JUMP ROPE WORKOUTS

THE COMPLETE JUMP ROPE PROGRAM TO BURN FAT, GET FIT, STRENGTHEN MUSCLE AND TAKE YOUR ENDURANCE TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

INCLUDES 20 WORKOUTS, JUMP ROPE TECHNIQUES, WARMING UP, COOLING DOWN AND NUTRITION.

BY PATRICK DALE
This e-book has been specially created for CSX customers who have purchased a CSX Pro Speed Rope. We would like to help all of our customers get the most from their Speed Rope no matter what their fitness level.

Patrick Dale, renowned fitness writer, ex-marine, fitness trainer and author of three fitness books has created a simple template that is easy to follow and will deliver results that most faddy programs will never match.

This book includes jumping techniques, 20 workouts, warming up, cooling down and nutrition.

Please feel free to share this e-book with anyone you think would enjoy it!

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A complimentary tool which works well alongside your jump rope training is an Ab Roller Wheel. Ab Wheels are a tried and tested tool for strengthening your core, arms, back and shoulder muscles.

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We also provide with the Ab Roller Wheel an eBook, “Great Abs! The Ultimate 12 Week Six Pack Abs Workout and Fitness Programme with an Ab Roller.” This is a simple step by step programme which provides the best core exercises to strengthen, tone, flatten your belly and develop your six pack. It is also designed to be suitable for anyone as each section builds on the previous skills and strength developed and sets you up for optimum success towards a six pack in a healthy way.

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Safety – Please Read Before Exercising

IMPORTANT – Before starting any form of exercise program, consult your doctor or therapist. If at any time during your exercise you experience discomfort or pain, stop the exercise immediately and consult your doctor.

Always Warm up – Cool down and stretch before and after exercising. This will help prevent straining muscles.
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1) Introduction

Once upon a time, prior to the early to mid 20th Century, exercise was almost unheard of. Life involved so much general physical activity that it was easy to stay fit, healthy and slim just by going about your daily activities. People walked rather than drove cars or rode buses and trains and food had to be hunted or gathered rather than being collected (or delivered even) from supermarkets. Subsequently, many of the diseases that are currently plaguing modern man were all but unheard of including type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease and many of the cancers directly attributable to leading a sedentary lifestyle and being overweight.

Fast forward to the late 20th and early 21st Century and technology has advanced exponentially and where manual labour jobs, walking and food produced locally were once the norm, we now have desk-based jobs, cities designed to all but preclude walking or cycling and a ready supply of food that is often hails from distant lands or has more to do with a chemistry set than animals or plants!

Subsequently, more and more people are overweight and unfit.

Thankfully, technology is a double-edged sword and while more and more people are overweight and unfit, at least there is lots of information about how to remedy these problems. However, there is such a thing as too much information...

Many potential exercisers suffer from something called “paralysis by analysis” which simply means that they end up getting bogged down in the minutia of exercise and nutrition rather than actually getting out and doing something active and eating more healthily.

Should you do CrossFit? Take up running? Is interval training or steady paced training best? What about weight training? Should you do Pilates? How about yoga? How many times a week should you exercise? What about strength training? What diet should I follow? How much water should I drink? The list of questions and potential answers is almost endless!
With so much information to wade through and filter, it’s no wonder that many potential exercisers simply end up dazed and confused and fail to actually start let alone maintain a routine of regular exercise.

Personally, I am a firm believer in the KISS principle of exercise and nutrition – Keep It Simple Stupid! The more complex an exercise tool, workout approach or diet is, the less likely I am to stick with it. As soon as something starts to make my head swim with information overload, the more quickly I discard it. I like my exercise and nutrition to be a “no brainer” that involves very little in the way of complication. That way, I am much more able to stick with it; I call this approach “No Frills”.

No Frills simply means focusing on exercises, workouts and nutritional approaches that provide a lot of bang for your buck. Like a smart and savvy banker seeking the best return for your monetary investment, a savvy exerciser should seek out the most productive, time effective workouts. No Frills workout tools and methods include barbells, kettlebells, and bodyweight exercises, walking, running and jumping rope.
Not only are these tools and methods effective without being complicated, they are also very time efficient. For many of us, and ironically despite the improvement in technology, time is one of the most important commodities of all. Balancing work with familial commitments can mean that many of us have little in the way of leisure time and what time we do have often disappears in the twinkling of an eye.

While joining a gym might seem like a great idea on January 1st, by mid-February, many New Year’s resolutions have melted away like the winter snow – usually due to lack of time. When asked, the vast majority of lapsed exercisers blame lack of time as their main reason for not exercising regularly.

Of course, if you do go to a gym, it’s not hard to see where all that time goes. A typical 45 to 60-minute workout at a gym could end up taking two or more hours out of your day once you factor in commuting, getting changed, waiting for an exercise class to start or exercise machines to become available, changing out of your exercise clothes, showering and commuting again – and who has time for all that?!

Some exercise experts say that the excuse of “not having time to exercise” is the adult equivalent to a child saying “the dog ate my homework” and while I do believe that even the busiest person in the world can find some time each day to exercise, I also believe that time is limited, is a precious commodity and should be used wisely. If I could use just one word to describe my approach to exercise, fitness and nutrition, I think it would be “efficient”.

Maybe it’s the ex-Royal Marine in me but I hate to waste time and energy doing anything that does not produce meaningful results. In the corps, we quickly learnt that the more efficiently any given task could be performed, the more time you had for sleeping and eating – two of a Marine’s favourite activities. Tasks still had to be completed to a very high standard but results were achieved in the most direct and simple way possible.

This approach is the foundation of everything I do in exercise and nutrition. For example, while you could do leg extensions, leg curls, hip abductions, hip extensions and calf raises to work your legs in the gym, instead, I just do squats.
I could follow a complicated diet that requires that I weigh and measure everything I eat while simultaneously taking fistfuls of expensive supplements but instead I just base all my meals around protein, vegetables, healthy fats and whole grains.

While I could get in my car, drive 30-minutes to the nearest gym and then hop on a cross trainer or exercise bike to do some cardio training, instead, I prefer to grab my jump rope and work out at home.

For me, the best diet or workout is the one that fits seamlessly into your lifestyle and is the one that is all but excuse-proof. If a workout is overly complicated, takes too long or is not readily accessible, it doesn’t matter how effective it is because, chances are, you won’t actually do it often enough for it to be beneficial!

**Jumping rope is the epitome of No Frills exercise – simple, effective and readily available. It might take you a while to master but the humble jump rope is arguably the best exercise tool around bar none.**
2) Why Jump Rope?

So, with so many exercise options available, what makes the “old fashioned” jump rope so great? Good question. Let’s take a moment to explore the advantages and benefits of jumping rope...

**Easy to learn**

The very first time you pick up a jump rope and try and use it, you may well think that it’s an impossible thing to use – let alone enjoy! A couple of whipped legs and very few rope turns may well reinforce your initial opinion. However, with a few minutes of perseverance and by following the information in the “Getting Started” section, you are moments away from learning how to use this fantastic exercise tool.

The thing is, once you have successfully done a few rope turns, the only way is up. You might only manage five or ten turns initially but day by day you will get better and better and soon you’ll be spinning that rope like a pro!

Jumping rope is a relatively simple activity that you can teach yourself and once learnt it’s never forgotten. Once you have mastered basic jump rope, you’ll be able to learn all sorts of cool tricks but initially, plain vanilla double-footed jumps will deliver a great workout. Ironically, the worse you are at jump rope, the more effective a workout it is because you are less efficient, use more energy per turn and frequent starts and stops mean you’ll be doing a form of interval training from the moment you start!
A recent personal training client of mine expressed a desire to learn how to jump rope and initially his goal was to do 100 rope turns – not in one go but cumulatively. As he become more proficient and was able to do more and more rope turns without stopping, the workout got shorter and easier. It took a week or so but he worked up to doing 100 rope turns without stopping and is now really enjoying using his jump rope.

Unlike many types of exercise and sports that are very technical and hard to learn, jumping rope is a very straightforward activity that is easy to self-teach and learn. You might not pick it up instantly – very few people are that fortunate – but a little consistency should see you jumping rope proficiently in double-quick time.

