

# The Workouts Top Trainers Do When They Have Only 20 Minutes to Exercise

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When your schedule is jam-packed, the idea of when and how to fit in a workout often sparks an internal debate: *If there's not enough time to fit it in your full routine, is it even worth it?* Of course, doing something is better than nothing, even if it's short. But when time is scarce, it doesn't necessarily mean you have to skimp on your workout quality. You just have to figure out what's going to be the most efficient thing to do in a short amount of time.

Should you strength train or go for a run? Lift heavy or do a bodyweight circuit? Instead of wondering (and wasting more time), we decided to ask some of our favorite go-to trainers what they do themselves when they have only 20 minutes to exercise. While their specific routines vary a lot, they all have a few things in common: They incorporate as many muscle groups as possible and are designed to keep the heart rate high throughout.

Try any of these 10 workouts below the next time you're looking for a short and efficient routine.

## 1. Noam Tamir, C.S.C.S., owner and trainer at TS Fitness in New York City

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When Tamir has time to train himself in between clients, he likes to do AMRAP (as many rounds as possible) workouts to make the most of his time. “An AMRAP workout is great because you are putting in a lot of work in a short period of time. You take rest only when you really need it and you become a little competitive with yourself during the workout, comparing the number of rounds you were able to complete with previous times you’ve done it.” His go-to workout below “is intended to hit the whole body, work multiple planes of movement, keep the body balanced, and improve endurance and strength,” he says.

### **Warm-up:**

### **15-Minute AMRAP Workout:**

## 2. PJ Stahl, C.S.C.S., co-owner and trainer at Lock Box in Los Angeles

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As a certified strength coach, Reebok master trainer, and both co-owner and head coach at Lock Box Fitness & Performance Center in Los Angeles, Stahl is what you’d consider an experienced fitness expert. Whenever he’s in a time crunch, his go-to workout is fast, efficient, and fun. “I make sure that I incorporate upper-body exercises, lower-body exercises, and plyometrics for increased calorie burn and plank-based movements to work the entire core,” he tells SELF. “This full-body workout can be done anywhere and with zero equipment!”

*Try not to take a break between circuits if possible.*

### **20-Minute Circuit Workout**

#### **Circuit 1:**

- Plank tuck-jumps—30 seconds
- Mountain climbers—30 seconds
- Alternating split lunge jumps—30 seconds
- Mountain climbers—30 seconds
- Do five rounds (10 minutes total).

#### **Circuit 2:**

- High plank with alternating shoulder taps—30 seconds
- Burpees—30 seconds
- In-and-out squat jumps—30 seconds
- Burpees—30 seconds
- Do five rounds (10 minutes total).

## 3. Astrid Swan, Barry’s Bootcamp instructor and personal trainer in West Hollywood, California

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Swan, one of the renowned trainers at Barry’s Bootcamp in Hollywood, has put celebrities like Julianne Hough and Olivia Munn through grueling workout sessions. Her no-BS, tell-it-like-it-is

training style is what her clients love most about her—and she takes the same approach with her own workouts. If she has only 20 minutes, Swan turns to a full-body circuit that works her arms, legs, glutes, shoulders, back, and core. She especially loves the high-intensity interval workout below because "it's time efficient, it's a balance of upper- and lower-body moves, and every move challenges your core," she says. "I love this workout because it requires just one dumbbell and doesn't need a lot of space. I am able to combine both strength training and cardio in this HIIT routine."

### **20-Minute HIIT Workout**

- Goblet squats—12 reps
- Kettlebell swings—12 reps
- Right arm rows (in lunge position)—12 reps
- Left arm rows (in lunge position)—12 reps
- Right leg lunges—12 reps
- Left leg lunges—12 reps
- Right arm snatch—12 reps
- Left arm snatch—12 reps
- Overhead tricep extensions—12 reps
- Burpees—12 reps

### **4. Adam Rosante, strength and nutrition coach and personal trainer in New York City**

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Founder of online-based program Two Week Transformation and trainer to stars like Naomi Watts and Liev Schreiber, Rosante is always on the go. His go-to workout: A full-body AMRAP that will send your heart rate through the roof. "It's strength-building [and] fat-burning, all in one simple but far from easy 20-minute circuit," he says. "It also allows you to create a healthy competition with yourself as you push to increase the number of rounds you complete, each time you revisit the workout."

#### **20-Minute AMRAP Workout:**

You will need one set of dumbbells. Select a weight that will allow you to complete all the reps of your weakest exercise with perfect form.

### **5. Michelle Lovitt, M.A., trainer in Los Angeles and author of *Exercise for Your Muscle Type***

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Lovitt has a masters in exercise physiology and trains celebrities like Courteney Cox, Lauren Graham, and Julianne Moore. When she's pressed for time, the L.A.-based trainer turns to a workout that doesn't require much equipment or space—so she can do it anywhere. "It's a quick workout, but you're still hitting all muscle groups and keeping your heart rate up, so you strengthen your muscles while burning fat," she tells SELF. "It's my perfect go-to workout."

#### **Warm-up:**

- Do a dynamic warm-up ([here's one you can try!](#)) or foam roll for 3 minutes.

