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SPRING 2014

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Say "see ya" to rest periods. Turn your ordinary leg day into a calorie-killing sweat session with active rest.

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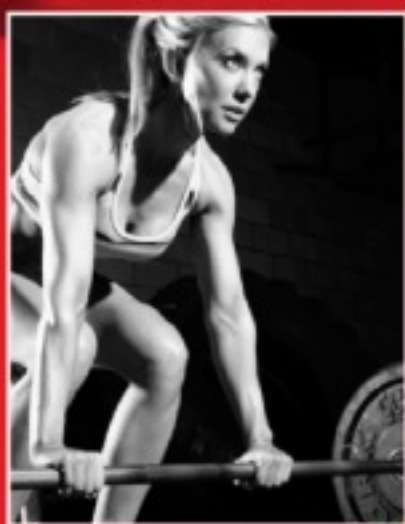
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Supercharge your metabolism with this body-rocking, high-energy routine.

ELECTRIC CIRCUIT

ROUTINE BY FATIMA LEITE KUSCH, COACH &
PRO FITNESS MODEL, COMPETITOR
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL BUCETA

IT'S APRIL,

which means beach season is lurking right around the corner. Sure, the motivation of New Year's resolutions has faded like your old jeans, and your once-killer gym routine has become just as outdated. But if you want to feel confident peeling off those layers come June, then this isn't the time for your workouts to lose momentum. Don't get discouraged if your progress has hit the brakes or if you've lost the gusto to destroy your leg day. It just means it's time to surprise your muscles—and we've got the perfect way to wake them up. This fast-paced workout comprised of compound movements is guaranteed to challenge your body and incinerate fat and calories. It's the jolt you need to jumpstart your metabolism, reboot your motivation and smash through that plateau. Welcome to spring training.

Why Circuit Training Rocks

1. IT INCREASES METABOLISM

Circuit training is an awesome addition to your current lifting regimen, because it has all the ingredients for the perfect fat burning workout. Like weightlifting, circuits incorporate resistance, which builds muscle and bone density for a better body composition. All that lean muscle makes your body burn fat more efficiently by improving your resting metabolic rate. But circuit training also sends your metabolism into hyper drive in order to repair tissue and meet the oxygen demands placed on your body from the constant full-body movements, performed with tons of intensity.

2. IT BUSTS PLATEAUS

Busting your butt at the gym without seeing improvements in your strength and physique can make you want to throw in the towel, but if you're repping it out the same way each week, a plateau is inevitable. The key is to stimulate your neuromuscular system in a different way. Circuit training will scramble up your mundane routine, keeping your body guessing, and when your body is constantly guessing, it becomes harder for it to adapt. Incorporate circuit training into your schedule for a few weeks, and you'll discover that when you return to more traditional lifting you'll be squatting, pressing and curling more than ever.

3. IT STRENGTHENS HEAD-TO-TOE

Circuits use compound movements, meaning you'll be working your entire body each time you train. The object here is to include multi-joint movements like squats, push-ups, and rows, to work the full body as a unit, allowing it to become more biomechanically efficient, which in turn will make you stronger, improving your workouts, and so on. The secret to achieving maximum results is all in how hard you hit it. When doing exercises with weights, you should use enough weight that you're being challenged, but not putting yourself at risk for injury (see "Create Your Own Circuit" for more on this). Try to push through all the exercises without having to stop mid-set. After all, the pain is only temporary, but your body will keep burning up calories long after.

THE WORKOUT

HOW TO: For this workout you will need a set of medium to heavy weight dumbbells, an open space on the floor and a bench. Cycle through each move, one after the other with minimal rest, aiming for 20 reps of each exercise. Once you've completed the whole circuit once, rest for 60-90 seconds, then start from the top. Repeat for up to 5 rounds.



PRISONER SQUAT

Set up: Stand with your feet hip width apart and place your palms behind your head, drawing your elbows and shoulders back. Keep them here throughout the entire movement.

Action: Hinge from your hip joint and lower down as far as you can, while maintaining a neutral spine position. Make sure your lower back doesn't round at the bottom of the squat. Press through your heels and squeeze your glute muscles to return to standing.



