

No gym, no problem



By Jennifer Braun
The Suburban

With summer right around the corner, getting bikini-ready is probably on your mind. Despite the little voice in your head saying it's time to shape up, it may be difficult for you to add an exercise program to your daily routine or you might just not be able to afford going to a gym. But if this is what is stopping you from staying active, you're in luck. Turns out, the best place for you to start getting in shape can be right from your home with very little or no equipment.

A well-balanced training program requires two components: cardio and weight-training, explains Anouare Abdou a canfitpro certified personal trainer. And this can easily be achieved by working out at home.

"Not being able to go to a gym shouldn't be an excuse for not staying active," Abdou says.

An effective way to workout at home is to do a circuit training, which is when you move from one exercise to the next without rest. "Circuit training is great because it keeps the heart rate up and increases calorie burn," Abdou says.

Still, the way you work out, including how many sets of exercises you do and the number of times you work out a week really depends on yourself. "Everyone is different. It depends on individual goals and levels," Abdou says.

Some very affective exercises to integrate in to your home training program are done with bodyweight. Using your own bodyweight you can work just about every main muscle in your body. "Bodyweight exercises are all classic and effective compound moves, meaning they engage a lot of muscle groups at once, which will make you burn more calories," Abdou says. Some of Abdou's favourite classic bodyweight exercises are push-ups, squats, lunges and planks.

If you want to ramp up these exercises or just keep your workout interesting, you can add one or two pieces of equipment.

Abdou says "a stability ball and a resistance band are definitely worth buying."

A stability ball is great for abdominal exercises and can easily cost less than \$20. A medicine ball is also an inexpensive piece of equipment that you can add on to a lot of exercises for extra weight.

After toning those muscles, it's time to move and burn some calories. "Jumping rope is great for cardio and is cheap," Abdou says. "A

good trick is to do a couple of minutes of jump rope between sets of exercise."

Another great way to get moving is to invest in exercise videos, Abdou suggests. You can find DVDs filled with all kinds of exercises, including aerobics, weight training, Pilates and kickboxing. Even some video game systems have great interactive videos to get you moving. What's important is that you stay committed and exercise along with the video or game regularly.

When the weather permits, you can always break a sweat outside, as well. Playing sports, going for a walk, or just taking a long bike-ride can be fun and effective ways to burn calories.

Lastly, the internet is your best friend. You can join a fitness plan online, which will create a training plan catered to your fitness goal. This might cost money, but there are still many websites that provide free workout schedules that meet a variety of different fitness goals. Also, the internet can provide you with new exercise ideas and show you how to do them properly with videos and pictures.

Now that you know the fitness basics and have some exercise ideas, you can get into shape right in the comfort of your own home, no gym membership required.