

# the plug 'n' play

## FITNESS PLAN

TURN THESE EIGHT CLASSIC MOVES  
INTO EIGHT UNIQUE WORKOUTS  
THAT ALIGN WITH NEARLY ANY FITNESS GOAL.

**EVERYWHERE YOU TURN, YOU'RE BOMBARDED BY OPTIONS** — cars in every make, model and color imaginable; toothpaste that fights tartar, bad breath and gingivitis; and Nikes that you can design yourself, right down to the placement of the Swoosh. It's enough to drive you mad. Working out is no less confounding, since there are literally thousands of exercises to choose from. Not that variety is bad, but when it comes to ultra-efficient moves that work multiple muscle groups, there are a select few that will do the job.

These eight exercises fit that bill, and while they aren't the only ones on the map that can accomplish this aim, they are pretty darn awesome. Master these moves and then simply "plug 'n' play" them into these eight sample workouts that target just about any fitness goal. Whether you adopt this as your standard training plan or just dip into this list occasionally, you'll find you can accomplish a lot with the bare minimum. Your life-addled brain will thank you. | BY MICHAEL BERG, NSCA-CPT | PHOTOGRAPHY BY IAN TRAVIS BARNARD







## BARBELL FRONT SQUAT

The barbell squat may be the so-called king of exercises, but shifting the barbell from the back to the front comes with several unheralded benefits. “Front squats improve your core strength, increase flexibility and build beautiful, strong quads,” says Canada-based health and fitness coach Jess Callegaro, creator of The Progress Project coaching program.

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and hold a barbell across your front delts and clavicle in a racked position — hands outside your shoulders, elbows flipped underneath. Kick your hips back and bend your knees as you drop your glutes straight down toward the floor, keeping your chest up, back neutral and abs tight. Drive through your heels and extend your legs and hips quickly to return to the start.

► **Quick Tip:** Keep your elbows lifted and your arms parallel to the floor throughout so the bar stays in place and does not roll forward.

► **Make It Harder:** “Adding a one- to three-second hold or pulse at the bottom of each rep creates more overall time under tension,” Callegaro says.



## SUMO BARBELL DEADLIFT

The conventional deadlift is the secret weapon for shapely glutes, but taking a wider sumo stance helps accentuate the outer glute area, according Heather Farmer, a national Olympic-weightlifting competitor and fitness coach based in New York City. “It’s also a good exercise for those who may lack the flexibility to achieve a flat back in a conventional deadlift with their feet together,” she adds.

Stand behind a barbell with your feet wider than shoulder-width apart and your legs and feet angled outward slightly. Bend your knees and press your hips rearward until you can grasp the bar with an alternating grip and your hips are just below 90 degrees. Keep your chest lifted and back tight as you straighten your legs and hips to pull the bar straight up in a vertical path. Squeeze your glutes at the top, then slowly lower along the same path and repeat.

► **Quick Tip:** As you stand, make sure your knees press outward and track over your toes to keep tension in your glutes.

► **Make It Harder:** Manipulate your speed on the descent. “Lower the bar slowly so that the plates don’t make any noise when they touch the floor,” Farmer says.



## DUMBBELL LATERAL LUNGE

This popular unilateral exercise rocks each leg individually, meaning a stronger side can’t compensate for a weaker one, as can happen in a bilateral lift. “Holding a weight on the same side as your lunging leg pulls you deeper into that hamstring and glute, giving a stronger contraction on the way back up,” says Angelo Grincer, movement specialist and high-profile trainer in New York City.

Hold a dumbbell in your left hand and stand with your feet together, shoulders back, core braced. Take a long step to the left, bending your left knee and tracking it over your toes until it makes a 90-degree angle while keeping your right leg straight, foot flat. Drive through your left foot to straighten your leg and push off the floor back to the start. Complete all reps on one side, then switch the weight to the other side and repeat.

► **Quick Tip:** “Keep your [working] shoulder blade pulled back, and focus on shifting your butt back as you lower down,” Grincer recommends.

► **Make It Harder:** Secure an exercise band around your ankles to add extra resistance.



