

A Leaner, Sexier, Healthier You—In 15 Minutes a Day!

THE **Women's Health**

BIG

BOOK *of*

15 **MINUTE**
WORKOUTS

By **SELENE YEAGER** and the editors of *Women's Health*



THE Women's Health

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BOOK

**15 MINUTE
WORKOUTS**

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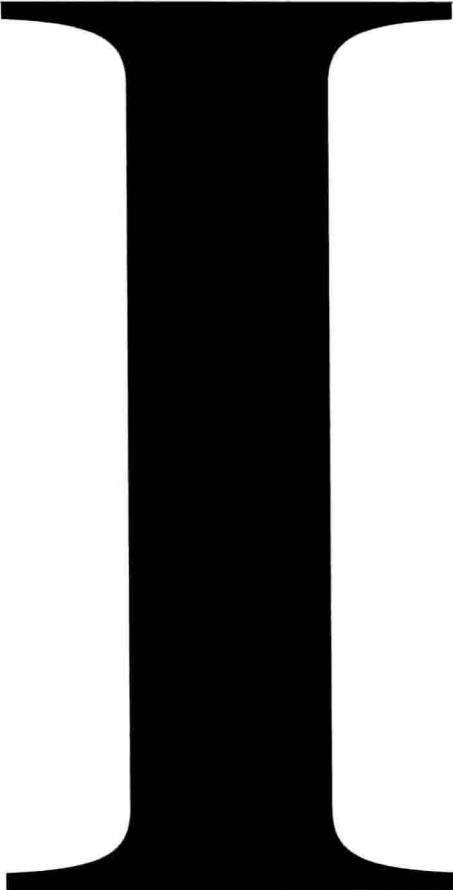
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— Selene Yeager



Introduction: The 15-Minute Secret

Why a Quarter of an Hour Is All You Need
to Lose Weight, Tone Every Inch,
and Finally Get the Body You Want.



I don't have

the time. Does that sentence sound familiar? We bet it does. Hands down, it's the number one reason, in survey after survey, that women give for why they can't exercise. And it's true: we are hard-pressed for time. Between work and family commitments and trying to have a social life, there never really seem to be enough hours in the day. But you don't need an hour to start a fitness plan that works. You don't need even half an hour. We're going to let you in on a little secret: All you need to create a slimmer, sexier, healthier body is 15 minutes.

The 15-Minute Secret

That's right, if you use your time wisely, you can get a great, body-transforming workout in just 15 minutes four to six times a week. According to an October 2010 study published in the *European Journal of Applied Physiology*, 15 minutes of resistance training was just as effective as 35 minutes in elevating resting energy expenditure for up to 72 hours after exercising. That means you can burn calories, build muscle, and get the body you want in half the time you thought possible. And you'll actually have a much better chance of slimming down with quick workouts than with lengthy gym sessions. A study in the *International Journal of Sports Medicine* found that women who were trying to lose weight had a much better chance of sticking to an exercise plan if their workouts were chopped down to 15 minutes.

It makes sense. You can always find 15 minutes, right? If you took every single second during which you said or thought "I don't have the time" and added them up, it would equal more than 15 minutes. That's why we've created our revolutionary superfast fitness program composed entirely of 15-minute workouts. These aren't the kind of 15-minute workouts that are half as good as a 30-minute session. They're scientifically designed to be as effective as they are efficient, so you'll achieve the

best results in the least amount of time. Every second of exercise will count a little more than it ever has before. Instead of working out longer, you'll be working out smarter and faster.

You'll find workouts to flatten your belly so quickly it's almost instantaneous; workouts that melt fat off your body so fast you'll barely have time to buy a smaller pair of pants before you drop another size; workouts that will turn your jiggly arms and thighs into firm, sleek accessories you'll want to show off every second you can. Each of the workouts in this book has been road tested by our editors and validated by the latest research. Just follow our superfast fitness program and you'll be seeing the fastest results of your life!


