



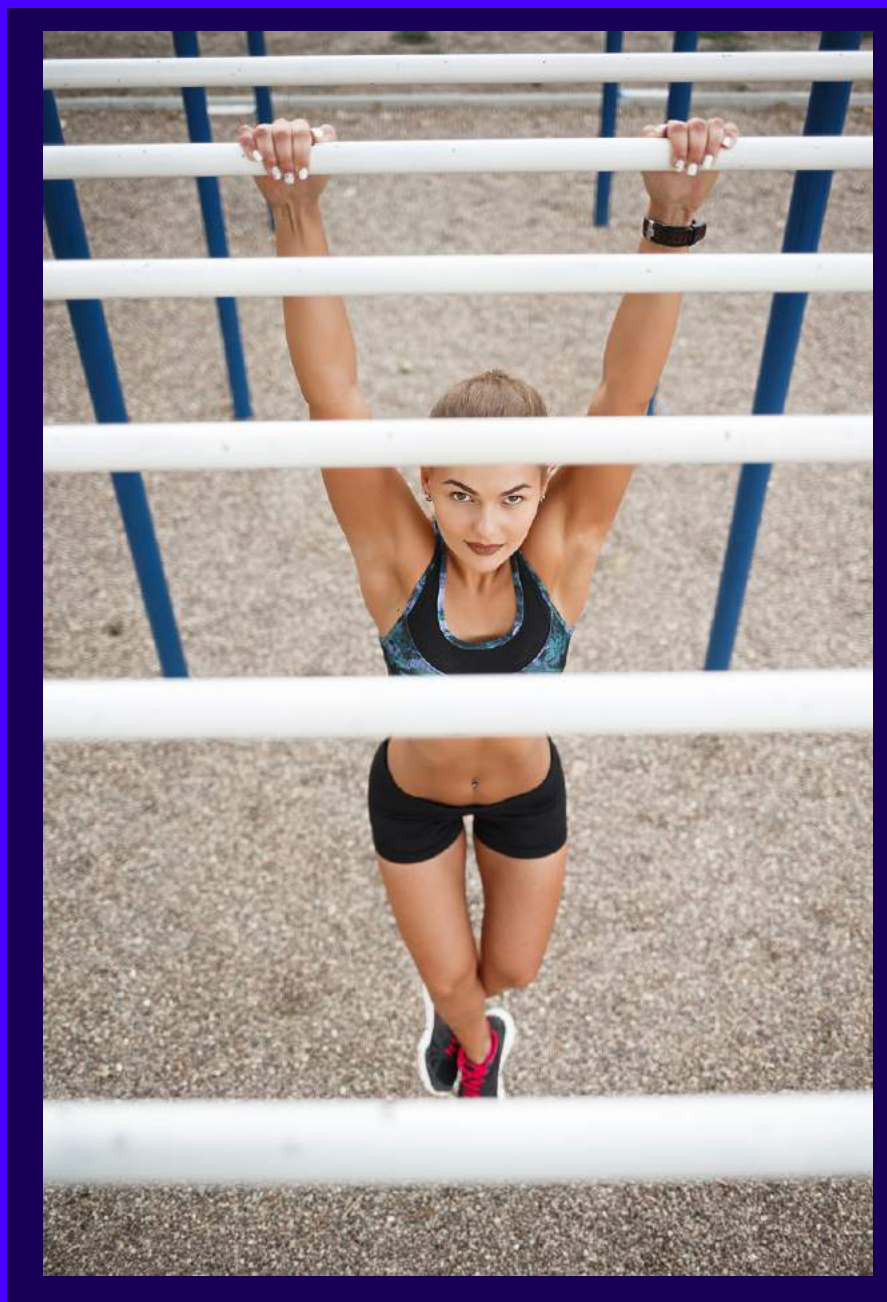
Calisthenics and Bodyweight Workouts

By Martin Gallagher



Calisthenics and Bodyweight Workouts

An Ebook designed for newcomers into the world of bodyweight exercise and fitness.



