

THE SIZZLING SUN "BURN" ISSUE

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ANGELA GARGANO

AMERICAN NINJA WARRIOR ATHLETE

MASTER THE BARBELL DEADLIFT

THE FLEXIBLE FAT-LOSS MEAL PLAN

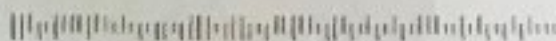
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Maximize your gym time

Summer's here — who wants to be cooped up inside? These five innovative solutions allow you to fit a great workout into less time.



1 WARM UP ON THE WAY

We get it, you're busy, but warming up is an essential part of your workout. Save time by arriving at the gym already warmed up. Do walking lunges from your house to the car and from the car to the gym, suggests Gretchen Zelek, AFAA group fitness instructor, functional aging specialist, and co-founder of Donuts and Pie Fitness. "Skipping, hopping, brisk marching — whatever it takes to get your heart beating faster," she says.

While you're at it, warm up mentally, too. "World-class athletes visualize themselves as being victorious," says Chris Shelton, certified *qigong* teacher with almost 20 years of experience. "Use this same principle for yourself. Breathe deeply and visualize how you want to feel right before you walk into the gym, during your workout and 10 minutes afterward."

2 CAMP OUT

How many minutes do you actually spend training versus moving from place to place or waiting for equipment? Trim a ton of wasted time by gathering up a few key pieces of equipment — dumbbells, medicine ball, bench, jump rope, bands, etc. — and setting up camp in one area. Choose moves that use that gear, and organize them into a time-effective workout such as a metcon, chipper, Tabata or circuit.

"I love using a push-pull combo for the upper body," says Samantha Clayton, personal trainer, group exercise instructor and former Olympic sprinter. "You can get really creative and string together an eight-move workout using only two pieces of equipment."

3 (STOP)WATCH THE GAP

You might not realize you're dawdling because perception doesn't always match reality. Put your rest to the test: Record the time you take between sets over the course of a few workouts, then analyze your results to see whether they suit your current training methodology. "The heavier the weight, the more rest you need between sets, anywhere from two to five minutes," Clayton says. Your body's phosphagen energy system takes that long to recover, and strength-focused athletes (such as powerlifters) should skew toward longer rest intervals. The typical fitness buff, on the other hand, should consider a 1:1 or 1:2 work-to-rest ratio to stay on track while training your system to handle the lactate buildup in your muscles. "A 30- to 60-second rest between sets is usually plenty," Clayton adds.

4 CHIP AWAY

Condensing your workload into a smaller time frame can boost intensity and incite metabolic change, so try ditching the traditional set/rep scheme and setting a time limit in which to complete all sets and reps of a given exercise. For example, for a shoulder press you might usually do five sets of 10 reps, which takes about 10 minutes, including rest. Instead, set a goal to finish all 50 reps in just five minutes, performing as many as you can muster at a time and resting just long enough to catch your breath. Do this for five exercises and you've saved 25 minutes.

5 DROP, ROCK AND ROLL

Using drop sets can save time by doubling or tripling the workload and intensity of a single set. "Your muscles are under tension longer, burning more calories and improving muscular endurance," Clayton says. Begin with a moderately heavy weight and do as many reps as you can (until failure), then immediately "drop" (reduce) the weight by 10 to 15 percent and again rep it out to failure. Because of their intensity, drop sets should be used sparingly. "Only do them on your last set of an exercise because you'll burn out fast," says Jason Kozma, PROPTA-CPT, IFA-CPT, sports nutritionist and owner of High Performance Personal Training in Los Angeles. Overdoing drop sets also can lead to overtraining, causing lingering soreness, persistent fatigue, brain fog and the like.