To make this book even more useful, the world's top trainers have also provided dozens of cutting-edge 15-minute workouts for just about every form of exercise and just about every situation, such as the yoga metabolism booster in Chapter 15 or workouts for busy travelers designed by Juan Carlos Santana of the Institute of Human Performance in Boca Raton, Florida, that will sculpt lean muscles in no time flat. Some of the advice and exercises in these pages comes from some of the biggest names in performance training, including longtime friend of *Men's Health* Mark Verstegen, the author of the breakthrough book

Core Performance and owner of Athlete's Performance in Phoenix; exercise physiologist Amy Dixon of Equinox in Santa Monica; and Hollywood fitness trainer Valerie Waters in Los Angeles.

That's barely scratching the surface of the sheer volume and variety of workouts we've included. Can't shake nagging headaches? Pain-proof your noggin with the moves provided by Jyotsna Sahni, MD, a sleep specialist in Tucson. We've even created workouts based on your body type, so if you've spent your life trying to whittle down your pear-shaped behind, we've got you covered. And since your body should feel as good as it looks, we've

also tapped some experts to bring you a little sexercise (hello, COREgasm!) with a whole chapter on better-sex workouts.

By following our Superfast Fitness Plan, you'll learn how to put all of these workouts together for maximum results. Combine that with our Superfast Weight-Loss System and you'll shed even more pounds, trim even more inches, and get back into your skinny jeans even faster. We'd go on and on about all the tools and resources that are packed into this book, but we don't want to waste your time. Ready to get started? Good. Because who knows when your 15 minutes of fame might arrive.



The 15-Minute Secret

Free Minutes!

15 WAYS TO FIND 15 MINUTES FOR EXERCISE EVERY DAY!
(DITCH THE STUFF THAT'S WASTING YOUR PRECIOUS TIME.)

1. FLIP OFF

FACEBOOK. We now spend a whopping 7 hours a month on Facebook, according to Nielsen. Let's do the math: Seven hours a month works out to 105 minutes each week or, hmmm, guess what, exactly 15 minutes every single day. You don't have to banish FB from your life entirely, but limit it to two short sessions a day, like once in the morning over coffee and later in the evening. Then log out and stay off.

2. SAY "NO!"

Women have a very hard time with this one. But we think you'll really like it once you try it. Next time someone (not your big boss) asks you to do something you really don't want or need to do, say, "I'm sorry. No. I just can't," and feel the freedom—and all that free time—wash over you.

3. PLAN YOUR

PEAKS. We all have certain times of the day when we are most focused and productive. Schedule your biggest task for that time (for many people it's in the morning, say 9:00 a.m.). You'll get it done more quickly and efficiently than if you wait to tackle it during a natural low point (like midafternoon).

4. DO ONE THING

AT A TIME. We pride ourselves on being supreme multi-taskers, but trying to do too many things at once means getting nothing done. Sit down with your to-do list. Pick an item, and do it and only it. You'll be shocked by how quickly each task gets done when you give it your full energy and attention.

5. RECORD YOUR

SHOWS. A typical hour-long TV show contains just 40 to 42 minutes of real content—the rest is commercials. Watch two shows and that's 40 to 45 minutes you could have spent doing something else. It's well worth investing in a digital TV recorder so you can watch just what you want when you want, and free up hours (and, by the end of the year, days) to pursue more healthful activities, like 15-minute workouts.

6. DON'T BE A

NEATNIK. Is it really all that important that your apartment is spotless? Stop wasting precious time straightening your sheets just so and polishing picture frames, and aim for adequate instead.

7. BE DECISIVE!

You can easily waste hours choosing what color to paint your walls or which brand of sneakers to buy (it's called analysis paralysis). At some point, you need to stop waffling and move forward. Set a time limit, say 45 minutes, for comparison shopping, weighing pros and cons, etc., then make a decision and go forth.

8. BUY TIME. Yes, you actually can buy more hours in the day by paying for services that suck up tons of time. Before you pooh-pooh the idea of hiring a laundry or cleaning service, sit down and do a little math. What is an hour of your time worth? How do you spend your disposable income? When you consider that you might be blowing a few hundred bucks on shoes and bags you don't really need while you slave away all your spare time scrubbing the tub, it's time to reconsider your expenditures. Hire a cleaning service to do the heavy-duty stuff twice a month, look into premade meal plans, and buy yourself hours every week.