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CALISTHENICS FOR BEGINNERS

Callisthenics are a form of resistance training that utilises the body's own weight and gravity to provide the required resistance. They involve using the body as a whole rather than isolating muscle groups as in some resistance training. For instance, a mini circuit of press-ups combined with burpees, jumping jacks, planks and mountain climbers will target every muscle group (from calves to the upper leg, core muscles and upper body muscles) as opposed to traditional resistance training that will tend to target muscle groups individually.

Callisthenics for Resistance Training

Further benefits of Callisthenics are that they challenge balance, stability, flexibility, motor skills and kinesthetic awareness just to name a few. The majority of the exercises involved in Callisthenics are functional (for example, lifting, pulling, pushing movements), which means that they have real-life value (beneficial in improving ability in everyday life tasks).

Engaging as many muscle groups as possible in an exercise increases the energy requirements to power those muscles = potential for increased calorie use = increased fat burning. The average Callisthenics circuit engages such a vast amount of muscle groups in the exercises that they will contain, that their fat burner and weight loss potential is off the scale!

As a Resistance Training Tool

Callisthenics are a proven muscle builder, although granted not as good as traditional weight training for Hypertrophy (Muscle building) gains, they are effective for lean muscle building and muscular endurance training. They can be used as a primary method of exercising or can be used as a supplement for other forms of resistance training. It is not uncommon to find people who lift weights also undertaking callisthenics sessions on their in-between days, to target muscle groups from different angles.

Injury Prevention

Bodyweight exercises are (generally) much safer than weights or other resistance-based exercises and less likely to cause tearing type injuries like weight related exercises often do. They are also easier on the joints and tendons compared to the demands of other resistance training methods.

Keeping illness at Bay

As well as helping to maintain a healthy weight, Callisthenics can help stave off conditions such as diabetes and heart disease, increase overall cardiovascular fitness, and promote positive mood due to the release of endorphins. Furthermore, many of the exercises involved are weight bearing and as such can help prevent Osteoporosis.

Time efficient

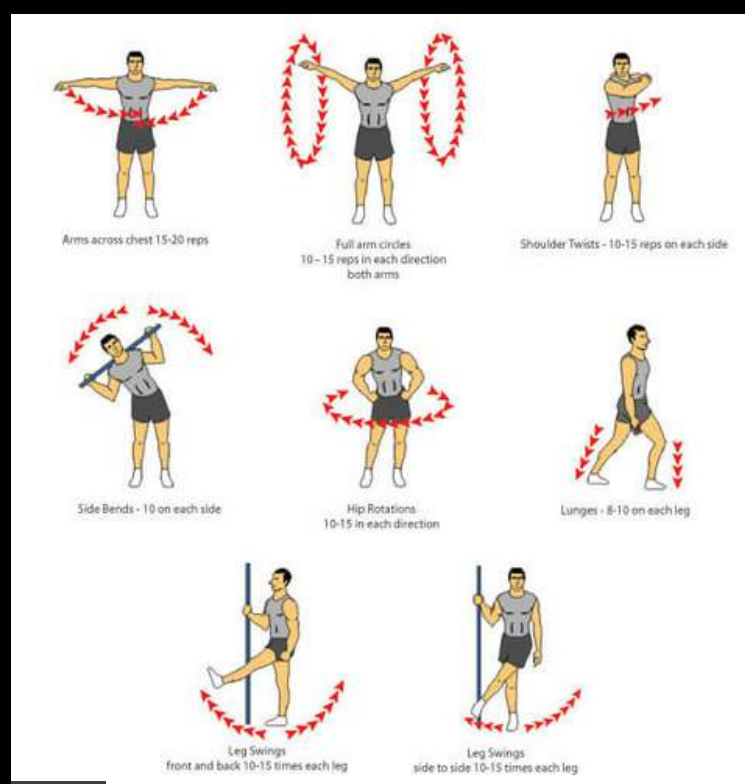
Callisthenics are ideal exercises for those who find it difficult to get to the gym, for whatever reason (family, work, travel, fatigue, finances etc.). They are versatile exercises that can be done at home or outdoors, in areas with limited space. They require little or no training equipment, indeed, the surrounding environment can often be used to provide resistance or stability (See the following section!) and are easily adaptable to meet the specific ability of the user.