**Hard to master**

At the risk of contradicting myself, while jumping rope is initially easy to learn, it is very hard to master. As soon as you have learnt how to do basic double-footed jumps, there are numerous other techniques and tricks you can learn. Some people even go so far as to develop intricate routines involving turns, changes of directions, double and triple unders (more than one rope turn per jump) and even somersaults!

This “free styling” form of jump rope is a blend of dance and gymnastics and it not for everyone – I only mention it to illustrate that jumping rope is as easy or as hard as you make it. For the less artistically-inclined, you can focus on increasing your speed at which you spin your rope or the length of your workouts rather than the complexity of the tricks you perform.

The point is, the seemingly simple jump rope provides a workout that is as hard as you want it to be. If you are a beginner, 100 rope turns is a great workout that will be challenging and satisfying to complete. However, if you are an advanced exerciser, there are plenty of additional ways to crank up the intensity too. The bottom line is that, no matter what your level of fitness and experience, you can modify or create jump rope workouts that will challenge and entertain you.

**No special equipment required**

Other than the actual jump rope, you don’t really need much else to get a great workout other than some space and appropriate footwear and clothing. Some workouts require that you have access (or buy) a whole host of expensive paraphernalia which is fine if
you have lots of space and money but can add up to an excuse not to exercise if you don’t. Jumping rope is a true No Frills exercise tool.

**Very cost effective**
Joining a gym can be an expensive affair. Many gyms have an upfront joining fee (non refundable of course) and then you have to commit to 12-months or more of membership which gets sucked out of your bank account whether you go to the gym or not. Then there is the clothing you need to buy, and the workout shoes and the parking fees and the drink in the juice bar afterward – before you know it your new fitness regime can end up costing you £100.00 a month or even more.

In contrast, and for less than a week’s gym membership, you can buy yourself a jump rope and never have to pay another penny out again.

You don’t need expensive running shoes, fancy gym clothes or any additional equipment to enjoy the benefits of jumping rope – it’s a case of less equals more. Add an exercise mat and maybe some resistance bands and you have a virtual gym in a bag for less than most people spend on a pair of fancy gym shorts!

**Very time efficient**
Workouts using a jump rope tend to be shorter than going for a walk or a run. For example, while I can walk for several hours without getting overly tired, ten-minutes of non-stop rope jumping is more than enough to leave me hot and sweaty. This is because that, although jumping rope is a lower body dominant activity, you also use your shoulders, arms and core to spin the rope which means that jumping rope is actually a whole body workout. Jumping up and down against the pull of gravity means you have to work quite hard even if you are using a relatively slow tempo. Pick up the pace and your heart and breathing rate will rise significantly. In a nutshell, you don’t need to do long workouts with a jump rope – just a few minutes a day can be very beneficial.

**Can be done almost anywhere, anytime**
As I mentioned earlier, for many people, lack of time is the biggest perceived barrier to exercise which is mainly due to the amount of time most will have to spend getting to and then from the gym. With a jump rope, as it is so portable, you can work out almost anywhere and at any time which negates many if not all time-related issues.
You can use your jump rope at home, at school, at the office or anywhere else you find yourself where there is a reasonable amount of space around you. As you can exercise virtually anywhere, time becomes less of an issue because you can do your workout whenever you have a few minutes to spare. Personally, I have jumped rope in rain shelters in parks, on a Royal Navy minesweeper in the Irish Sea, in my garage, in my lounge and in more than a few handy car parks. Basically, if you have enough clearance around you to swing your rope, you have more than enough space for a very effective workout.

**Can be used to develop a multitude of fitness components**

Whatever your fitness goal, you can address it by jumping rope...

Build basic cardiovascular fitness – moderate paced rope jumping for extended periods of time is your prescription here.

Improve anaerobic fitness for sports – try interval training or short, very fast, bouts of jumping rope.

Increase agility and athleticism – try moves like double unders and cross overs to improve your ability to control your limbs.

Improve speed – run on the spot and spin the rope as fast as you possibly can.

Build power – double and triple unders will get the job done.

Burn fat for weight loss – combine bodyweight exercises with both steady paced and interval-type jump rope training for the ultimate in get lean workouts.

**Is proven by the pros**

Very few sports are as physically demanding as boxing. Boxers are, arguably, the most complete athletes on the planet. Weightlifters may be stronger and runners may...
be fitter but when it comes to the total fitness package, boxers have it all. One of the cornerstones of boxing training is jumping rope. Boxers jump rope for weight control, improving footwork and foot speed and for building fitness. With so much to work on, boxers do not have time to do ineffective forms of training – they have to find time for core work, strength training, running, sparring, bag work and a whole host of other types of exercise. The fact they make time to jump rope is testament to the effectiveness of this form of training.

Irrespective of what you want to achieve from your workouts, jumping rope will help you get there with no mess, no fuss and very little cost!
3) Choosing a Jump Rope

If you have already purchased or are considering purchasing a CSX Pro Speed Jump Rope then you already know just how good a jump rope that is. However, let’s take a moment to look at the alternatives – if for no other reason than to reinforce your purchasing decision!

There are several different styles and many manufacturers of jump ropes. You can pay as little as a couple of pounds for a rope or, if you look hard enough, find jump ropes that cost upward of £100! As far as I can tell, these very expensive ropes offer little in the way of benefit over ropes costing almost a tenth as much however its worth looking at the different types of rope available...

**Rope ropes**

No – not a typo, some jump ropes are actually made of rope. Popular with school children (in the schools where the kids are actually allowed to use jump ropes that is!) rope ropes are soft and easy to use but they are not very fast and tend to twist because of the lack of any real handle. Those with handles don’t tend to spin very well either. If all you have is a piece or rope, you can still get a reasonable workout but if you are interested in a good workout then look elsewhere.

**Leather ropes**

Not so long ago, leather ropes were cutting edge technology, especially when coupled with a ball bearing handle to enhance rope smoothness and speed. Leather ropes are faster than rope ropes but even with well-designed handles, are not as smooth and fast as more advanced designs. On the plus side, leather ropes tend to be very hard wearing but are also often more expensive than some of the other alternatives. You could do worse than a leather rope but you could also do better!
Plastic speed ropes
Plastic speed ropes do exactly what it says on the tin – they’re fast and made of plastic. Usually a very simple design where the rope is threaded through a hollow handle and a washer of some sort (usually carbon or graphite) minimizes friction, these ropes are generally cheap and readily available. On the downside, they are not adjustable and the only real way to shorten them is to tie knots in them. Hardwearing and basic, a plastic speed rope is a good buying choice if you want to use it outside, want something that is so cheap it’s almost disposable and want decent performance but it’s not the fastest or smoothest rope around.

Weighted ropes
There are two main types of weighted ropes – ropes where the handles are heavier than normal and those with thick, heavy ropes. Both are designed to increase the muscular demand of jumping rope.

Weighted handles are designed to give your shoulders a good workout but, because the weight is relatively light (just a couple of pounds at most) you won’t develop much in the way of strength or muscle size. All you are likely to experience is tired shoulders which force you to cut your workout short. Often, the weighted handles are adjustable but, in my experience, this just means there are more things to go wrong with the rope and it’s all too easy to lose the weights anyway. If you want to build your upper body, you’d be much better off just doing some press ups in addition to your jump rope training.

In the case of weighted ropes, the rope itself is either made of thick metal wire or wire covered in plastic. Some heavy ropes have weighted beads threaded onto them. A weighted rope is harder to turn which makes your workout more demanding but the rope a) won’t spin as fast, b) really hurts if you should hit yourself and c) is not so good
for tricks like crossovers and double unders. Initially, the slow speed and lack of flexibility may make using this kind of weighted rope seem appealing but once you have mastered your technique, a weighted rope may actually limit rather than enhance your workouts. Weighted ropes tend not to be adjustable for length either.

**Ropes with counters in the handles**
This type of rope will have either a rope or a plastic rope and a digital counter set into the handle. On the plus side, this makes tracking the length of your workouts very easy but, on the downside, you’ll very soon be able to do far more rope turns than these types of rope can record – the maximum usually being 999. Forget these types of rope – they are usually low quality and are not suitable for anything more than casual, occasional use.

