

Suspension Training

Your workouts shouldn't be routine. Strap in for the ultimate metabolism-boosting muscle builder.

DON'T LET THE MINIMALIST DESIGN FOOL YOU: Suspension trainers like TRX offer distinct advantages over barbells and dumbbells. "They're incredibly portable—if you have access to a door-jamb, tree, or other stable anchor, you have all you need for a total-body workout," says Michael Piercy, M.S., the 2013 TRX Overall Instructor of the Year and owner of The Lab Performance & Sports Science, a New Jersey gym. Plus, by taking exercises off terra firma, you add an element of instability that boosts the challenge to your core and stabilizing muscles. The result: faster gains and more real-world strength. "Suspension training systems bring a whole new dimension to the concept of body-weight training," says Piercy. The key is learning to leverage your body's relationship with gravity. —KELSEY CANNON



1

NAIL THE BASICS

"You have to earn the harder movements," says Piercy. "Jumping ahead without mastering the fundamentals will give you a shaky foundation, and you won't have the skills you need to maximize your gains from the harder progressions." You'll also be more prone to injury. Begin with the exercises on the right; then visit MensHealth.com/trx for more.

2

LOCK DOWN YOUR CORE

Unlike a stable bench or machine, a suspension trainer puts your muscles in a constant battle with gravity. "Gravity always attacks your weakest point," says Piercy. "For most people, that's their core." Fight back by bracing your abs at the beginning of each exercise. That way you reinforce your spine and boost stability. The payoff: You'll generate more power.

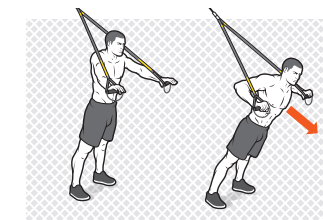
3

AVOID FRICTION

"If you don't apply even pressure to both handles, they'll 'saw' back and forth, throwing you off balance and increasing your risk of injury," says Piercy. "Scraping" (that is, when the straps rub against your arms) is another sign of bad form. "If you can't finish an exercise without sawing or scraping, you're probably progressing too quickly," Piercy says.

START HERE

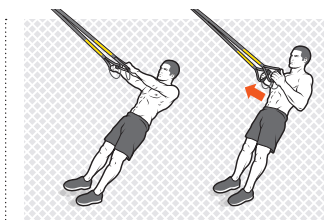
3 MOVES FOR A TOTAL-BODY BURN



1/ TRX Chest Press

Grab the handles and face away from the anchor point with your feet shoulder width apart. Extend your arms straight in front of your chest and walk back a few steps so your body leans forward. Keeping your body straight, bend your arms to lower your chest until your upper arms are parallel to the floor. Pause; push back up.

MAKE IT HARDER Walk your feet farther back or lift one foot off the floor.

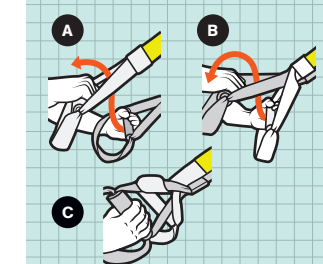


2/ TRX Row

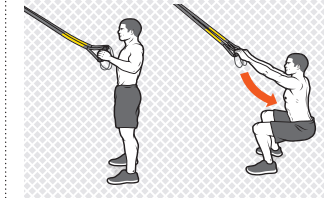
Grab the handles and face the anchor point with your feet shoulder width apart. Straighten your arms out in front of you and walk your feet forward a few steps so your body leans back. Keeping your body straight, pull your chest to the handles. Pause, and return to the starting position.

MAKE IT HARDER Walk your feet farther forward or perform a single-arm row (see "Do It One-Handed").

DO IT ONE-HANDED



Here's how to combine the handles for single-arm or suspended-leg exercises: Hold one handle in each hand. Pass the bottom handle through the upper part of the top handle [A]. Repeat [B], pulling to lock [C].



3/ TRX Squat

Use the same starting position as the TRX row, but instead of extending your arms in front of you, hold them at 90-degree angles with your elbows by your sides and the handles at chest level; there should be light tension on the straps. Push your hips back and lower your body until your thighs are parallel to the floor. Reverse the move to return to the starting position.

MAKE IT HARDER Perform a single-leg squat or add an explosive hop.

Best New Workout

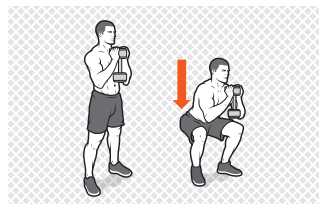
Torch 1,000 Calories

In one hour, your weekend indiscretions will be history.

▶ HOW TO DO IT

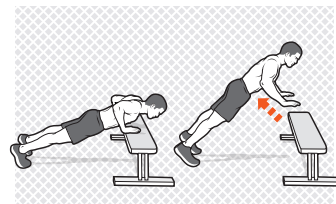
Perform the exercises as a circuit, doing each for 30 seconds and resting for 15 seconds between them. After you complete all five moves, begin the circuit again. Do 4 circuits total, increasing your rest periods by 15 seconds each time.

55 MINUTES



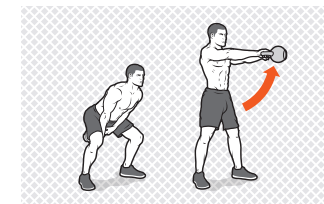
1/ Goblet Squat

Hold a dumbbell vertically next to your chest, cupping one end in both hands. (Imagine that you're holding a heavy goblet.) Push your hips back and lower your body as far as you can while keeping your back straight. Pause, and then push yourself back up to the starting position. Repeat.



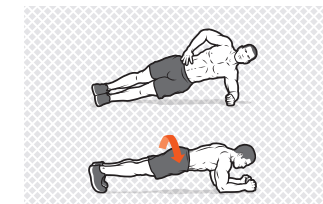
2/ Explosive Incline Pushup

Assume a pushup position with your body straight from head to ankles but your hands on a bench, box, or step. Bend your elbows and lower your body until your chest is a few inches from the bench. Push yourself back up with enough force for your hands to leave the bench. Land and repeat.



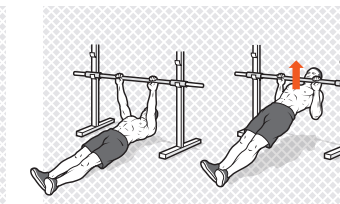
3/ Kettlebell Swing

Place a kettlebell on the floor in front of you. With your feet slightly beyond shoulder width, push your hips back and grab the handle in both hands. Swing the weight between your legs, and then thrust your hips forward as you swing it up to chest level. Swing it back between your legs and repeat.



4/ Rolling Side Plank

Lie on your left side with your legs straight and body propped on your left elbow and forearm. Your body should be straight from ankles to head. Roll onto both elbows and hold for a count of two. Then roll onto your right elbow and hold for a count of two. Continue rolling back and forth.



5/ Inverted Row

Secure a bar at waist height and slide beneath it. Grab it using an overhand, shoulder-width grip, and hang with your hands directly above your shoulders. Now keep your shoulder blades back and use your arms to pull your chest to the bar. Pause, lower yourself to the starting position, and repeat.



TRAINER
Robert dos Remedios, c.s.c.s., strength and conditioning coach, Santa Clarita, CA

BEST FOR
Dropping pounds fast, building lean muscle

EQUIPMENT
Dumbbell, kettlebell, bench, adjustable bar

FOCUS
Weight loss, stamina, mobility, strength

CALORIES BURNED
1,000+
When performed by a fit 6'2", 180-pound man, and including an estimated postexercise 24-hour calorie burn