### **20-Minute Full-Body Workout:**

- Dumbbell lunges (alternating forward and reverse lunges)—15 reps on each leg, 2 sets
- Renegade rows—15 reps on each arm, 2 sets
- Dumbbell [squat to press](#)—15 reps, 2 sets
- Dumbbell [deadlifts](#)—15 reps, 2 sets
- Alternating [dumbbell twists](#)—15 reps, 2 sets
- Do two times.
- Row, run, or jump rope for 2 minutes.

## 6. Kenny Santucci, trainer in New York City and creator of Body at Solace New York

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You may recognize him from his days competing back on MTV's *The Challenge*, but now Kenny Santucci has made CrossFit one of his life passions, creating the Body program at Solace in New York City. If he has only 20 minutes, he's turning to a WOD that runs through four different exercises, doing one every minute on the minute (EMOM). "You hit your whole body—upper body, lower body, and core—and this workout is strength, speed, and stamina," Santucci tells SELF. "You get to warm up to the movement too, which is very important. You squat, press, swing, and sprint all in one workout without a second to waste. It's as hard or as easy as you want to make it."

### **20-Minute EMOM Workout**

- Rower—15–20 calories
- Wall balls—15–20 reps
- V-ups—15–20 reps
- Heavy kettlebell swings—15–20 reps
- Do this circuit five times, starting with 15 reps in the first round (treat this as a warm-up) and working up to 20 by the fifth. (This should be done at all-out intensity.)

## 7. Don Saladino, owner of Drive 495 and trainer in New York City

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Saladino is the owner of Drive Health Clubs in New York City. He has trained professional athletes, golfers, and celebrities, including Scarlett Johansson, Blake Lively, and Ryan Reynolds. His go-to 20-minute workout is equipment free and involves compound exercises that work multiple muscle groups at once so that he can keep his heart rate elevated throughout. "This is a complete full-body workout that improves strength, mobility, endurance, and hypertrophy [muscle growth]," Saladino tells SELF.

### **20-Minute AMRAP Workout:**

## 8. Adrian Williams, head coach at Tone House in New York City

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A track and field athlete in his earlier days, Williams has always had an athletic mentality when

it comes to exercise. He's now a head coach at Tone House, which is known as one of the hardest fitness studios in New York City where gym-goers train like athletes. When Williams has time to train quickly on his own, he focuses on lifting. "The idea with this workout is to hit my shoulders, legs, core, and back," Williams tells SELF. He says that his AMRAP-style workout helps increase fat burn while improving muscular strength, endurance, and explosiveness.

### **20-Minute AMRAP Workout:**

## **9. Alex Silver-Fagan, trainer at Solace in New York City and author of *Get Strong for Women***

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From powerlifting to CrossFit to kettlebells to yoga, trainer Silver-Fagan truly does it all. When the Nike trainer makes the time to train herself, she opts for a kettlebell flow to get a total-body workout. "The benefits include improved strength and cardio endurance, as well as mental focus," she tells SELF. "When doing a workout like this, where you have to be very conscious of your movements, it's hard to 'zone out,' which is a great way to keep you focused on your workout and to truly take a break from your endless to-do list!"

### **20-Minute Kettlebell Flow**

Flow through the following circuit without stopping in between moves. Start with just one rep of each. The second time, do two reps of each. Then do three reps of each, then four. After that, ladder back down, doing three reps, then two, then back to one. If you don't have a kettlebell, you can do this with a dumbbell instead.

*One circuit includes*

- Single-arm swing
- Single-arm clean
- Single-arm press
- Single-arm squat
- Single-arm lunge
- For the first set, do one rep of each move in the circuit. Switch arm and repeat.
- Rest for 20 seconds
- Repeat the circuit doing two reps of each move. Switch arm and repeat.
- Rest for 20 seconds
- Repeat the circuit doing three reps of each move. Switch arm and repeat.
- Rest for 20 seconds

- Repeat the circuit doing four reps of each move. Switch arm and repeat.
- Rest for 20 seconds
- Repeat the circuit doing three reps of each move. Switch arm and repeat.
- Rest for 20 seconds
- Repeat the circuit doing two reps each move. Switch arm and repeat.
- Rest for 20 seconds
- Repeat the circuit doing one rep of each move. Switch arm and repeat.

## 10. Ryan Hopkins, co-owner and trainer at Soho Strength Lab in New York City

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In addition to co-owning a NYC gym, Hopkins has trained tons of athletes, such as New York Mets pitcher Noah Syndergaard. Hopkins is also a competitive Olympic weightlifter, so when he has time to train himself, he likes to focus on improving his weaknesses. “I have had some shoulder girdle issues lately (over the past few years), so I do a good overhead stability-based exercise,” he tells SELF. “And as a power lifter—my sport requires standing in a split stance and having a strong trunk that can stay rigid [while supporting a lot of weight]—I include some single-leg stability work and plank variations.”

### **Warm-up:**

- Airdyne bike (or whatever cardio machine you have available)—light intensity, 3 minutes
- Dynamic warm-up/movement prep—5 minutes ([Try this dynamic warm-up](#) if you don't already have a go-to.)

### **20-Minute Stability Workout:**

- Kettlebell overhead presses to overhead carries—10 presses, walk 10 yards with weight overhead, 5 presses, walk back
- Walking lunges—2 minutes
- Plank circuit—right side plank for 20 seconds, left side plank for 20 seconds, regular forearm plank for 20 seconds
- Do three rounds.