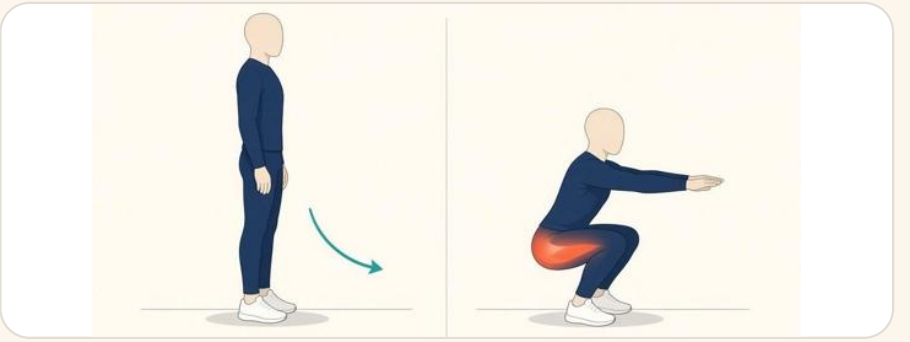
Free guide

The Illustrated Exercise Guide: At Home and in the Gym

38 illustrated exercises, with sets, common mistakes and ready-made weekly schedules

38	150 minutes	2 to 3
illustrated exercises	cardio a week	resistance sessions



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About this guide

A practical illustrated guide to resistance training. Its main part is bodyweight exercises with no gym and no equipment, followed by parts on gym machines, dumbbells and cables. It complements the nutrition guide "Less Sugar, Less Fat".

Disclaimer

This is a general guide for education only. The author does not give any personal medical, nutrition or training advice beyond the content of this guide. Anyone who wants a plan designed for their own situation should see a clinical dietitian and a qualified fitness trainer, and should see their doctor about any health condition.

Stop immediately if you have:

Chest pain, unusual shortness of breath, dizziness or fainting, sharp joint pain, or pain or swelling in the leg.

Contents

How to use this guide 5
Warm-up and progression 6
Safety 7

Part A: Bodyweight exercises, no gym 9

1. Bodyweight squat 10
2. Chair sit-to-stand 11
3. Reverse lunge 12
4. Step-up 13
5. Wall sit 14
6. Glute bridge 15
7. Hip hinge (good morning) 16
8. Calf raise 17
9. Wall push-up 18
10. Push-up 19
11. Chair dip 20
12. Prone Y-raise 21
13. Plank and side plank 22
14. Dead bug 23
15. Bird dog 24
16. Marching on the spot with high knees 25

Part B: Gym machines 26

17. Leg press machine 27
18. Leg extension machine 28
19. Seated leg curl machine 29
20. Machine chest press 30
21. Machine shoulder press 31
22. Lat pulldown machine 32

23. Seated row machine 33

Part C: Dumbbells 34

24. Goblet squat 35
25. Dumbbell Romanian deadlift 36
26. One-arm dumbbell row 37
27. Dumbbell bench press 38
28. Seated dumbbell shoulder press 39
29. Lateral raise 40
30. Dumbbell biceps curl 41
31. Overhead triceps extension 42

Part D: Cables 43

32. Seated cable row 44
33. Cable face pull 45
34. Cable triceps pushdown 46
35. Cable chest fly 47
36. Pallof press (anti-rotation) 48
37. Cable pull-through 49
38. Cable biceps curl 50

Ready-made weekly schedules 51

Schedule 1: Home beginner (2 resistance days) 52
Schedule 2: Home intermediate (3 full-body days) 53
Schedule 3: Gym beginner (machines, 3 days) 54
Schedule 4: Gym intermediate (4 upper/lower days) 55
Schedule 5: A 20-minute session for busy days 56
Progress log and FAQ 56
References 58

1 How to use this guide

This guide explains 38 exercises with drawings, in four parts: **bodyweight with no gym (the main part)**, then gym machines, then dumbbells, then cables. At the end there are ready-made weekly schedules for home and for the gym.

Term	Meaning
Repetition (rep)	Doing the movement once, completely.
Set	A number of repetitions in a row, e.g. 3 × 12 = three sets of 12 repetitions each.
Rest	The time between sets.
The right effort	Finish the set while you could still do 2 to 3 more repetitions with good form.

In every drawing: the start position is on the left, the end position is on the right, the arrow shows the direction of movement, and the working muscles are coloured.

The weekly formula

- **150 minutes of cardio** at moderate intensity (you can talk in short sentences).
- **Resistance training 2 to 3 times**, covering the whole body.
- **No more than two days in a row without exercise**; the effect of a session on insulin sensitivity lasts about 24 to 48 hours.

2 Warm-up and progression

Warm-up (5 to 8 minutes)

- Marching on the spot or high knees for 2 to 3 minutes.
- Shoulder and arm circles, and hip movements.
- A light set of the first exercise (e.g. 10 squats to a chair).

Progression: the "range, then increase" rule

1. Choose a range, e.g. 8 to 12 repetitions.
2. When you reach the top of the range (12) in all sets with good form, make the movement harder: the next weight, the harder version, or a slower descent.
3. Go back to the bottom of the range (8) and build up again.

- **Deload week:** every 6 to 8 weeks, one week with half the sets.
- **After a break of two weeks or more:** come back at about half the volume and lighter, then progress.
- **Breathing:** breathe out with the effort and do not hold your breath.

3 Safety first

Stop immediately if you have:

Chest pain, unusual shortness of breath, dizziness or fainting, sharp joint pain, or pain or swelling in the leg.

Condition	Modification
Knee pain	A shorter range in squats and lunges, and sit-to-stand from a higher chair.
Shoulder pain	Avoid overhead movements, and keep lateral raises below shoulder level.
Lower back pain	Start with the bridge, bird dog and dead bug, and postpone hinges and the Romanian deadlift.
Hernia, or after childbirth with separated abdominal muscles	Avoid the plank and pressure on the abdomen until your doctor or therapist allows it.
Heart disease or uncontrolled blood pressure	Do not start before your doctor allows it.
Older adults or poor balance	Do the movements beside a wall or holding the back of a stable chair.

Exercise, fasting and diabetes

- It is best to exercise inside the eating window (if you combine intermittent fasting), 1 to 2 hours after a meal, followed by a meal with protein.
- Anyone taking insulin or sulfonylurea medicines: do not exercise while fasting unless your doctor allows it, and carry something sweet with you.

For women during fertility treatment or pregnancy

- **During ovarian stimulation and after egg collection until the next period:** light walking only, with no weights, no strain on the abdomen and no twisting of the trunk.
- **After egg collection, go to the emergency department immediately if you have:** severe pain, bloating with shortness of breath or passing little urine, or sudden one-sided pain with nausea or vomiting.
- **Pregnancy:** ask your doctor before starting. If you have bleeding, leaking fluid, contractions, severe pain or dizziness: stop and go to the emergency department.

Part A: Bodyweight exercises, no gym

The main part: enough to start and keep going, at home and with no equipment

- 1. Bodyweight squat
- 2. Chair sit-to-stand
- 3. Reverse lunge
- 4. Step-up
- 5. Wall sit
- 6. Glute bridge
- 7. Hip hinge (good morning)
- 8. Calf raise
- 9. Wall push-up
- 10. Push-up
- 11. Chair dip
- 12. Prone Y-raise
- 13. Plank and side plank
- 14. Dead bug
- 15. Bird dog
- 16. Marching on the spot with high knees

1 Bodyweight squat

Muscles: Front thigh, glutes · **Equipment:** None



Start → End

2 × 10	3 × 12 to 15	60 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, toes turned out slightly.
2. Push your hips back and bend your knees as if sitting on a chair, reaching your arms forward for balance.
3. Go down until your thigh is parallel to the floor, or as close as you can without pain.
4. Push the floor away with your whole foot and return to standing, breathing out on the way up.

