

» Pilates | By Jade Winter

# FIRM & FIT... FAST

Career, family, friends, study, shopping, housework... life just never seems to stop. So, who has time for exercise, asks Jade Winter?

Let face it, life isn't getting any slower. And with advances in communication like email, facebook and twitter, the pace just keeps picking up. So, here are a few simple tips on how to squeeze the most out of your day and look firm, fit and fabulous in the process.

## INCREASE YOUR 'INCIDENTAL' EXERCISE.

Incidental exercise basically means the mobility it takes to achieve your day-to-day activities. Increasing this will burn more calories without having to schedule in specific exercise, and will only add a minute amount of time on to your day. Some simple ways to increase your incidental exercise include:

- Take the stairs instead of the lift at work, and take two steps at once if you can.
- Catch the bus or train home? Get off a stop or two early and walk briskly to your letterbox.
- Try to do the household chores in record time. Scrub that shower in turbo mode, until it sparkles.
- Walk to the supermarket and carry your groceries home, building up your arm muscles.

Be open to looking out for other ways that you can maximise that incidental exercise in your daily routine and watch the fat start to melt away.

## TRY INTERVAL TRAINING

The most effective way to improve your cardio fitness and to strip away the fat is to get into interval training. This basically means that instead of going for a long, slow, easy jog for an hour, you do a short burst of high-intensity exercise, followed by a low-intensity interval. If you repeat this, you can pack twice as much fitness into half the time.

For example instead of doing 5km on the treadmill, go to your local park and do 10x100m sprints at maximum pace, with each one followed by 1min of slow jogging. If you don't like running, then apply the same format to any form of cardio activity – swimming, cycling, rowing etc. Boxing or spin classes are great forms of interval training and get great results.

As always, though, make sure you are thoroughly warmed up, as you don't want any strains and you'll want to build your intensity as you gain fitness. Give it a go – you will not only get amazing results, but you'll also save time.

## MAXIMISE YOUR RESISTANCE TRAINING

The rule is that the more muscle you have, the faster you will burn calories when you exercise. So, make sure you're doing some

resistance training most days. And you don't have to spend hours pumping weights. You should be able to get everything you need from a full-on 10-20min session.

Resistance training is classed as any exercise where you need to apply force to move a weight, and that includes your own bodyweight. If you are doing weights, you can cut down your workout time down by half by doing a two-station circuit. When you have finished one exercise to work one area of the body, go to another machine and work out another area of your body, then go back to the first. Repeat this at least 3 times for each exercise, for at least 20 reps, to get maximum results. It's best to do this in off-peak times in your gym, in case someone nicks one of your machines while you're on the other one.

Doing weights in the gym is not the only form of resistance training, though – especially if you feel uncomfortable in the gym environment. You might like to try Pilates, which uses your own weight – or traditional spring-resisted Pilates machines in a studio – to tone and strengthen your body, and create long, lean, defined muscles, in record time. So, try this targeted 5min Pilates workout at home, and start getting firm and fit, fast!

## 100S

– Flatten your stomach and transform your figure

Lie on your back, holding your bent knees. Curl your ribs to your hips by lifting

your head and shoulders. Bring your hands down by your hips and simultaneously extend your legs straight up towards the ceiling. Draw your tummy button in towards

your spine to flatten your abdominals. Hold this position for 10 breaths – breathe in for the count of five and breathe out for the count of five, to get to 100.



### Double Leg Lift



Sculpt your sides. Lie on your side, with your underneath arm extended long and your head relaxed onto it. Your hips should be stacked vertically, one on top of the other, with your top hand resting lightly on

the floor in front of you for balance. Keeping your legs together, exhale and raise them up, squeezing through the waist. Inhale and slowly relax back down. Repeat 20 times, with a 20sec hold at the end.

### Hinge

– This will strengthen and sculpt the thighs  
Kneel on the mat, with your arms stretched out in front of you at shoulder

height. Lean your whole body backwards in one line, like a falling tree, hinging from the knees. Hold for a second and then return to vertical. Repeat 20 times.



### Horse Kick

– Tones the buttocks and back of the legs  
Kneel on all fours, with your hands underneath your shoulders. Extend one leg out behind you, keeping it straight. Exhale and slowly raise the leg up to horizontal, squeezing the

buttock and without dipping through the back. Inhale and lower the leg slightly. Repeat 50 times each side. Try adding an ankle weight to up the resistance and you might like to do this in front of a mirror to check technique. Remember to



### Kneeling Side-kick

– Tones the buttocks and outer thighs  
Kneel on one knee, with the other leg held out straight and lifted to hip height. Place one hand on your hip and the other on the mat, about 60cm from your knee, so that your

hand, head, hip and lifted leg are all in one straight line. Pulse the raised leg up and down, squeezing your buttock muscles. Repeat 50 times, with a 10 second hold at the end, then change sides.



Studio Pilates International® is offering Fitness Life readers an exclusive deal on its Personal Pilates Studio™ home workout system. Go online to [www.studiopilates.com](http://www.studiopilates.com) and simply enter the code word 'fitlife'. You'll receive 15 percent off the \$199 purchase price of this dual spring home workout device, which comes with a carry bag and instructional workout DVD.