



# **HIT THE RESET BUTTON**

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**ADD SOME  
EXCITEMENT  
(AND A NEW  
CHALLENGE!)  
TO YOUR WINTER  
WORKOUTS BY  
TACKLING ONE  
OF THESE OUT-  
OF-THE-BOX  
FITNESS GOALS.**

**W**hile climate change may be upending our weather patterns, the seasons remain predictable and aligned: Spring brings the promise of summer, summer fades into fall, and fall gives way to the cold of winter. Are your workouts just as predictable?

Now is the perfect opportunity to shake things up and pursue a new goal. For each of these four rut busters, you'll take a short fitness test to establish your baseline, then will have 12 weeks to better your score. At the end of three months, do a retest and you'll see just how far you've come. Talk about motivation!



# GOAL

## POWER UP YOUR UPPER BOD

Women can lag behind men in terms of upper-body strength by as much as 40 percent, according to a study published in the *Journal of Applied Physiology*. Fortunately, strength isn't exclusively dictated by physiology — it's also developed through sweat equity. According to Whitney Jones, NASM-CPT, the 2018 Fitness International and Fitness Olympia champion, boosting upper-body strength begins with mastering two bodyweight basics: pull-ups and push-ups.

**PLAN OF ATTACK** Depending on where you are in your fitness journey, you may only be able to do one or two reps of either move; this is perfectly fine. "For pull-ups, try to double your initial rep count in three months," says Jones, co-owner of Pro Physiques in Gilbert, Arizona. "For push-ups, tripling or quadrupling your initial test result is very doable." Add pull-ups to your regular back training day and push-ups to your chest and/or shoulders day. If you don't follow a traditional lifting split, work these moves into a different training day every week. Do as many reps as you can for two to three sets, and complement them with ancillary exercises such as lat pulldowns and rows to better your pull-ups and incline/decline push-ups and dips to improve your push-ups, Jones says.

### SELF-TEST: PUSH-UP

*After a thorough warm-up, perform as many perfect push-ups as you can. Once your form breaks or you have to stop for more than a couple of seconds, you're done. Record your number. Test yourself every few weeks for 12 weeks.*

► Place your hands just outside shoulder-width apart on the ground (or on an object) and extend your legs behind you, making sure your head, hips and heels are aligned. Bend your elbows and slowly lower your body down until you are almost touching the ground/object, then extend your arms forcefully to rise back to the start.

### TRAINING TIPS

► **Go wide.** Position your legs a little farther apart to get more reps. "This decreases the difficulty by shortening the distance between your shoulders and your feet so your lower body supports more of your weight," Jones explains.

► **Adjust your speed.** "A plyometric push-up can help develop fast-twitch muscle fibers," says Jones — the fibers responsible for bursts of power and strength. Do these from your knees, pressing down into the floor with enough force that your hands come off the ground.

### AWESOME ANCILLARY MOVE

#### Hand-Release Push-Up

► Get into plank with your head, hips and heels aligned and your hands a little outside shoulder-width apart. Bend your elbows and lower yourself all the way down to lie to the floor. Lift your hands up a couple of inches, then replace your hands and extend your arms to press back to the start.







## SELF-TEST: PULL-UP

**After a thorough warm-up, do as many perfect pull-ups as you can. If you begin to swing, kip or use momentum to complete a rep, you're through. Record your number. Test yourself every few weeks for 12 weeks.**

► Take about a shoulder-width overhand grip on the bar and hang with your arms and elbows fully extended. Squeeze your legs together and bring your toes in front of you slightly, then draw your shoulder blades together and drive your elbows down and back to pull your body as high as you can toward the bar. Pause briefly and then slowly lower back to a full extension.

## TRAINING TIPS

► **Hang out.** Develop a vice-like grip by simply hanging passively from the bar for 30 seconds at a time, Jones recommends. Repeat three to five times, resting as needed between sets.

► **Have a ball.** Mobility in your upper body can improve pull-up potential. Use a lacrosse ball, placing it in areas where you feel tension and applying pressure until it begins to release.

## AWESOME ANCILLARY MOVE Inverted Pull-Up

► Secure a barbell in a power rack and lie faceup underneath it so it aligns with your midchest. (You also can use a TRX.) Take a shoulder-width overhand grip on the bar with your arms extended and lift your hips so you're in an inverted plank with only your heels on the floor. Drive your elbows down and back and pull your chest to the bar. Pause briefly and then slowly lower to the start.