**Wire ropes**
In my opinion, wire ropes are the best choice for most exercisers. Smooth, fast, light and easy to adjust, wire ropes are everything that a good jump rope should be. The thickness of the wire varies from one manufacturer to another and, generally, the thinner the wire the faster the rope will spin but even thicker wires are very fast. Wires can be uncovered or covered and really it doesn’t make too much difference which you choose however an uncovered wire is not easy to see and a covered wire may last a little longer although it’s very unlikely you’ll ever wear one out; covered or otherwise.

On the downside, if there is one, wire ropes are not usually recommended for outdoor use although I have used mine outdoors for years with no problem. Using my rope outdoors has worn the middle somewhat but it is still functioning properly and will probably do so for a long time to come. If you want to use your rope outside and minimize wear and tear, you can always wrap the middle of the rope with duct tape or electricians tape. *(For the best protection while outdoors CSX recommend to use an interlocking gym mat which provides cushioning for your knees as well as prevents wear to the rope)*

Don’t get bogged down with all the different types of rope available – just stick with a basic wire speed rope for value for money, ease of use, speed and performance. They are small and light enough that you can literally pop it in a pocket and it will last you many years. For less than a week’s gym membership, you can buy yourself one of the best pieces of exercise equipment around.
4) Getting Started

Prior planning prevents poor performance or so we used to be told in the Marines. To that end, here are your pre-workout instructions! Address the following to ensure your workout is as effective and enjoyable as well as safe as possible.

**Equipment** – it’s a given that you have a jump rope if you are about to embark on a jump rope workout but it’s important your rope is properly adjusted so it fits you.

Hold the ends of your rope and stand on the middle with your feet together – the ends of the handles should just reach your armpits. If the rope is too short, it will catch on your toes but if it is too long, too much rope will drag along the floor. Both problems will make jumping rope harder than it needs to be so adjust your rope accordingly. Once you have your rope to the correct approximate length, you can fine tune it to customize the rope to your unique morphology.

**Timer** – another useful piece of equipment for jump rope workouts is a programmable timer. You can download a smart phone or tablet app or use a watch with a built-in programmable timer. Alternatively, do your workout in front of a clock with an obvious sweep hand. You’ll need to time parts of your workout when you move onto things like interval training.

**Clothing** – you don’t need a whole lot of fancy clothing to jump rope, so long as you are comfortable you are good to go. However, it pays to dress in layers so that, when you get warm, you can vent off some heat. You should also ensure your that your clothes are supportive as you’ll be doing a whole lot of bouncing up and down; sports bras are essential for most women. On your feet, go for cushioned, supportive shoes that have padding in the forefoot and not just the heel. Court sports shoes are ideal but running shoes will also suffice.
Jump Rope Workouts

Music – jumping rope is a very rhythmic activity that may be more enjoyable if accompanied by music. Using a personal MP3 player or a CD player, try jumping rope to music. Try to choose music with an obvious baseline and that is fast enough that you can jump in time to the music. While music that is a bit fast means you may end up working harder than you might otherwise like, slow music can make jumping rope laborious and even more difficult so pick your music carefully. 120 to 150 BMP (beats per minute) is about right.

Environment – make sure you have enough space around you before you start your workout. I once shredded a hanging light shade when jumping rope in my lounge, much to my wife’s dismay! Check above, around and behind you and ensure you have enough space so that if you move off the spot, your rope won’t hit anything (or anyone).

If possible, avoid jumping rope on concrete or tarmac as this can result in a lot of shock being transferred into your feet, ankles, knees, hips and spine. The best surface is...
arguably a lightly sprung wooden floor. If you do not have access to this type of flooring (commonly found in group exercise studios) a carpeted floor will suffice. Alternatively, if you are serious about jumping rope, consider investing in some rubber floor matting tiles and make yourself a bespoke workout area. If you MUST jump rope on tarmac or concrete, make sure you are wearing supportive, cushioned shoes and try to move forward and back and side to side rather than just stay on the spot.

**Basic jump rope techniques**

Now you are properly prepared, it’s time to jump rope. Don’t worry if you don’t get it right away – give it a few sessions and you’ll soon have the basics mastered!

**Imaginary rope** – for this exercise, which makes for an ideal warm up before “real” jump rope, hold both handles in your dominant hand. Tuck your elbow into your ribs and hold your hand slightly out and away from your side. Using your wrist and not your shoulder and upper arm, swing the rope in circles next to your body. Try and establish a nice, smooth rhythm. Once you have your rhythm down, start jumping on the spot. Keep your knees slightly bent and your weight on the balls of your feet. Your landings should be all but silent and you should hit the ground fractionally after the rope. Try to swing your other arm even though you aren’t holding the rope that side. Keep going until you feel you have established a solid, steady rhythm and are ready to move onto “real” rope jumping.

**Double-footed jumps** – hold a handle in each hand place the middle of the rope on the floor behind you. Keep your shoulders relaxed and your hands at approximately hip-level. Stand with your knees slightly bent and your weight somewhat on your toes. Use your wrists rather than your arms and swing the rope up and overhead. Keeping your legs together, jump over the rope as it approaches your feet. Do NOT try and set some kind of high jump record – the rope is less than a few millimetres thick! Instead, only jump a few centimetres into the air. The most common technique fault I see with novice skippers is a tendency to jump too high. The higher you jump, the harder it is to time your rope turns. Land softly and, without pausing or hitching, flip the rope back up and over your head. Continue jumping and turning the rope for as long as you can. Try to stick to one jump per rope turn and avoid the temptation to ‘double bounce’ between revolutions. This will simply make it harder to establish a smooth rope rhythm. Keep your hands down at hip-height and only slightly away from your body. If you raise your
hands much higher than this you effectively shorten the rope and increase your likelihood of tripping.

As you become more proficient, try to increase the speed of your rope turns. Once you can keep going for more than a few minutes you are ready to move onto heel-toe action skipping – sometimes called the boxer’s skip.

**Boxer style** – start with your basic two-footed jump rope and then, when you are ready, kick one foot forwards so that you land with one heel on the floor. Change legs on the next jump and continue alternating your feet in this way for the duration of your workout. Once mastered, you’ll be able to move forwards, sideways, and backwards using this heel-toe action and it will act as a linking move between other, more challenging, jump rope drills.

**Jogging on the spot** – as the name suggests, this variant resembles easy running on the spot and is another basic jump rope technique. From either double-footed jumps or the boxer’s skip, simply transition into a jogging motion so that only one foot is touching the floor at a time. Once you have mastered this one, you can add a little bit of lateral or sideways movement (complete with a dip of the shoulders) to spice up your workouts.

**These basic jump rope techniques will form the cornerstones of most of your workouts** – especially the boxer’s style. However, and to keep your workouts fresh and interesting and also crank up the intensity when you want a more demanding workout, there are several additional techniques you can use...

**Additional techniques**

**Travelling** – using any of the previous techniques, and assuming you have sufficient space, move forward, backward and side to side around your training area. For variety, you could do double-footed jumps forward, jog on the spot for a moment and then do boxer style back to your starting place. Mix and match the techniques as you see fit. Moving around not only challenges your ability to jump rope, it also makes sure you do not overload one particular part of your foot which is an important consideration for preventing injury.

**Knee lift sprints** – this is a great drill for driving up your heart rate and making your jump rope workouts more demanding. From the basic boxer’s/heel-toe technique,
transition into jogging on the spot. Lift your knees up in front of you so that your thighs come up to roughly parallel to the floor. Pick up the pace and try to turn the rope as fast as possible while moving your feet as quickly as you can. Do not lean back when performing this drill. In fact, you may find you can skip faster if you lean forward slightly. Pump your legs and spin the rope with purpose and your fitness levels will soar!

**Cross-overs** – jumping rope can make your shoulders ache, especially if you are new to this form of exercise or are skipping for long periods of time. Periodically crossing your arms can help to alleviate this discomfort. Stick with double-footed jumps when first trying this technique and then progress onto heel-toe when you feel ready. As you turn the rope and it passes overhead, cross your hands to form a loop in the rope. Jump through the loop and then quickly uncross your hands. Because the loop in the rope is comparatively small, you may need to hunch your shoulders and tuck up slightly as you jump through it. Start off by performing single cross-overs and then try to link multiple cross-overs together.

**Lateral or side to side jumps** – jumping side to side instead of the normal fashion is a nice way to add some agility work to your jump rope workout and can help improve your sideways dodging ability which is useful if you play soccer, basketball or similar ball sports. With your feet together, jump rope normally but then add a slight side to side action as though you were jumping over a line or low hurdle. Imagine you are downhill skiing. This side to side action places an emphasis on the muscles on the outside of your thighs and hips.