Common mistakes

✗ Knees caving inward.

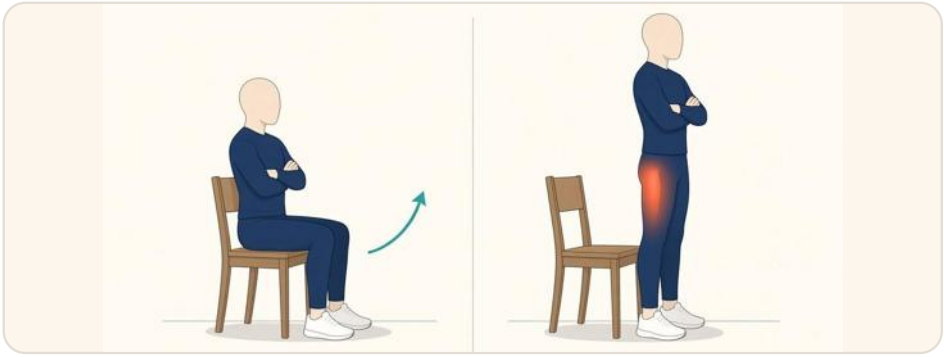
✗ Heels lifting off the floor.

✗ Leaning the back far forward.

Easier: Squat to a chair (the next movement). **Harder:** Slow the descent to 3 seconds, or pause 2 seconds at the bottom.

2 Chair sit-to-stand

Muscles: Front thigh, glutes · **Equipment:** Stable chair



Start → End

2 × 8	3 × 12 to 15	60 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Sit on the edge of a stable chair placed against the wall, feet on the floor.
2. Cross your arms over your chest and lean your trunk slightly forward.
3. Stand up fully by pushing the floor with your feet, without using your hands.
4. Lower slowly until you lightly touch the chair, then repeat.

Common mistakes

✗ Dropping heavily onto the chair.

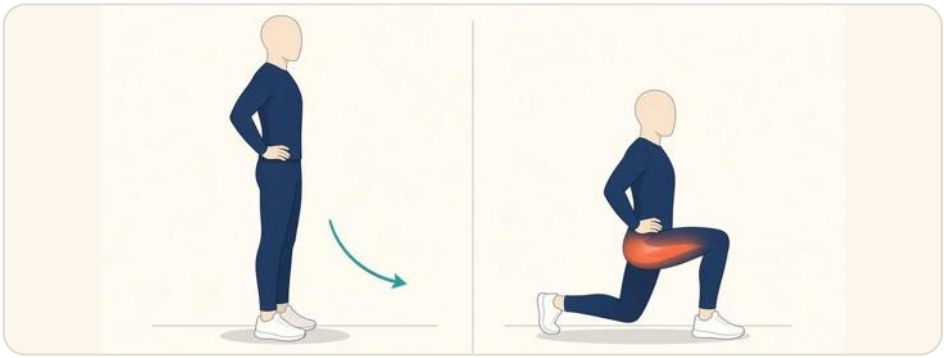
✗ Using your hands or swinging.

✗ Knees drawing together as you stand.

Easier: A higher chair, or help a little with your hands. **Harder:** Only touch the chair without sitting on it.

3 Reverse lunge

Muscles: Front thigh, glutes, balance · **Equipment:** None (a wall for balance)



Start → End

2 × 8 each leg	3 × 10 to 12 each leg	60 to 90 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Stand tall with hands on your waist.
2. Take a long step backward with one foot.
3. Lower until the back knee nears the floor, with the front knee over the ankle.
4. Push through the front foot to return, then switch legs.

Common mistakes

✗ A short step that pushes the front knee far forward.

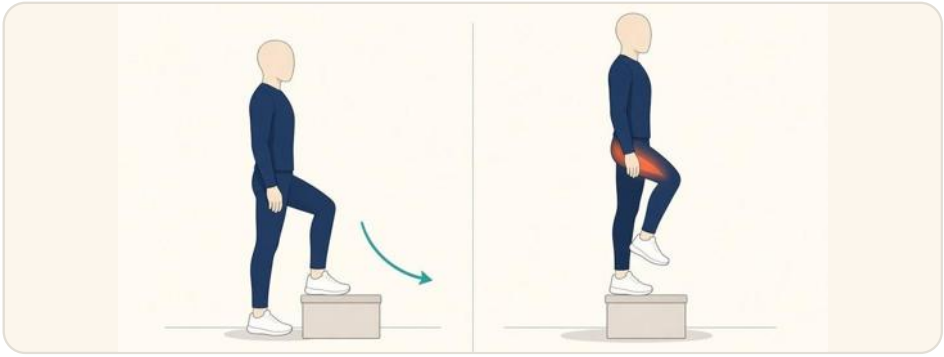
✗ Leaning the trunk forward or to the side.

✗ Banging the back knee on the floor.

Easier: Hold a wall or the back of a chair, and go halfway down. **Harder:** Slow the descent, or put the front foot on a low step.

4 Step-up

Muscles: Front thigh, glutes · **Equipment:** A stable stair step



Start → End

2 × 8 each leg	3 × 12 each leg	60 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Place your whole foot on a stable stair step (about 15 to 20 cm).
2. Push through the leg on the step until you stand straight on top of it.
3. Lower slowly with the other leg.
4. Finish your repetitions, then switch.

Common mistakes

✗ Pushing off with the leg on the floor instead of the working leg.
✗ Putting only half the foot on the step.
✗ Coming down quickly.

Easier: A lower step while holding the handrail. **Harder:** A slightly higher step, or a slow 3-second descent.

5 Wall sit

Muscles: Front thigh · **Equipment:** A wall



Start → End

2 × 20 s	3 × 30 to 45 s	60 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Rest your back against the wall with your feet about half a metre in front.
2. Slide your back down the wall until your knees are near a right angle.
3. Knees over ankles, back flat against the wall.
4. Hold, breathing normally.

Common mistakes

✗ Holding your breath.

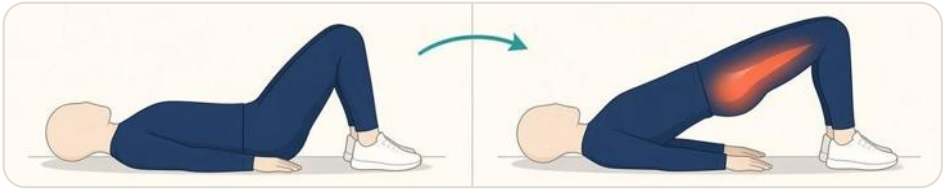
✗ Knees in front of the toes.

✗ Going deeper than is comfortable, with knee pain.

Easier: Go less deep (a wider angle) for a shorter time. **Harder:** Hold longer, or lift one heel slightly.

6 Glute bridge

Muscles: Glutes, back of thigh · **Equipment:** None (a mat)



Start → End

2 × 12	3 × 15 to 20	45 to 60 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Lie on your back, knees bent and feet on the floor.
2. Brace your stomach slightly and press through your heels.
3. Lift your hips until shoulders, hips and knees form one straight line.
4. Hold for a second and squeeze your glutes, then lower slowly.

Common mistakes

✗ Arching the lower back instead of lifting the hips with the glutes.

✗ Feet too far from the hips.

✗ Going fast with no pause at the top.

Easier: A shorter range. **Harder:** Single-leg bridge, or a 3-second pause at the top.