Conclusion

In short Callisthenics are incredible exercise routines, that blow the argument of never having enough time, money, equipment or ability right out of the water. With Callisthenics workouts in your repertoire, there is literally no excuse for not fitting into your favourite pair of jeans. They are the ideal starting place for persons new or returning to fitness as well as persons supplementing other forms of training (weights, running etc.) looking to hit the muscle groups from different angles.

Warm Ups and Mobility Drills

A warm-up is a session which takes place prior to doing physical activity; usually a warm-up will consist of light cardiovascular exercises combined with stretches. The aim of warming-up is to allow a person to gradually adapt and prepare themselves both physically and mentally for exercise. Its principle aims can be summarised as:



Mobility Drills



Overhead Air Punches (20 Reps)



**Shoulder
Circles
(20 Reps)**



**Forward Air Punches
(20 Reps)**

Dynamic Warm Ups



**Prisoner Squats
(1 Set, 5 Reps)**



**Jogging on the Spot with
High Knees Intervals
(1 Set, 5 Reps)**



**Burpees
(no Press
Up) (1 Set,
10 Reps)**

Dynamic Warm Ups



Jumping Jacks (1 Set, 10 Reps)

Stand tall with your feet together and your hands at your sides. Quickly raise your arms above your head while jumping your feet out to the sides. Immediately reverse the movement to jump back to the standing position.

The Warmup

Start with any combination of (any of) the mobility drills from above and utilise them for 5 mins to wake the body's joints up, gradually incorporating some of the moves from the Dynamic stretch section above, with the final few minutes being just dynamic moves as the muscles become warmer and in preparation for the actual workout ahead.

If you decide to incorporate Static Stretches into the warmup (See Cool down section below), but again bare in mind that you may need to undertake a second warm up to warm up sufficiently for the main workout.

BODYWEIGHT CIRCUITS

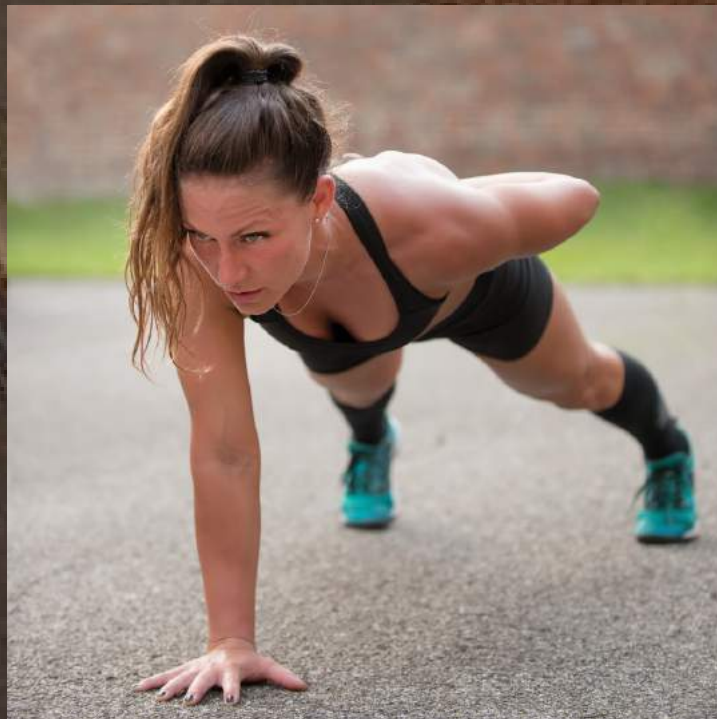
EXERCISES DESIGNED TO TORCH FAT
AND ENCOURAGE LEAN MUSCLE GROWTH



FULL BODY CIRCUIT 1

Monday Wednesday Friday:

