

30-day fitness challenge: a beginner calendar you can print

Thirty days, four movements, a walk three days a week and a rest day every week. It's a month for building the habit and learning the movements, written out day by day, with a PDF to stick on the fridge.

Short answer: Three short bodyweight sessions a week (squat, glute bridge, push-up, plank), a brisk walk on three other days that grows from 20 to 50 minutes, and one rest day. Two sets each for the first two weeks, three after that. It's a habit-and-skill month, not a promise about your body.

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This 30-day challenge is a small version of a real training week: a short bodyweight session three times a week, a walk on three other days, and a day off. Nothing to buy, nothing to track except what you did.

Be clear about what a month can do. This challenge is about two things: making training a normal part of your week, and learning four movements well enough to keep going after day 30. It doesn't promise any change in weight, size or shape, and no honest page can tell you what thirty days will do for your body.

The week the month repeats

- **Three strength days** (days 1, 3 and 5 of each week): four bodyweight movements for the legs, hips, chest and arms, and core.
- **Three walk days** (days 2, 4 and 6): a brisk walk, the kind you'd rate about a 5 or 6 on a 0 to 10 effort scale, which is how the World Health Organization describes moderate activity.¹
- **One rest day** (day 7): your normal day. There's always a day between the strength sessions, so no muscle trains hard two days running. ([Rest days](#) explains why.)

The WHO guidelines ask adults for 150 to 300 minutes of moderate aerobic activity a week, plus muscle-strengthening work for all major muscle groups on two or more days a week.¹ They also say some activity is better than none, and that people not yet meeting the guidelines should start with small amounts and build up over time.¹ So the walks start below the guideline on purpose: 60 minutes in week 1, 90 in week 2, 120 in week 3 and 150 in week 4, the bottom of the range.

The strength session

Warm up with one easy set of the squat and the push-up at about half your reps. Then do the four movements in order, resting about a minute between sets:

Movement	Start here	Make it harder when it's easy
Bodyweight squat	Sit to a chair seat and stand up	A lower step, then a full squat, then a slow lowering
Glute bridge	Both feet down	Single-leg glute bridge
Push-up	Hands on a kitchen counter	Hands on a bench or stair, then the floor
Plank	Hands or forearms on a counter, or short holds of 10 to 15 seconds	Forearms and toes on the floor

- **Reps:** 8 to 20 a set. Pick the version where you can do at least eight good reps. More than twenty with reps to spare, move to the harder one.
- **Plank:** hold only as long as your body stays in a straight line. Once a 45-second hold feels easy, make the version harder rather than holding longer.
- **Weeks 1 and 2:** two sets of each, stopping with three or four reps left. The American College of Sports Medicine's 2026 position stand advises at least two sets per exercise.²
- **Weeks 3 and 4:** three sets, stopping with one to three reps left. ([Here's how to judge reps left.](#)) Going all the way to failure isn't needed: the same stand found it doesn't add gains in strength or muscle.²

The easy first two weeks are deliberate. Soreness is common when a kind of activity is new, and one review advises bringing new activities in gradually over a week or two.³

The 30-day calendar

Week 1: learn the movements

Day	What to do
1	Strength: 2 sets of each, 3 or 4 reps left. Write down the version and the reps you did.
2	Brisk walk, 20 minutes
3	Strength: 2 sets of each, 3 or 4 reps left
4	Brisk walk, 20 minutes
5	Strength: 2 sets of each, 3 or 4 reps left
6	Brisk walk, 20 minutes
7	Rest

Week 2: same sessions, longer walks

Day	What to do
8	Strength: 2 sets of each, 3 or 4 reps left
9	Brisk walk, 30 minutes
10	Strength: 2 sets of each, 3 or 4 reps left
11	Brisk walk, 30 minutes
12	Strength: 2 sets of each, 3 or 4 reps left
13	Brisk walk, 30 minutes
14	Rest

Week 3: a third set

Day	What to do
15	Strength: 3 sets of each, 1 to 3 reps left
16	Brisk walk, 40 minutes
17	Strength: 3 sets of each, 1 to 3 reps left
18	Brisk walk, 40 minutes
19	Strength: 3 sets of each, 1 to 3 reps left
20	Brisk walk, 40 minutes
21	Rest