7 Hip hinge (good morning)

Muscles: Back of thigh, glutes, lower back · **Equipment:** None



Start → End

2 × 10	3 × 12 to 15	60 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Stand with feet hip-width apart, hands on your chest.
2. Push your hips back with a slight bend in the knees.
3. Tip your trunk forward with a straight back until you feel a stretch behind the thigh.
4. Return to standing by driving your hips forward.

Common mistakes

✗ Rounding the back or the shoulders.

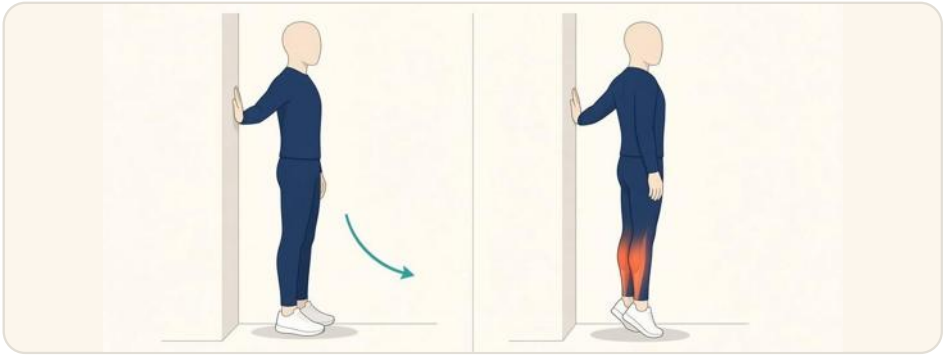
✗ Bending the knees too much so it turns into a squat.

✗ Lifting the head up sharply.

Easier: Practise with your back to a wall: touch the wall with your bottom.
Harder: On one leg while holding a wall.

8 Calf raise

Muscles: Calf muscle · **Equipment:** A wall for balance



Start → End

2 × 15	3 × 20	45 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Stand beside a wall with a hand on it for balance.
2. Rise onto your toes to the highest point.
3. Hold for a second.
4. Lower slowly until your heel touches the floor.

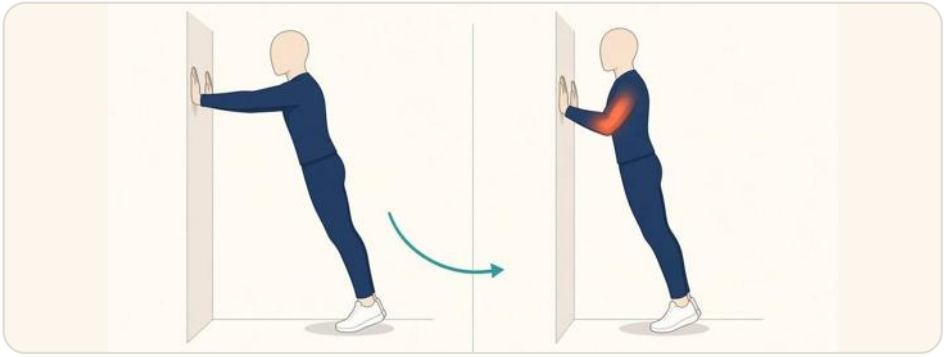
Common mistakes

- ✗ Fast, bouncing movement.
- ✗ The ankle rolling outward.
- ✗ A very short range.

Easier: Both legs together with a shorter range. **Harder:** On one leg, or on the edge of a step.

9 Wall push-up

Muscles: Chest, front shoulder, triceps · **Equipment:** A wall



Start → End

2 × 10	3 × 15	45 to 60 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Stand an arm's length from the wall, hands on the wall at shoulder height.
2. Body straight from head to heels.
3. Bend your elbows and bring your chest toward the wall.
4. Push the wall away and return.

Common mistakes

✗ The hips sagging forward or sticking back.

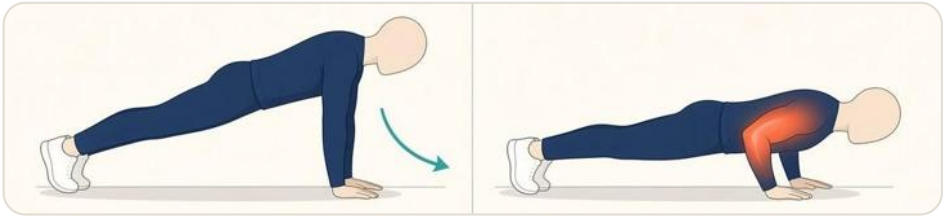
✗ Flaring the elbows out to the sides at 90 degrees.

✗ Shrugging the shoulders toward the ears.

Easier: Stand closer to the wall. **Harder:** Stand further away, then progress to a stable table, then the floor.

10 Push-up

Muscles: Chest, front shoulder, triceps, abdomen · **Equipment:** None



Start → End

2 × 5 to 8 (on the knees if needed)	3 × 8 to 15	60 to 90 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Place your hands slightly wider than your shoulders, body straight like a plank.
2. Lower your chest toward the floor with elbows at about 45 degrees from the body.
3. Go down until your chest is close to the floor.
4. Push the floor away and return, keeping your body straight.

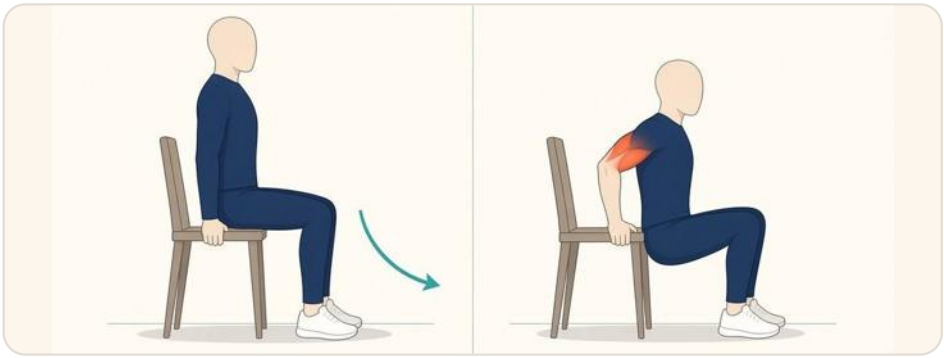
Common mistakes

- ✗ The hips sagging or piking up.
- ✗ The head drooping.
- ✗ A very short range.

Easier: On your knees, or hands on a stable table or sofa. **Harder:** Slow the descent to 3 seconds, or put your feet on a step.

11 Chair dip

Muscles: Triceps, front shoulder · **Equipment:** A stable chair against the wall



Start → End

2 × 6 to 8	3 × 10 to 12	60 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Sit on the edge of a stable chair against the wall, hands on the edge beside your hips.
2. Slide forward until your hips are in front of the chair, knees bent.
3. Lower by bending your elbows backward to about 90 degrees.
4. Push back up.

Common mistakes

✗ Going deeper than 90 degrees with shoulder pain.

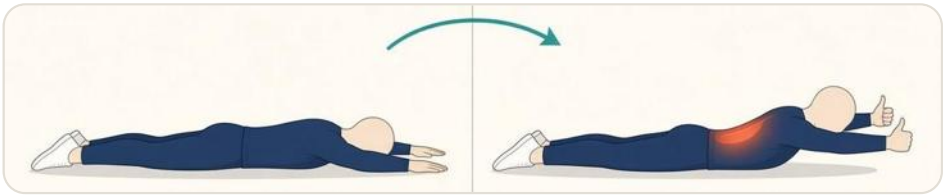
✗ Flaring the elbows out to the sides.

✗ Moving the hips too far from the chair.

Easier: Bring your feet closer and help with your legs. **Harder:** Stretch your legs further forward.