- Push-ups, 3 sets, maximum reps.
- Pull-ups, 3 sets, maximum reps.
- Pulse squats 3 sets, 3 maximum reps.
- Bench dips, 2 sets, maximum reps.
- Nordic raises, 3 sets, maximum reps.
- One legged calf raises 3 sets (each leg), maximum reps.
- Upside-down shoulder press, 3 sets, maximum reps.
- Hanging leg raises 5 sets, 25 reps.
- Lying leg raises 25 reps.
- Triceps dips, 3 sets, maximum reps.
- Bodyweight leg curls 3 sets, maximum reps.
- Bear crawls 3 sets X 1 minute.
- Prone cobras 3 sets, X 12 reps.
- Hip bridges 3 sets. X 12 reps.
- Scissor kicks/Butterfly kicks 3 sets, 30 of each per set.



FULL BODY CIRCUIT 2

Monday Wednesday Friday

- Burpees, 3 sets, X 15 reps.
- Staggered Press ups 3 sets, maximum reps.
- Pull-ups (or variation) 3 sets, maximum reps.
- Dynamic jump lunges 3 sets, X 50 reps (25 Each Leg).
- Box jumps 3 sets, X 20 reps.
- Sumo squats 3 sets, X 25 reps.
- Triceps dips 3 sets, maximum reps.
- Jumping jacks 3 sets, X 30 reps.
- Hindu push ups 3 sets, X 15 reps.
- Woodcutters 3 sets, X 50 reps (25 each side).
- Plank side dips 3 sets, X 40 reps (20 each side).
- Bunny hops 3 sets, X 30 reps.
- Floor slider leg curls 3 sets, X 15 reps.
- Donkey calf raises 3 sets X maximum reps.

These circuits are aimed at pushing boundaries. Once the circuit has become achievable then it needs to be changed, failure is an important part of **progression**. If the muscles are finding the exercises too **easy**, then no progression can be made.

Keep changing up your training so your body has to adapt to keep up. Add sets and reps to challenge yourself!

OTHER CIRCUITS

AMRAP Workouts

AMRAP (As Many Reps As Possible) circuits involve performing a set number of bodyweight exercises continuously within a specific time period (10-30 mins ideally). There is no or little rest between different exercises, the idea being that a different muscle group targeted in the following exercise provides the rest needed for the previously targeted muscle groups until it is their time to perform again.

These are great for people short on time because a great workout can be squeezed out in the minimum amount of time, you only have to work like a demon within that short space of time!!

A

(12-15 Minutes, no rest)

- 10 Spiderman push ups.
- 15 Air-squats.
- 20 Crunches.
- 10 Diamond press ups.
- 30 Secs plank.

B

(12-15 Minutes, no rest)

- 10 Incline push ups.
- 16 Step ups.
- 20 Twisting crunches.
- 10 Decline push ups.
- 10 Bodyweight triceps extension.
- 30 Secs side plank.

EMOM Circuits

With EMOM (Every Minute On the Minute) specific exercises are chosen and the participant has to perform a set number of these exercises within a minute. The quicker they undertake the exercises the better, because they then have the rest of that minute to recover, before starting again, on the minute! Choose one (or two!) workouts from below.

- * 12 burpees EMOM in 15 minutes.
- * 7 burpees and 5 push-ups EMOM in 15 minutes.
- * 5 squat thrusts/5 Press ups/5 tuck jumps EMOM X 15 minutes.
- * 10 mountain climbers/10 push-ups/5 burpees. EMOM X15 minutes.
- * 5 burpees/10 squats and plank for time. X 10 minutes. 400m run finish.

