
YOUR
easy guide to
HIIT WORKOUTS

a bonus Authentic Health guidebook



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In the book *Authentic Health*, we have an entire chapter on the benefits of movement. We try to simplify the concept and reframe it in a way that makes it something that everybody would want to do. We start by talking about all the potential benefits of an active lifestyle, meaning regular exercise and regular movement. Those benefits include:

- Improved energy
- Improved sleep
- Improved mood
- Reduced stress and anxiety
- Becoming stronger, or faster, or better conditioned
- Improved biomechanical health and reduced pain

Exercise reduces your risk of heart disease, cancer, and lowers your blood pressure and blood sugar. Exercise is important to reverse conditions such as type-2 diabetes, as after more intensive exercise, insulin resistance is reduced and blood sugars are lower. Exercise increases your metabolic rate and can help with weight loss. That's just the short list.

There are so many benefits to physical activity. I know that if I could create a prescription medication with all of the benefits, everyone would want to take it. Here's the good news. You don't have to go to a gym. You don't have to buy expensive equipment. You can do this by yourself or with others. You don't have to start with an hour a day. You can just start wherever you feel most comfortable. Any movement will help you.

I'm a big advocate of moving as much as possible as well as trying to be outdoors as much as possible. Getting natural sunlight helps your circadian rhythms, improves your mood, and improves your sleep.

Autophagy

There's another benefit to more intensive physical activity. It's a concept called autophagy. Autophagy is the process where our older cells basically kill themselves. It's a form of cleanup or detox for the body. It's a natural process and it's supposed to occur. Our modern lifestyles prevent autophagy from happening, which increases our risk of cancer and other conditions.

Autophagy occurs when we place our body, specifically, our cells, under some form of stress. That can include things such as fasting and exercise. Fasting and brief periods of reduced calorie consumption can actually induce autophagy, which is part of why they're beneficial for us. Also more intensive exercise will increase autophagy as well, as it's a form of stress for the cells. So we want you to look at physical activity or overall movement as consistent with your goals to feel your best now, and for as long as you can possibly live.

Foundations of Movement

In the book, I outline my foundations of movement. I discuss postural awareness, biomechanical awareness, ways to make sure you're holding your body and using it rightly. I discuss overall movement, which is quite simple: just move as much as you can. Take the stairs. Take two trips. Kneel, squat, lunge, pull, press.

Embrace every opportunity to use your body as much as possible.

Get off the couch, get out of the chair, and move your body. That's easy.

Then we get into the specifics of more intensive, focused physical exercise for the purposes of improving your health. There are many programs available that can help you be more physically fit and healthy. We are providing you with some basics that you can use for the rest of your life without needing any other programs. However, you may decide to explore other options as well, which is great. There are countless free videos on YouTube outlining different fitness routines. There are so many different types of fitness classes, including spin classes, dance classes, Zumba, and other activities that will accomplish your goals.

Mindset

For our purposes, we're going to teach two primary forms of focused physical activity or exercise. I keep using the term "focused physical activity" because for many people, they hear the word "exercise" and they think of it as work, something they have to do, or ought to do, but don't want to do. We've already been clear in our mindset materials that for you to be successful, you have to desire this for yourself. In order to develop the habit of being physically active and physically fit, you have to reframe this as consistent with your desires, what *you* want. You want to be healthy and feel good, and this is part of how you experience that. Actually reframe sitting on the couch or an absence of movement as something you don't want, as something very inconsistent with how you want to feel.

You have to have the right mindset, the right desire, for this to work for you. If you need help with that, please go back to either our chapters on mindset, or view [our resources](#) or video series on [mindset](#) and desire, so that you can enter into this from the perspective of excitement about what you're about to do.

Okay, enough preliminary talk.

Let's get to the programs

What we're suggesting is really quite simple. And again, you can use this as your platform for the rest of your life and get all the results you desire. We are going to suggest two forms of workouts, both of which can be combined if desired. We are also going to break this down into an approach for beginners as well as those who are more advanced. Start wherever you feel most comfortable. This is a long-term journey. This is not 6 weeks to your best fitness ever. This is for the rest of your life, feeling good, and being healthy. Take your time, be patient, and just stick with it. Keep reminding yourself of your goals. Keep reminding yourself of what you want.

