

Get Stronger with Military Calisthenics

The 28-Day Plan

Five short bodyweight sessions a week. No app, no gym. Test on day 1, retest on day 28. Numbers don't lie. You will be fitter.



LENGTH

28 days, 5 sessions a week

TIME

30–40 minutes a session

KIT

None; a bar or sturdy table and chair

STRUCTURE

5-min warm-up, then the day's workout

TEST

Push-ups, plank, 2.4 km run

How it works

01 · THE PLAN

Four weeks, five days a week

You train Monday to Friday and rest on weekends. On day 1 you do a quick test: push-ups, a plank and a 2.4 km run. Write your numbers down. Each week gets a little harder, first with more rounds, then with less rest. On day 28 you do the same test again.

02 · A CIRCUIT

Five moves, back to back

Do the first exercise, then go straight to the next until you've done all five. That's one round. Rest for 90 seconds, then go again. The calendar on page 3 tells you how many rounds to do each day. If your form starts to slip, slow down. Good reps count, sloppy ones don't.

03 · THE PAYOFF

Stronger by day 28. Guaranteed.

Stick to the plan and you will finish stronger and fitter than you started: more push-ups, a longer plank and a faster run. Your day-1 and day-28 numbers will prove it. Miss a day? Pick up where you left off. Turning up is what gets you fighting fit.

WARM-UP 5 minutes before every session: jog on the spot, jumping jacks, arm circles and a few easy squats.

CIRCUIT A · DAYS 2, 8, 15, 22

Strength circuit A

As little rest as possible between moves; 90 s between rounds.



Push-ups

× 10

Hands under shoulders, body in one line. Lower your chest to a fist's height, press back up. Hands on a bench if needed.



Bodyweight squats

× 20

Feet shoulder-width. Sit the hips back and down to parallel, then drive up through the heels.



Inverted rows

× 8–10

Lie under a sturdy table or low bar and grip the edge, body straight. Pull your chest up to it, lower slowly.



Reverse lunges

× 10 each leg

Step one foot back and lower until both knees reach 90°. Push through the front heel to stand.



Plank

30–45 s

Forearms under shoulders, body straight from head to heels. Brace the stomach and squeeze the glutes.

CIRCUIT B · DAYS 4, 10, 17, 24

Strength circuit B

Little rest between moves; 90 s between rounds.

**Diamond or wide push-ups**

× 8

Diamond: hands together under the chest. Wide: hands outside the shoulders. Same straight body as a push-up.

**Split squats**

× 10 each leg

Staggered stance, feet stay planted. Drop the back knee towards the floor, then stand. Finish one leg, then swap.

**Pull-ups or chin-ups**

× 3-6

Palms away (pull-up) or facing you (chin-up). Chin over the bar, lower slowly. Can't do one? Jump up and lower over 5 s.

**Glute bridges**

× 15

On your back, knees bent, feet flat. Drive the hips up until knees, hips and shoulders line up. Pause, lower.

**Side plank**

20-30 s each side

On one forearm, feet stacked, hips lifted so your body makes a straight line. Swap sides.

CONDITIONING · DAYS 3, 9, 16, 23

Conditioning

One exercise per work interval, hard but controlled. Walk or march on the spot during the easy portions. Intervals change each week.

**Burpees**

Squat, hands down, jump the feet back to a plank. Jump them back in, stand and jump.

**Mountain climbers**

From a high plank, drive one knee at a time towards your chest. Quick feet, hips level.

**High knees**

Run on the spot, bringing the knees up to hip height. Pump the arms.

**Squat jumps**

Squat to parallel, jump straight up, land softly and sink back into the squat.

**Jumping Jacks**

Stand feet together, then jump to spread arms and legs then return to start position.

CORE AND PULL · DAYS 5, 11, 18, 25

Core and pull

Work through all five, then repeat for the rounds set that day.

**Flutter kicks**

× 20 each leg

On your back, hands under the hips, legs straight and just off the floor. Kick up and down in small, quick beats.

**Hollow hold**

20-30 s

Press your lower back into the floor, then lift the shoulders and legs, arms overhead. Hold the shape.

**Single-leg toe reach**

× 10 each side

Sit with one hand on the floor for support. Lean back slightly, lift one leg and reach the other hand towards your foot. Lower with control, then switch sides. Keep your chest lifted and stomach braced.

**Dead hang or active hang**

20-40 s

Hang from a bar, arms straight. Active hang: pull the shoulders down away from the ears without bending the arms.

**Seated straight-leg hold**

20-30 s

Sit on a sturdy chair and grip the seat beside your hips. Brace your stomach and lift both straight legs in front of you. Hold with your chest up and shoulders down. Bend your knees if you need an easier version.

The 28 days

Strength A

Strength B

Conditioning

Core and pull

Run/walk

Test

WEEK 1

Foundation

Learn the moves. Stop every set 2–3 reps short of failure.

DAY 1

Test

Warm up, then do the tests below

DAY 2

Strength A

3 rounds

DAY 3

Conditioning

8 × 30 s on, 60 s easy

DAY 4

Strength B

3 rounds

DAY 5

Core and pull

3 rounds + 20 min brisk walk

DAY 6–7

Rest

Rest one day, walk the other for 30 mins

WEEK 2

Build

Same sessions, more work: add a round or a few reps.

DAY 8

Strength A

4 rounds

DAY 9

Conditioning

10 × 30 s on, 45 s easy

DAY 10

Strength B

4 rounds

DAY 11

Core and pull

4 rounds

DAY 12

Run

20–30 min, steady pace, 3–4km

DAY 13–14

Rest

Rest one day, walk the other for 45 mins

WEEK 3

Density

Same moves, less rest. This is the hard week.

DAY 15

Strength A

20-min AMRAP (as many rounds as possible)

DAY 16

Conditioning

12 × 30 s on, 30 s easy

DAY 17

Strength B

20-min AMRAP

DAY 18

Core and pull

4 rounds, harder progressions

DAY 19

Run

25–30 min with 6 × 1-min faster efforts

DAY 20–21

Rest

Rest, or an easy walk

WEEK 4

Peak and retest

Back off early in the week, then test.

DAY 22

Strength A

3 rounds, crisp

DAY 23

Conditioning

8 × 30 s on, 60 s easy

DAY 24

Strength B

3 rounds

DAY 25

Core and pull

3 rounds

DAY 26–27

Rest

DAY 28

Retest

Compare with day 1

Your test results

TEST	HOW	DAY 1	DAY 28
Push-ups	Max good reps in 2 minutes. Chest to a fist's height, body straight, full lockout. Rest only at the top.	reps	reps
Plank	Forearm plank, straight body, hold as long as you can.	min:s	min:s
2.4 km run	Run or run-walk 2.4 km (1.5 miles) as fast as you can.	min:s	min:s

Rules that make it work

Wrecked for two days?

Repeat that week instead of moving on. Turning up five times a week beats one heroic session.

Beginner or over 50?

Hands on a bench for push-ups, 2 rounds in week 1, walk instead of run, and swap jumps for step-backs or marching.

Scale, don't skip.

Knee or incline push-ups, table rows and slow negatives all count. Progress from your own day-1 numbers.

Safety first.

Build up gradually, stop anything that causes sharp pain, and see your GP first if you're returning from injury or have a heart or blood-pressure condition.