12 Prone Y-raise

Muscles: Upper back, between the shoulder blades, lower back · **Equipment:** A mat



Start → End

2 × 10	3 × 12 to 15	45 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Lie on your stomach with arms stretched in front of you in a Y shape.
2. Thumbs up, eyes on the floor.
3. Lift your arms and chest slightly off the floor by squeezing your shoulder blades together.
4. Hold 2 seconds, then lower slowly.

Common mistakes

✗ Lifting the head and looking forward.

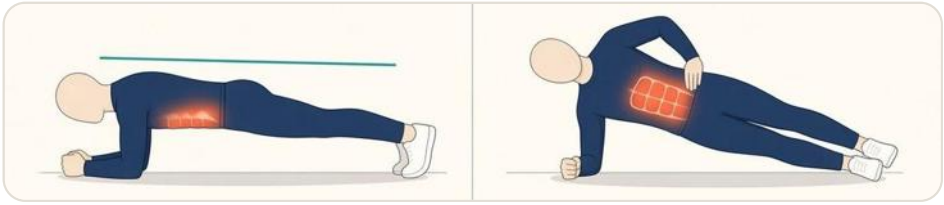
✗ Rising high by arching the lower back.

✗ Moving fast.

Easier: One arm at a time. **Harder:** Hold 3 to 5 seconds at the top.

13 Plank and side plank

Muscles: Abdominal and core muscles · **Equipment:** A mat



Start → End

2 × 20 s each type	3 × 30 to 45 s	45 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Plank: elbows under shoulders, body in a straight line from head to heels.
2. Brace your stomach and glutes, and breathe calmly.
3. Side plank: on one forearm with the elbow under the shoulder, feet stacked.
4. Lift your hips until your body is straight, then switch sides.

Common mistakes

- ✗ The hips sagging or piking up.
- ✗ Holding your breath.
- ✗ Holding for minutes with poor form.

Easier: On your knees instead of your feet. **Harder:** Hold longer, or lift one leg slightly.

14 Dead bug

Muscles: Deep abdominal muscles · **Equipment:** A mat



Start → End

2 × 6 each side	3 × 8 to 10 each side	45 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Lie on your back, arms up, hips and knees at right angles.
2. Press your lower back into the floor.
3. Slowly reach one arm back and the opposite leg forward without your back lifting.
4. Return and switch sides.

Common mistakes

✗ The lower back lifting off the floor.

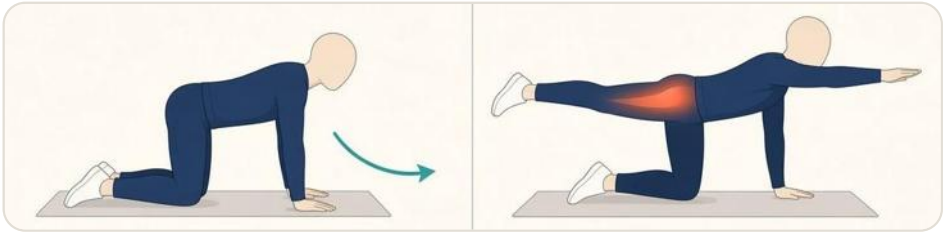
✗ Speed.

✗ Holding your breath.

Easier: Move only the leg, or only the arm. **Harder:** Go slower, and keep the extended leg close to the floor.

15 Bird dog

Muscles: Lower back, glutes, abdomen · **Equipment:** A mat



Start → End

2 × 6 each side	3 × 10 each side	45 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Kneel on hands and knees, hands under shoulders and knees under hips.
2. Back flat like a table.
3. Reach one arm forward and the opposite leg back until they are level with your body.
4. Hold 2 seconds, return, and switch.

Common mistakes

✗ The hips tilting or rotating.

✗ Lifting the leg higher than the back.

✗ Arching the lower back.

Easier: Leg only or arm only. **Harder:** Hold 5 seconds, or touch elbow to knee under the body.

16 Marching on the spot with high knees

Muscles: Cardio, thigh, abdomen · **Equipment:** None



Start → End

3 × 1 min	5 to 10 min continuous	30 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Stand tall and swing your arms as when walking.
2. Lift one knee to about hip height.
3. Alternate legs at a steady rhythm.
4. For cardio: keep going at a pace where talking in short sentences is possible.

Common mistakes

✗ Leaning backward.

✗ Landing hard on the heels.

✗ Holding your breath.

Easier: Lift the knees less, holding a chair. **Harder:** Faster, or intervals of 30 s fast and 30 s easy.

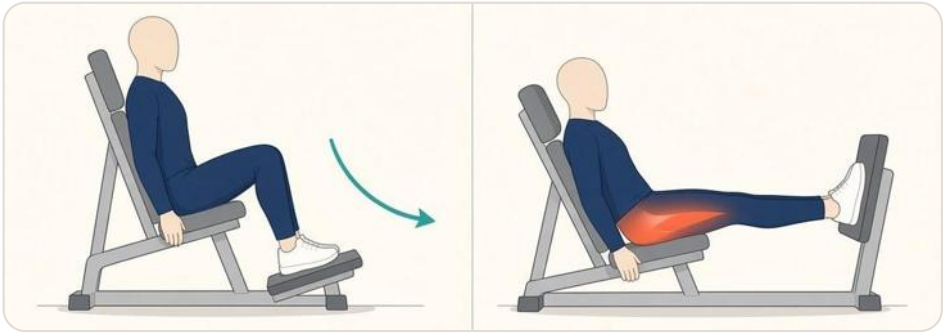
Part B: Gym machines

Machines with a fixed path, suitable for gym beginners

- 17. Leg press machine
- 18. Leg extension machine
- 19. Seated leg curl machine
- 20. Machine chest press
- 21. Machine shoulder press
- 22. Lat pulldown machine
- 23. Seated row machine

17 Leg press machine

Muscles: Front thigh, glutes · **Equipment:** Machine



Start → End

2 × 10 to 12	3 × 8 to 12	90 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Sit with your back against the pad, feet on the platform shoulder-width apart.
2. Release the safety lock.
3. Lower until your knees are near a right angle without your hips lifting.
4. Push until your legs are almost straight without locking the knees.

Common mistakes

✗ Locking the knees at the top.

✗ The hips lifting off the seat at the bottom.

✗ Knees caving inward.

Easier: Lighter weight and a shorter range. **Harder:** Increase the weight gradually, or slow the descent.

18 Leg extension machine

Muscles: Front thigh · **Equipment:** Machine



Start → End

2 × 12	3 × 12 to 15	60 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Adjust the back pad so your knee lines up with the machine's pivot, with the roller pad above the ankle.
2. Hold the side handles.
3. Straighten your knees until they are almost straight.
4. Lower slowly.

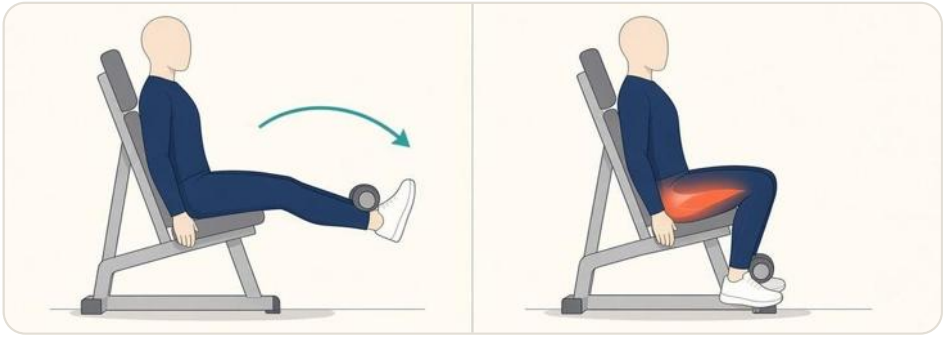
Common mistakes

- ✗ Swinging and using momentum.
- ✗ Very heavy weight with knee pain.
- ✗ The hips lifting off the seat.

