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Best workout for fat burning and toning

If you've ever researched "how to lose fat," then you've probably heard of the fat-burning zone. If you haven't, the claim is basically that working out at 50% to 60% of your maximum heart rate leads to fat loss. See, for our bodies to effectively burn fat while we are exercising, oxygen needs to be present. "The nuts and bolts are that more intense exercise burns less fat because we need oxygen to burn fat and as exercise intensity increases the anaerobic contribution increases (energy provision without oxygen)," explains James King, lecturer in exercise physiology at Loughborough University. So if an effective fat-burning workout is what you're looking for, we're here to help. The first step is figuring out if your usual workout is the most efficient at helping you reach whatever goals you may have. We're busy people leading hectic lives, so it makes sense we'd want the most fat-burning bang for our buck. That's why we turned to various trainers in London and asked them, "What are the best fat-burning workouts?" Their answers may surprise you. Keep scrolling for some of the best expert-approved exercises to burn fat. Okay, so when you're in that HIIT class, you might not be burning much fat. But after is a totally different story: "A HIIT workout can elevate EPOC (excess post-exercise oxygen consumption) to a level which can allow you to burn fat for up to 24 hours afterward, even longer in some cases," explains Sophie Everard, Another Space HIIT instructor. This will depend on ensuring you reach the anaerobic threshold (around 85% of your maximal heart rate) during your session. The Tabata protocol is a common—and quick—form of HIIT training. To try it, do eight 20-second rounds of exercise at an all-out intensity, and take just 10 seconds of rest between rounds. Pick an exercise that will get your heart rate up in a flash (e.g. sprints, kettlebell swings, squat jumps, burpees, etc.). To combat the fatigue and muscle strain that often accompanies HIIT, cross-train with some LISS. Focus on stretching, mobility drills, and steady-state cardio (heart rate below 140 bpm) to aid your recovery. You'll be able to go harder in your next HIIT session while increasing the amount of fat burned. You might not readily associate mind-body exercises like yoga with fat loss, but this kind of activity is key for creating balance, improving flexibility, and easing stress. And since there are many different types of yoga, from vigorous and fast-paced to slow and stretch-focused, you're bound to find something that works for you. Similar to low- to moderate-intensity cardio, you could do yoga without having to overexert yourself. At a minimum, though, try out your yogi skills at least once a week and we assure you, you'll be impressed by the results. To get started, wake up fresh with an energizing morning routine or incorporate some beginner poses into your day. A favorite of personal trainer Kayla Itsines, LISS is any cardio that is done at low intensity in a steady state (hence the abbreviation). You can jog, swim, row or cycle, but you should be able to hold a conversation. "You should be working for 30 minutes minimum and at 60% of your maximum heart rate," explains Simon Stacks, personal trainer at FitMiBody. "The theory is that your body stops using glycogen (today's food energy) and switches to an older source (stored energy, aka the fat from last week's pizza)," he adds. So why not just choose LISS as your fat-burning method of choice all the time? The answer is that you still burn some fat calories during HIIT and keep burning them after: "The downside of [LISS] is that with lower intensities the absolute energy expenditure will be less (if the duration is matched), which is what actually matters for weight control, not fat oxidation per se," says King. In essence, a short, sharp HIIT session is more time-efficient than a longer LISS one. Since you want your body to tap into old energy stores, consider doing your LISS in a fasted state. However, if you're going to try fasted training (exercise on an empty stomach), then you want to ensure that you refuel with a balanced meal of carbohydrates, protein, and some good fats afterward. @thisisfirstbase / Instagram Some experts estimate that a pound of muscle burns almost three times as many calories as a pound of fat. The more you lift weights—as long as you are doing a progressive overload plan i.e. working towards lifting heavier weights over a period of time—you will increase your muscle mass, meaning, you'll become a more efficient fat- and calorie-burning machine. It's no wonder, then, that Stacks names strength training as the best fat-burning workout since you burn energy both during training and afterward during recovery. "Not only that, but this adaption to your physiology (bigger muscles) has now upped your metabolism," he adds. Try shooting for two to four strength sessions per week, alternating days between upper body and lower body. Aiming for one to two sets of eight to 10 reps on each muscle group is a good goal, but listen to your body and adjust as needed. Do like Beyoncé and Emma Stone and enroll in reformer Pilates. Unlike traditional Pilates which is performed on a mat, this