# GOAL

## ELEVATE YOUR ENDURANCE

Do you lose steam halfway through a workout? Or have you always wanted to run a race but lacked the stamina? Now you can change that, one quick step at a time. "Choose an event like a 5K, 10K or even a longer distance as a goal," says Michelle Speers, NSCA-CPT, an endurance athlete based in Wrightwood, California. "You'll improve your overall cardio endurance and will complete a race you might not have done otherwise."







**PLAN OF ATTACK** You should start by running three to four days per week, building your distance gradually by adding a quarter to a half mile to your runs each week. “Once you can do 5 miles comfortably, you can add a full mile to your runs each week,” Speers says. Beginners can alternate between running and walking for a minute each and slowly build to running 3 miles without stopping. Those with a better base of conditioning can start with 1 to 2 miles and build up to 6 over the course of three months; seasoned runners can begin with 3 miles and build up to 13.

### **SELF-TEST: THE 12-MINUTE RUN**

**Warm up with five to 10 minutes of walking or easy jogging, then run as far as you can in 12 minutes on a track, around your neighborhood or on a treadmill. Calculate your total distance to the nearest sixteenth of a mile. (If you’re running outside, use a GPS watch or an app like RunKeeper or MapMyRun for accurate metrics.) On a treadmill, set the screen to reflect distance and set the incline to 1 percent to better simulate outdoor running, Speers advises. For the retest, use the same method/modality for comparison.**

### **TRAINING TIPS**

» **Lower-body love.** The repetitive motion of running can cause tightness in your lower back and lower body, so stretch them diligently after each run, Speers says.

» **Be patient.** Progress slowly and carefully in order to avoid overtraining and prevent injury. “Earn your progressions rather than just randomly deciding to up your mileage,” Speers says.

### **AWESOME ANCILLARY MOVE**

#### **Plank**

► Place your hands on the floor underneath your shoulders and extend your legs behind you. Lift your hips so they align with your head and heels. Hold here as long as you can, breathing deeply for 30 to 60 seconds.



# GOAL

BUILD SUPER  
SPEED AND  
AGILITY

No matter what sport you play or what fitness level you are, speed and agility training can take your performance, physique and fitness ferocity to a whole new level, says Kristian Flores, CSCS, a fitness coach based in New York City. Bonus: Its high-intensity nature deftly incinerates fat!

## SELF-TEST 1: T-TEST

This test measures your ability to change directions quickly. Enlist a friend to time you, and place four cones in a T formation 5 to 10 yards apart. Run as fast as you can from cone A to cone B. Touch the base of the cone with your right hand, then shuffle sideways to cone C. Touch its base with your left hand and then shuffle across to cone D. Touch its base with your right hand and then shuffle back to cone B and touch it with your left hand. Finally, run backward past cone A to stop the timer. Complete the drill three to four times and record your best overall time. Repeat every few weeks.

## SELF-TEST 2: 50-YARD DASH

After a thorough warm-up, take your position at the starting line and have a friend stand at the 50-yard mark. When your buddy says go, sprint as fast as you possibly can across the finish line. Perform the test a few times and take your best time. Repeat every few weeks.

### TRAINING TIPS

» Listen to your body. "This kind of work is taxing on both the muscles and the central nervous system," Flores says. Pay attention to your nutrition, sleep and mood throughout the day, and turn things down a notch when you're not feeling it to prevent overtraining.

» Energize with electrolytes. "Your electrolyte balance is critical to performance, and replacing them with a drink will help you recover faster," Flores says.

**PLAN OF ATTACK** Training for speed and agility means incorporating a few different training protocols into your workout week: concentric and eccentric strength work, multidirectional training, power-focused training and speed training.

### SAMPLE SPEED/AGILITY SPLIT

Day	Training Mode(s)
► Monday	Concentric strength + multidirectional work
► Thursday	Power-focused training + eccentric strength
► Saturday	Speed training

### 1/ CONCENTRIC STRENGTH TRAINING

Speed and agility are built on a foundation of strength — stronger muscles allow for greater lower-body explosive power and sudden directional changes. Concentric strength — the ability of your muscles to contract (shorten) against resistance — can be developed through multi-joint movements like squats and presses, which engage several muscle groups at once. Choose a weight that is challenging enough so you can't complete a 13th rep with good form to ensure you're pushing your muscles to momentary failure.

### Dumbbell Squat

► Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and your toes turned out slightly. Hold a set of dumbbells at shoulder height with your elbows bent and tucked into your body. Push your glutes back, then bend your knees to lower into a deep squat. Drive up and out of the bottom position by quickly extending your legs and hips.