9. INK IT ON YOUR CALENDAR. Amazing how you find time for everything on your calendar, right? That's because it's there in black and white, demanding your attention (and time). Block out your workouts as you would work appointments and you won't miss a one.

10. USE AN EGG TIMER. Certain activities are black holes for time. All the little things you plan to do for just a few minutes—surfing the Web, playing games on your phone, “window shopping” all the new apps for your iPhone or iPad—can suck away hours if you're not careful. Keep an egg timer on your desk. When you sit down, set it for 15 or 20 minutes. Then shut down when the bell rings.

11. TOUCH IT ONCE. When a paper comes across your desk (or in the mail), deal with it immediately. Piling up stacks of paper not only creates distracting clutter, you also waste time revisiting each issue again (and again) or, worse, losing something important. (Try it with email too!)

12. MAKE A CALL. IM-ing and emailing can be great time-savers. But sometimes it takes 15 messages to accomplish what you could do in a 40-second phone call. As soon as it starts getting complicated, pick up the phone.

13. PUT THINGS IN THEIR PLACES. I used to waste minutes (hours...days) looking for my keys. At any given time they could have been anywhere, and I mean anywhere—coat pockets, drawers, messenger bags, the clothes dryer, my car, or my personal favorite, hanging from the door lock. Finally, I bought a 75-cent hook, hung it by the phone as my designated key spot, and have not lost my keys since. Try this trick with anything you lose regularly. It works.

14. SET OUT YOUR STUFF. This one is repeated more often than *It's a Wonderful Life* at Christmastime, but it works. Setting out your exercise clothes at night makes it far more likely that you will get up and get moving for a morning workout, instead of hitting snooze (or worse,

skipping the whole affair entirely) because it's too daunting to get up and start rummaging around for your workout gear.

15. GET UP 15 MINUTES EARLIER. Ridiculously simple, right? Yep, and it works. Vow to get up and work out at 5 a.m. every day and you'll never do it. But even the most nocturnal of night owls can set their alarms (and roll out of the sack) a mere 15 minutes earlier in the morning. Even if you don't use that extra time for your workout, it gets you out the door and to your office earlier than usual, so you get more done earlier in the day. So you're more likely to feel entitled to take that 15 minutes for yourself later in the day.



Chapter 1: The Genius of the 15-Minute Training Plan

When It Comes to Exercise,
It Really Is About Quality, Not Quantity.

The Superfast Workouts Help You Become
Leaner, Sexier, and Healthier in Half the Time!
And That's Just Plain Smart.

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I

n our *Biggest Loser*

culture we have a tendency to believe that if a little exercise firms and burns, *a lot* of exercise will transform us into Victoria's Secret models. Even though I'm a trainer and triathlete and I should know better, I've been guilty of buying in to this notion myself. A few years back, I laced up my running shoes and started hitting the street for an hour a day, believing that if only I sweated more, my skinny jeans, which were on the verge of becoming my asphyxiation jeans, would never get too snug. But to my dismay, I didn't really get any leaner. I lost a little bulk, sure. But I also got softer, especially in my belly. Then a running coach gave me some advice that stuck (because it worked!): If you want to scorch calories and burn fat, go harder, not longer. I picked up the pace and haven't looked back since.

The Genius of the 15-Minute Training Plan

The more-is-more mind-set is more than a waste of time; it also derails people from their fitness goals. If we think we have to do a ton to get results, we sometimes don't exercise at all. It's a mentality that sets us up for failure before we even start. As it turns out, it is far more important to know what kind of exercise to do rather than how long to do it for. Because much of what we think is going to make us thin or keep us fit actually does neither. Case in point, a study published in the *International Journal of Sports Nutrition and Exercise Metabolism* in which researchers asked a group of women to do 45 minutes of steady, moderate cardio exercise (like a brisk elliptical workout) 5 days a week for 12 weeks. The result? At the end of the study, the women experienced no change in their body composition compared with women who didn't exercise or diet.