version uses a carriage to adjust the level of resistance—and thereby, difficulty—of each move to fit your workout needs. It helps you build core strength and improves posture and alignment. And while it may not burn as many calories as a cardio workout, the muscle you build during reformer Pilates helps you burn more calories at rest. Depending on your skill level and the intensity of the Pilates program, you can start out with 30- to 60-minute classes at least two to three times per week. You may eventually work your way up to daily sessions and, who knows? maybe even try out a class at SLT. If you've ever dreamed about being Rocky but the thought of taking blows to the head doesn't quite appeal to you, then why not consider kickboxing instead? This high-intensity, full-body workout brings you the grit and excitement of boxing—sans broken nose. It also seriously revs up your fat burn thanks to all the punching, kicking, squatting, and twisting involved. In case you're not sure where to start, we've put together a guide to the best online kickboxing classes out there. Training just three times a week will wield some serious results. Now get out there and go kick some butt—or bags, rather. Put the hike pedal to the metal with an energizing spin class. Thanks to its upbeat music, motivating instructors, and its sexy spandex gear, spin is more than just an exercise, it's a lifestyle. And if you're looking to burn 500 calories in just 60 minutes—plus fat post-workout—then look no further. Not only is spin one of the most effective weight loss exercises, but it also boasts a number of other physical and mental health benefits, too. Still, not gonna lie, mounting that spin bike next to a 6-foot Ms. Lululemon fitness model can be intimidating—even with the lights dimmed. But everyone has to start out somewhere, so just have fun with it—or try a 30-minute spin workout from the non-judgmental confines of your own home—whatever works. @jolynclothing / Instagram Swimming is a great full-body workout that is muscle-toning and fat-burning. It's also low-impact (read: easier on your joints) so whether you're 20 or 80, you can make this exercise part of your workout regime. Depending on your goal and skill level, you can try a swim workout that lasts anyone from 15 minutes to an hour. For best results, aim for swimming four to five days a week. Begin with 15- to 20-minute swims every other day, eventually working your way up to 30-minute swims four to five days a week. And on your active recovery day (i.e. when you're not swimming), embrace your inner senior snowbird and take up a water aerobics class. Noodle, anyone? You've heard it before: the hardest part about working out is not working out, per se, it's showing up. But what if exercising were fun? Would we then be more inclined to make an effort to break a sweat? Zumba is a cardio workout that involves dancing to Latin and world music. It gets your heart rate up, which helps to build cardio endurance, while also being a great way to let loose and de-stress. Sessions typically range from 45- to 60-minutes with many studios now offering virtual Zumba classes. Regardless of whether you have natural rhythm or two left feet, consider giving Zumba a try. It just might change your outlook on working out. But if not, at least it will improve your dance moves. @thisisfirstbase / Instagram The goal to lose weight and build muscle can seem overwhelming, but by focusing on making small, simple changes, it becomes more attainable. If fat loss is your focus, then try factoring in two or three weight-training sessions per week, two or three HIIT, and one LISS. Ensure you have one rest day too. It could look like this: Monday: HIIT Tuesday: weight training Wednesday: rest Thursday: HIIT Friday: weight training Saturday: rest day Sunday: LISS If you're trying to lose weight, should you spend all your time on the treadmill or pumping extra iron? To look fabulous and toned, you need to do both. After all, you can run on the treadmill for hours, but you'll never build sexy muscles unless you lift weights. Alternately, you can crunch yourself into oblivion, but you won't be able to see your abs if they're buried under a layer of excess fat. Surprisingly, building muscle can actually help increase your metabolism. A pound of muscle burns more calories than a pound of fat, even if you're just sitting still. Also, strengthening your muscles will help you perform better when you're exercising, which means you'll be able to work out harder and blast more fat. And if you work on your muscles and stick with your cardio program, you'll begin to see sexy definition as you lose more weight. Cardio activities like running, swimming and biking melt fat from all over your body, which will make the underlying muscles visible. Weight-lifting exercises, such as squats and push ups, are perfect for toning problem areas. You can have separate workouts for cardio and toning, but if you want to save time, perform a routine that provides both cardio and strength-training benefits, like a super circuit. Even though it sounds like you have to do double the work to get the body you want, there's no way your fat can survive the two-pronged attack of cardio and weight training!

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