Change the emphasis of your pull-ups by playing with the spacing of your hands on the bar.



## PULL-UP

Pull-ups mainly hit your latissimus dorsi — the fan-shaped muscles that run along each side of your back — but they also involve your biceps, upper back, traps, forearms and obliques. “Pull-ups are one of the best bodyweight exercises you can possibly master,” Callegaro says. “Adding them to your regimen will increase overall upper-body strength while increasing intensity in a fun, challenging way.”

Take a wide overhand grip on a pull-up bar and hang freely with your arms fully extended. Your legs can either be straight or crossed — whichever is more comfortable. Draw your shoulder blades together, then drive your elbows down and back to lift your body upward until your chin is above the bar. Slowly lower back to the dead hang and repeat.

► **Quick Tip:** If you can’t do a pull-up, build strength by performing scapular pull-ups, bodyweight rows and angled TRX or ring rows, Callegaro says.

► **Make It Harder:** “Burpee pull-ups are definitely my recommendation for advancing this move,” Callegaro says. “Other ways to create intensity are manipulating speed and incorporating five-second holds in the middle and top positions.”



## the moves

### KETTLEBELL OVERHEAD CARRY

It may seem a little silly at first glance to be walking around the gym holding a kettlebell overhead — but choose a challenging weight and you'll quickly realize that this exercise is no joke. "Carries train shoulder stability and will challenge your core as it works to stabilize the muscles around your spine," Grinceri says. "It's a great pick to improve overall body strength in a controlled way, without the explosiveness required by many other functional moves."

Hold a kettlebell in one hand and press it straight up over your shoulder. The weight should rest against the back of your arm, and your shoulder should actively press upward throughout the move. Walk forward taking small, controlled steps, for distance or time. Switch sides and repeat.

► **Quick Tip:** "Think about keeping your joints 'stacked'— wrist over forearm, forearm over elbow, elbow over shoulder, and down through your body," Grinceri suggests.

► **Make It Harder:** Perform the exercise with both arms simultaneously. "Doubling the amount of weight overhead increases the stress on your core and keeps your entire upper body working," Grinceri says.



No landmine? No problem: Find an empty gym corner and wedge one end of a barbell in the seam.

### LANDMINE BARBELL ROTATION

You may know about working in rotation, but anti-rotation works your body in a whole new way, training your muscles to resist a force to create strength and stability. "This anti-rotational exercise stimulates the core and is a good option if you play a racket or throwing sport," Roberts says.

Stand with your feet outside shoulder-width apart, and hold the end of the barbell overhead with straight arms. Rotate slowly to one side, lowering the bar in a smooth arc to hip level while keeping your arms straight and your feet connected to the floor. Return to the start and repeat on the other side to complete one rep.

► **Quick Tip:** Keep your hips square and stable throughout the move. "In addition, hold your breath for two seconds as you get to the end range of each rotation," Roberts says.

► **Make It Harder:** Balance on one leg as you do the rotations to kill your core and work the glutes and ankle stabilizers, Roberts advises.



### LANDMINE CHEST PRESS

The landmine apparatus is a simple sheath that anchors one end of a barbell to the floor while leaving the other end free. Two favorites for Dan Roberts, CSCS, founder of the Dan Roberts Group, are the chest press and the barbell rotation (opposite page). "The press develops your upper chest and triceps, but your scapular stabilizers and core are engaged, too, particularly the internal obliques and transverse abdominis in an anti-rotational capacity," he says.

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and hold the bar at your chest with both hands at the end. (Note: Load any plates needed on the bar before lifting.) Walk your feet back a little so your body is inclined toward the barbell and makes a straight line from head to heel. Bend your knees slightly to load up, then powerfully push the barbell upward and forward until your arms and legs are straight. Lower the bar back to your chest under control.

► **Quick Tip:** "Engage your core before you start, and exhale as you extend your arms," Roberts says.

► **Make It Harder:** Add a squat to each rep to make this a total-body move.



