bursts) + <b>30 mins moderate resistance:</b> 10 to 12 reps of ten.
<b>Tues</b> (30 minutes)	<b>30 mins high-intensity cardio</b> (four 1-min bursts) + incidental.
<b>Thu &amp; Sun</b> (30 minutes)	<b>30 minutes high-intensity cardio</b> (with five 1-minute speed bursts).
<b>Fri &amp; Sat</b> (60 minutes)	<b>30 mins moderate-high cardio</b> + <b>30 mins moderate resistance:</b> 10 to 12 reps of ten exercises.

### THE BENDY BENEFITS

As well as cardio and resistance exercise, mix up your workout routine with a weekly Pilates or yoga session. In addition to increasing your flexibility, muscle strength and control, these types of workouts also enhance wellbeing and help relieve stress. What's not to love?

### RESISTANCE + CARDIO = CIRCUIT TRAINING

Want a workout that combines cardio with resistance exercise? Try circuit training. You can even create a circuit of several different exercise stations in your own home. Turn to page 22 for easy ways to get started or just log onto [www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au/hav/articles.nsf/pages/circuit\\_training?open](http://www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au/hav/articles.nsf/pages/circuit_training?open) for more information.



## REWARD YOURSELF

In addition to your workout schedule, do some incidental exercise every day, such as walking the kids to school or the local shops. As you reach month three of your fitness plan, keep motivation high with rewards like a night out or a new haircut.

## WEEKS 9 & 10

**Mon & Fri**  
(60 minutes)

30 mins high-intensity cardio (with 1 five-min speed burst) + 30 mins high-intensity upper and mid-body resistance moves: 10 to 12 reps of ten.

**Tue, Thu & Sun**  
(30 minutes)

Repeat Monday's cardio plan for 30 minutes + as much incidental exercise as possible before, during or after work.

**Wed & Sat**  
(60 minutes)

Repeat Monday's cardio plan for 30 mins + 30 mins high-intensity lower and mid-body resistance: 10 to 12 reps of ten exercises.

# MONTH 3

There are just four weeks left between you and a fit, toned body! Use your slimmer physique and healthier life as motivation to stay on track.

## WEEK 11

<b>Mon &amp; Fri</b> (65 minutes)	35 minutes high-intensity cardio (with three 5-minute bursts) + 30 minutes upper and mid-body resistance: 12 to 15 reps of ten.
<b>Tue, Thu &amp; Sun</b> (35 minutes)	Repeat Monday's cardio for 35 minutes + incidental exercise.
<b>Wed &amp; Sat</b> (65 minutes)	Repeat Monday's cardio plan for 35 minutes + 30 mins high-intensity lower and mid-body resistance: 12 to 15 reps of ten.

## WEEK 12

<b>Mon &amp; Fri</b> (70 minutes)	40 minutes high-intensity cardio (with four 5-min bursts) + 30 mins upper and mid-body resistance: 12 to 15 reps of ten exercises.
<b>Tue, Thu &amp; Sun</b> (45 minutes)	Repeat Monday's cardio plan for 45 minutes + incidental exercise.
<b>Wed &amp; Sat</b> (75 minutes)	Repeat Monday's cardio plan for 45 mins + 30 mins high-intensity lower and mid-body resistance: 12 to 15 reps of ten exercises.

### CREATE NEW CHALLENGES AND STAY MOTIVATED

If you've been doing the same exercises over and over, and no longer feel (or see) results, then chances are your body has adapted to your workout, which means it's time to lift it up a notch or two.

The American College of Sports Medicine suggests the following strategies to challenge your fitness levels:

- 1 For cyclists, start cycling for longer and in a higher gear.
- 2 For power walkers, add more hills into your usual route.
- 3 For gym lovers, try working with heavier hand weights or machine gradients.
- 4 Interval training is a highly effective way of kickstarting weight loss, so add one-minute speed bursts into your normal workout, then up their frequency as your fitness improves. **WWW**