

5. The Intense Cardio Circuit



You will need a platform such as a step or bench 8 – 12 inches high, or you can use the bottom rung of a staircase or step in your home. The higher it is the harder your exercise will be so start off low and progress! Do the following exercises in successions.

REMEMBER: Before doing RED workouts you must warm up for a minimum of 5 minutes. Try the 'Get up and GO!' workout. You must also cool down and stretch out, so follow any one of our YELLOW zone workouts for a minimum of 4 minutes after this exercise.

A STEP UPS

Stand close to your step/bench. Run up onto the step, right foot then left, and step back down. Aim to run up fast and step down with a little more control, so it's run up right, left, step down right, left and repeat. The faster and higher you go the harder it will be. Always make sure the whole of your foot is going onto the step. Keep your back tall and try to look straight ahead. Repeat for one minute then change leading legs so you're running up left, right, and stepping down, left right.



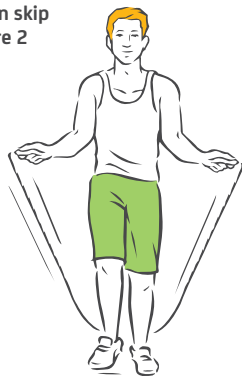
B SQUAT JUMPS

Standing with your feet a little wider than hip width apart, squat back with your weight into your heels, and with back tall (see posture tips on page 77). Bring your arms forward as you squat back, pulling them back by your sides as you stand tall. Start to increase the pace of your squat and add a jump as you lift up out of your squat to stand tall. Squat back down and jump up as many times as you can (try 4 to begin with and build up). Go back to a squat when your muscles are tired. Aim to do 3 lots of jumping within 2 minutes of squatting. Keep going for 2 minutes.



C SKIPPING

You can use a skipping rope or just simulate the action. Place your right heel in front with toes off the ground. Now lift your right knee up and hop as you transfer your weight onto your right foot, placing your left heel in front. Hop to switch again. Repeat the action right to left for 2 minutes. Aim to keep your hands by your side, rotating your forearms as if turning a rope. Keep moving and try to skip for at least 30 seconds within a 2 minute period. Build from there until you can skip for the entire 2 minutes.

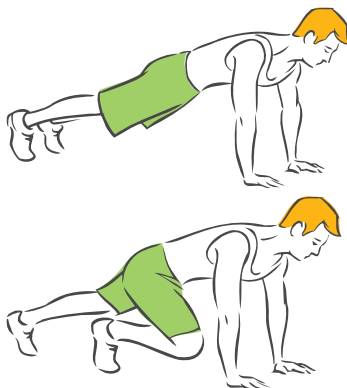


ALSO TRY: 'STRENGTH AND TONING FOR EVERYONE', GYM WORKOUTS, INTERVAL WORKOUTS, SPINNING AND CYCLING CLASSES

D MOUNTAIN CLIMBER

Place your hands onto your step or bench. You can even use a very sturdy footstool or coffee table for this. Make sure your back is tall (see posture tips), your legs extended and that your shoulders are drawn down away from your ears (think of a press up position). It's important to work your tummy muscles here so your back doesn't sag. Bring your right knee up to your chest, foot off the floor. Now jump to switch legs so that your left foot is up to your chest and off the floor, right leg extended behind you, ball of the foot on the floor. You may find to begin with that you can only bring your knee up to your hips. Aim to increase the range and the speed as you get fitter.

To make it even harder, work with your hands on the floor. Start with 10 – 20 second bursts within a 2 minute period, and increase gradually until you can keep going for the entire 2 minutes.



Go back and repeat each exercise for one minute.

How to exercise safely

- Wear comfortable clothing that allows your skin to breathe and a good pair of supportive training shoes
- Ladies should always wear a supportive sports bra – doesn't matter how big or small you are!
- Aim to eat a small meal 2 hours before a workout or a snack, like a banana, 20 minutes before
- Drink water before, during and after your workouts
- Make sure you pick activities to suit your fitness level. See the 'activity zone' table
- Spread out your workouts over the week and aim to alternate days where you do more GREEN or more RED exercise. Always have a day where you completely rest from GREEN and RED, doing more gentle BLUE or YELLOW zone activities
- If you are pregnant or recently had a baby you need to keep your intensity low and should always consult with a doctor before exercising. Some exercise will need to be adapted to suit you so please get help from a qualified instructor
- Always warm up and cool down for intense workouts (GREEN and RED). YELLOW and BLUE workouts have their own built-in warm up phase
- If you feel any pain when exercising stop immediately and re-assess what you are doing
- If your muscles feel achy the day after a workout, take it easier the next day. Do some more gentle workouts from the YELLOW and BLUE zones

