

# **The Emergency Workout: Don't have time to go to the gym?**

## **Train at home with an improvised session . . .**

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### **Introduction**

No matter how well we manage our time or schedule in training sessions, there are going to be days when everything doesn't go as planned, and we find ourselves with no time for the gym. So, what do we do? We want to train – we know we *need* to. But what can we do? We can't spare the time to drive to and from the gym, and then spend a whole hour doing cardio, followed by a resistance session, followed by stretching, before a shower and the drive home. There's a quick and easy, simple solution: Train at home. That's right – have a list of different workouts that you can do at home. Adjust and improvise, and you can have an intense quality session done and complete in as little as 10-20 minutes!

So, how do you know what to do? Depending on what falls on that particular day, you can design and create myriad workouts to achieve the same thing you would do in the gym. The key to home programmes are effectiveness and efficiency in shorter time – make your sessions short and intense.

### **Activities and Exercises**

There are a variety of activities and exercises that you can incorporate into home programmes, including, but not limited to:

- *Calisthenics* – Bodyweight exercises.

Examples of calisthenics:

- Squats – Standing or against the wall.

- Burpees – Variations can be used, from the regular burpee, to doing a push-up at the end of the ‘drop’.
  - Pull-Ups – With fingertips on doorframes/beams.
  - Push-Ups – On the floor or against the wall; many variations can be done, from beginner through to advance.
  - Dips – Using a chair or bench.
  - Ab exercises – Crunches, curls, etc.
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- *Plyometrics* – Jumping/explosive/power exercises.

Examples of plyometric exercises:

- Squat Jumps
  - Box Jumps
  - Bench Jumps
  - Jumping Lunges
  - Bounding
  - Throwing
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- *Skipping* – A skipping rope is cheap to buy, easy to store, and doesn’t require a huge space to use it in.

Examples of a skipping session:

- Interval training – 10-20 minute session, with 20-120 second efforts, with 10-60 seconds easy or resting, etc.
  - Continuous training – 10-20 minutes of continuous skipping, with little or no change in pace.
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- *Shadow Boxing* – Bag/boxing gloves and a bag are not even required.

### Example of a Shadow Boxing session:

Perform two rounds of the following exercises in order, with 30-60 seconds rest between exercises, and 60 second rest between rounds:

- Straight Punches 2 minutes
- Hooks 2 minutes
- Uppercuts 2 minutes
- Combination Punches 2 minutes

### Create Your Training Session

You can include all of the mentioned activities and exercises into various home programme sessions, including, but not limited to:

- *Cards* – Have a pack of cards. Assign an exercise (i.e. calisthenics, plyometrics, cardio, shadow boxing, etc.) to each suit or number (remove the Joker). Place the cards facedown in a stack. Pick a card off the top. Based on what it is, perform for either a set number of reps or period of time that exercise, until complete, and then pick up another card, to complete that exercise. Complete for 10-15 cards, depending on whether you select reps or time per exercise, for sessions lasting anywhere from 10 minutes to 30 minutes.

Example of card deck sessions:

If doing an exercise based on suite:

- Clubs – Jumping Jacks x 1 minute
- Spades – Star-Jumps x 1 minute
- Diamonds – Push-Ups x 1 minute
- Hearts – Burpees x 1 minute

If doing an exercise based on card:

- Ace – Shuttle Run 2 x 10-metres
- Jack – Skipping effort 2 minutes
- Queen – Squat Jumps 1 minute

- King – Crunches x 50
  - 10 – Plank x 1 minute
  - 9 – Thrusters x 10
  - 8 – Walking Lunges x 20 paces out and 20 paces back
  - 7 – N-Up x 1 minute
  - 6 – Tai Chi Squat x 10
  - 5 – Push-Ups x 20
  - 4 – Shadowboxing 2 minutes
  - 3 – Jumping Lunges x 20
  - 2 – Overhead Push Press x 20
- *Circuits* – A high intensity session that includes cardio components (i.e. skipping, sprints, etc.) and resistance work (i.e. calisthenics, etc.).

Example of a Circuit:

- 1-3 circuits/rounds, of 8-12 exercises done with medium to fast tempo, with 30-90 seconds per exercise/station, 30-90 seconds between exercises/stations, and 2-3 minutes between circuits.
- *Floor Routines* – A combination of flexibility and resistance exercises that incorporate bodyweight and/or tube work.

Example of a Floor Routine:

Perform each exercise in order, adding another 5-10 reps per week:

- Push-Ups 3 x 15
- Crunches 3 x 10-15
- Arm/Leg Raises 3 x 10-15
- Elbow Toe Stand 3 x 30 seconds

- *High intensity interval training (HIIT) – Efforts.*

Example of a HIIT session:

- Start with an easy 4 minute warm-up. Then do 8-16 20-second efforts at maximal intensity, with either 10-seconds easy or break between each effort. Finish off with 4 minutes easy to cool down. Can be done running (up and down the street or around the block), skipping, cycling (if you have a bike and a stationary trainer).
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- *High-intensity session – You can incorporate cardio (i.e. skipping) with body-weights exercises, calisthenics, and plyometrics, etc.*

Example of a high-intensity session:

Perform two rounds of the following exercises in order, with no rest between rounds:

- Skip 1 minute
- Squat Jumps 1 minute
- Skip 1 minute
- Push-Ups 1 minute
- Skip 1 minute
- Supermans 1 minute
- Skip 1 minute
- Dips 1 minute
- Skip 1 minute
- Plank 1 minute

Such a simple programme, and yet you hit every exercise group, incorporate resistance work with cardiovascular benefits, and all in only 20 minutes.

## **Conclusion**

Improvise. Use what you have in the house to do different exercises. Cans can be used as dumbbells. Chairs and sofas can be used as benches. Steps can be used. Bicycle tubes can act as resistance tubing and cables. Don't limit your imagination. You can use everything for something. You don't even have to use anything at all – you can do plenty using only your body and your body-weight for an effective session.

I personally find that the best session to do if I can't make it to the gym, is a high intensity “cardio” session. Such a session includes a multitude of exercises and modes, from cardio to resistance work, using body-weight, calisthenics, plyometrics, and tubing.