Depressing huh? Not at all. The good news is that you have permission to stop wasting your time. You can finally free yourself from marathon gym sessions. Instead scientists are now saying you can shed fat, firm trouble spots, boost your heart health, and fend off a host of ills, mental and physical, not by doing more, but by doing less. You can do this in as little as 15 minutes if you do the right exercises. But you need the inside knowledge.

Short Workouts, Sweet Rewards

That's exactly what you get with the *Women's Health Big Book of 15-Minute Workouts*: a scientifically proven, insider shortcut to losing weight permanently. We've pooled all our expertise and pored over the latest research to create the Superfast Fitness Plan. At the heart of it is resistance training. Hands down, resistance training is the quickest way to burn fat and build a lean, beautiful body. When you create resistance—whether with weights or your own body—you cause microscopic tears in your muscle fibers, which sounds like a bad thing, but is actually the first step to slimming down and getting strong. This fiber breakdown speeds up a process called muscle protein synthesis that uses amino acids to repair and reinforce those fibers—and voilà, you've built some new muscle.

Muscle works magic in many ways. First, all that lifting and rebuilding burns calories not just while you're exercising, but long after you're done. Secondly, muscle is metabolically more active than fat, meaning it burns more calories just to sustain itself. Finally, being stronger makes you more active. Research finds that people are more spontaneously active when they start lifting weights because they're stronger and even hard physical tasks suddenly

feel easier. Worried that building muscle will make you bulky? Don't be. A pound of muscle takes up 20 percent less space than a pound of fat. So you'll actually be smaller, but stronger. Didn't we tell you less is more?

The best part: You can get all these body-shaping benefits in no time—just 15 minutes is all it takes. How? We've condensed the workout by removing all the sitting around and resting between moves for a supereffective program. It's not only time efficient, it also increases your energy expenditure both during and afterward. Researchers from Southern Illinois University recently found that one set of 10 reps of 10 exercises (which took 15 minutes to complete, by the way) raised resting energy expenditure (the calories you burn when you're just sitting around) as much as three sets, which took the volunteers 35 minutes to do.

Finally, to turbocharge your results, we've added cardio to the mix. Not the 45-minutes-to-an-hour-a-day variety that may barely budge the scale, but the superfast-fat-burning variety, known in scientific circles as high-intensity interval training (or HIIT) that, like resistance training, builds muscle and burns fat fast. While the government keeps upping the ante on its cardio exercise recommendation—up a half hour from 60 minutes a day to 90 minutes a day for weight loss—a large and growing body of research is saying the opposite thing: that HIIT is drastically superior to regular cardio workouts in

improving cardiovascular functioning, increasing insulin sensitivity, and, of course, burning calories. What determines whether or not you shed fat is not the duration of your workouts, but the intensity. In other words, it'll take many hours to walk away that extra weight. But you can sprint it off in no time.

HIIT builds up lactic acid in your muscles because you're working harder and faster than your body has a chance to clear it, which triggers a release of human growth hormone, a powerful natural elixir that promotes fat loss and may crank your metabolism to Maserati speed. And it works fast. Just 30 seconds of sprinting on a stationary bike is enough to send your levels of human growth hormone—that chemical that boosts lean muscle and burns fat—soaring by 530 percent. Another study, published in the *Journal of Applied Physiology*, reported that just 2 weeks of alternate-day interval training boosted eight active women's fat-burning ability by 36 percent. Importantly, your metabolism stays elevated for far longer—up to 24 hours, burning up to 120 additional calories (twice as many as low-intensity exercise)—after a high-intensity workout, so you see results fast.

All that fat burning translates into a leaner you in half the workout time. In a study of 18 women, Australian researchers found that those who performed superfast fat burning workouts that included 8-second sprints followed by 12 seconds of recovery 3 days a week lost about 5½ pounds during the

The Genius of the 15-Minute Training Plan

study period while a similar group who pedaled twice as long at an average pace actually gained a pound of fat over the same period. Even better, the weight you lose is pure fat. In one study from Laval University, researchers found that even when HIIT exercisers burned half as many calories during their actual workout sessions, they still lost nine times more fat after 15 weeks of working out than their traditional long-cardio-bout peers did after 20 weeks.

