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Charmaine Yabsley gets the scoop from top fitness experts on how to take your workout up a notch, and ditch flab and fatigue for good.
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Rev up your fitness!

1. Reward your muscles

“The most common form of self-massage, foam rolling has become increasingly popular among gym-goers and health enthusiasts,” says exercise physiologist Jono Freeman. “Based on a scientific principle known as autogenic inhibition reflex, it’s the sudden relaxation of a muscle after a high magnitude of tension. While stretching will improve the length of a muscle, foam rolling works to adjust the muscle’s tone by releasing connective tissue and deep trigger points that affect how that muscle functions. Rolling prior to training increases flexibility, while doing it after helps blood flow for recovery and reduces muscle soreness the next day.”

2. Jump!

“Trampoline fitness is not only fun, but it’s so effective that even NASA has declared it among the most efficient forms of exercise,” says Skyfit’s Emily Steele. “Participants can burn up to 500 calories in a single 30-minute class, and because trampoline beds absorb up to 80 percent of the impact on joints, it’s a great exercise for people with joint injuries or who are overweight.”

3. Eat fat

“One of the best-kept secrets for increasing energy and stamina for a workout is eating fat,” says nutritionist Christine Cronau. “Not just

‘good’ fats from avocados and nuts, but also real old-fashioned fats, such as butter, coconut oil, and egg yolks. Is fat higher in calories? Absolutely. Fat has twice the calories of protein and carbohydrate. It has twice the calories of sugar. That is why many low-fat foods are loaded with sugar! But different calories act differently in the body: some promote fat storage, and some don’t. And sugar and carbohydrates, even though they are lower in calories, are the most likely to cause fat storage. This is because we can only use or store a small amount of glucose - just 500g of glycogen, our stored form of glucose - at any one time. And if we consume more than we can use or store, then we generally have to store it as fat.”

4. Go for the whole

“Supplements composed of synthetic materials or highly refined extracts deliver what’s on the label - but nothing more,” says nutritional advisor Dr Jaroslav Boublik. “Whole food-based supplements, however, take advantage of nature’s wisdom and millennia of co-evolution. For someone who does not have time to get all their requirements from their diet, these products represent a quantum leap in effectiveness, delivering not just the target nutrients but all the enzymes, cofactors and phytonutrients that would normally be found in the food sources.”



Meet the experts



Exercise Physiologist **Jono Freeman** is the author of "The Complete Guide to Foam Rolling".



Emily Steele is a Skyfit National Fitness Coordinator. www.skyzone.com.au



Christine Cronau is a nutritionist, speaker and author. www.christinecronau.com.au



Dr Jaroslav Boublik is nutritional advisor to Olympic athletes and developer of Activated Nutrients. www.activatednutrients.com



Peta Serras is a Pilates instructor and lifestyle blogger. www.professionalbabe.com



Anthea Amore is a vegan chef, yoga teacher and author. www.organicpassioncatering.com



Health and wellness expert **Ali Cavill** is the owner of Fit Fantastic. www.fitfantastic.webstarts.com



Shura Ford is a registered acupuncturist and herbalist. www.fordwellnessgroup.com.au



Sally Lynch is a running technique specialist and Athletics Australia coach. www.letsrun.com.au



Bee Smith is the founder of The Game Changer 10-week lifestyle program. www.beesmithfit.com

5. Boost your back flexibility

"A standing roll-down is the perfect exercise to stretch your hamstrings, glutes, and back," says Pilates instructor Peta Serras. "Stand with your back against the wall and your feet hip-distance apart and away from the wall. Begin to peel your spine off the wall one vertebrae at a time until you are fully relaxed over your legs. Hold at the bottom for a moment before rolling back up. This exercise gives you feedback on what part of your back is the tightest; you'll feel a big section come off where you are tight. Repeat morning and night."

6. Go up the wall

"Restorative postures like Viparita Karani (Legs Up the Wall) are wonderfully restful for the heart, and also reduce stress and soothe the nervous system," says yoga teacher Anthea Amore. "It's great for circulation and stimulates healthy blood pressure, and gently works the hips, legs and calf muscles and eases lower back tightness. Sit against a wall with your knees bent up, and then carefully swing one leg up the wall while the other naturally follows as you lower your torso towards the ground. Have your buttocks as close to the wall as you can manage."

7. Train smart for a strong heart

"Regular weight and strength training - which is exercise that requires your muscles to exert force against some form of resistance, such as free weights - improves cardiovascular fitness, leading to better heart function," says health and wellness expert Ali Cavill. "As your body becomes stronger, heavier loads now represent a lower percentage of your maximum capacity, so this increase in muscle strength and endurance allows everyday tasks to be performed with less effort and for longer periods. Result? Lower heart rate, blood pressure, and cardiac demands."