### BARBELL THRUSTER

This combination upper-/lower-body exercise is an excellent way to incinerate calories while training for power. "If you're aiming for maximal loads, you'll need to increase your overall explosiveness and core control when bringing the bar overhead," Farmer says.

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, and hold a barbell outside your shoulders in the racked position — resting on your clavicle and anterior delts with your elbows lifted underneath. Kick your hips back and bend your knees to drop your glutes straight down toward the floor, keeping your chest and elbows lifted, and lower into a deep squat. Drive up forcefully through your heels, extending your hips and knees and generating enough momentum, so as you approach full extension, you can transfer that energy to extend your arms and press the barbell straight up overhead. Lower the bar back to shoulder level and repeat.

► **Quick Tip:** "The entire action should be one fluid movement," Farmer says.

► **Make It Harder:** Add a clean to the front end of the move. "Begin with the barbell on the floor, clean it to your shoulders and then complete the thruster," Farmer says.



GOAL Basic Muscle Building

Nothing beats the basics when it comes to building a foundation for muscle, and this workout uses a good rep range for hypertrophy — i.e., growth. Use a moderately challenging weight for each of these moves, and rest 60 to 90 seconds between sets. If you want a little more of a burn, trim that rest down to 30 to 45 seconds.

Exercise	Sets	Reps/Steps
Pull-Up	4	8-12
Barbell Thruster	4	8-12
Barbell Front Squat	4	8-12
Dumbbell Lateral Lunge	3	8-12 (each leg)
Sumo Barbell Deadlift	3	8-12
Landmine Chest Press	3	10
Landmine Barbell Rotation	3	10 (each side)
Kettlebell Overhead Carry	2-3	20 steps (each side)

GOAL Advanced Muscle Building

Playing with your tempo is a great way to engage all your muscle fibers — slow twitch, fast twitch and everything in between. For each move with an asterisk (\*), perform two reps using a very slow, five-second concentric contraction and a very slow five-second eccentric contraction. Next, do two explosive reps — strong and powerful on the way up and carefully controlled on the way down. That completes one cycle; eight to 12 reps equals two to three cycles. The remaining exercises should be done with a steady cadence and no explosiveness.

Exercise	Sets	Reps/Steps
Barbell Thruster*	3-4	8-12 (2-3 cycles)
Barbell Front Squat*	3-4	8-12
Sumo Barbell Deadlift	3-4	10
Dumbbell Lateral Lunge*	3-4	8-12 (each leg)
Pull-Up*	3-4	8-12
Landmine Chest Press*	3-4	8-12
Landmine Barbell Rotation	3-4	10
Kettlebell Overhead Carry	3-4	20-25 steps (each side)

GOAL Endurance and Conditioning

Muscular endurance is important not only from a performance perspective but also from a lifting one: The longer you can last in a workout, the more time you can spend training and the more fat and calories you will burn. For this workout, your goal is to complete one set of 50 or 100 reps per move, so choose a moderately heavy weight and break the reps into manageable sets — for instance, five sets of 20 pull-ups. Stop for short 15- to 30-second rest periods, as needed, getting right back to it when you're partially recovered. Do these workouts back-to-back with a little break in between, or perform them on separate days.

GOAL Intermediate Muscle Building

Your body is a wonderful machine and will get used to whatever you throw at it in short shift. This workout throws your body a curveball to all but guarantee progress. For each exercise with an asterisk (\*), you'll begin with a moderately heavy weight and will build for the first three sets, decreasing your reps as you go. You'll then strip that weight incrementally for two sets, increasing your reps accordingly. Rest up to 90 seconds between sets, if needed, in order to fully recover. For the remaining moves, perform them in straight sets, resting as needed in between.

Exercise	Sets	Reps/Steps
Sumo Barbell Deadlift*	5	12, 10, 8, 10, 12
Barbell Front Squat*	5	12, 10, 8, 10, 12
Barbell Thruster*	5	10, 8, 6, 8, 10
Dumbbell Lateral Lunge*	5	12, 10, 8, 10, 12
Pull-Up	4	10, 10, 10, 10
Landmine Chest Press*	5	12, 10, 8, 10, 12
Landmine Barbell Rotation	5	10
Kettlebell Overhead Carry	3	20-25 steps (each side)

GOAL Super Power

Training for power adds lean muscle to your frame, and the more weight you can lift, the denser and shapelier your muscles — and the faster your metabolism. Spend plenty of time warming up, building to a weight you can handle for five or 10 reps; this is your starting weight for each move (when applicable).

