Trainer’s Bench

Home Improvement

December 1, 2006 By Jeffrey Gross

Between aging and HIV med side effects, I must exercise to control my blood pressure and cholesterol. But it’ll soon be too cold outside for my speed-walking routine, and I can’t get to the gym very often. How can I keep fit without leaving my apartment?

—The Insider

Dear Insider,
Many positive people need regular workouts to keep their hearts (and minds) healthy, and those needs can be met at home—or even in prison. Get your doc’s approval before starting any exercise program, then try these in-house (or in-cell) routines.

CARDIOVASCULAR WORKOUTS

No. 1 The forward march:
Put on some upbeat music. Start by marching slowly in place for five minutes to warm up and get your blood flowing. March more quickly for another ten minutes, then jog in place for ten more. Next, slow the pace to that of the first march for another five minutes to return your heart rate to normal. That’s 30 minutes of cardiovascular work; you can work your way up to longer and faster sets.

No. 2 Step lively:
If your home has stairs, hike up and down- for 20 to 30 minutes (music can help keep you on pace and motivated). Adjust your speed from slow to faster and back, as described in routine No. 1.

Wrap up each of these workouts with about five more minutes of gentle stretching to prevent muscle pain.

STRENGTH TRAINING
There’s no reason you can’t pump up at home too.

For abs:
Lie on a carpet with your legs extended and toes pointed forward. Lift shoulders and toes slightly.

Scissor legs up and down, never allowing your feet or shoulders to quite touch the floor.

For legs:
Do standing lunges, holding three to five pound dumbbells. Or hoist them on your shoulders to do squats—the best exercise for building both cardiovascular health and strength. Now, try my favorite: Vacuum (or mop), taking long strides and bending from the knees as you sweep or swab. You'll clean up on muscle strength alone.

For chest and arms:
Do push-ups. With dumbbells, do bicep curls, shoulder presses and lateral raises.

Combine these moves for a complete workout, burning calories and building strength. When you're done, you can hit your very own shower.

Jeffrey Gross is a certified fitness trainer based in Chicago. Got a question for our trainer? E-mail it to trainer@poz.com.

DUMBELLS FOR DUMMIES
Buying a set of light dumbbells for home use can pound your budget. So make your own:

1. **Find** two sturdy plastic cups—8, 12 or 16 ounces—with tight-fitting lids.If you can find larger cups with handles (you must be able to hoist them), you can produce a heavier pair too.
2. **Fill** with sand or sugar. An 8-ounce cup filled with sand will weigh about a pound; with sugar, just shy of a pound. For a 16-ounce cup, those weights rise to 2 pounds for sand and just under 2 pounds for sugar. (You can get sand from gardening and hardware stores.)
3. **Check** that you can grip the cups in each hand comfortably while working out.
4. **Lift** at a rate and a weight that suits you and your doc.
5. **Smile** and admire your work.

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