8. Be a clever commuter

"Building exercise into your daily commute can provide that 'me-time' your body desperately craves," adds Cavill. "Leave your car at home and cycle to work. Get off the bus or train one stop early and walk. Take the stairs whenever you can. Try interval training or boot-camp classes: alternating new and different bursts of intense activity with intervals of lighter activity keeps boredom at bay and burns more calories without spending extra time at the gym. A 40-minute workout combining fast, intense exercise with gentler, slower movements, such as core and strength conditioning, is just as effective as a 60-minute run."

9. Try TCM

"Chinese medicine has its foundations in preventive medicine, and it can certainly enhance fitness," says acupuncturist and herbalist Shura Ford. "I use acupuncture and Chinese herbal remedies with clients to increase energy and stamina as well as for goal-setting, to improve their motivation and willpower. These treatments are especially helpful when clients are stepping up fitness training or returning to training after a period of downtime. Acupuncture is also great for providing strength and stability to muscles and joints and so enabling efficient, injury-free training, particularly if there is a history of injury."

10. Take it outside

"If your regular cardio routine consists of walking or running on a treadmill in the gym, then take it outdoors," says running technique specialist Sally Lynch. "Try to pick up the pace, add some hills, or include some interval sprints. If you're a committed runner, add core work for better stability and high intensity training to increase strength and stamina."

11. Put mind over matter

Personal trainer Bee Smith recommends the following steps to change your training attitude. "Set goals - break down your ultimate health and fitness goal into small, specific and achievable mini-goals. This will provide you with direction and help you avoid becoming overwhelmed on your fitness journey. Stay positive - your words and thoughts influence how you perceive your world. Practise positive self-talk and surround yourself with positive people. Track your progress - what we see, we believe, so keep a diary and review your results to feel empowered to continue. Be prepared and consistent, and ensure you have an exercise and nutrition game plan. Know what you're going to be doing before you start. Reduce risk of injury with functional fitness exercises that train your muscles to do everyday activities safely and efficiently. These exercises mimic real-life movements and focus on more than one body part at a time, so all of your muscles work together. This use of multiple muscles enhances strength, balance, flexibility, speed and coordination, which in turn decreases your risk of injury. Functional exercises are also very effective at burning calories because you use numerous muscle groups at once."

12. Switch your routine

"You can't go from start to finish with the same routine, and expect to achieve your goal,"

says Pilates instructor Michael Dermansky. “It is important to assess your program regularly, every six weeks, to ensure that your routine is current and appropriate for your fitness level, and to see positive progress. Negative progress is also important, because it means that your program can be adapted and redirected to achieve your goals.”

13. Include an add-on

“If you want to boost results from your workouts, include an ‘add on’ at the end,” says Mark Capelin, founder of Tribe Social Fitness. “Try two minutes of skipping at a consistent, solid speed, or tackle as many burpees as you can in a minute. For an added challenge, try rowing intervals, either by time or distance. For example, do four sets of 250 meters, taking 30 to 45 seconds of rest between each set. This will get your heart rate up and it is a great way to finish a workout.”

14. Shake it up

“Mixing up your training allows your body to move in different ways, and keeps it guessing,” says endurance runner Ben Lucas. “You can do this in several ways. For example, do a hybrid workout, such as a spin class followed by a strength session, back to back. These two training styles complement each other, because you start by getting your heart rate up and having a calorie burn before you even lift a weight. So by the time you move onto the strength component of the workout, your body is already in fat-burning mode, which is only maximised once you start lifting weights. Studies show that a good strength program can elevate your metabolism for up to 38 hours post-workout. That’s why it’s good to include both strength and cardio in a weight loss program, because resistance training allows your body to continue to burn fat long after the session ends, whereas a cardio workout will only really burn fat while you’re training. You can also adopt this style of training in the gym, starting with cardio and moving onto weights. Or, do some form of cardio and strength in the morning, followed by Pilates or yoga in the afternoon for balance

A study by Indiana University shows that the dropout rate for couples who went to the gym together was only 6.3 percent, compared to 43 percent for those who went separately.

and to lengthen out your muscles. Or, you may just choose to do a different training style every time you train.”

15. Slow down

“A ‘de-loading’ week will refresh your nervous system,” says personal trainer Christian Baker. “For one week, complete your usual workouts - but don’t finish any sets. For example, if you normally achieve 10 reps with a certain weight, finish the set at eight reps instead. Also, reduce the time of your workout. So if you normally train for 1 hour, try just 40 minutes per session. This gives your nervous





Get a foam roller: using it pre-training increases flexibility, and using it afterwards increases blood flow and reduces muscle soreness.

system a much-needed break and increases your chances of being refreshed and ready for harder workouts the following week.”