Easier: Lighter weight. **Harder:** Pause 2 seconds at the top.

19 Seated leg curl machine

Muscles: Back of thigh · **Equipment:** Machine



Start → End

2 × 12	3 × 10 to 15	60 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Sit with your knee on the machine's pivot and the pad behind your ankle.
2. Lock the thigh pad over your thighs.
3. Pull your heels down and back.
4. Return slowly.

Common mistakes

✗ Returning quickly.
✗ Lifting the hips.
✗ A short range.

Easier: Lighter weight. **Harder:** Slow the return to 3 seconds.

20 Machine chest press

Muscles: Chest, front shoulder, triceps · **Equipment:** Machine



Start → End

2 × 10 to 12	3 × 8 to 12	90 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Adjust the seat so the handles are at mid-chest height.
2. Back against the pad, shoulders back and down.
3. Push forward until your arms are almost straight.
4. Return slowly until you feel a light stretch in the chest.

Common mistakes

✗ Shrugging the shoulders toward the ears.

✗ The back coming off the pad.

✗ Locking the elbows hard.

Easier: Lighter weight. **Harder:** Increase the weight gradually.

21 Machine shoulder press

Muscles: Shoulders, triceps · **Equipment:** Machine



Start → End

2 × 10	3 × 8 to 12	90 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Adjust the seat so the handles are slightly above shoulder level.
2. Back against the pad.
3. Push up until your arms are almost straight.
4. Lower slowly to shoulder level.

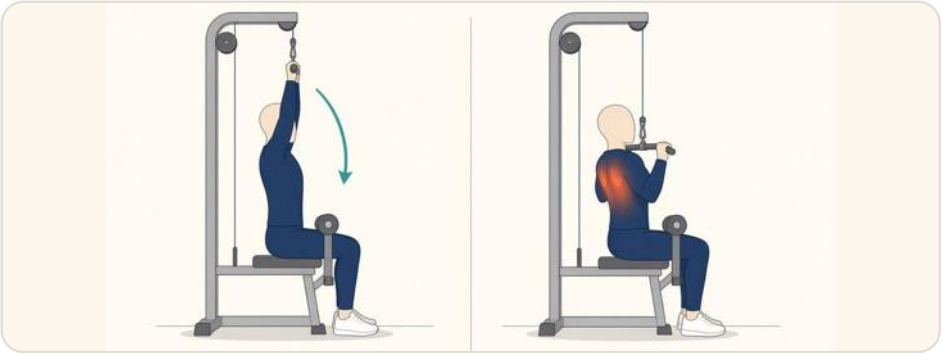
Common mistakes

✗ Arching the lower back.
✗ Going below the shoulders with pain.
✗ Locking the elbows.

Easier: Lighter weight and a shorter range. **Harder:** Increase the weight gradually.

22 Lat pulldown machine

Muscles: Lats (wide back muscles), biceps · **Equipment:** Machine



Start → End

2 × 10 to 12	3 × 8 to 12	90 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Lock your thighs under the pad and grip the bar wider than your shoulders.
2. Lean back slightly with your chest up.
3. Pull the bar **in front of your face** to your upper chest, elbows down.
4. Return slowly until your arms are straight.

Common mistakes

✗ Pulling behind the neck.

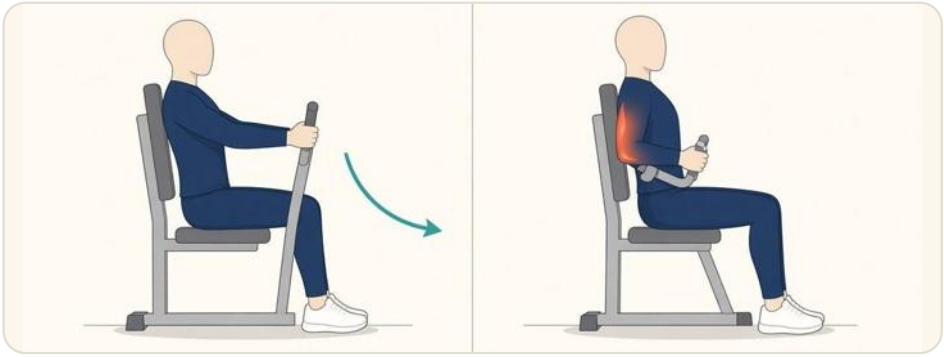
✗ Leaning far back and using your body.

✗ Letting the bar fly up quickly.

Easier: Lighter weight. **Harder:** Pause for a second at the chest.

23 Seated row machine

Muscles: Mid back, biceps · **Equipment:** Machine



Start → End

2 × 10 to 12	3 × 10 to 12	90 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Adjust the seat so the handles are at lower-chest height, chest on the pad.
2. Grip the handles with arms extended.
3. Pull your elbows back close to your body and squeeze your shoulder blades.
4. Return slowly.

Common mistakes

✗ Shrugging the shoulders toward the ears.

✗ Leaving the pad and leaning back.

✗ Pulling with the arms only without squeezing the shoulder blades.

Easier: Lighter weight. **Harder:** Pause 2 seconds at the back.

Part C: Dumbbells

Free weights that need more control

- 24. Goblet squat
- 25. Dumbbell Romanian deadlift
- 26. One-arm dumbbell row
- 27. Dumbbell bench press
- 28. Seated dumbbell shoulder press
- 29. Lateral raise
- 30. Dumbbell biceps curl
- 31. Overhead triceps extension

24 Goblet squat

Muscles: Front thigh, glutes, abdomen · **Equipment:** One dumbbell



Start → End

2 × 10	3 × 8 to 12	90 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Hold a dumbbell vertically in front of your chest with both hands.
2. Feet shoulder-width apart.
3. Lower your hips back and down with your chest up.
4. Push the floor away and return.

Common mistakes

- ✗ Letting the dumbbell drift away from the chest.
- ✗ Rounding the back.
- ✗ Knees caving inward.

Easier: A lighter dumbbell, or squat to a chair. **Harder:** A heavier dumbbell, or a slow descent.

25 Dumbbell Romanian deadlift

Muscles: Back of thigh, glutes, lower back · **Equipment:** Two dumbbells



Start → End

2 × 10	3 × 8 to 12	90 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Stand with a dumbbell in each hand in front of your thighs.
2. Push your hips back with a slight bend in the knees.
3. Lower the dumbbells close to your legs to just below the knee, back straight.
4. Return by driving your hips forward.

Common mistakes

✗ Rounding the back.

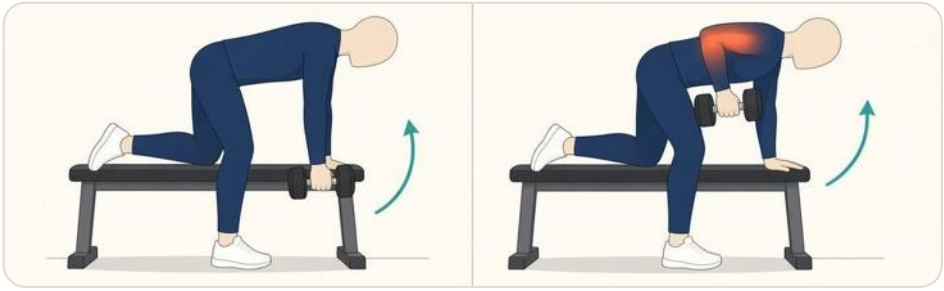
✗ Letting the dumbbells drift away from the legs.

✗ Turning it into a squat by bending the knees too much.

