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Minimal Equipment, Maximum Effects - Home Workouts for the Time Crunched

From time to time, everyone struggles with fitting in quality workouts at the gym. Whether you are a fitness professional that can't seem to escape your adoring fans when you're on the treadmill, or a busy working mom that has one too many errands to run after work, we all could benefit quick and easy workouts at home. But when you're paying for a membership or have easy access to state of art equipment at your club, it's hard to justify spending your hard earned money to set up an adequate workout space. Let's look at the key pieces that would allow you to create full body workouts in your home for minimal cost, taking up very little room.

In order to hit the 'Big 4' (cardiorespiratory, strength, flexibility and balance), all you need are four simple pieces of equipment: *a jump rope, Nautilus SelectTech dumbbells, a yoga mat, and a stability ball*. Each of these pieces takes up very little room, both to execute exercises and for storage. The best part, your 'home gym' can be set up for around \$500, be used for a variety of workouts and can be suitable for EVERY exerciser in your house.

Here's a sample workout that should take you less than 30 minutes:

Warm Up - using the jump rope first, lie the rope down in a straight line and straddle it; begin stepping over it to the right and then back over it to the left as you move towards the front of the rope; once you are at the front of the rope, straddle the rope and march back. Repeat this at least 10 times, increasing the length of your steps from side to side and the

height of the knees on the march back to elevate the heart rate and core temperature, getting your body ready to work.

Strength/ Cardio/ Balance Intervals -try the following 5 tri-exercise intervals to target the entire body using the Nautilus SelectTech dumbbells (these dumbbells provide up to 52lbs of resistance with an easy turn of the dial), jump rope, and stability ball. Each exercise should be performed for approximately 60 seconds (except for jump roping) with minimal rest in between:

(1) With feet shoulder width apart, and a SelectTech dumbbell in each hand, perform bent over rows. Immediately following, stand up with the dumbbells still by your side and execute squats. Dumbbells move out of the way, pick up the jump rope and perform 45 seconds of jumping. Then, sit on the edge of the stability ball with your feet approximately shoulder distance apart. Alternate extending one leg at a time out in front of you (off the floor) while trying to keep the ball from moving. If you need to increase the balance challenge, try closing your eyes.

(2) Still using the stability ball, either place your hands on the ball or your feet on the ball to perform a set of pushups. See how many you can do in 60-seconds. You can place the stability ball against the wall for a little help in the balance department, or choose to do the pushups on the floor instead. Next, lie on the floor with your heels placed on the ball and your knees bent. Execute hip lifts or bridges (simply lift the hips off the ground, trying to keep the pelvis level and the back in the same position). Stand up, grab the rope and try for another set of jumping. For your balance work, perform abdominal curls while lying on the stability ball.

(3) Seated on the stability ball, holding the SelectTech dumbbells in both hands perform biceps curls. Immediately following, still holding the dumbbells, straddle the ball and bend the knees to place the inside of the thighs against the outside of the ball. Alternate between squeezing and releasing the ball. Put the dumbbells down, and you're back to jumping rope. Back to a seated position on the ball, with your hips close to the edge; try to alternate stepping side to side as far as you can for a balance challenge. To make it harder, go further or start leaping from side to side (hips do not leave the ball).

(4) Standing, with one SelectTech dumbbell grasped in both hands over head, begin executing overhead triceps extensions. Bring the dumbbell down to in front of the chest lengthwise, and

begin alternating lunges, stepping backwards to execute the lunge. Again, take hold of the rope and jump. Try adding in some various foot positions this time (side-side, front-back, etc). For your balance work, lie prone on the stability ball and perform back extensions. Experiment with your hand and feet positions to increase or decrease the balance challenge on this exercise.

(5) Standing, with a SelectTech dumbbell in either hand at your side, alternate front raises and side raises to fatigue the shoulders. Keep the dumbbells by your side, alternate between rising on to your toes and then rocking back on your heels (without tilting the pelvis). Last time, grab the jump rope and perform your last round of jumping. Your last balance exercise will be to lie supine on the stability ball with your head and neck supported and try to alternate lifting a foot off the floor for 60-seconds. To decrease the stability challenge, simply lift the heel instead of the foot and/or instead of alternating for the entire time, hold each lift for a few seconds.

Stretch – move the other equipment away and unroll your yoga mat (if you haven't been using it thus far), inhale and reach up over your head with both arms. With the arms remaining overhead, try to lean to either side and hold for approximately 20-seconds. Release the arms; tuck the chin and roll all the way down to touch the floor with your hands (bend the knees as much as you need to in order to accomplish this position). Roll all the way back up with a strong core. Step back with the right leg into a long lunge, hands on either side of the foot, and once there take the back knee to the floor. Once you find your balance, lift the arms over the head and sink into this hip flexor stretch. Hands return to the floor, knee comes off the mat and switch to repeat on the left side. Come into a standing position, pull the right heel into the buttocks to stretch the quadriceps; repeat on the opposite leg. Place the feet shoulder width apart, roll the shoulders a few times to the back. Take one last inhale, arms over the head – hold them there and stretch as if you just woke up. Shake the arms out and down to finish!

Of course, this merely scratches the surface for the number of exercises and workouts you can create with these pieces of equipment at your home. The key is to minimize the equipment and the time, while maximizing the effectiveness to keep you motivated. These strategies will allow you to sneak workouts in no matter how your week is shaping up.