**Double-unders** – a cool trick that can really crank up your heart rate and also develop lower body jumping power, the double-under is a great way to make your jump rope training much more intense. Before you attempt your first double under, make sure you have mastered fast, single rope turns. If you can’t do these with solid technique, you will really struggle with double unders. Next, understand that you really don’t need to jump much higher and you definitely don’t need to tuck your knees up to your chest or pike excessively at the hips. While such techniques may help you get one or two double unders, they make linking lots of double unders almost impossible. Finally, do not try and muscle the rope around using your arms or shoulders – use your wrists instead. As soon as you get “arm happy” you’ll reduce the size of the loop you are jumping through and make it all but impossible to do a single double under, let alone several in a row.
Jump rope normally and, when you are ready, speed up the turn-rate of your rope and jump a little bit higher; don’t jump very high though as you’ll make a mess of your timing. In the early stages of learning the double under it’s okay to jump a little too high but as you get better, start to bring your jump height down a little until it is virtually the same as your normal jump height. If necessary, you can practice this by swinging the rope to the side as you did when learning how to jump rope initially. Turn the rope twice before landing. Initially, after a successful double-under, return to your normal skipping technique and then, when you are ready, perform another one. Once you have mastered single double-unders, try and link a few together. With practice, you will be able to do twenty or more in a row, which really cranks up your heart rate!

**Triple-unders** – as for double unders but instead of turning the rope twice, you turn it three times.

**Once you are comfortable with each of these techniques, try mixing them into a freeform routine or try one of the jump rope workouts detailed in chapter six.**
5) Warming up and cooling down

Many exercisers dive right into their workout with very little forethought and then, on completion, head off to the showers and to eat something without stretching or cooling down. Skipping your warm up and/or cool down is a great way to get injured!

As exercise is supposed to make you healthier and not increase your chances of getting injured, make sure you pay attention to this section and always warm up before and cool down after your workouts...

**Warming up**

Warm ups prepare your body and mind for exercise. They raise your body temperature, increase the synovial fluid production around your joints, get your muscles to optimum length and provide an opportunity to practice the skills of the workout you are about to perform. This five to ten-minutes spent warming up can make or break your workout. Although it is impossible to prove or disprove that warming up prevents injury – people who have warmed up still get injured after all – it’s better to spend a few minutes getting your body ready to train than a few injured months wishing your had!

**How to warm up the wrong way**

We’ll call this the weekend warrior warm up as it’s the way that all too many amateur sportsmen get ready for a Saturday afternoon game of football or basketball!

1. Run for 1-2 minutes
2. Perform static quadriceps and hamstring stretches
3. Perform ballistic leg swings
4. Start playing sport/training at maximum intensity
5. Play/train badly and/or get injured!

Although a warm up like this is better than nothing, for a similar investment in time, you can get a lot more from your pre-workout routine and actually enhance your performance rather than harm it.
How to warm up the right way
Warming up properly follows a logical sequence of events that will make sure that your body, and indeed your mind, is ready to perform at its best.

The stages of warm up

1. Incremental pulse raising activity
2. Mobility
3. Dynamic flexibility
4. Exercise/activity rehearsal

Incremental Pulse Raising Activity
Gradually raising your pulse increases blood flow to your working muscles, raises your core temperature, causes your airways and blood vessels to dilate, increases the oxygen levels in your blood and helps buffer the fatiguing effect of lactic acid and carbon dioxide. By increasing the intensity of your pulse raising activity gradually, you make the transition from inactivity to action as smooth and painless as possible. Have you ever noticed how the first mile of a run or first five minutes of a workout are often the hardest? It’s almost as though your lungs can’t quite keep pace with your legs! Gradually increasing exercise intensity for the first few minutes of your warm up prevents this discomfort.

Good examples of pulse raising activity include jogging, jumping rope, rowing, cycling and using a cross trainer or stair climber although as this e-book is all about jumping rope, that is an ideal warm up activity providing you take it fairly easily at first. Increase the speed and/or intensity of your pulse raising activity gradually so that your lungs can keep pace with your legs. You should finish your pulse raiser slightly out of breath, feeling warm and ready to move on to some more strenuous exercise.

Mobility
Many pulse raising activities double as joint mobility exercises. Walking, jogging, running, cycling, rowing and stepping mobilize your ankle, knee and hip joints as you raise your temperature. The main disadvantage of cycling, jogging or stepping is, however, that they do little to mobilize your shoulders or spine. Rowing is one of the few pulse raising activities that cover both the bases of pulse raiser and joint mobility. If
you chose to warm up by riding a bike, jogging or using a stepper, spend one to two minutes mobilizing your major upper body joints prior to exercise.

To do this, perform some shoulder shrugs, arm circles, trunk twists, arm bends and neck rolls. About 10-repetitions of each will get the job done. If you use a rower to warm up you can move straight onto dynamic flexibility. If, however, you use a lower body dominant form of pulse raiser, such as jumping rope, spend a moment on some upper body mobility drills to make sure your top half is as well prepared for exercise as your bottom half.

**Dynamic Flexibility**

Dynamic flexibility is the stretching choice of champions for warming up. Dynamic stretches also double up as joint mobilising exercises. Mobilizing your joints twice over may seem like overkill but synovial fluid is literally the lifeblood of your joints and by making sure your joints are well lubricated you will significantly reduce the amount of exercise-induced wear and tear they experience. This might not seem important now but let me assure you, you’ll miss those pain-free, non-creaky joints when they are gone! A few minutes of extra exercise preparation for a decade less joint pain? Count me in!

Perform 10 to 15-repetitions of the following dynamic stretches after your incremental pulse raiser to ensure your muscles are ready for your coming workout. Use a controlled tempo and try to increase the range of movement gradually as your set progresses. Concentrate on great posture, good joint alignment and excellent quality movements to get the most from these simple but effective exercises. Do not perform the exercises forcefully i.e. balistically, as this may lead to injury.

**Dynamic stretch 1 — alternating leg swings**

Gently swing your leg forwards as though you were kicking a football. Increase the height of the kicks as you feel your hamstrings begin to loosen up. Reach your opposite hand towards your foot to add a slight twist to mobilize your spine at the same time. Alternate legs by performing a small shuffle step between kicks.
Dynamic stretch 2 — horizontal push and pull
With your arms raised, reach forwards and round your upper back slightly before pulling your arms back and lifting your chest. Alternate pushes and pulls for the desired number of repetitions. This is a great exercise to prepare your shoulders for press ups and bench presses and can be combined with a forwards or backwards lunge to also involve the legs.

Push and pull
Dynamic stretch 3 — squat, reach and twist
This straightforward exercise dynamically stretches just about every muscle in your body. Simply bend your knees and squat down and then, as you stand up, reach your arms above your head and rotate your spine slightly so that your upper body is turned to the side. Repeat and twist to the opposite side.
Dynamic stretch 4 — duck unders/step overs
To really mobilise and stretch your hips, imagine you are stood left side on to a hip-high hurdle. Step over the imaginary barrier and then duck back under it. Perform the desired number of repetitions and then reverse direction. Perform an equal number of repetitions on both sides.
Step over
Exercise/activity rehearsal

Now you are warm, your muscles have been stretched and your joints mobilized, it’s time to practice a few key elements from your upcoming workout. This might be a one or two sub-maximal sets of press ups or barbell back squats, a couple of half-speed sprints or a few light clean and presses; it all depends on what your workout includes on that particular day. These rehearsals provide you with the opportunity to practice the techniques you’ll be performing in your workout and get your mind on the job in hand. Don’t go crazy – remember these are preparatory sets and not part of your workout. Do just enough so that you feel you are ready to workout at maximal intensity – you should by itching to get started after a good warm up!

How Long Should a Warm Up Be?