Easier: Lighter dumbbells, or the hip hinge without weight. **Harder:** Heavier dumbbells, or on one leg.

26 One-arm dumbbell row

Muscles: Lats, mid back, biceps · **Equipment:** Dumbbell and bench



Start → End

2 × 10 each arm	3 × 8 to 12 each arm	60 to 90 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Put the knee and hand of the same side on a bench, back flat.
2. Hold the dumbbell in the other hand, arm extended.
3. Pull the dumbbell toward your hip, elbow close to your body.
4. Lower slowly; finish, then switch.

Common mistakes

✗ Twisting the trunk to lift the dumbbell.

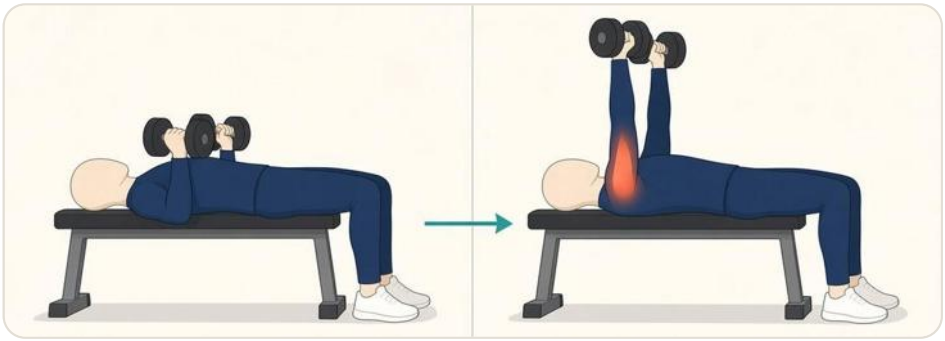
✗ Pulling toward the chest instead of the hip.

✗ Arching the back.

Easier: A lighter dumbbell. **Harder:** Pause 2 seconds at the top.

27 Dumbbell bench press

Muscles: Chest, front shoulder, triceps · **Equipment:** Two dumbbells and a bench



Start → End

2 × 10	3 × 8 to 12	90 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Lie on the bench with feet on the floor, a dumbbell in each hand beside your chest.
2. Elbows at about 45 degrees from the body.
3. Press the dumbbells up above your chest.
4. Lower slowly to chest level.

Common mistakes

✗ Flaring the elbows to 90 degrees.

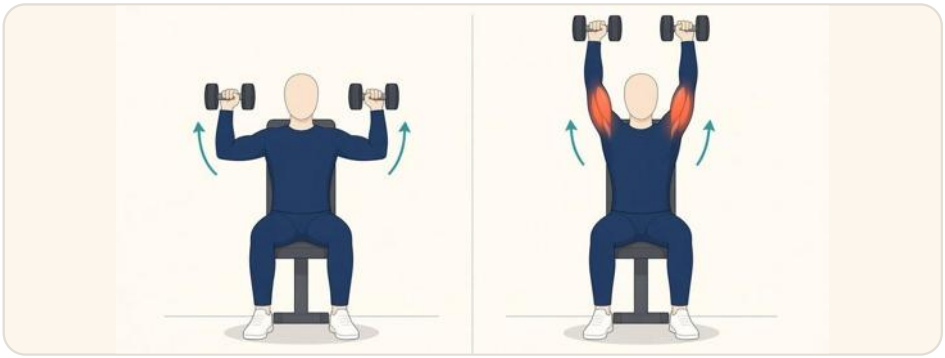
✗ Lifting the hips off the bench.

✗ Knocking the dumbbells together at the top.

Easier: Lighter dumbbells, or on the floor (shorter range). **Harder:** Heavier dumbbells.

28 Seated dumbbell shoulder press

Muscles: Shoulders, triceps · **Equipment:** Two dumbbells and a bench with back support



Start → End

2 × 10	3 × 8 to 12	90 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Sit with your back on the support, a dumbbell in each hand at shoulder level.
2. Elbows under the wrists.
3. Press up until your arms are almost straight.
4. Lower slowly to shoulder level.

Common mistakes

✗ Arching the lower back.

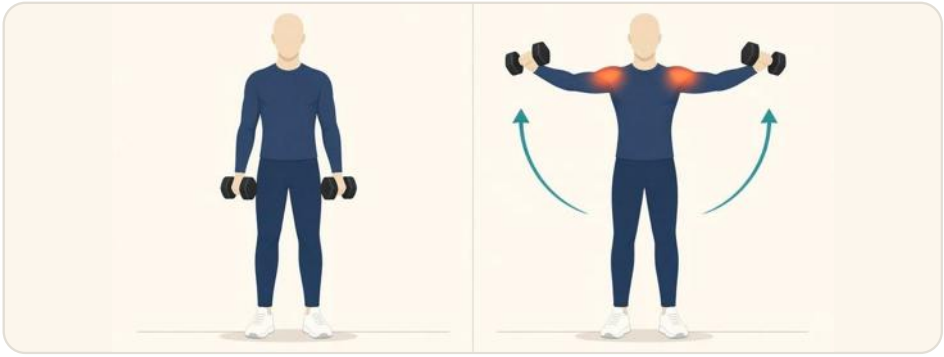
✗ Lowering quickly.

✗ Pushing the dumbbells forward instead of up.

Easier: Lighter dumbbells, or one arm at a time. **Harder:** Heavier dumbbells.

29 Lateral raise

Muscles: Side shoulder · **Equipment:** Two light dumbbells



Start → End

2 × 12	3 × 12 to 15	60 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Stand with a light dumbbell in each hand beside your thighs.
2. Elbows slightly bent.
3. Raise your arms out to the sides up to shoulder level.
4. Lower slowly.

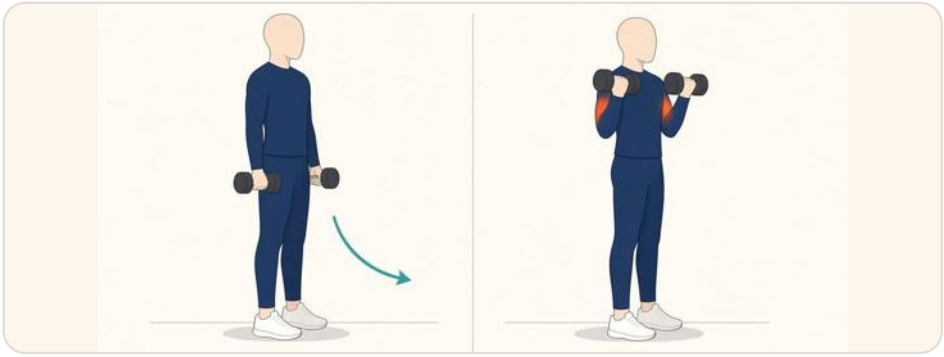
Common mistakes

✗ Swinging with the body.
✗ Lifting above shoulder level.
✗ Shrugging the shoulders toward the ears.

Easier: A very light weight, or no weight. **Harder:** Slow the descent to 3 seconds.

30 Dumbbell biceps curl

Muscles: Biceps · **Equipment:** Two dumbbells



Start → End

2 × 12	3 × 10 to 15	60 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Stand with a dumbbell in each hand, palms facing forward.
2. Elbows tucked against your body.
3. Bend your elbows and lift the dumbbells toward your shoulders.
4. Lower slowly until your arms are straight.

