The 20-Minute Morning Workout

Before taking in that balanced breakfast and multivitamin, try this fast equipment-free series of exercises. They work your whole body from your heart to your hips and get you trim, toned and out the door in no time.

August 22, 2006 By Alicia Villarosa

Plié Side Leg Lift
(works hips, thighs and glutes)

1. Stand with legs three feet apart, feet turned out, arms out to the sides, palms down.
2. Bend knees 90 degrees, and raise arms overhead, fingertips up.
3. Squeeze glutes, and straighten right leg as you lift left leg straight to the side while pressing arms down to shoulder height.
4. Lower leg to starting position.

Do two sets of five reps per side. Alternate with squat kick/mule kick.

Swimmer
(works back, glutes and abs)

1. Lie on your stomach with arms and legs extended in line with your body.
2. Lift chest, arms and legs slightly off floor keeping head in line with spine. Imagine balancing on your stomach.
3. Lift right arm and left leg and then quickly alternate to the left arm and right leg, continuously kicking and lifting arms. Keep stomach, legs and glutes tight throughout the motion.

Swim for 20 seconds and work up to one minute. Do two sets.

Single Leg Stretch/Scissors
(works abs, hamstrings and glutes)

1. Lie on your back, and pull knees in to chest with head lifted.
2. Extend left leg straight to the ceiling, and grab ankle (or shin) with both hands as you stretch right leg out until it is hovering above the floor.
3. Pull navel to spine, and anchor back firmly on the floor.
4. Keeping head lifted, inhale. Exhale and move legs like scissors.

Repeat for a total of 16 reps (eight per side). Do two sets.

Squat Kick Punch/Mule Kick
(works abs, glutes, thighs, shoulders)

1. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, fists at chin level and elbows tucked in.
2. Bend knees into a squat; as you come up, kick up right leg while punching with left arm.
3. Squat and repeat on the other side; continue for one minute.
4. Alternate with mule kicks. Squat, then kick right leg out heel first to the side to hip level. (Tip: Don’t snap your knees.)

Do two sets of 20 reps per leg.

Plank
(works abs and back muscles)

1. Lie on your stomach.
2. Slowly raise body until balanced on forearms and toes with your body in a straight line from back of head to feet.
3. Keep your legs straight, and your elbows lined up below your shoulders.
4. Squeeze glutes for balance; keep stomach tight by pulling navel to spine and hold for 20 seconds.

Work up to one minute. Do two sets.

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