This question, as valid as it is, cannot really be answered. There are a number of factors that need to be considered which dictate the length of your warm up. Take these factors into account and then warm up accordingly. Remember that at the end of your warm up you should feel you are fully prepared and energised and not feeling too hot and tired or cold and tight.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consideration</th>
<th>Effect</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inactive for long period prior to workout</td>
<td>Longer warm up required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low temperature of surroundings</td>
<td>Longer warm up required</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intense workout to follow</td>
<td>Longer warm up required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Older exercisers benefit from longer warm ups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joint pain or muscle stiffness</td>
<td>Longer warm up required</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low intensity workout to follow</td>
<td>Shorter warm up required</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time of day</td>
<td>Early morning workouts benefit from longer warm ups</td>
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Warm ups should be long enough to get the job done but no longer than necessary. On average, allow five to fifteen minutes for your warm up. It’s better to do a couple of
minutes too long than a couple of minutes too little and remember time spent warming up might save you months of inactivity because of an otherwise avoidable injury.

**Cooling down**
So, your workout is finished and you are feeling pleasantly tired, sweaty and hungry. Probably the last thing you want to do is spend another five to ten minutes performing yet more exercise – after all you’ll get cooler by doing nothing, right? The problem is that if you just come to an abrupt halt after a workout, all of the metabolic waste products produced during your workout are still in your muscles and failing to flush them out can result in hampered post-exercise recovery and sore muscles tomorrow. A few minutes spent returning to your original pre-exercise state – called homeostasis – means you’ll recover faster and be able to train harder, sooner.

**There are two parts of a cool down**

1. Incremental pulse lowering activity
2. Static stretching

**Incremental pulse lowering activity**
The aim of the incremental pulse lowerer is to promote venous return and help supply your hard-worked muscles with freshly re-oxygenated blood. When you work out, blood “pools” within your working muscles and with it, the waste products of metabolism accumulate. Flushing your muscles through with freshly oxygenated blood helps clear these metabolic remnants away and promotes recovery. A pulse lowerer is merely the reversal of the pulse raiser performed in your warm up—perform some cardio at a reasonable level of intensity and then reduce your speed over three to five minutes. You should finish your pulse lowerer with your breathing approaching normal and feeling ready to do some stretching. You can use any form of cardio for your cool down but avoid activities you find demanding. Slow tempo jump rope and jogging decreasing in speed to walking are ideal.

**Static Stretches**
The dynamic stretches performed in the warm up are great at preparing your muscles for exercise but not so good for improving or maintaining your flexibility. The better choice of stretch for your cool down is static stretches. Static stretches, as the name implies, are stretches that are held for time rather than performed for repetitions. Static
stretches come in two main types: maintenance and developmental. Maintenance stretches are held for 10 to 20 seconds and are designed to stop you losing your flexibility. This type of stretching is ideal if you already have good flexibility. Developmental stretches are held for 30 to 60 seconds or more and are used when you want to improve your flexibility. Your cool down may contain one or both types of stretching depending on your current flexibility requirements.

When it comes to stretching duration, you know which of your muscles feel tight and which ones don’t. Spend longer on the tight muscles and less time of the looser ones. Stretching after a workout can help to reset your muscles and return them to their original resting length or even enhance your flexibility by encouraging your muscles to rest in a new, lengthened position. The static stretching used in the cool down also helps to relax your muscles and rebalance your nervous system – both essential for recovery after exercise. Get the most from your stretches by following these tips...

**Seven tips for better stretching**

1. Only stretch your muscles when they are warm—stretching cold muscles may lead to injury.

2. Do not bounce! Bouncing when stretching is dangerous and can result in injury.

3. Stay relaxed when stretching—do not let your shoulders, jaw, neck or hands tense up as this will reduce the effectiveness of your stretching.

4. Breathe! Exhale as you relax into a stretch. Holding your breath will only impair your stretching.

5. If you are really inflexible, consider stretching every day—possibly twice or more for particularly stiff muscles. If it’s taken you years to stiffen up, it’ll take more than a few minutes a week to make you flexible again!

6. If you find it difficult to find the time to stretch after your workout—maybe because you are hungry or in a rush to get to work—just perform a few maintenance stretches after exercising and then have a proper stretch when it’s more convenient e.g. when watching the TV at the end of your day.
7. Never force a stretch—if you feel any burning or your muscles are shaking uncontrollably, you are overdoing it so back off before you hurt yourself.

Your personal stretching prescription
To save you having to design your own cool down, just perform the following stretches after each and every workout but only once you have completed your pulse lowering activity. Hold the stretches for as long as you deem necessary based on your flexibility and remember to spend longer on the muscles that feel tightest.

1. Standing calf stretch
Stand arms’ length from a wall or post and place your hands out at shoulder level. Step your left leg back and bend your right knee. Press your left heel into the floor ensuring that your ankle, knee and hip are aligned and your left foot is pointing straight at the wall. Keep your head and chest up for the duration of the stretch. Change legs and then repeat.

Calf stretch
2. Standing quad stretch
Perform this stretch next to a wall or post if you need help with balance. Bend your left leg behind you and grasp around your ankle with your left hand. Point your left knee down at the floor and keep your legs together. Pull your left foot towards your butt. Hold this position while maintaining an upright torso. On completion, change legs and then repeat.

Quad stretch
3. Seated hamstring stretch
Sit on a bench or chair with your legs bent and feet flat on the floor. Extend one leg in front of you and place your heel on the floor with your toes pointing up toward the ceiling. Place your hands on your bent knee and then, keeping your chest lifted, lean forwards from your hips. Try not to let your lower back round over as you lean forward. Hold for the desired duration and then change legs.
4. Kneeling hip flexor stretch
Kneel down on the floor and then take a large step forwards so that your front shin is vertical and your rear leg is extended behind you, knee resting on the floor. Keep your body upright. Relax and sink your hips down towards the floor. Slide your rear leg further back if necessary. Place your hands on your front thigh and hold this position for the required duration. Come out of the stretch slowly, change legs and repeat.
5. Seated groin stretch
Sit on the floor with the soles of your feet together and your legs bent. Draw your feet as close as possible to your groin. Wrap your hands around your ankles and place your elbows on your legs. Use your arms to gently push your knees down towards the floor. This stretch is more effective if you remove your shoes. Try not to let your lower back round excessively when performing this exercise.
6. Prone lying abs stretch
Lie on your front with your hands below your shoulders and your forehead resting on the floor. Gently lift your head, chest and shoulders off of the floor while simultaneously pushing with your arms. Keep your arms close to your ribs and your chin tucked in. Keep your hips on the floor and your legs straight throughout this stretch.

7. Supine figure four glute and spine stretch
Lie on your back with your legs straight and your hands by your sides. Bend your left leg and place your foot next to your right knee. Put your left arm on the floor at shoulder height and reach your right arm across your body, grasping the outside of your left knee. Roll your lower body to the right, keeping your left arm flat on the floor. Hold this position for the desired duration before slowly returning to the centre and then repeat the stretch on the other side.
8. Doorway chest stretch
Stand in an open doorway and place your forearms on the vertical door frames. Your elbows should be level with your shoulders and your arms bent to 90 degrees. Adopt a staggered stance and then lean your chest between your arms to stretch your chest and shoulders. Hold this position and then slowly ease out of the stretch. If you don’t have a doorway available, perform this stretch one arm at a time against any vertical support such as the corner of a wall, a tree or a lamp post.
9. Standing lat stretch
Grasp a sturdy waist-high handhold with your left hand. Move your feet backwards and lean forwards until your upper body is parallel to the floor and your arm is fully extended. Lean your body towards your left arm to deepen the stretch in your lats while also leaning back to stretch your shoulders. Hold this position for the desired duration and then change sides.

Remember the wise words of the Royal Marines Physical Training Instructors. “If you don’t have time to warm up and cool down properly, you don’t have time to exercise!” Skimping on these vital elements of your workout can hamper your progress and actually reduce your fitness. Make sure you allow sufficient time for your warm up and cool down. Consider this a “standing order” from which deviation may result in reduced recovery and/or injury.
6) Jump rope workouts

While you COULD just grab your jump rope and use it for 20-minutes, that workout will soon become boring and ineffectual. Instead, try one of these 20 jump rope-based workouts to push your fitness and fat burning to new levels...

1. Three minute intervals

Inspired by the length of a typical round of boxing, jump rope at a fast but sustainable pace for three minutes and then rest for one.

Repeat for as many rounds as required – five rounds makes for a great 20-minute workout.

2. Jump rope and burpee descending pyramid

This short but sweet workout is against the clock and really challenges your skipping ability and fitness.