16. Walk and plank

Physiotherapist Margarita Gurevich suggests the following exercises to get your heart rate going and strengthen your back. “Walking lunges: make sure that when you lunge you can see your toes, otherwise too much load will go through the knees, causing injuries. Holding some weights will make the exercise harder. With the plank, hold the position for as long as you can, aiming for at least one minute. To make it harder, bring one knee towards your chest, then return to the start position and repeat with the other leg, for 10 repetitions on each leg. Make sure you’re not experiencing any sharp back pain.”

17. Look good

“Wearing the right gear in the gym is crucial,” says personal trainer Matt Chapman. “I recommend PocJox: made from a high-tech fabric with graduated compression, it increases blood circulation for improved recovery and reduces muscle stiffness post-workout. The fabric is moisture-wicking, meaning it draws sweat away from your body so you’ll be more comfortable.”

18. Incorporate back-bends

“If you feel the need for an extra heart opening or gentle energetic boost, practise Half Upside-down Bow Pose throughout the day,” suggests yoga instructor Charlotte Dodson. “By working your large muscles groups you get the energy and oxygenated blood flowing through your organs and limbs, and you’ll be set for the day. Back-bends open up your physical and emotional heart, and open the front body and strengthen the back; Half Upside-down Bow Pose also gives you an energetic boost as you turn yourself inside out, like a rainbow shape. Start by lying down on the floor. Bend both knees up to about a 45-degree angle, and press the soles of your feet into the earth, keeping your feet hip-distance apart. Place your forearms on the floor, palms facing down. As you exhale, ground your feet and roll your buttocks, lower, middle and upper back away from the floor. Roll your shoulders down and, if it feels comfortable, interlock your hands together under your back body. Keep lifting your chest towards your chin and your chin towards your chest. This pose is great for developing muscle strength in your legs. Hold the pose and breathe deeply for five to 10 breaths before rolling back to the floor on an exhalation. Every time you exhale, feel your

belly tightly tuck in and see if you can soften your buttocks. That way, as you move on the exhale your belly is protecting your lower back. Another option is to lift up onto your tiptoes to release your lower back, or roll back down to the floor if it feels uncomfortable. When you come back to the floor, make sure you hug your knees into your belly and give yourself a squeeze. Keep your lower back pressed down into the floor before repeating the pose a few more times.”

19. Count to three

Performance and health coach Laura Moore has three easy steps to get your fitness level into gear. “Firstly, get connected to what you really want. Stop focusing on losing weight and get to the heart of the matter: you don’t want to lose five kilos, but you do want more confidence when you’re naked to reignite the passion in your relationship. Secondly, commit to a training program with friends. Studies by Indiana University show that the dropout rate for couples who went to the gym together was only 6.3 percent, compared to 43 percent for those who went separately. Thirdly, set mini goals and track your performance, perhaps with a FitBit or activity app. Each time you reach a milestone celebrate your success.”

20. Use the stairs!

“Stairwork is not just incidental exercise, but also HIIT (high intensity interval training),” says fitness expert Sally Brouwer. “As stairs are steeper than most hills, your heart rate is accelerated more rapidly and you require less time to achieve a great workout. You’ll also strengthen lower body muscles, including stabiliser muscles - which assist your balance as you work against gravity - that are often neglected during flat walking or running. Stairs are the perfect addition to rev up a circuit session, or for a real challenge, try an event like Stadium Stomp at the SCG, MCG, Adelaide Oval or The GABBA (www.stadiumstomp.com.au)!”

21. Eat sugar

“Sugar is an evil word in the dietary world - but it can actually be your best friend after an intense workout,” says trainer Ethan Hyde. “When you exercise, you deplete your glycogen stores and leave your body hungry for energy that needs to be replaced as soon as possible. Eating some fast-digesting carbohydrates, such as snakes, jelly beans, or even chocolate with your protein shake, will spike your insulin and promote a fast recovery so you can come back tomorrow and do it all again. Aim for 20-30g of sugar and 20-30g of protein immediately post-workout.” ✱

✱ Meet the experts



Michael Dermansky is a senior physiotherapist and Pilates instructor. www.mdhealth.com.au



Former NRL player **Mark Capelin** is founder of Tribe Social Fitness. www.tribesocialfitness.com



Former NRL player **Ben Lucas** owns Flow Athletic, and is an endurance runner. www.flowathletic.com.au



Personal trainer **Christian Baker** is the inventor of the anti-fatigue nutritional supplement ReVive. www.upsidenutrition.com



Margarita Gurevich is senior physiotherapist. www.healthpointphysiotherapy.com.au



Matt Chapman is a personal trainer and founder of PocJox. www.pocjox.com



Charlotte Dodson is a yoga instructor. www.charlottedodson.tv



Laura Moore is a performance and health coach and founder of Uppy.



Sally Brouwer, past Personal Trainer of the Year. www.sallybrouwerfitness.com.au



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