



Newsletter: November 2009 - Fit For Christmas -

Christmas can be demanding as well as fun, so why not get in shape for it with a fitness blitz

Enjoyable though it may be, at Christmas we put our bodies through a lot of physical and mental stress. We eat too much, drink too much, shell out money we don't have and spend time with family members who drive us crazy.

You still have plenty of time to get yourself in shape for all this. Follow this pre-Christmas routine 3 times a week to boost your metabolic rate, and complement it with at least 2 aerobic sessions such as swimming, walking or [cycling](#). We promise you'll feel fit and ready for anything.

1. Warm up and Stretch

To warm up skip, jog or do jacks for five minutes. When you do your stretches do not bounce.

2. Cardiovascular work (15 to 20 minutes)

Choose from a brisk walk, [cycling](#), skipping or a short aerobics video

3. Strength work (use water bottles if you don't have weights)

4. Cool-down

Repeat the stretches you did at the beginning of this [workout](#), holding them for slightly longer.



STRETCH SESSIONS: Calf Stretch

Stand facing a wall with your right foot close to the wall and your right knee bent. Place your hands flat against the wall at shoulder height. Now stretch your left leg out behind you as far as it will go, without lifting your heel off the floor, and lean towards the wall. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds and relax. Switch legs.



Quad Stretch

Stand with your right hand pressed against the back of a chair or wall. Bend your left knee and bring your left heel up to your bottom, grasping your foot with your left hand. Your back should be straight, and your shoulders, hips and knees should all be in line. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds. Switch legs.



Hamstring Stretch

Stand up straight and place your right foot on a table, bench or chair, so that your leg is almost parallel to the floor. Slowly move your hands down your right leg towards your ankle until you feel tension on the underside of your thigh. Try to lean forward from the hips, keeping your back straight from the tailbone to the top of your head. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds. Switch legs.



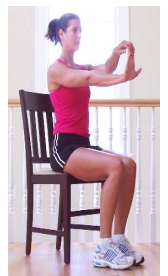
Tricep Stretch

Stand with your feet slightly apart and your knees soft. Bring your right arm up and over your head, so that you pretend to pat yourself on the back. With the arm in this position, use your left hand to gently press the right elbow back slightly. Repeat on the other side. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.



Bicep Stretch

Hold your right arm straight out to the side and place your palm flat against a wall. Now turn **your body away from the wall (45 degrees) so you are looking over your left shoulder. Next rotate your right shoulder forward without moving your hand. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds. Switch sides.**



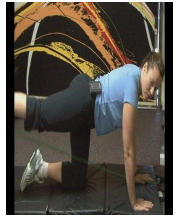
Shoulder Stretch

Stand with your feet slightly apart and your knees soft. Hold your arms out in front of you, so that your palms are facing away from you. Now place your right palm on top of the back of your left hand, and use it to push the left hand further away from you.



STRENGTH SESSIONS: Rear Leg Raises (works the bottom)

Kneel on the floor on all fours, with your hand beneath your shoulders and knees beneath your hips. Straighten your right leg out behind you, with your toes still touching the floor. Inhale and, as you exhale, raise your leg until it is parallel with the floor. Squeeze your bottom then lower. Repeat 10 to 15 times.



Lunges (works the thighs and bottom)

Stand with your back straight and feet together. Inhale as you take a large step forward, landing with the heel first. Bend the front knee no more than 90 degrees. Keep your back straight and lower the back knee as close to the floor as possible. Your front knee should be lined up over your ankle and your back thigh with your back. Exhale and push down against your front heel, squeezing your buttocks tight as you rise back to a standing position. Repeat 10 to 15 times. Switch sides.



Chest Press

Lie down on a bench with your feet resting comfortably on the floor. If you don't have a bench, you can use a step or just lie down on the floor. Holding weights, extend your arms overhead, a shoulder-width apart and palms facing out, so that the weights are positioned directly above your face and over your shoulders. Gradually lower the weights out to the side until they're slightly above your shoulders. Your elbows should be bent at about 90 degrees, so they almost touch the floor. Push the dumbbells up with an arcing motion until they're back in the starting position. Repeat 10 to 15 times.



Forward Raises

Stand with your feet a shoulder-width apart and knees slightly bent. Clench your abs and bottom. Hold weights in each hand, resting on the front of your thigh with your thumb facing upwards. Inhale and, as you exhale, raise one arm in front of you to shoulder height to the count of two. Hold it there for one second, and then inhale as you slowly lower back down. Repeat using alternate arms, and continue until you can't do any more.



Reverse Curl

Lie on your back, with your arms by your sides. Raise your legs in the air and cross your ankles. Keep your head on the floor and inhale. As you exhale, raise your hips slightly off floor and, using your abdominal muscles, curl your knees to your chest. Hold for a second. Inhale as you slowly lower. Repeat 10 to 15 times.



Finally, remember that over the holiday period your normal schedule will be thrown out. Visiting relatives and excited children will all bring a certain amount of stress and chaos. Don't panic, if you happen to gain a pound or two you can lose it next month. So get mentally prepared to go with the flow, armed with the knowledge that life will go back to normal in the New Year.

If you have any questions or queries please don't hesitate to contact me.

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