Perform ten burpees and then skip until you have performed fifty rope turns. Then do nine burpees followed by another fifty rope turns.

Keep reducing the burpees by one until you reach one.

Burpees

How to perform: Stand with your feet together and your hands by your sides. Squat down and place your hands on the floor. Jump your feet back and out into the press up position and then do a single press up. Jump your feet back in and then leap up and into the air. Land on slightly bent knees and then repeat. Omit the press up or the jump as required.
3. Jump and swing

Combining kettlebell swings and jump rope, this no-frills workout is really effective but very simple.

Set your timer so it bleeps every three minutes.

Perform twenty to thirty kettlebell swings and then grab your rope and jump until the timer bleeps again.

Perform another set of swings and repeat.

Feel free to adjust the reps and timings to suit your individual fitness level – two minutes works equally well and is actually more demanding as the jump rope is actually the recovery part of this workout!

**Kettlebell swings**

How to perform: Hold a kettlebell in your hands and stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Bend your knees slightly and then hinge forward from the hips to lower the weight between your knees. Drive your hips forward – imagine you are doing a standing long jump – and use this “hip snap” to swing the weight forward and up to shoulder-height. Lower the weight and repeat.
4. Jump rope, press ups and squats

This workout is a great way to get a full-body training session into a very short time using nothing but a jump rope and some clear floor space.

Perform a continuous cycle of thirty seconds skipping/thirty seconds press ups/thirty seconds skipping/thirty seconds squats. Continue for as long as you like.

Ten cycles totals twenty minutes, making this a great ‘in a hurry’ workout.

Press ups
How to perform: Place your hands on the floor shoulder-width apart and walk your feet back so your legs are straight and your abs are tight. Your feet, knees, hips and shoulders should form a line. Bend your arms and lower your chest to lightly touch the floor – no touch means no rep! Press back up and repeat. Bend your legs and rest your knees on the floor for an easier workout.
Squats
How to perform: Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and your toes turned slightly outward. Push your hips back, bend your knees and squat down until your thighs are roughly parallel to the floor. Don’t round your lower back. Stand back up and repeat. Hold weights in your hands to make this exercise more demanding.
5. Tabata skipping intervals

This jump rope workout is very short but that doesn’t mean it’s easy.

Skip as fast as possible for twenty seconds (knee lift sprints or double-unders are best) and then rest for ten seconds.

Repeat for eight sets.

If you aren’t thoroughly exhausted at the end of this short but sharp workout, you weren’t skipping fast enough!

This workout is named after a Japanese sports scientist who found that he could increase the aerobic and anaerobic fitness of his athletes (Olympic speed skaters) using very brief but ultra-intense workouts.
6. The Spartan circuit

This is one of my favourite jump rope based workouts! It ticks lots of fitness component boxes and is easily adaptable according to the equipment you have available.

Why the Spartan Circuit? It’s very efficient and effective just like the Spartan warriors were, and it can be performed even when exercise equipment and space is sparse.

Set your timer for alternating two-minute and one-minute intervals and then complete the following circuit twice. This is a continuous circuit so move from one exercise to the next without taking any rests

- 2 minutes jump rope
- 1 minute press ups
- 2 minutes jump rope
- 1 minute squats
- 2 minutes jump rope
- 1 minute dorsal raises
- 2 minutes jump rope
- 1 minute planks
- 2 minutes jump rope
- 1 minute lunges

Repeat entire sequence one more time!

Press ups
How to perform: As before

Squats
How to perform: As before
Dorsal raises
How to perform: Lie on your front with a cushion or folded exercise mat under your hips for comfort. Clasp your hands behind your back. Keeping your feet on the floor, lift your head and shoulders off the ground. Lower yourself back to the floor and repeat.

Planks
How to perform: Lie on your front and rest on your elbows as though you were relaxing and reading a book on the beach. Keep your legs straight and lift your hips off the floor – your feet, hips and shoulders should form a straight line. Hold this position (but never your breath) for the prescribed duration.
Lunges
How to perform: Stand with your feet together and your hands by your sides. Take a large step forward, bend your knees and lower your rearmost knee to the floor. Keep your front shin vertical and avoid leaning forward. Push up and off your front leg and return to the starting position. Perform a similar rep leading with your opposite leg. Alternate legs for the duration of your set.
7. 5BX

When I was in the Marines we loved acronyms; it was like a secret code to ensure that civilians have no idea what you are talking about. You can normally pick out soldiers from civvies simply by listening to the way they speak to each other. It sounds like English and yet they aren’t making any sense! Common acronyms include BFT – Basic Fitness Test, ATH – Above the Horizon, ROE - Rules of Engagement, PFC – Private, First-Class and now 5BX which stands for five basic exercises.

Perform each of the exercises below for five sets using 30/30 intervals i.e. work hard for 30 seconds, rest for 30 seconds to total five minutes per exercise. Move from one exercise to the next without any rest. Perform as many repetitions as you can during each interval and record the number of reps so you can work to beat your scores when you repeat this workout.

1. Jump rope – double unders
2. Bench dips
3. Chinnies
4. Box jumps
5. Jump rope – knee lift sprints

**Jump rope – double unders**
How to perform: As before

**Bench dips**
How to perform: Sit on an exercise bench with your hands on the bench hip width apart. Point your fingers forward. Shift your hips forward so your butt is clear of the bench and extend your legs. Bend your arms and lower your butt down toward the floor and then push back up. The closer your feet are to the bench, the easier this exercise becomes so adjust your position accordingly.

**Chinnies**
How to perform: Lie on your back with your legs bent and your hands resting on your temples. Sit up and simultaneously lift one leg. Bend your leg, turn your torso and touch
your knee to your opposite elbow. Lie back down and then do the same movement to the opposite side. Keep alternating sides for the duration of your set.

**Chinnies**

**Box jumps**

How to perform: Stand facing a knee-high box. Jump forward and up to land softly on the box. Step (don’t jump) back down and repeat. Use your arms for extra momentum.

**Jump rope – knee lift sprints**

How to perform: As before
8. Double under pyramid

This workout is an exercise in self-regulation which means you keep on going until you are unable to continue, adjusting the intensity based on how you feel.

Start your stopwatch or keep an eye on the second hand of a clock...

At the top of the first minute do two double unders
At the top of the second minute do four double unders
At the top of the third minute do six double unders
At the top of the fourth minute do eight double unders
At the top of the sixth minute do ten double unders
Keep on adding two more double unders to each set until you are unable to continue.

Double unders

How to perform: As before
9. The conditioning pyramid

I really like numerical sequences like 5/10/15/20 in my workouts as it makes keeping track of how many reps you are supposed to be doing much easier.

Do five laps of the following exercises against the clock. Rest when you have to but remember the clock is ticking!

5 Double unders
10 Press ups
15 Sit-ups
20 Squats
25 Dorsal raises

Double unders
How to perform: As before

Press ups
How to perform: As before

Sit ups
How to perform: Lie on your back with your legs bent and feet flat on the floor. Place your hands on your temples. Without pulling on your head, sit up and touch your elbows to your knees. Lie back down and repeat.

Squats
How to perform: As before

Dorsal raises
How to perform: As before
10. Fast feet intervals

You can use your jump rope to improve leg speed and agility. This workout is designed to develop both while improving your fitness and endurance.

Do ten sets of 100 skipping rope turns with 60-seconds between sets.

Try to spin the rope as fast as you can and really pump your legs. Think sprint and not run or jog!

11. Bag and rope intervals

Jump rope and boxing go together “like peas and carrots” to quote Forrest Gump. Try this workout to channel your inner Rocky...

Jump rope for 60-seconds and then immediately drop your rope, put on your gloves and start thrashing the heavy bag for 60-seconds.

On completion, rest for 60-seconds and repeat.

Do five to eight rounds in total.

Hitting the bag immediately after jumping rope will mean you start tired which will help increase your boxing-specific stamina. Make sure you keep your wrists straight, your thumbs OUTSIDE of your fists and try to throw a variety of punches with both hands.

12. Fitness and strength builder

Trying to find time for strength training and cardio can be really hard so why not combine the two in one workout?

Perform your normal strength training workout but rather than just rest passively between sets for 60 to 90-seconds, do some easy jump rope instead.