Exercise	Sets	Reps/Steps
Barbell Front Squat	5	5
Barbell Thruster	5	5
Sumo Barbell Deadlift	5	5
Dumbbell Lateral Lunge	5	10 (each leg)
Pull-Up	5	10
Landmine Chest Press	5	5
Landmine Barbell Rotation	5	10
Kettlebell Overhead Carry	5	10 steps (each side)

Upper Body	Reps/Steps
Pull-Up	100
Kettlebell Overhead Carry	100 steps (50 each side)
Landmine Chest Press	100
Landmine Barbell Rotation	100 (50 each side)

Lower Body	Reps
Barbell Thruster	50
Barbell Front Squat	50
Sumo Barbell Deadlift	50
Dumbbell Lateral Lunge	50 (each leg)

GOAL Fit and Fabulous

Supersets are a super-efficient way to elevate your heart rate and get your fit on, burning calories while saving time. Choose a moderate weight, and do the moves in each superset back-to-back with little to no rest in between. Rest 30 seconds between sets and supersets.

Exercise	Sets	Reps/Steps
Barbell Front Squat	4	15
- superset with -		
Sumo Barbell Deadlift	4	12-15
Pull-Up	4	10-15
- superset with -		
Kettlebell Overhead Carry	4	20 steps (each side)
Barbell Thruster	4	15
- superset with -		
Dumbbell Lateral Lunge	4	15
Landmine Chest Press	4	15
- superset with -		
Landmine Barbell Rotation	4	15

GOAL Metabolic Overload

This three-part workout hits your entire body and puts your metabolism into overdrive: The ever-changing pace and variable workload gives your body a new twist to handle at every turn.

Part 1

Every two minutes, do the below workout. Complete four total rounds. Note: There is no rest between the kettlebell overhead carries and the start of the next round.

8	Landmine Chest Presses
8	Landmine Barbell Rotations (4 each side)
8	Dumbbell Lateral Lunges (each leg)
Remaining Time	Max Kettlebell Overhead Carry*
*Split your time equally between both arms.	

Part 2

Complete five rounds of the below workout and keep track of your time. Note: You'll use the same weight on the barbell for all the moves, so defer to your weakest lift when choosing your load.

400 meters	Run
5	Sumo Barbell Deadlifts
5	Barbell Front Squats
5	Barbell Thrusters
1 minute	Rest

Finisher

Complete all the reps for the below exercise using good form as quickly as possible. Keep track of your time and try to beat it at a later date.

50 Pull-Ups

GOAL Strong and Shredded

Being lean doesn't mean sacrificing performance, and often the strongest women are also the most shredded. This workout targets strength first, then moves into a fast-paced, fat-blasting AMRAP wherein you complete as many rounds and reps as possible within the time frame given. You'll finish up with some focused endurance work to kill your core, but good.

Strength

Running Clock: 10 minutes (5 minutes per move)

For each move, build to a heavy weight with which you can complete three continuous reps. The weight should be very challenging, but not so much so that you have to drop the bar in between.

Barbell Front Squat  
Sumo Barbell Deadlift

Shred

15-Minute AMRAP

Complete as many rounds and reps as possible of the below workout within the 15-minute time cap.

- 4 Pull-Ups
- 8 Barbell Thrusters
- 16 Dumbbell Lateral Lunges (8 each leg)
- 32 Jump Ropes

Endure

Complete three rounds of the below workout. Take your time and focus on executing each one with perfect form.

50 meters	Kettlebell Overhead Carry (right)
1 minute	Landmine Chest Press
50 meters	Kettlebell Overhead Carry (left)
1 minute	Landmine Barbell Rotation