First, you want to understand that the focused physical activity will involve a little more effort than just the general movement we recommend. This can be based off of a walking program, but you will have to occasionally walk a little faster and breathe a little harder. We want you to be able to accurately assess your levels of exertion. We're going to use high intensity interval training (HIIT).

High Intensity Interval Training and Heart Rate

This is very popular, and you can find many different types of HIIT workouts online. Essentially, HIIT is simply more intensive bursts of activity interspersed with periods of rest. You repeat it a number of times, and then you're done. Generally speaking, we would like these workouts to last approximately 30 minutes. This usually would mean 5-6 minutes of warming up, followed by anywhere from 8-15 intervals depending on how long they are, and then a brief period of cool down. You can go for longer than 30 minutes, but you don't need to. 30 minutes is all you need.

I also want to be clear that when you're short on time, even 5 minutes will be helpful for you. You may not get the same level of benefit, but you will get benefit. So don't ever think that you don't have enough time. Even a 4-minute Tabata sequence, which is easy to do, can have significant benefits for you.

Goals

You have to first decide what are your goals? If your primary goal is just to feel good and live a long, healthy lifespan, then I do not think you need to do intensive exercise more than twice a week. For promoting your longest, healthiest lifespan, I recommend, moving as much as possible each day, and then once a week, do a high intensity interval training workout. Also, once a week, do a strength training routine. That's really all you need to do.

We provide pictures and descriptions of sample routines you can do. But essentially, to live your longest, healthiest lifespan, you move a lot, you do intensive aerobic activity once a week, and you do some form of strength training once a week. These workouts can be less than 20 minutes, and you'll still get the benefit of them.

If you're actually trying to lose weight, improve your conditioning, and maximize your results, then you'll need to do a little more than that. If that's the case, I'm recommending two high intensity interval training workouts each week, and two strength sessions each week.

If your goals are to develop explosive power, or to build the most muscle you can, then our training programs aren't really what you're looking for. Ours are for general health and fitness. For those of you who are looking for advanced level conditioning, I suspect you already have resources you go to.

Our programs can work for anyone, but they are specific to just being your healthiest self.

The Numbers

When doing high intensity intervals, it's important that you get your heart rate up to a target zone. You can do this precisely with heart rate monitoring, or you can do something called a perceived exertion scale. Either is fine. If you want to be precise, you'll calculate your maximum heart rate. This is basically the number of beats per minute your heart can handle during exercise, and the simplest formula for it is to subtract your age from 220. So if you are a 50-year-old, you would subtract 50 from 220 to get a maximum heart rate of 170.

Then you would identify your target heart rate. This would be the range that you'd like to get your heart rate into when performing your intervals. Generally you would want to get it to between 80-90% of your maximum during the high intensity portion of the training. So you would then take 170 and multiply it by 80% which is 136, and 90% which is 153, and then that would give you your heart rate range: 136-153. Your goal, if you were using a heart rate monitor, would be to get into that range during the high intensity interval, and then lower it during the rest interval. Then you would repeat that for however many sets you are doing. If you are just starting out then you would use a lower range- 70%-85%.

Another method, which might be easier, is to use something called the perceived exertion scale. It works just as well. You just think of your effort as being on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being full, all-out effort, as though you were sprinting, and giving it everything you had. 0 would be doing nothing. Moderate effort would be a 3 or a 4, and would involve perhaps brisk walking or light jogging or any other activity.

The level you would want to get to would be a perceived exertion of a 7 or 8, which would be that you're breathing pretty heavily, but that you could sustain that for perhaps 30 seconds or longer. If you use this scale, essentially you'll try to get to between a 7 or 8 or even a 9 for your interval, and then you'll lower it to a 2 or 3 or 4 during the rest portion.

