

Build Better Abs

Don't work your abdominal muscles every day. "Physiologically, your abs are like any other muscle in your body," says David Pearson, Ph.D., C.S.C.S., an exercise scientist at Ball State University. Train them only 2 or 3 days a week.

Protect Your Neck

Put your tongue on the roof of your mouth when you do crunches. "It will help align your head properly, which helps reduce neck strain," says Michael Mejia, C.S.C.S., *Men's Health* exercise advisor.

Keep Muscles Limber

If you're under 40, hold your stretches for 30 seconds. If you're over 40, hold them for 60 seconds. As you reach your 40s, your muscles become less pliable, so they need to be stretched longer.

Grow Muscle, Save Time

Keep your weight workouts under an hour. After 60 minutes, your body starts producing more of the stress hormone cortisol, which can have a testosterone-blocking, muscle-wasting effect.

Exercise in Order

Use dumbbells, barbells, and machines—in that order. "The smaller, stabilizer muscles you use with dumbbells fatigue before your larger muscle groups," says Charles Staley, a strength coach in Las Vegas. So progress to machines, which require less help from your smaller muscles, as you grow tired

Buy Shoes That Fit

Shop for workout shoes late in the day. That's when your feet are the largest. Make sure there's a half inch of space in front of your longest toe, and that you can easily wiggle your toes. Then slip off the shoes and compare them with your bare feet. If each shoe isn't obviously wider and longer than your foot, go half a size bigger.

Muscle Up Your Back

When doing lat pulldowns, don't wrap your thumb around the bar. Instead, place it on top, alongside your index finger. This decreases the involvement of your arm muscles, so you'll work your back harder. Works for pullups, too

Overcome Injuries, Build Big Arms

If you hurt your right arm, don't stop exercising your left arm. Researchers at the University of Oklahoma found that people who trained only one arm for 2 weeks managed to increase arm strength in their nonexercising arm up to 10 percent. The reason: Exercising one arm stimulates the muscle nerve fibers in the opposite arm.

Blow Off Your Belly

Exhale forcefully at the top of the movement when you do abdominal crunches. It forces your abs to work harder.

Build Big Biceps

Bend your wrists to work your biceps harder. That is, extend them backward slightly—and hold them that way—while you do arm curls.

Heal Faster

Don't exercise when you're sick—unless your symptoms are above the neck. And even then you might do better taking a day off. "Your body will use its resources to heal itself, not build muscle and endurance," says Alwyn Cosgrove, C.S.C.S., a trainer in Santa Clarita, California.

Get Stronger Fast

Do the same amount of exercise in 10 percent less time. It forces your muscles to work harder and improves your endurance at the same time. If it takes you 30 minutes to do a full-body workout on Monday, try to do it in 27 minutes on Wednesday.

Improve Balance

Use a sofa cushion to improve your balance. Stand one-legged on the cushion and move a medicine ball (or a 1-gallon milk jug or heavy phone book) from hand to hand, side to side, and behind your head. Once you've mastered the move, try it with your eyes closed. "You'll improve your balance, coordination, and body control, all important athletic attributes," says Greg Brittenham, assistant coach of player development for the New York Knicks.

Win a Marathon

To build speed and endurance, train like a Kenyan: Go slowly for the first third of your run, at a normal pace in the middle third, and at a faster-than-normal pace at the end. Gradually increase your starting pace each week, and you'll increase your normal and fast paces, too.

For more tips visit

<http://www.menshealth.com/fitness/100-best-fitness-tips>