### SAMPLE DUMBBELL CONCENTRIC WORKOUT

Exercise	Sets	Reps
► Dumbbell Squat	3	8-12
► Dumbbell Deadlift	3	8-12
► Dumbbell Lateral Lunge	3	8-12 (each side)







**2 / ECCENTRIC STRENGTH TRAINING**

The eccentric, or negative, action is the opposite of a concentric contraction — a muscle lengthening under a load. This occurs in your lower body when you run and change directions. To specifically train eccentric strength, you can perform drop landings and deceleration drills one or two times per week, starting with one set of 10 reps per session for four weeks, then adding a second and a third set every few weeks as you improve.

**Drop Landing**

► Stand on top of a platform or box that's about 1 or 2 feet high. Step off the platform with one foot and land on both feet, absorbing the impact by bending your ankles, knees and hips. Hold at the bottom for three to five seconds.





### PLYOMETRIC POWER MOVES

- ▶ Broad Jump
- ▶ Speedskater
- ▶ Box Jump
- ▶ Vertical Jump
- ▶ Plyo Push-Up
- ▶ Single-Legged Hop



### 3 / POWER TRAINING

While concentric exercises involve slower, more controlled muscle contractions, explosive plyometric training develops your fast-twitch muscle fibers to maximize your power and speed potential. Choose two exercises and perform two sets of 10 reps one to two times per week.

#### Broad Jump

▶ Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Swing your arms behind you and quickly bend your knees and hips, then explosively extend them to leap as far forward as you can, swinging your arms to help generate momentum. Land and absorb the landing by bending your knees and hips. Reset and repeat.

### Reverse Lunge With Overhead Press

▶ Hold a set of dumbbells at your shoulders and stand with your feet together. Take a large step backward and bend both knees to 90 degrees while simultaneously pressing the dumbbells overhead. Return to the start and continue, alternating sides.

### 4 / MULTIDIRECTIONAL STRENGTH

Most weight-training moves are performed in one plane of motion, whether it's a squat, a press or a row. For all performance and real-world power, you need to be able to move in numerous directions dynamically, which better mimics sports and life situations. Flores suggests performing a unilaterally loaded move, such as a one-arm push press, or an exercise that combines two movement directions, such as a reverse lunge with an overhead press.

### 5 / SPEED TRAINING

For straight-ahead speed improvement, perform sprints of various distances, such as 50 or 100 meters, as well as hill and stair sprints. "Do five sprints total the first week and double that to 10 in weeks 2 and 3," Flores instructs. "In Week 4, you can go up to 12, and in Weeks 5 and beyond, do 15 sprints per session."

Your rest periods between sprints should be at least five times the sprint duration, so if you sprint for 10 seconds, you should rest 50 seconds.





# GOAL

## STRETCH YOUR WINGS

Being flexible means more than just doing the splits as a party trick. "It can improve physical performance, reduce your risk of injury and even help correct muscular imbalances," says Jess Nadine, a health and fitness coach based in Vancouver, Canada, and creator of The Progress Project. "It can also help your body and mind relax."

**PLAN OF ATTACK** After every workout, perform a series of stretches that targets the muscles you just worked or that mobilizes parts that are chronically tight or stiff. "Pick five stretches and hold each for 15 to 30 seconds for one to three rounds," Nadine says. "Also, try to release negativity and allow tension in your face and body to fade."

### SELF-TEST: STANDING STRETCH

After a five- to 10-minute warm-up, perform this stretch three times, holding for 10 to 15 seconds each time. Record your best result and retest yourself every week.

► Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart with a soft bend in your knees. Fold forward from your hips, allowing your head and neck to hang freely as you reach your hands for the floor with the ultimate goal of placing them flat on the ground. Breathe and relax into the stretch, holding for 10 to 15 seconds.

### TRAINING TIPS

» **Don't overdo it.** "Overstretching can cause injury," Nadine says. "Ease yourself into each stretch and drop the ego so you don't push past your comfort zone."

» **Flex Rx.** If you are super tight, stand with your feet a little wider to make the stretch more doable. As you become more flexible, bring your feet closer together.

### AWESOME ANCILLARY MOVE One-Legged Forward Fold

► Sit with your right leg extended, foot flexed, and place the sole of your left foot on your inner right thigh. Reach upward with both arms and then bend at the hips as you exhale, reaching toward your right foot, grasping it if you can. Take at least three deep breaths, then slowly release. Repeat one to three times, then switch legs. ➡