The benefits don't stop at weight loss. HIIT workouts also help you get fitter faster (so you have more energy for everything you love to do). In a striking head-to-head showdown, Canadian researchers found that a group of exercisers who cranked out short stationary bike workouts that included a series of 30-second sprints 3 days a week improved their fitness by about 30 percent—nearly identical to the improvements made by a similar group of exercisers who pedaled for 1½ to 2 hours at a lesser intensity. Interval training is also the ticket for better health. Researchers in Norway reported that interval training was far more effective for reducing blood pressure, controlling blood sugar, and improving cholesterol than traditional one-speed workouts.

When you stop and think about how your body works, all of this seemingly counterintuitive science suddenly makes a lot of sense. Our bodies are built to adapt to the work we demand of them. When you get up and go out the door for



Percent more calories you burn after doing back-to-back sets of two different exercises (supersets) compared with sets that let you rest between moves, according to the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*.

a leisurely jog, you're asking your slow-twitch (endurance) muscle fibers to wake up and get to work, but all those fast-twitch (speed and power) muscle fibers go largely untapped. Over time, many of the neurons that once served fast-twitch fibers will get rewired to serve their slower counterparts. Others will die off. Turning up the intensity of your workouts not only gives you firmer, more shapely muscles by tapping in to all those unused fibers (think Dara Torres), but also fast-tracks your fitness gains, says HIIT training researcher Martin Gibala, PhD, professor of kinesiology at McMaster University. "High-intensity exercise kind of shocks your system. Your body thinks, 'She's making me do some really hard work,' so it increases your total exercise capacity—your ability to use oxygen and burn fat—in a fraction of the time than if you'd exercised less intensely," he says. In fact, according to neuromuscular researcher Christopher Knight, PhD, of the University of Delaware, there's an

almost immediate effect when you tap into your fast-twitch fibers with strength training and/or high-speed intervals. “We’ve found that you can increase your fast-twitch firing rates after just 1 week of training,” he says.

That’s the genius of the Superfast Workout Plan. You combine 15-minute resistance-training workouts with 15-minute HIIT workouts to lose the most weight. Scientists already know that combining cardio and resistance training works faster and better than either alone. When Pennsylvania State University researchers put three groups of overweight people on a diet and then had them do cardio, resistance training and cardio, or no exercise at all, they found that though each group lost roughly 21 pounds, the lifters dropped 6 more pounds, or 40 percent more, of fat (which, remember, takes up more room than muscle and doesn’t look nearly as nice). That’s right, nearly every ounce they lost was in the form of fat, while the other two groups dropped precious metabolism-revving muscle as well. Now you get to reap all these rewards in a fraction of the time you ever thought possible.

But the 15-minute secret doesn’t just give you the shortest, most effective workout on the planet. You’ll also:

1. Trade Fat for Muscle

Whether you want to be bikini ready or are just looking to boost a sagging bottom, 15 minutes is all it takes. Premiere strength-training researcher

Wayne Westcott, PhD, CSCS, instructor in the exercise science department at Quincy College in Massachusetts, confirms that when you choose your exercises wisely, a handful of moves—just four in some cases—is all you need to change your body composition. “Navy research shows you can get tremendous overall improvement—losing 4 pounds of fat and adding 2 pounds of muscle in 8 weeks—by doing just four exercises that work every major muscle,” he says. The four moves are the squat, chest press, row, and abs curl. Do them during several rounds of a 15-minute workout for total body transformation.

2. Burn More Calories

Even better, the calorie-burning benefits of even the shortest strength-training bout keep coming long after you’ve left the gym. In a study from Southern Illinois University, researchers found that when volunteers did just one set of nine exercises, or about 11 minutes of strength training, 3 days a week, they increased their resting metabolic rate (the calories burned when just hanging out) and fat burning enough to keep unwanted weight at bay. And then even more great things will happen.

3. Stay Young

Unless you do something to stop it, your body loses about half a pound of muscle a year after age 20, says Tina Schmidt-McNulty, exercise specialist at Purdue University Calumet. That may sound nearly insignificant,