Park Circuit

Undertake a 2-5Km Park run, stopping at each bench along the route to undertake one of the exercises below. Work through the list X 3 rounds.

- Warmup
- Shoulder pushups (Use park bench to elevate feet if required) X 20 reps.
- Park bench step-ups X 20 reps.
- Bodyweight squats X 20 reps. Burpees X 20 reps.
- Dynamic alternate lunges – X 20 reps.
- Press ups (Incline – feet on park bench) X 20 reps.
- Bench triceps dips X 20 reps.
- Australian pull-ups – X 20 reps.
- Side lunges X 20 reps.
- Frog jumps X 20 reps.

Tabata Circuits

- Work to maximum intensity for 20 seconds on the first exercise in the set.
- Rest for 10 seconds
- Work to maximum intensity for 20 seconds on the second exercise in the set.
- Complete 8 rounds (4 rounds of each exercise in the set)
- Move to the next Set of exercises. Start again.
- Continue until you complete the circuit.

(Choose at least one set from below. 20 seconds on, 10 Seconds recovery, 4 minutes each set. Alternate between the two exercises each interval. 20 minutes total workout time)

- SET 1: Frog jumps. Squat jumps.
- SET2: Sit-ups. Heel taps.
- SET3: Lunge with knee lift (Right). Lunge with knee lift (Left)
- SET4: Superman's. Triceps push ups.
- SET 5: High knees. Burpees.
- SET 1: Mountain climbers. Push-ups.
- SET 2: V-Ups. Bicycle crunches.
- SET 3: Air squats. Jumping lunges.
- SET 4: Triceps dips. Pulse squats.
- SET 5: Burpees. Jumping jacks.

TREADMILL WORKOUTS

For those worried about injuries on uneven ground whilst hill running or who simply do not live in an area with many challenging hills, there is always the option of treadmill workouts. Many purists will argue about treadmills vs the real thing and the pros and cons, however, for the time limited or injury prone it is a worthy alternative.

Incline Treadmill Workout 1

- Warm up by walking for 2 minutes.
- Run easy for 5 minutes.
- Repeat 8 times: Run for 90 seconds at a 4 to 5 % incline at a pace that elevates your effort to 90% MHR (90% of your maximum effort. You should be breathing vigorously and be unable to talk). Recover with a very easy jog at 0 % incline for 3 minutes.
- Run easy for 5 minutes.
- Cool down by walking for 2 minutes.

Incline Treadmill Workout 2

- Warm up by walking for 2 minutes.
- Run easy for 8 minutes.
- Repeat 1: Run five minutes at a 1 per cent incline and at a pace that elevates your effort level to 80-85% of your maximum ability.
- Recovery 1: Jog or walk for 2 minutes to recover.
- Repeat 2: Run five minutes at a 2 percent incline and at a pace that elevates your effort level to where it was on the previous rep.
- Recovery 2: Jog or walk for 2 minutes to recover.

POST WORKOUT STRETCHING

I cannot emphasise the importance of stretching muscles enough, not only post-workout but at any point in the day when your limbs and joints feel tight or just to relieve muscle tension. Ask any practitioner of Yoga or Pilates the benefits are incredible. If anything it has enhanced my other forms of training, by helping me recover faster, reducing the possibility of injury from tight muscles trapped nerves etc., increased my balance, stability and flexibility and improved my core strength tenfold.

Perhaps most importantly it is paramount that you stretch after each and every workout to troubleshoot the possibility of injury and return your lengthened muscles to their previous states.

I have selected a number of stretches I regularly use post training that incorporate most of the major muscle groups. (See Post Workout Stretching section below)

POST WORKOUT STRETCHES

Stretching is an essential way to improve flexibility and range of motion. It can help improve circulation, posture, decrease joint stiffness and muscle tension, as well as improve your ability to relax.