RENEGADE ROW

Set up: Start in an upright plank position with your hands holding onto dumbbells. Keep your wrists straight, avoiding any flexion or hyperextension at the joint. Keep your feet hip-width apart or wider (a wider stance decreases difficulty). Engage your abs and glutes to help support your spine, and keep your neck long with your gaze forward.

Action: Lift one dumbbell up to your torso by bending at the elbow and driving it towards the ceiling. Squeeze your lat at the top of the movement, then return the weight to the ground. Repeat on the other side. Continue alternating sides for all reps.



ALTERNATING STEP UP

Set up: Holding a dumbbell in each hand, stand facing the side of a bench. Give yourself enough room to safely step up onto it.

Action: Place one foot flat on the bench (do not let your low back round as you lift your leg). Push through your glutes to come to standing on one leg on the bench, keeping your other leg free, but still engaged. Slowly lower down and repeat on the other side. Continue alternating sides for all reps.

PUSH-UP

Set up: Start in a high plank position with your hands under your shoulders or slightly wider (wider makes it easier). Engage your abs and maintain a long, neutral spine with your gaze forward.

Action: Bend your elbows and lower yourself towards the floor as low as you can without touching. As you lower, think about your shoulder blades moving in towards your spine and down towards your back podials. Return to the starting position by extending your arms and pushing up through your chest.



TIP: WHY NOT TIME HOW LONG IT TAKES YOU TO COMPLETE A ROUND? TRY TO DECREASE YOUR TIME EACH WEEK!



BENCH HANGING LEG RAISE

Set up: Lie on the bench so that your legs are hanging off the end from the glutes down, keeping your lower back and torso in contact with the bench. Keep your legs together and as straight as you can and hold onto the bench by your head for support.

Action: Keeping your legs straight and your back pressed into the bench, raise your legs straight up into the air until they are perpendicular with the bench. Using control from your core, slowly lower them down as far as you can. That is one rep.

CREATE
YOUR
OWN
CIRCUIT

1. Choose a relatively heavy weight that you can lift for 20 reps without losing form.
2. Program the order of exercises so that you agonist-antagonist muscle groups, for example: push-ups, followed by rows.
3. When you complete 20 reps of the first exercise move right into the next, without rest.
4. Once completed (usually consisting of 5-10 exercises in a row), rest for roughly 60 seconds then repeat, for a total of 4-5 rounds.



BICYCLE CRUNCHES

Set up: Lay on your back on the floor or on a bench with your knees bent, feet on the floor, and hands behind your head to partly support your head.

Action: Press your lower back into the mat and tighten your abs to lift your head, shoulders, and upper back off the floor. Simultaneously lift your legs and move your right elbow and left knee towards each other so they meet above your belly button. At the same time straighten your right leg (don't let it touch the ground). Switch sides, and that's one rep. Continue to move continuously, as if pedaling a bicycle.

H₂O TIP:
TAKE SIPS OF WATER
BETWEEN ROUNDS TO
STAY HYDRATED.

JUMPING SIDE LUNGE

Set up: Begin in a side lunge position by bending your right knee, pushing your hip out and keeping your left leg straight. Bring your left hand down and touch your right foot.