So here's the basic high intensity interval workout. It's quite simple, and we want to do these either once a week for just general wellness, or twice a week if we have higher goals.

The Workout

Pick an activity. It could be walking, jogging, swimming, cycling, rowing, running, spinning, dancing, or calisthenics. Basically any activity that gets your heart rate up. We want you to go for 30 minutes, but it can absolutely be less if necessary. Any amount counts. But your goal is eventually to get to where you can do this for 30 minutes.

If you're a beginner, for the first 5 minutes, you would warm up, doing whatever activity you've chosen. This would be a perceived exertion of 3 or 4 on the scale of 1-10. For the next 20 minutes, you're going to do 30 seconds of more intensive effort, which would be a 7, 8, or a 9, followed by 30 seconds of lighter effort, which would be a 3, a 4, or a 5. For the last 5 minutes, you cool down, which could be with stretching, or just a very slow pace of whatever you were doing. Then you're finished. That's it. It took 30 minutes. Remember, if you only have 20 minutes that is fine, still do the workout.

If you're already a regular exerciser, then you'll still warm up for 5 minutes, with perceived exertion of 3 or 4 on a scale of 1-10. Then for the next 20 minutes, you're going to do 1 minute of more intensive effort, followed by 45 seconds to 1 minute, if needed, of lighter effort. Again, this would be 7 to 9 for the hard effort, and 2 to 4 for the more moderate effort.

If you're already at an advanced level, for the first 5 minutes, you would do your warm up, the next 20 minutes you would do 2 minutes of hard effort followed by 45 seconds to 1 minute of light effort. And again, you would do that for 20 minutes, and then cool down for 5 minutes.

You can see that this is really quite simple. You're basically doing a 5-minute warm up and a 5-minute cool down, and then just doing bursts of activity followed by brief rest periods for 20 minutes. Actually, you can vary your timing. You can go with 20-second sprints followed by 20-second rest periods, and do more. Or you can do 4-minute moderate intensity intervals, such as a 6 or a 7, followed by 2-3 minutes of recovery. All versions of this can work for you. You just have to be consistent. Actually, it's quite helpful to vary it over time so that you work different metabolic systems. You work different cellular energy systems. This will enhance metabolic flexibility and your body's ability to use energy.

It's pretty simple. Pick an activity and spend 30 minutes doing it in high intensity interval fashion.

Another option is Tabata intervals, and you can basically do a Tabata interval, followed by a minute of rest, followed by 3 more Tabata intervals. This can be done with body weight exercises such as squats, or burpees, or jumping jacks. You can see our [list of exercises](#) to pick one, and you basically would do it for 20 seconds on, followed by 10 seconds of rest. You repeat that 8 times for 4 minutes of total exercise. Then you would spend a few minutes recovering, and then repeat this.

Strength and Conditioning

We also recommend some form of resistance training—for general wellness, once a week, or for improved fitness, twice a week. This is strength training. You do not have to go to a gym. You can just use body weight exercises. It's very important because the message of strength training to your body is a very invigorating message:

- Increase your metabolism and bone density
- Increase growth hormone and testosterone
- Increase strength and conditioning
- Promote a longer, healthier lifespan

When overdone, it can be too much of a stress on the body, and we're not going to recommend that for you. We're focused on what's necessary to maintain your lean body mass and maintain your health.

Generally, I try to pick compound exercises—exercises that will stress multiple body parts at once. These are exercises such as a squat-press, or a lunge with a bicep curl. Again, you can see our pictures and descriptions so you understand the types of exercises we're discussing. We really want to focus on form with these. The goal is to, over time, develop strength and develop a body that functions properly, so we're not in a hurry to lift more weight.

Mobility and Core Strengthening

Our first focus is overall mobility and and core strengthening. I would encourage you, if you're a beginner, to focus on this with body weight exercises, paying attention to your form, and be very patient. You'd be surprised at how intense this can be with just body weight.

