

Lose More

Rather than pounding away on a treadmill or sweating to an aerobics tape, recent research shows there is a better, easier way to drop unwanted pounds and get fit fast. It's called slow-motion fitness. The regime requires you to do simple strength-training moves at an extremely slow pace, yet it brings rapid results in as little as 15 minutes, two days a week.

How is that possible, you ask? "By performing slow and controlled moves that thoroughly exhaust your muscles, you gain muscle which helps you lose body fat," says Josh Golder, a licensed SuperSlow instructor and president of Cutting Edge Fitness in Newton, Massachusetts. Practicing such a high-intensity workout requires a longer recovery period for the muscles, from 3 to 7 days. (Typical strength programs recommend as little as one day of rest.)

Golder created this timesaving sequence that you can follow at home. Start by doing it twice a week. After five weeks, drop your workouts down to just once a week. You'll never say you don't have the time to exercise again!

The Slow-Motion Secrets

The single most important thing to remember when doing slow-motion exercise is that *it's about working your muscles, not about momentum.* "No matter what, you want to avoid jerking or yanking the weight," says Fredrick Hahn, owner of the Serious Strength Studio (www.seriousstrength.com) in New York and co-author of *The Slow Burn Fitness Revolution* (Broadway Books). "It should take three seconds to move the first inch and one second for each additional inch of movement." Here are more guidelines from Hahn:

- Move the weight or your body as slowly as you possibly can—as if you were picking up an infant. Or slowly count to 10 in each direction.
- Go for quality over quantity. Do only as many reps as you can in proper form.
- Perform only one set of each exercise. If you feel you can do more, you're moving too fast or the weight/resistance is too light.
- Use appropriate weights for your fitness level. If your muscles aren't tired after one set, you need to increase the weight and/or the resistance.
- Don't hold your breath. You need oxygen to fuel your muscles.

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Push Ups

What you need: A pillow

What it works: Your triceps and chest

A. Balance on your hands and knees, arms straight. Your body should form a straight line from knees to shoulders. Place the pillow on the floor just above your hands.

B. As slowly as you can, bend your elbows and lower your torso down until you rest on the pillow. Over time, move down at a slower and slower rate.

Weight in Less Time

Wall Slide

What you need: 2 pillows

What it works: Your quadriceps

Lean against a wall with feet a comfortable distance from wall, shoulder width apart. Hold one pillow and place another on the floor beneath you. Slide upper body down the wall until your knees are bent at a 90-degree angle, directly over your ankles. Next, prop the pillow

behind your shoulders. Press your lower back against the wall and your heels down through the floor. Hold as long as possible. As you fatigue, your back may move away from the wall, causing the pillow to move or fall. This is a sign that you are done. Slowly sink down the wall to the pillow below you. To progress, increase your time or hold a pair of weights in your hands.



Shoulder Press

What you need: Chair, weights, pillow

What it works: Your shoulders and triceps

A. Sit in a chair, placing a pillow behind the shoulders. Press your lower back against the chair. Elbows are bent, with the weights at shoulder level and palms facing each other.

B. As slowly as possible, extend your arms forward and up. Lower slowly to start. Once you can do 8, increase the weight.

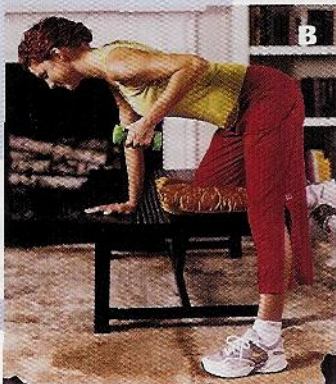
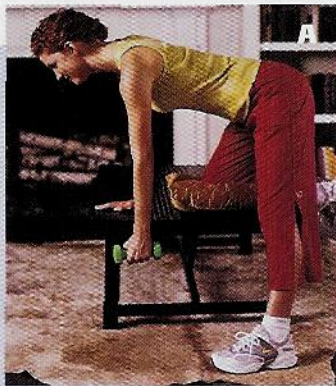
Slow Row

What you need: Bench or coffee table, pillow, weight

What it works: Your lats (the sides of your back)