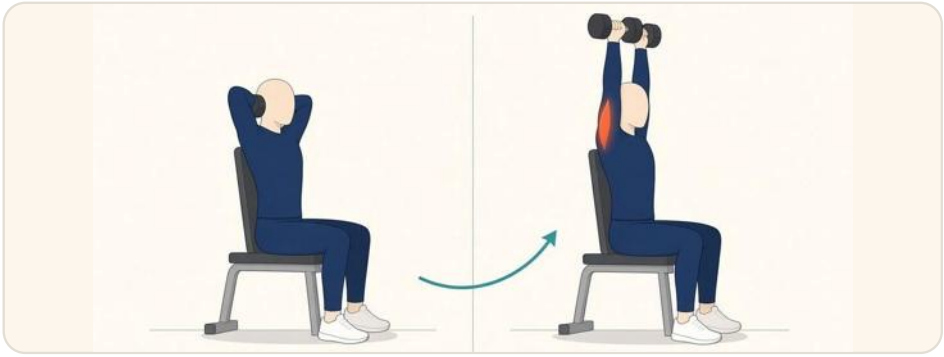
Common mistakes

✗ Swinging with the back.
✗ The elbows moving forward.
✗ Lowering quickly.

Easier: Lighter weight, or one arm at a time. **Harder:** Slow the descent.

31 Overhead triceps extension

Muscles: Triceps · **Equipment:** One dumbbell



Start → End

2 × 12	3 × 10 to 15	60 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Sit with your back on the support and hold a dumbbell with both hands above your head.
2. Bend your elbows so the dumbbell goes down behind your head, elbows close to your head.
3. Straighten your arms upward.
4. Control the descent.

Common mistakes

✗ Flaring the elbows out to the sides.

✗ Arching the back.

✗ Heavy weight with shoulder pain.

Easier: Lighter weight, or the chair dip instead. **Harder:** Slow the descent.

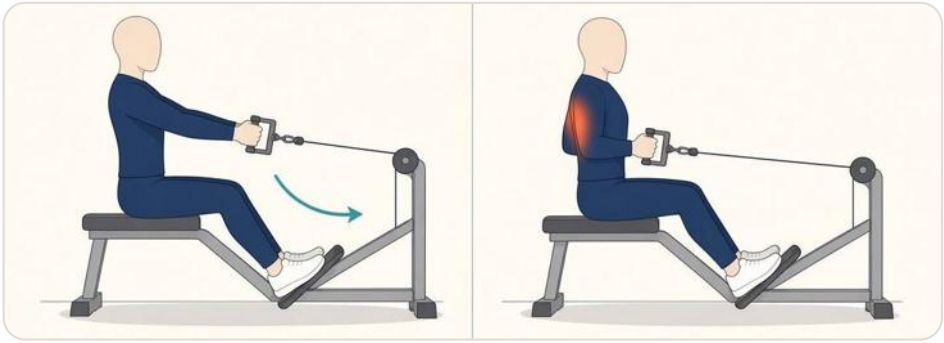
Part D: Cables

Constant resistance through the whole movement

- 32. Seated cable row
- 33. Cable face pull
- 34. Cable triceps pushdown
- 35. Cable chest fly
- 36. Pallof press (anti-rotation)
- 37. Cable pull-through
- 38. Cable biceps curl

32 Seated cable row

Muscles: Mid back, lats, biceps · **Equipment:** Low cable and handle



Start → End

2 × 12	3 × 10 to 12	90 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Sit with your feet on the foot plate and knees slightly bent.
2. Back straight and arms extended.
3. Pull the handle toward your lower chest, elbows close to your body.
4. Return slowly without rounding your back.

Common mistakes

✗ Rocking forward and back.
✗ Rounding the back on the return.
✗ Shrugging the shoulders.

Easier: Lighter weight. **Harder:** Pause 2 seconds at the chest.

33 Cable face pull

Muscles: Rear shoulder, upper back · **Equipment:** Cable at face height and a rope



Start → End

2 × 12	3 × 12 to 15	60 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Set the pulley at face height and grip both ends of the rope.
2. Step back with arms extended.
3. Pull the rope toward your forehead, spreading your hands apart with elbows high.
4. Return slowly.

Common mistakes

✗ A heavy weight that makes the body lean back.

✗ The elbows dropping.

✗ Pulling toward the neck.

Easier: Lighter weight. **Harder:** Pause 2 seconds.

34 Cable triceps pushdown

Muscles: Triceps · **Equipment:** High cable and a bar or rope



Start → End

2 × 12	3 × 10 to 15	60 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Stand facing the cable and grip the bar, elbows tucked against your body.
2. Start with elbows at about 90 degrees.
3. Push down until your arms are straight.
4. Return slowly without moving your elbows.

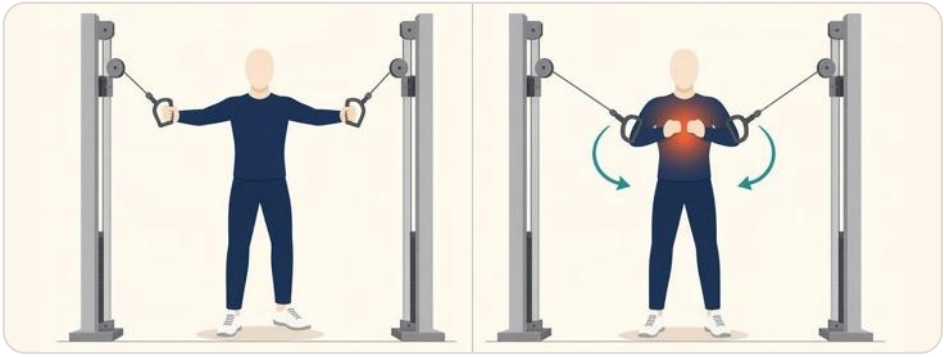
Common mistakes

- ✗ Moving the elbows forward and back.
- ✗ Leaning the body to push the weight.
- ✗ Returning quickly.

Easier: Lighter weight. **Harder:** Slow the return.

35 Cable chest fly

Muscles: Chest · **Equipment:** Two cables at shoulder height



Start → End

2 × 12	3 × 12 to 15	60 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Stand between the two pulleys and grip the handles, feet in a split stance.
2. Elbows slightly bent and fixed.
3. Bring your hands together in front of your chest in an arc, like a hug.
4. Return slowly until you feel a light stretch.

Common mistakes

✗ Bending and straightening the elbows so it turns into a press.

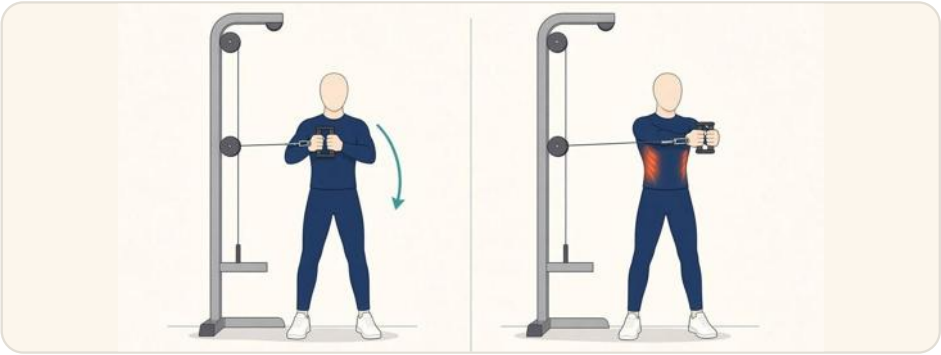
✗ Going too far back on the return.

✗ A heavy weight that shakes the body.

Easier: Lighter weight. **Harder:** Pause 2 seconds with the hands together.

36 Pallof press (anti-rotation)

Muscles: Side abdominal and core muscles · **Equipment:** Cable at chest height



Start → End

2 × 8 each side	3 × 10 to 12 each side	45 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Stand side-on to the cable with the handle in front of your chest in both hands.
2. Feet shoulder-width apart, knees soft.
3. Press your hands forward until your arms are straight, without your trunk twisting.
4. Hold 2 seconds and return, then do the other side.

