How to Start a Home Workout Routine (Step by Step)

Health · about 18 minutes · 2026-11-11

A fully illustrated 27-step guide to starting a home workout routine: set a realistic goal, prepare your space, learn safe movement patterns, and build a habit that lasts.

Phase 1 — Set a Goal and Prepare Your Space

1. **Write one concrete reason to exercise**
   Write one concrete reason to exercise.
2. **Start with three short sessions a week**
   Start with three short sessions a week.
3. **Pick a fixed time you will not renegotiate**
   Pick a fixed time you will not renegotiate.
4. **Define what success looks like in four weeks**
   Define what success looks like in four weeks.
5. **Clear a body-length area of floor**
   Clear a body-length area of floor.
6. **Wear shoes suited to the movement**
   Wear shoes suited to the movement.
7. **Keep water and a towel within reach**
   Keep water and a towel within reach.
8. **Choose two or three starter items only**
   Choose two or three starter items only.

Phase 2 — Learn Safe Movement Patterns

9. **Spend five minutes warming up**
   Spend five minutes warming up.
10. **Rehearse a bodyweight squat**
    Rehearse a bodyweight squat.
11. **Practise a hip hinge, not a bend**
    Practise a hip hinge, not a bend.
12. **Try a modified push-up**
    Try a modified push-up.
13. **Choose one move per movement pattern**
    Choose one move per movement pattern.
14. **Set an easy target of two sets of ten**
    Set an easy target of two sets of ten.
15. **Rest 60 to 90 seconds between sets**
    Rest 60 to 90 seconds between sets.

16. Finish with a short cool-down

Finish with a short cool-down.

Phase 3 — Do the Work and Improve Gradually

17. Follow your four moves in order

Follow your four moves in order.

18. Stop if you feel sharp pain

Stop if you feel sharp pain.

19. Log what you did and how it felt

Log what you did and how it felt.

20. Add reps before adding weight

Add reps before adding weight.

21. Shorten the rest or add a third set

Shorten the rest or add a third set.

22. Change one variable each week

Change one variable each week.

Phase 4 — Recover and Make It a Habit

23. Leave a rest day between sessions

Leave a rest day between sessions.

24. Sleep seven to nine hours

Sleep seven to nine hours.

25. Eat enough protein to repair

Eat enough protein to repair.

26. Shrink the plan on bad days

Shrink the plan on bad days.

27. Review and reset every four weeks

Review and reset every four weeks.

Sources

1. NHS — Live Well
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2. NHLBI — High Blood Pressure
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3. WebMD — health information
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Written as a checklist from https://www.howcompass.com/how-to/How-to-Start-a-Home-Workout. Corrections: https://www.howcompass.com/co