

Four weeks to fabulous

Not possible? It is, with heptathlete Louise Hazel's handy step-by-step guide. (Step one: get off the sofa)

Photographs by Sophia Evans



WEEK 1

10-minute workouts

Monday Complete the Gym 1 routine (see overleaf), doing each exercise for 30 seconds at a time.

Tuesday Do 10 minutes of continuous cardio exercise at 50% intensity (ie, half as hard as you could). This could be jogging, swimming, cycling or cross-training. Slowly ease yourself into the session. Then complete the core workout (see page 11).

Wednesday Rest day.

Thursday Complete the Gym 2 routine (see overleaf), doing each exercise for 30 seconds at a time.

Friday

Choose your cardio exercise and do 30 seconds almost as hard as you can (90% intensity), followed by a minute standing still to recover. Repeat this eight times. Then complete the core workout.

Saturday Follow my stretch routine (page 10) or do a yoga or Pilates class.

Sunday Rest day.



Warm up with five minutes of pulse-raising activity (cross-trainer, rowing machine, treadmill) and some stretching to loosen up

WEEK 2

20-minute workouts

Monday Complete the Gym 1 routine (see overleaf), doing each exercise for 30 seconds at a time. Repeat once more.

Tuesday Do 20 minutes of continuous cardio exercise at 50% intensity (ie, half as hard as you could). This could be jogging, swimming, cycling or cross-training. Slowly ease yourself into the session. Then complete the core workout (see page 11).

Wednesday Rest day.

Thursday Complete

the Gym 2 routine (see overleaf), doing each exercise for 30 seconds at a time. Repeat once more.

Friday

Choose your cardio exercise and do 30 seconds almost as hard as you can (90%), followed by a minute standing still to recover. Repeat this 10 times. Then complete the core workout.

Saturday Follow my stretch routine (page 10) or do a yoga or Pilates class.

Sunday Rest day.

WEEK 3

30-minute workouts

Monday Complete the Gym 1 routine (see overleaf), doing each exercise for 30 seconds at a time. Repeat a total of three times.

Tuesday Do 30 minutes of continuous cardio exercise at 50% intensity (ie, half as hard as you could). This could be jogging, swimming, cycling or cross-training. Slowly ease yourself into the session. Then complete the core workout (page 11).

Wednesday Rest day.

Thursday Complete the Gym 2 routine (see overleaf) three times, doing each exercise for 30 seconds at a time.

Friday Choose your cardio exercise and do 30 seconds almost as hard as you can (90%), followed by a minute standing still to recover. Repeat this 12 times. Then complete the core workout.

Saturday Follow my stretch routine (page 10) or do a yoga or Pilates class.

Sunday Rest day.

If you miss a day, do not double up; just move on to the following day

WEEK 4

40-minute workouts

Monday Complete the Gym 1 routine (see overleaf), doing each exercise for 30 seconds at a time. Repeat a total of four times.

Tuesday Do 40 minutes of continuous cardio exercise at 50% intensity (ie, half as hard as you could). This could be jogging, swimming, cycling or cross-training. Slowly ease yourself into the session. Then complete the core workout (see page 11).

Wednesday Rest day.

Thursday Complete the Gym 2 routine (see overleaf), doing each exercise for 30 seconds at a time. Repeat a total of four times.

Friday Choose your cardio exercise and do 30 seconds almost as hard as you can (90%), followed by a minute standing still to recover. Repeat this 10 times. Then complete the core workout.

Saturday Follow my stretch routine (page 10) or do a yoga or Pilates class.

Sunday Rest day. »

Gym 1

Aim to perform each exercise for 30 seconds, with no rest between moves. Then take one minute to recover before repeating

1 Bicycle crunch

Lie on your back with knees bent to 90 degrees and hands by your ears. Slowly extend left heel towards the floor while reaching left elbow across to right knee. Repeat on opposite side.



2 Toe taps

Keeping your body upright, drive your arms in a running motion, while lifting one leg at a time, knee bent. Gently tap each foot on the top of a step. Repeat, alternating as fast as you can.



3 Mountain climber

Starting in plank position, lift left toe off floor, bring left knee towards chest and gently tap floor with toe. Return to plank and repeat on right. Alternate as fast as you can. Repeat toe taps, as before.



4 Back squat

Stand with feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, and straight. Lower hips and bend knees to 90 degrees, keeping chest upright. Pause, then return to standing position. Repeat toe taps, as before.