Common mistakes

- ✗ The body twisting toward the cable.
- ✗ Holding your breath.
- ✗ Very heavy weight.

Easier: Stand closer to the cable. **Harder:** Step further away, or hold 5 seconds.

37 Cable pull-through

Muscles: Glutes, back of thigh · **Equipment:** Low cable and a rope



Start → End

2 × 12	3 × 12 to 15	60 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Stand with your back to the cable, holding the rope between your legs.
2. Walk forward two steps.
3. Push your hips back with a straight back until you feel a stretch behind the thigh.
4. Drive your hips forward and stand tall, squeezing your glutes.

Common mistakes

✗ Pulling with the arms.

✗ Rounding the back.

✗ Leaning back at the top.

Easier: Lighter weight. **Harder:** Pause 2 seconds at the top.

38 Cable biceps curl

Muscles: Biceps · **Equipment:** Low cable and a bar



Start → End

2 × 12	3 × 10 to 15	60 s
Beginner	Intermediate	Rest

How to do it

1. Stand facing the cable and grip the bar, palms up.
2. Elbows tucked against your body.
3. Bend your elbows and lift the bar toward your chest.
4. Lower slowly.

Common mistakes

✗ Leaning back.

✗ The elbows moving forward.

✗ Letting go quickly.

Easier: Lighter weight. **Harder:** Slow the descent to 3 seconds.

Ready-made weekly schedules

Choose one schedule and stick with it for 6 to 8 weeks

Resistance session | **Cardio** walk or bike | **Rest** light movement

Schedule	For whom?
1. Home beginner	Those not currently exercising
2. Home intermediate	After 6 weeks of Schedule 1
3. Gym beginner	First time in the gym
4. Gym intermediate	After 2 to 3 months of regular training
5. 20-minute session	Busy days

All schedules achieve: 150 minutes of cardio, resistance 2 to 4 times, and no more than two days in a row without exercise.

Schedule 1: Home beginner (2 resistance days)

The first 4 to 6 weeks. No equipment.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Resist. A	Walk 30m	Walk 30m	Resist. B	Walk 30m	Rest	Walk 30m

Day A

Exercise	Sets × reps
2. Chair sit-to-stand	2 × 10
9. Wall push-up	2 × 10
6. Glute bridge	2 × 12
12. Prone Y-raise	2 × 10
8. Calf raise	2 × 15
14. Dead bug	2 × 6 each side

Day B

Exercise	Sets × reps
3. Reverse lunge	2 × 8 each leg
9. Wall push-up	2 × 12
7. Hip hinge (good morning)	2 × 10
15. Bird dog	2 × 6 each side
5. Wall sit	2 × 20 s
13. Plank and side plank	2 × 20 s

Cardio: 4 × 30 minutes of brisk walking + 2 × 15 minutes on the two resistance days = 150 minutes.

Schedule 2: Home intermediate (3 full-body days)

After 6 weeks of Schedule 1, or for those already training.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Resist. A	Cardio 30m	Resist. B	Cardio 30m	Resist. A	Rest	Cardio 45m

Day A

Exercise	Sets × reps
1. Bodyweight squat	3 × 15
10. Push-up	3 × 8 to 12
4. Step-up	3 × 12 each leg
12. Prone Y-raise	3 × 12
11. Chair dip	3 × 10
13. Plank and side plank	3 × 40 s

Day B

Exercise	Sets × reps
3. Reverse lunge	3 × 12 each leg
6. Glute bridge	3 × 15 (single-leg if you can)
10. Push-up	3 × max reps with good form
7. Hip hinge (good morning)	3 × 15
8. Calf raise	3 × 20
14. Dead bug	3 × 10 each side

Cardio: 30 + 30 + 45 minutes + 3 × 15 minutes after resistance = 150 minutes. The following week, start with Day B (A, B, A then B, A, B).

Schedule 3: Gym beginner (machines, 3 days)

Machines are easier to learn and safer to start with.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Full body	Cardio 30m	Full body	Cardio 30m	Full body	Rest	Cardio 30m

Every session

Exercise	Sets × reps
17. Leg press machine	2 × 10 to 12
20. Machine chest press	2 × 10 to 12
22. Lat pulldown machine	2 × 10 to 12
19. Seated leg curl machine	2 × 12
23. Seated row machine	2 × 10 to 12
21. Machine shoulder press	2 × 10
13. Plank and side plank	2 × 30 s

Cardio: 3 × 30 minutes (incline treadmill, bike, or stair machine) + 3 × 20 minutes after resistance = 150 minutes.

Schedule 4: Gym intermediate (4 upper/lower days)

Machines + dumbbells + cables.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Upper	Lower	Cardio 30m	Upper	Lower	Rest	Cardio 40m

Upper

Exercise	Sets × reps
27. Dumbbell bench press	3 × 8 to 12
22. Lat pulldown machine	3 × 8 to 12
28. Seated dumbbell shoulder press	3 × 8 to 12
32. Seated cable row	3 × 10 to 12
29. Lateral raise	2 × 12 to 15
34. Cable triceps pushdown	2 × 12
30. Dumbbell biceps curl	2 × 12
33. Cable face pull	2 × 15

Lower

Exercise	Sets × reps
24. Goblet squat	3 × 8 to 12
25. Dumbbell Romanian deadlift	3 × 8 to 12
17. Leg press machine	3 × 10 to 12
19. Seated leg curl machine	3 × 12
3. Reverse lunge	2 × 10 each leg
8. Calf raise	3 × 20
36. Pallof press (anti-rotation)	3 × 10 each side

Cardio: 30 + 40 minutes + 4 × 20 minutes after resistance = 150 minutes.

Schedule 5: A 20-minute session for busy days

At home, a circuit with no rest between movements, and one minute of rest between rounds.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
20m	Walk	20m	Walk	20m	Rest	Walk

3 rounds

Exercise	Sets × reps
1. Bodyweight squat	40 s work then 20 s rest
10. Push-up	Same as above (or against the wall)
6. Glute bridge	Same as above
15. Bird dog	Same as above
16. Marching on the spot with high knees	Same as above

Cardio: Walking: 4 × 30 minutes, or 3 × 10 minutes after meals every day.

Progress log and frequently asked questions

Progress log

Copy it into a notebook or your phone notes: the exercise, the weight or version, and the repetitions in each set.

Date	Exercise	Weight/version	S1	S2	S3

Do I need a gym?

No. Part A (bodyweight) with brisk walking is enough to start and for many months; the gym is an extra option.

Should I exercise while fasting?

It is best inside the eating window (if you combine intermittent fasting). Anyone taking medicines that lower blood sugar should not exercise while fasting unless their doctor allows it.

I could not do the movement as shown in the drawing?

Use the easier version listed under each exercise, shorten the range, and progress gradually.

My muscles ached a day or two later?

Delayed muscle soreness is normal at the start and eases within days. Sharp joint pain, however, is a signal to stop.

What if I miss a day?

Carry on from where you stopped; what matters is not going more than two days without any exercise, even a 20-minute walk.

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4. Richter EA, Hargreaves M. Exercise, GLUT4, and skeletal muscle glucose uptake. Physiol Rev. 2013;93:993–1017.
5. ACOG Committee Opinion No. 804: Physical activity and exercise during pregnancy and the postpartum period. Obstet Gynecol. 2020;135:e178–e188.

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Reminder: this is a general guide only, and the author does not give personal medical, nutrition or training advice outside its content. For a personalised plan, see a clinical dietitian and a qualified fitness trainer, and your doctor about any health condition.

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