This will help increase your fitness without increasing the duration of your workout and also helps inject some additional calorific expenditure into your workouts which is ideal if you are trying to lose weight.
13. Indoor roadwork

Bad weather may mean that heading out for a run is not very appealing. If bad weather keeps you indoors, jump rope instead.

Crank up the music, mix up your moves to include forward, backward, cross-overs and double under skipping and keep going for 20 to 30-minutes.

Don’t stay on one spot – move forward, backward and side to side.

If you trip, do ten-press ups as penance!

14. Timed laps workout

This CrossFit-style workout is fast and furious but also very simple. Do as many laps of the following exercises as you can in 20-minutes.

Rest when you need to but try and keep going.

If the 5/10/15/20 rep counts are too high or too low for you then feel free to change them to something more suitable e.g. 3/6/9/12 or 6/12/18/24 reps.

5 burpees
10 press ups
15 squats
20 double unders

Burpees
How to perform: As before

Press ups
How to perform: As before

Squats
How to perform: As before

Double unders
How to perform: As before
15. **Double under challenge**

Double unders are one of the most effective ways to crank up your heart rate and burn a whole lot of calories.

For this workout do 100, 150, 200 or even 250 double unders against the clock.

Rest when you need to but don’t forget the clock is ticking from the moment you start to when you finish your last double under. Try to beat your previous time whenever you repeat this workout.

16. **Descending pyramid conditioning workout**

What is the easiest way to eat a plate of frogs? Consume the biggest one first!

This workout uses that same principle.

Do 50-reps of each exercise first and then go back to the start and do 40-reps.

Perform 30-reps for your third circuit followed by 20-reps and finally ten.

Simple? Yes! Easy? No way!

1. Double unders
2. Sit-ups
3. Press ups

**Double unders**
How to perform: As before

**Sit-ups**
How to perform: As before

**Press ups**
How to perform: As before
17. Leg power plyometric circuit

Power is your ability to generate force very quickly and is an important part of most sports.

Jumping exercises, commonly called plyometrics, are one way to develop power.

Perform five to ten laps of the following circuit resting 60 to 90-seconds between laps.

Do not perform this workout on concrete or tarmac – it involves a lot of impact and you may end up with sore feet, ankles or knees.

10 speed squats
10 squat jumps
10 double unders

**Speed squats**
How to perform: With your feet shoulder-width apart, squat down until your thighs are parallel to the floor and then stand up as fast as you can without actually jumping off the floor – it’s okay to rise up onto the balls of your feet though. Descend rapidly and repeat. Try not to round your lower back.

**Squat jumps**
How to perform: Squat down as before but this time explode upward and, using your arms for momentum, leap into the air. Land on slightly bent legs and repeat.

**Double unders**
How to perform: As before
18. Twice through conditioning circuit

This workout is against the clock so no dilly-dallying!

Do two laps of the following exercises as quickly as you can but don’t sacrifice good form for speed – perform each exercise properly and precisely for maximum benefit and minimum risk of injury.

20 double-unders
30 walking lunges (15 out and 15 back)
40 press ups
30 squats
20 sit-ups
10 box jumps

**Double unders**
How to perform: As before

**Walking lunges**
How to perform: Stand with your feet together and your hands by your sides. Take a large step forward and then bend your legs; lower your rear knee toward the floor. Step up and through into another repetition. Keep your torso upright and your front shin vertical.

**Press ups**
How to perform: As before

**Squats**
How to perform: As before

**Sit-ups**
How to perform: As before

**Box jumps**
How to perform: As before
19. Jump rope cardio medley

Although you can freestyle your jump rope workouts, having a more structured approach can be useful if you find it hard to make things up on the spot.

Write or print this workout out using large text so you can easily see what comes next and so you don’t have to keep stopping; the idea is to seamlessly move from one exercise to the next.

If you trip, reward yourself with ten press ups!

Set your timer so it sounds every thirty seconds...
30 seconds – lateral or side to side jumps
30 seconds – heel/toe boxer style
30 seconds – high knee sprints
30 seconds – cross overs
30 seconds – double unders
30 seconds – lateral or side to side jumps
30 seconds – heel/toe boxer style
30 seconds – high knee sprints
30 seconds – cross overs
30 seconds – double unders
30 seconds – lateral or side to side jumps
30 seconds – heel/toe boxer style
30 seconds – high knee sprints
30 seconds – cross overs
30 seconds – double unders
30 seconds – lateral or side to side jumps
30 seconds – heel/toe boxer style
30 seconds – high knee sprints
30 seconds – cross overs
30 seconds – double unders
20. Reverse Tabata

Tabata training normally involves doing 20-seconds of work and getting ten-seconds of rest but this slightly easier version puts that in reverse so you can focus 100-percent on spinning the rope as fast as you can.

Do ten-sets...

10 seconds flat out skipping rope sprint
20 seconds slow skip to recover
10 seconds flat out skipping rope sprint
20 seconds slow skip to recover
10 seconds flat out skipping rope sprint
20 seconds slow skip to recover
10 seconds flat out skipping rope sprint
20 seconds slow skip to recover
10 seconds flat out skipping rope sprint
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20 seconds slow skip to recover
10 seconds flat out skipping rope sprint
20 seconds slow skip to recover
10 seconds flat out skipping rope sprint
20 seconds slow skip to recover
10 seconds flat out skipping rope sprint
20 seconds slow skip to recover

Rest a moment and repeat if you feel the desire!
7) Basic Nutrition for Health and Weight Management

Like exercise, diet and nutrition can seem very complicated. If you Google healthy diet or weight loss you will be inundated with thousands of results – some of which are excellent and informative resources but even more are nothing but glorified sales pitches. In keeping with my No Frills philosophy, I have boiled my approach to healthy eating down into TEN golden principles that, if followed, will make losing or maintaining your weight as easy as A,B,C!

1. Make vegetables the cornerstone of every meal

When you are deciding what to eat, the first thing you should be thinking about is what vegetables to have. Ideally, every meal you eat should contain two or more different vegetables to ensure that you get plenty of essential vitamins and minerals. Try to choose different colour vegetables in each meal to further expand your intake of nutrients. Vegetables are not only packed full of essential vitamins and minerals, they are also low in calories so you can eat a lot of them without worrying about expanding your waistline. Fill up on vegetables (rather than lots of bread, rice or pasta) and your meals will automatically be low in calories without having to weigh or measure your food. Try to eat your vegetables in the rawest state you can tolerate to preserve as many of the essential nutrients as you can. Overcooking vegetables can sometimes degrade its nutritional value.
2. Pump up the protein

Weight trainers know that protein is good for them and take steps to consume plenty of it but most average exercisers don’t eat enough protein. Protein, found in foods like chicken, fish, meat, eggs, dairy, soya, beans and nuts, is essential for post-exercise muscle repair and is also very useful for people trying to lose weight. Protein has a high thermal effect which simply means your body uses a lot of energy breaking it down, transporting it, utilizing it and finally eliminating it. This means that every meal you eat that contains protein provides your digestive system with a mini fat burning workout! In addition, it is very hard for your body to convert unused protein into stored fat – this is not the same with carbohydrates or dietary fats. A lean meat and vegetable-based meal is perfect for weight control.
3. Don’t forget the healthy fats!

Fats often get a bad rap and that makes a certain amount of sense as fats are very calorie dense so eating too much fat can make you fat. However, fats are also essential for your health so this creates a problem – eat less fat to stay slim BUT eat fats to stay healthy! The answer is eating fats that are useful to your body and have a low affinity for conversion to body fat – specifically omega three and six fats which are often called essential fatty acids or EFAs. These fats (found in fish and vegetable oils like olive oil) have so many health benefits that it is impossible to list them all here but include being anti-inflammatory, good for your hair, eyes, skin and joints and helping you regulate your mood and blood glucose levels. Saturated fat is much maligned but, other than the fact it can make you fat, is nothing to worry about too much. If you are watching your weight then cut down on saturated fat but otherwise a reasonable amount (around 30 grams a day) is fine. The main fat to avoid is trans fat which is commonly found in processed foods like cookies, shop-bought cakes, many margarines and takeaway foods. Trans fats are inherently bad for your health.