5 Plank spiderman

Start in plank position, but with arms bent. Lift your left toe and raise your left knee out towards your left elbow. Repeat on the right side, then alternate sides in a controlled motion. Repeat toe taps, as before.



6 Forward lunge

With hands on hips, step forward on to your left foot (about 1m in front of you). Slowly bend knees to 90 degrees to lower your hips. Push through your heel to return to starting position. Repeat on right side. Repeat toe taps, as before.



Gym 2

Aim to perform each exercise for 30 seconds, with no rest between moves. Then take one minute to recover before repeating

1 Dead bugs

Lie on your back with knees bent to 90 degrees, arms up. Slowly lower left heel towards floor while extending right arm over head. Slowly return to starting position and repeat on the other side.



2 Toe taps

Keeping your body upright, drive your arms in a running motion, while lifting one leg at a time, knee bent. Gently tap each foot on the top of a step. Repeat, alternating as fast as you can.



3 Jump squats

Stand with feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, toes pointing forwards. Lower hips and bend knees to 90 degrees, with chest upright. Jump up in the air, land gently on both feet and repeat. Repeat toe taps, as before.



4 Inchworm

From a standing position, bend over so your hands are on the floor in front of you (bend your knees if you need to). Slowly inch hands forward one by one until you can go no farther. Then inch them closer to your body until you're back in starting position. Repeat toe taps, as before.



5 Modified press-up

In a kneeling push-up position, make sure you keep head, neck and back in a straight line. Slowly bend elbows until your chest touches the floor. Pause before pushing up to starting position. Do not stick your bum out. Repeat toe taps, as before.



6 Burpees

Crouch in a tuck position with hands on the floor. Extend legs out into a plank, balancing weight on palms and toes. Return to tuck position before driving through toes and jumping up. Repeat as many times as you can. Repeat toe taps, as before. »



Stretch

This sequence is to be performed straight through, with no breaks. Aim to hold poses for 10 seconds on each side of the body. Complete the sequence three times, breathing steadily throughout and exhaling deeply as you move between stretches

1 Neck

Stand in a relaxed position. Ease your head down towards one side, using your hand to pull it down gently. Repeat on the other side.



2 Shoulders

Stand in a relaxed position with feet shoulder-width apart. Put one arm out straight and pull it across your body with the other hand. Repeat on the other side.



3 Overhead triceps

Stand in a relaxed position. Raise one arm, elbow bent, with your hand facing down your back. Use your other hand to stretch your tricep. Repeat on the other side.



4 Calf

Step forward into a gentle lunge, keeping back leg straight. Press against a wall to deepen the stretch.



5 Butterfly

Sit on the floor and bend both knees, keeping feet together and back straight. Use your elbows to deepen the stretch.



6 Hamstring

Sit on the floor and put one leg straight out in front of you, with the other leg bent. Lean forward and reach as far as you can. Repeat on the other side.



7 Lower back

Lie on your back with legs out straight. Raise one knee, pulling it towards your chest. Hold, then repeat with the other leg.



8 Glute stretch

Lie on your back with your knees bent. Put your right foot on to your left knee, so that your knee is out to one side. Pull your left leg in towards you. Hold, then repeat on the other side.



9 Cat stretch

Start on all fours, looking straight ahead. Sink your spine and stick out your bottom, arching your back. Then invert the stretch, curving your back, with your head lowered.



10 Cobra

Lie face down with arms bent on the ground. Push up with them to lift your torso and gently arch your back.



Core

Hold each position for 30 seconds before moving on to the next. Then rest for one minute. Aim to complete the set three times - you may need to build up to this, at first holding each pose for only 20 seconds

1 Front plank

Start by lying face down. Raise your body on to toes and forearms, keeping back, neck and head in a neutral position. Your body should be in a straight line. Engage your core.



2 Side plank

When in plank position, rotate on to one side, holding your weight on one forearm, with legs straight and feet stacked on top of each other. Lift the other arm. Push your hip to the ceiling to maintain alignment.



3 Front plank

As above. Squeeze your core muscles to maintain the position.



4 Side plank

As above, on other side. Control your breathing.



Louise Hazel's exclusive video series

Follow our workout with 13 videos at theguardian.com/video, including Louise Hazel's stretch routine and the best technique for every move. Leggings, from the Louise Hazel x BAA range, available from baaclothing.com from next month.