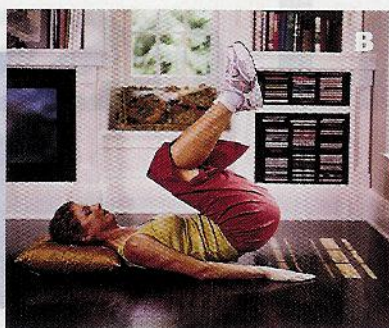
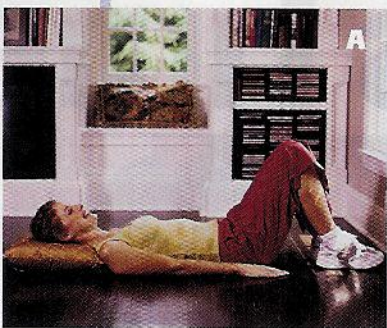
A. Rest your right knee on a pillow placed on the table. Your left leg is straight. Hinge forward at the hips, placing your right hand on the table, and hold a weight in your left hand. Extend the left arm toward the floor. Your back and neck should be straight and parallel to the floor. Look down, not straight ahead.

B. Slowly bend your left arm and bring the weight toward your armpit. Lower down slowly. Do as many as you can, then switch sides. Once you can do 8 on each side, increase the weight.



Three Easy Ways to Make a Big Difference

- **Need another reason to take it slow?** When attempting to lose weight, many folks do too much too soon. Embarking on an exercise plan and a strict diet all at once can be overwhelming and often leads to failure. Instead, try to keep it fun, advises Golde. He suggests staying active between workouts with pursuits you enjoy, such as gardening or stepping out for a night of dancing.
- **Keep on trekking.** Since this workout takes only 10 minutes, you can easily weave it into an existing walking routine. On the days you perform the moves, head out for your walk after you strength train. "The cardio gets your blood flowing and helps repair the muscles that were just stressed," says Steve Zim, co-author of *Hot Point Fitness* (Perseus) and a personal trainer in Culver City, California.
- **Don't deprive yourself, energize yourself!** Allow yourself to eat more often, but take care not to use food as a reward for exercising. Aim to consume less sugar and fewer processed foods. As with your workouts, go slowly with any changes. For example, start by putting one less teaspoon of sugar in your coffee, trade in your cola for a seltzer with juice. Then add one more piece of fruit to your daily diet, have half a bagel instead of a whole one.



Reverse Ab Crunch

What you need: One pillow

What it works: Your abs

A. Lie on your back with your knees bent, feet on the floor, your arms on the floor alongside you and your head resting on a pillow. Feel your lower back pressing down into the floor.

B. As slowly as possible, pull your knees up close to your chest. Then slowly return to start. Complete as many reps as you can with your lower back flat against the floor. If you can do more than 8 you are moving too quickly.

Heel Lifts

What you need: A step and weights

What it works: Your calves and ankles

A. Stand with the balls of your feet on a step and your heels over the edge. Hold on to a railing with one hand and hold a weight in the other. To warm up, lift up and down on tiptoes, at regular pace, 3 times. Then, as slowly as you can, lift up on tiptoes.

B. Lower the heels at a super-slow pace until they are extended far below the step. Lift up on to the balls of your feet and repeat.



Biceps Drops

What you need: A flat-backed chair, a pillow, weights.

What it works: Your biceps

A. Sitting upright on the chair, hunch your shoulders slightly forward. Balance a pillow behind your shoulders. Holding a weight in each hand, bend your elbows to bring weights in front of your shoulders.

B. As slowly as you can, un hinge your elbows and straighten your arms, keeping hands and elbows close to your sides. Repeat, doing as many slow reps as you can. If you start to arch your back and the pillow moves, that means you're fatigued so you're finished. Once you can do 8 drops, increase the weight.

The Benefits of Taking It Slow

● **An exercise in efficiency.** You fatigue your muscles faster by doing slower movements (and fewer reps). That means less time spent working out.

● **Faster fat-burning.** Muscle burns more calories than fat and revs up your metabolism. Any strength-training regime will help improve your muscle-to-fat ratio.

● **Strength gains.** Deeply fatiguing your muscles sparks the growth mechanism, which causes them to repair and grow stronger in the process.

● **A happy heart.** A study

published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* last year found that heart health improves from weight training 30 minutes or more a week.

● **Better bone density.** Strength-training activities such as our workout are important for keeping your bones strong and preventing fractures.

● **A safer workout.** Moving slowly forces you to use your muscles, not momentum, reducing your risk of injury.

● **Flexibility.** You're slowly moving your joints through their entire range of motion.

Door Squat

What you need: Door frame

What it works: Your butt
Stand in a doorway with feet shoulder width apart. Face and grasp the door frame. Slowly bend your knees as you inch your hands down the door frame until your knees are at a 90-degree angle (or as low as you can). Pause for 2 to 3 seconds, then slowly return to standing position. Work up to 8 squats.



For shopping details, see Buyer's Guide, page 128.