4. Eat like a hunter/gatherer

Hunter gathers were lean, fit and healthy – partly because they were very active and partly because of their diets. They ate mostly fruit, vegetables, meat, nuts and seeds and very little sugar. Their diet was very nutrient dense while not being very calorie dense – the ideal balance. While I don’t expect you to head off and go hunting or start picking things off trees to eat, it is worth trying to emulate hunter/gatherers by eating foods that are as close to their natural state as possible. The fewer ingredients a food has, the
healthier it is likely to be so, wherever possible, eat foods with very few or even one ingredient only if you want to be lean and healthy.

5. Time your carbs around exercise
Carbs often get labelled as being bad for you but this is really unfair – carbs are essential for fuelling an active lifestyle as they are your brain and muscles’ preferred source of energy. The problem is that most people are very inactive and so carbs are not used to fuel activity but are instead converted and stored as fat for later use. In a nutshell, the less active you are, the fewer carbs you need. As you are reading a book about exercise, I will make the assumption that you need at least some carbs to fuel your workouts so here is my suggestion – eat the majority of your carbs (bread, rice, pasta etc) before and after exercise and limit your carb intake the rest of the time. That way you will have all the energy you need to work out and then recover afterward but won’t create a competition for fuel which will result in little or no fat burning or, worse still, fat storage.

6. Don’t drink your calories
Fruit juice, smoothies, milk shakes, sodas, coffee coolers – the one thing all these beverages have in common is the large number of calories they contain. A typical 330ml soda can contain as many as 200 calories and a coffee cooler may well contain as many as 600 calories! The problem with liquid calories is they don’t really fill you up like food so you end up not only drinking a lot of calories but also eating a lot too. The occasional calorie-laden drink is fine but over consumption is likely to cause weight gain. Stick with calorie-free beverages and save your calories for food.
7. Forget diet fads and think long term eating habits

Lots of people want to lose weight and to do this they normally resort to strict diets. Diets work but usually only in the short term because, and after a period of very strict eating, most people eventually fall off the diet wagon and end up overeating and regaining all the weight they have lost! This creates a yo-yo effect as the dieter goes on another restrictive diet to lose the weight again. Very low calorie diets trigger something called the starvation response which basically primes your body for fat storage rather than fat burning and also results in muscle loss and severe hunger. Instead of following a short term celebrity-endorsed fad diet (and there are so many to choose from!) follow the tips in this chapter. Okay – you won’t lose 20lbs in a week but the weight you lose will stay off and you won’t feel ill/hungry/tired/bloated/weak. A very reasonable weight loss of one pound per week will result in a whopping 52lbs of weight loss in a year with very little chance of putting it back on.

8. Treat yourself – you deserve it!

If I tell you not to think about elephants, what pops into your mind? Elephants of course! This is the problem with most diets – as soon as any food is put on the “banned” list, you want it even if you never wanted it before. This is just human nature. Because of this, I never say never when it comes to treat foods like ice cream, cakes or cookies – I just limit their consumption to a couple of times a week. That way, I never feel deprived and am much less likely to go overboard and overindulge. Assuming you eat 28 times a week (three meals and a snack), I think around three treats a week is perfectly acceptable. This equates to around 10-percent of your weekly food intake. Remember, a treat is just that – a dessert after a healthy meal or a snack – not a binge!
9. Make water your primary beverage
Your body is mostly made of water – around 90 percent of your body mass is H2O. You need water for joint lubrication, heat regulation, food digestion, muscle contraction, flushing waste products out of your body...virtually everything that happens in your body needs water. However, many people drink so little water they are chronically dehydrated. I love coffee and also enjoy the occasional diet coke and beer but I don’t count these beverages as water as they are not very good for hydration (replacing lost fluids). Instead, my primary beverage is water and as a keen exerciser, I make sure I drink between two and three litres of plain water each and every day. This ensures I never get dehydrated and can afford to lose plenty of sweat when I exercise. Make water your primary beverage and treat all other drinks as non-hydrating.

10. Sugar – bad for more than just your teeth
It’s very rare that I label a food as being “bad” but with sugar, I feel justified in being so judgemental. Sugar is empty calories – it contains no vitamins or minerals and provides nothing but energy. Sugar has an affinity for being converted easily to body fat, disrupts your blood glucose levels so your energy and mood roller coaster up and down, causes systemic inflammation and AGEs (Advanced Glycation End-products – one of the major causes of aging, illness and general pain), is highly addictive and, as the heading suggests, can rot your teeth. Sugar is often hidden in processed foods and many people start their day with a big bowl of sugar in the form of seemingly healthy breakfast cereal. Did you know a typical 330ml can of soda contains around 40 grams of sugar – that’s EIGHT teaspoons worth! By adhering to the preceding nine items in this list you will already be limiting your sugar intake but by becoming more “sugar aware” you can further limit your consumption of what we often called “white death” in the Marines.
8) Conclusion

As a writer, personal trainer and lecturer on all things fitness, I am constantly reading about new developments in the health and fitness industry; I like to keep my finger on the pulse! Subsequently, I am always learning about new exercise methods and nutritional approaches that are often touted as cutting edge or being the next big thing that makes everything else redundant. The thing is, in my nearly 30-years of fitness industry experience, this is seldom the case!

When it comes to nutrition and exercise, I keep coming back to the fact that basic is usually best and the most effective methods are the ones that have stood the test of time. Walking, lifting barbells and using a jump rope all fall under the banner of “tried and tested”. They might not be trendy, sexy, fancy, high tech or especially new but you can guarantee that they work.

I’ve lost count of the number of fad diets, exotic exercise machines and flash in the pan training methods I have read about – there have been so many over the years. I’m always a little sad when I read about the next “big thing” because I know that more than a few poor souls will be suckered in to following a program, buying into a diet or using an exercise device that is simply ineffective or maybe even dangerous. Walking, lifting weights and jumping rope have been around forever and that’s why you should do them. Their longevity is testament to their effectiveness.

Of course, you don’t have to take my word for it – the proof, as the saying goes, is in the pudding so eat up! Do your best to clock up around 10,000 steps of walking a day, lift something heavy a couple of times a week and work out using your jump rope every other day. Combined with my ten rules for healthy eating, you have a simple template that is easy to follow and will deliver results that most faddy programs will never match.

Knowledge is power but only if you put that knowledge into practice. Use the information in this book and you’ll soon be fit, lean and healthy – No Frills guaranteed!
9) About the Author

Born in Bristol, England, in 1968, Patrick Dale realized at a very early age that sports and fitness was "his thing" and has devoted almost all of his life to these pursuits.

After studying physical education in college, Patrick began working as a gym instructor and aerobics class teacher before quickly progressing to facility management. He was soon personal training a select group of clients before Personal Training became a recognized job title.

He took a five year break from the Health & Fitness industry to join the Royal Marine Commandos - one of the most elite fighting forces in the world. The Marines have a reputation for "training hard and fighting easy" and Patrick's high level of fitness was tested to the extreme during his service. Patrick saw active duty in many parts of the world including Northern Ireland.

Patrick left the Marines to resume his Health & Fitness career first as a fitness manager and then he began teaching other people how to become personal trainers and gym instructors. He now has his own training company in Cyprus called Solar Fitness Qualifications which provides professional certification courses for those wishing to follow in his footsteps in to the rewarding industry of Health & Fitness.

As an enthusiastic sportsman, Patrick has been involved with and competed in a wide variety of activities including athletics, rugby, rock climbing, weightlifting, bodybuilding, triathlon, martial arts, trampolining and gymnastics; he has recently competed in his first powerlifting competition.

His main areas of professional interests are strength and conditioning for improved sports performance, nutrition, fitness psychology and weight management as well as family health and fitness - an area he is very passionate about promoting. Believing that prevention is better than cure, he wants to help people of all ages to get the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and reduce their risk of the common chronic diseases associated with poor nutrition and inactivity. Patrick has written three books – Military Fitness Training, Live Long, Live Long and No Gym? No Problem! The Home Workout Bible which are available from Amazon: [http://www.amazon.co.uk/](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Patrick-dale/e/B00B5HPLRO/ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_3?qid=1390912860&sr=1-3&tag=csxjreb-21)
When he isn’t researching and writing health & fitness related articles for various international magazines, lecturing, or writing books, Patrick enjoys spending his free time reading fiction, taking photographs, watching movies, cooking, walking his three great Danes and making the most of the sunny climate of Cyprus. He can be contacted at patrickdale.militaryfitness@hotmail.com