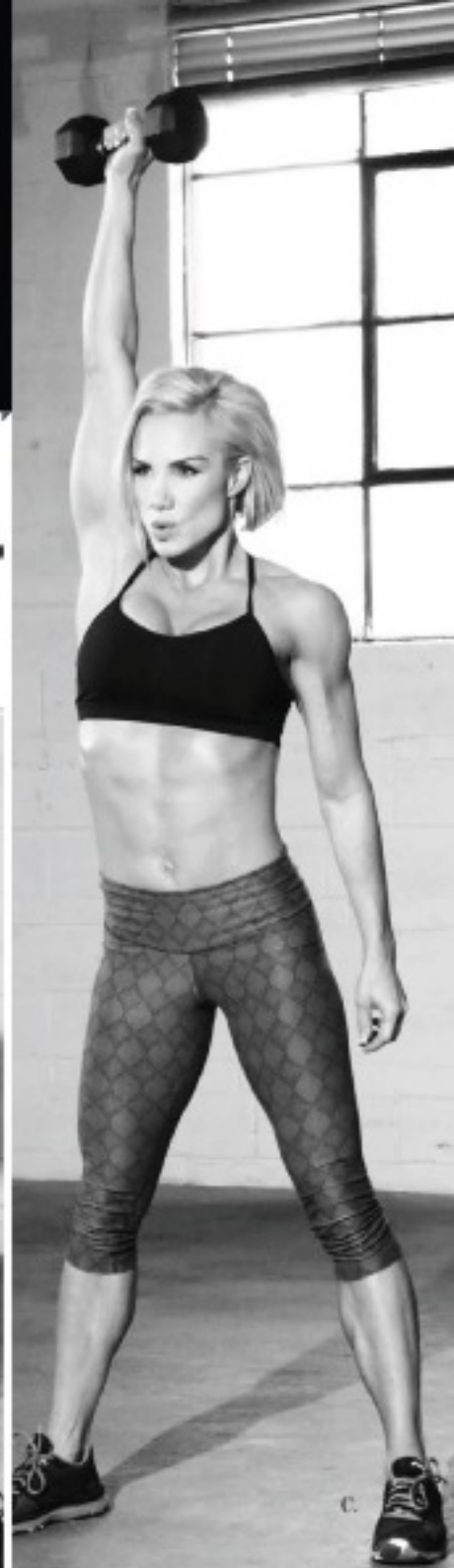
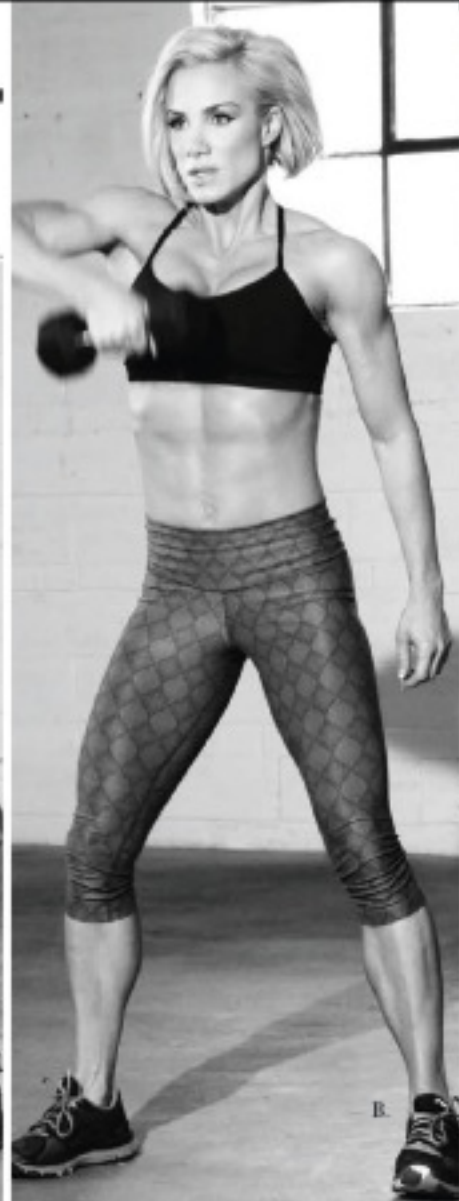
Action: From the lunge position, jump straight into the air, switching legs, then landing in a lunge on the left side. Bring your right arm straight down to the opposite foot. That's one rep.



ALTERNATING ONE-ARM SNATCH

Set up: Stand with feet hip-width apart with a dumbbell on its side between your feet. Bend your knees and push your butt back to get into a deep squat position.

Action: Grab the dumbbell with one palm facing you, and quickly press up to standing, bringing the dumbbell in a straight line up your body. Once the dumbbell is near shoulder height, flip your forearm and wrist back so your palm is facing forward, then punch the dumbbell overhead. Reverse the entire movement to lower the weight back to the ground. Repeat on other side.



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DALLAS, TEXAS
WITH JESSIE HILGENBERG

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