So you'd pick from our list of exercises, and you'll see that we have exercises for the front side of your body, and the back side of your body. A push, a pull, a squat, a lunge, and a core strengthening exercise. Then we're going to recommend that you do each exercise to the point where you feel like you're at the threshold of failure, meaning you feel like you really can't do any more. You're breathing heavy, the muscles are burning, and you literally can't do another rep. That's called your threshold of failure, and our goal is to take the muscles to

the threshold of failure. Once we arrive there, then we stop and rest. Rest is important. We want you to rest and recover, and then do this again.

There are so many different ways you can vary this. You can do 3 sets of 15 reps. You can do more sets of less, such as 5 sets of 5. You can go very slow, and actually only do one set, but to the point of maximum failure. If, for instance, you were doing a pushup, you could go very slow with excellent form through the range of motion of a pushup, for 1 ½ to 2 minutes, without stopping and to the point where you can no longer hold your body. The same is true for a squat or a lunge. There's really no wrong way to do this, other than to use bad form, or to not do it at all.

So you'll pick from the list of exercises, and you'll work through them. You'll do this once a week if all you're after is general wellness, twice a week if you're after conditioning and weight loss. These workouts will take less than 30 minutes. If done quickly, in the form of high intensity intervals, they can take less than 20 minutes. They should be fun. Turn on the music. Do this in a pleasant place. Go outdoors. Really enjoy this. Look forward to it.

At the end of the workout, although you'll be breathing heavily and your muscles may feel warm or hot, you'll walk away feeling very invigorated. You'll have energy. If you are working at a desk throughout the entire day and you find yourself having a midday slump, if instead of going and eating a snack or surfing the web, you actually were to take 4 minutes and do some body weight exercises, such as a Tabata sequence, you would find that your energy would return and you would feel invigorated.

This is fun. Make sure you remember that.

So when you're doing these exercises, if you're a beginner, we recommend you focus only on perfect form, contracting your muscles, and using only your body weight. If you're intermediate or advanced, you can add weight. You can use dumbbells or stretch bands, like resistance bands. You can even use small household items. Start with lighter weight and work your way up. Make sure you're always able to maintain good form.

Combined workout

We also have a combined workout, which can be very effective, and it also can be used as a substitute when you don't have time to do 4 workouts a week. This is a combination of high intensity interval training and strength training. You can do this workout twice a week, or only once if that's all that works for you.

Essentially, you're going to use the same exercises from our strength training section, and you're going to perform them for a certain amount of time, generally about 45 seconds to 1 minute, and then you're going to move to the next one without resting. So for instance, you would do pushups for a minute, then move to assisted pull-ups for a minute, and then move to squats for a minute, and then move to lunges for a minute, and then do a plank for 1 minute. You would then rest for a few minutes, until you feel like you've recovered, and then you would do it again. You would repeat this 4 times. In so doing, you'd get your heart rate up and build strength.

We provide plenty of options for the exercises. There are exercises that build:

- Strength
- Endurance
- Improve mobility

Just choose them and do them. Find the ones that feel good to you and do them. You also want to vary your workouts over time, because you want to provide different stresses to your body. You don't want to just do the same thing all the time. So you can vary it every week, or every 6 weeks, you can pick a new routine. When you come across movements that feel particularly challenging to you, stick with them unless they're causing you significant pain. Actually, having your brain or central nervous system have to develop the new skill sets will be really good for your mind and your body and increase neuroplasticity—you'll grow more neuronal networks, which will actually make you smarter as well.

Join our Facebook community, where people can share their various workouts and other ideas that have helped them develop a habit of total body movement.

The final thing is just to do it. Move as much as you can. Pay attention to your posture. Once a week, sprint, meaning do some form of high intensity interval training. Once a week, build strength. We also recommend throughout the week restorative activities, such as yoga, other forms of stretching, foam rolling, myofascial stretches, and we have resources that outline this as well. It is very important that you give your body adequate rest and recovery time. If your soreness is lasting for more than a day, or you're feeling weak and tired when you wake up, then you might want to back off and give your body more rest. Remember: this is the long journey.

You will never regret developing the habit of movement. It will always pay you back more than whatever time it takes.