

Step ①②③

be your own personal trainer

Having taken on the role of personal trainer in terms of testing your fitness with our home fitness tests, you're now ready to design your very own workout programme. With the information we provide you'll become more than just an actor in your fitness production. So follow the lines below to win a real fitness Oscar.

The need to plan

We'll refer to the tests in the previous article to develop sample programmes from potential home test scores for beginner, intermediate and advanced case studies. You should read all of these, regardless of your ability, as each shows you a different way to interpret and devise fitness programmes and introduces major fitness concepts.

In each of these case studies you'll also find the individual's 'fitness aims' identified. This is a process that you would normally go through with a personal trainer. It will require you to decide what you want to achieve from your fitness programme. It will also provide you with the starting point, that'll focus exactly what you want to achieve from your workouts. Each case study will finish with a sample programme.

Rate of Perceived Exertion

In the training schedules that follow you'll see rpe figures, these are based on a self-perceived classification of exercise effort

devised by exercise scientists. These levels are linked to heart rate levels. So if you have calculated your heart rate max

you will be able to identify with either the recommended level of effort or the actual heart rate required. **See table below.**

Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE)

Rate of perceived exertion (RPE) and approximate relationship to maximum heart rate

Scale Number	Perceived level of effort	Approx heart rate (beats per minute)
6	Rest	60-70
7-8	Very, very light	80
9-10	Very light	100
11-12	Fairly light	115
13-14	Somewhat hard	130
15-16	Hard	150
17-18	Very hard	160-170
19	Very, very hard	180
20	Total exhaustion	Maximum

Beginner Programme **case study**

Jane is a 27-year-old dental hygienist working in a busy practice and is new to exercise

Fitness aim

Jane wants to lose weight and tone up her thighs, butt and stomach areas in particular. She's less interested in physical fitness per se and more in achieving a sexier body.

Pre-screening

No problems were identified – although there was little history of exercise involvement since school. This would obviously put her into the beginner category and will mean careful and slow progression of training.

Calculated maximum heart rate

217 minus $(0.85 \times 27) = 194$.

Resting heart rate: 68 (Slightly below average)

Body composition

Waist to hip ratio: w30:h36 = 0.83 (Slightly overweight)

As losing weight, or more relevantly, body fat, is a key aim for Jane, a substantial component of her workout regime will be cardiovascular work. Progression should be slow and carefully controlled. She should begin with ten minutes on her chosen piece of CV kit and progress by an additional minute every session until she reaches twenty minutes. After this, she should increase duration by two minutes every two sessions until she reaches thirty minutes. Once this level has been reached, she could then repeat the process from ten minutes upward, but this time putting in a higher – but again not exhaustive level – of effort. CV work should be performed three times a week.

Flexibility

20 – a good level

No need specifically to increase flexibility, although Jane should ensure that she doesn't lose previous flexibility levels.



“Jane wants to lose weight and tone up her thighs, butt and stomach areas in particular”

Muscular strength

Maximum sets.

As Jane is new to exercise, it's recommended that initially she only perform very light weight sessions on a twice-a-week basis for at least six weeks, in order to learn proper technique and become 'acclimatised' to weight training. Two sets of twelve repetitions would be sufficient on exercises that involve all body parts. After this period she will reach a standard of fitness that will enable the safe testing of muscular strength through the set method. Jane should then establish the weight to be lifted on each exercise at a level that makes completion of further reps difficult. This will promote muscular growth. A sample session could be 3x10 reps.

Weight training will increase lean muscle mass. Muscle is the most metabolically active constituent of the

body, burning in excess of three times as many calories as fat. By increasing lean muscle, Jane will be increasing her body's ability to achieve tone and leanness. This will complement the calorie burning achieved through her CV work.

Muscular endurance

Press-ups: 7 – below average.

In reality this is not a bad score for previously unconditioned Jane, given the fact that a full press-up requires a lot of all-over body strength. Press-ups (and other body weight exercises for the abdominals) should be incorporated into her training plan, but they will not become a key feature – due to her fitness aim. As functional strength increases, Jane will probably in any case find herself able to perform an increasing number of press-ups without specific training.

PROGRAMME FOR BEGINNERS CASE STUDY

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
CV 10 min RPE 10/11	Weights 2 x 10 reps	Rest	CV 11 min RPE 10/11	Weights 2 x 12 reps – including press ups 2 x 4 and abdominal moves.	Rest	CV 12 min RPE 10/11

Step 3 Be Your Own Personal Trainer

Intermediate Programme **case study**

Max is 25 and a self-employed plumber who works out on a regular basis

Fitness aim

Max wants to increase muscular size particularly around his chest and butt. He's been training for three years – on average three weights sessions a week and 3x30 to 40-minute CV efforts.

Pre-screening

No particular problems were identified.

Calculated maximum heart rate

217 minus (0.85 x 25) = 196.

Resting Heart Rate: 57

(Good – a consequence of regular CV work.)

Body composition

Waist to hip ratio: w34:h39 = 0.87 (Lean)

Flexibility

Poor in hamstring region.

Muscular strength

Due to regular strength training, Max's one rep maximums on key exercises like bench press and squats were high (115kg and 210kg half squat). However, a bit of a training plateau had been reached with progression slowing quite rapidly in the last six months with no noticeable gains in muscular size.

To continue ringing the changes from a strength programme, Max's routines need constantly to be changed and evaluated in order to maintain muscular adaptation. Muscles become used to the same training stimuli and need to be worked differently. This could range from a small change, such as altering the angle at which you perform a bicep curl or shoulder press, or a much more substantial change in terms of the weight system you utilise.

Specific to Max is the use of substantial CV work in his training routines. Regular aerobic training to his levels could actually be detrimental to the fitness aim of increased muscle size. In short, the



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wrong type of muscle fibres may be developed, which will detract from muscular size and strength gains. In Max's case, it's far better to employ more power-

orientated CV work – up to around twenty minutes total in terms of workload. Examples of such sessions would include – 4x5 minutes hard on his chosen piece of CV kit with almost a full recovery.

Muscular endurance

Press-ups: 42 – nearly an excellent score

Made all the more remarkable by the fact that Max didn't incorporate press-ups regularly in his schedules. Interpreting information like this as your own personal trainer is a very important consideration. Comparison scores on tests like these are ok, but they need to be treated with caution, and respect should be given to a person's prior level and type of training. Being able to do 70 press-ups doesn't mean that you have a good squat score or aerobic ability – it's a specific test and should be seen as such.

PROGRAMME FOR INTERMEDIATE CASE STUDY

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
CV 15 min RPE 15/16	Weights 1 x 8 @70% 2 x 6 @ 75% 2 x 4 @ 85%	CV 9 x 1 min RPE 19 – 2 min recovery	CV 2 x 10 min RPE 13/14 – 5 min recovery	Weights 4 x 3 reps @90% Press-ups 2 x 4 and abdominal moves	Rest	CV 10 min RPE 15/16 Weights as Tuesday