Week 4: the full week

Day	What to do
22	Strength: 3 sets of each, 1 to 3 reps left
23	Brisk walk, 50 minutes
24	Strength: 3 sets of each, 1 to 3 reps left
25	Brisk walk, 50 minutes
26	Strength: 3 sets of each, 1 to 3 reps left
27	Brisk walk, 50 minutes
28	Rest

Days 29 and 30: look back, then pick what's next

Day	What to do
29	Strength: 3 sets of each, 1 to 3 reps left. Write down the version and the reps next to day 1's.
30	Brisk walk, 50 minutes. Then choose next month's plan (below).

Writing it down is part of the challenge, not an extra. A 2016 meta-analysis of 138 studies, about goals in general rather than exercise, found that monitoring progress helped people reach their goals, and helped more when the progress was physically recorded.⁴ Day 29 next to day 1 shows what you learned: which version you're on and how many good reps it takes. ([A workout log you can copy.](#))

Four rules for the month

- **Missed a day? Do it tomorrow.** Slide the rest of the calendar back a day. The month is the thirty days in order, not the dates on a calendar.
- **Never miss twice.** One missed day is life. Two in a row is how a month quietly ends.
- **Don't add more.** Feeling good in week 1 is the plan working. Keep the rest day and the reps left; the third set comes in week 3.
- **If it hurts, stop.** Sharp pain is not soreness. If you have an injury, a medical condition or a medical question, talk to a doctor before you start. I'm a fitness coach, not a doctor.

What to do after day 30

The point of the month is that you keep going. Three ways to carry on:

- **Stay at home with no equipment:** [the bodyweight workout](#) keeps these four movements and adds the one this month leaves out, a pull (a row).
- **Move into a gym:** [how to start lifting weights](#) is the first four weeks with weights.
- **Not sure which:** [the workout plan quiz](#) asks six questions about your week and points to a plan, and [all the free plans](#) are on one page.

Keep the walks too. Week 4's 150 minutes is the bottom of the WHO's range, not the top.¹

Common questions

Is this a weight-loss challenge?

No. It's a training habit and four movements. It doesn't promise any weight, size or shape change, and no page can promise what a month will do for your body. If food is the question, [calories and protein](#) is the plain version.

Can I do it if I've never exercised?

Yes. It's written for that. Every movement has an easier version to start on, the first two weeks stop well short of failure, and the first walks are twenty minutes. If you have an injury or a medical condition, check with a doctor first.

Why not train every day?

Because hard sets for the same muscles every day is the part to avoid, and the rest days are when your body answers the sessions. Walking most days is fine. [Rest days](#) has the research.

Can I swap in other exercises?

Keep the four slots and swap within them: a [reverse lunge](#) for the squat once it's easy, a [dead bug](#) for the plank. The calendar works because each session covers the same four slots, not because of the exact exercises.

If you want it written for you

A calendar on a web page is the same for everyone. Coaching is the version where your workouts live in the Trainerize app, built around the days you actually have, and a weekly call looks at the week you just had and rebuilds the next one. [Coaching for beginners](#) explains how the first weeks work, and [applying](#) takes about two minutes. Otherwise: print the calendar, put it somewhere you'll see it, and do day 1 today.

General education only, not medical advice. If you have a medical condition, are pregnant, or take medication, check with your doctor before changing how you train or eat.

Sources

1. Bull FC, Al-Ansari SS, Biddle S, et al. World Health Organization 2020 guidelines on physical activity and sedentary behaviour. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 2020. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7719906/> (accessed October 11, 2026).
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3. Cheung K, Hume P, Maxwell L. Delayed onset muscle soreness: treatment strategies and performance factors. *Sports Medicine*, 2003. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12617692/> (accessed October 18, 2026).
4. Harkin B, Webb TL, Chang BP, et al. Does monitoring goal progress promote goal attainment? A meta-analysis of the experimental evidence. *Psychological Bulletin*, 2016. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26479070/> (accessed October 18, 2026).

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