A post workout stretching routine should take roughly 10 minutes. It is always best to stretch the muscles when they have been used and are warm. Below are a number of static stretches (holds not involving movement) Focus on stretching the muscles you use the most during your specific exercise or sport.

Stretching Technique

- Perform balanced stretching. Stretch the muscles on both sides of your body evenly. Don't stretch one side more than the other side.
- Avoid over-stretching. Never stretch to the point of pain or discomfort. You will feel slight tension or a pull on the muscle at the peak of the stretch.
- Always stretch slowly and evenly. Hold the stretch for about 20 seconds then release slowly as well.
- Never bounce or jerk while stretching. This can cause injury as a muscle is pushed beyond its ability. All stretches should be smooth, and slow.
- Don't forget to breathe. Never hold your breath while you stretch.

Kneeling Hip Flexor Stretch

Kneel on a mat and bring your right knee up so the bottom of your foot is on the floor and extend your left leg out behind you so the top of your foot is on the floor. Shift your weight forward until you feel a stretch in your hip. Hold for 15 seconds, then repeat for your other side.



Lying Hamstring Stretch

Lie on your back and lift your right knee up. Grasp behind your thigh near your knee with both hands and pull knee close to chest. Slowly extend your knee as you straighten your legs (get as straight as possible, but not so much that it hurts) while trying to keep it close to chest. Hold stretch for 30 seconds. Repeat with opposite leg.



Hamstring Stretch

Sit on the floor with one leg out straight. Bend the other leg at the knee and position the sole of that foot against your opposite inner thigh. Extend your arms and reach forward over the one straight leg by bending at the waist as far as possible. Hold this position for 10 seconds. Relax. Repeat with the other leg.



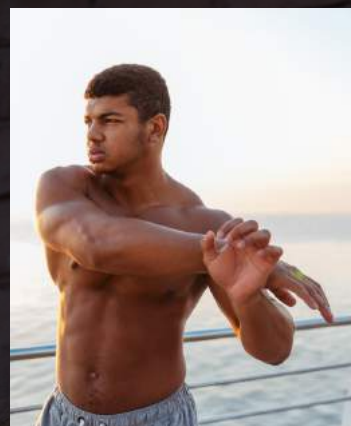
Figure 4 Stretch

Lay on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Cross your right ankle above your left knee and open your right knee to the right (a). Lift your left foot off the ground, keeping the left knee bent. Thread your right arm through the space between legs and reach left arm around left leg to interlace hands behind left thigh (b). Guide left knee toward chest and hold for 30 to 60 seconds (c). Repeat on the opposite side.



Arm and Shoulder Stretch

Stand with legs shoulder-width apart. Raise the right arm parallel to the floor and move it across the front of the body, with the upper arm coming in towards the chest. Placing the left hand on the right elbow, pull the right arm further across the body. The right elbow should be slightly bent, not be locked.



Triceps Stretch

Raise your left elbow and reach toward your upper back. Stand or sit straight with your feet shoulder width apart and knees slight bent. Point your left elbow toward the ceiling and touch the centre of your upper back with your left hand.[6] If you're not able to reach your upper back, put your hand on the back of your head instead. Bend your head forward when you put your hand on it, and then push your head back gently to increase the pull on your triceps.



Chest Wall Stretch

Stand in a doorway with your forearm placed in a vertical position on the doorframe. Your elbow and shoulder bent 90-degrees. Place your feet in a staggered stance position with your back leg on the same side as the chest muscle being stretched. Slowly shift your weight forward until a stretch is felt in the front of your shoulder and chest. Hold for 30 seconds.



Standing Calve Stretch

Keep your right leg forward, foot flat on the floor, and extend your left leg straight back, placing your heel flat on the floor. Don't bend your back knee. Lean into the wall until you feel the stretch in the calf of the straight leg. Hold for 30 seconds and switch sides.





'Start where you are, use what you have, do what you can!'

Arthur Ashe

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