

# Getting fit for life



*Variety is the spice of life: Why not try taking your workout outdoors, or to the beach, this weekend?*

The term “functional fitness” has become a bit of a buzzword lately, and while it does sound like one is stating the obvious—after all, isn’t one of the key reasons for a living fit and healthy lifestyle so that one’s body functions better?—the idea here is that when we exercise, we should be doing it so that our bodies become better at taking us through everyday, real-life situations... rather than just exercising simply to be better at, well, exercising. The movements we constantly try to improve upon while working out should thus help us simulate daily life occurrences—for instance, when you perform a farmer’s carry or walk, it should help you feel less tired when you’re actually carrying heavy bags of groceries home. Or when you perform squats, it’s so that you’re able to get up and about on your own even when you’re older. After all, the average person who likes to stay fit, and who isn’t a pro athlete, is training to stay fit for life itself, rather than for a specific sport in a competitive context, right?

While I am personally thrilled that there does seem to be more of a societal shift towards the idea of celebrating our bodies for what they are able to do rather than only what they look like—something that our regular readers know that we champion—these types of workouts have been around forever. They’re all things that most gym-goers or active people are already familiar with. Which is awesome, because that means that all you

then have to do is remember what you’re doing them for, and actually apply that mentality. Still, as anyone who has ever tried a sport vastly different to their own will tell you, no matter how much you excel at one type of physical activity, that doesn’t necessarily mean you’re fit in all of them. That’s why personally, I’ve always made variety (and dedication) the most constant part of my fitness routine. Not only does it keep my body perpetually guessing, but it also stops me from getting bored—trying something quite different to your norm can only challenge you for the better.

Being well-rounded isn’t just important when it comes to our health and fitness, however—research has shown that having fun, passion-led side-projects can not only make us happier and healthier, but they can actually make us better at everything else, too. And they don’t just mean spending our downtime on activities that help us release the strain of our stresses and problems—while escapism is certainly important too, the studies have found that engaging in meaningful leisure activities that contribute to your personal growth and development are the key, leading to better mental health, and a greater sense of control and overall relaxation. In fact, some studies have shown that certain hobbies like learning to play an instrument, reading more, learning a new language, or volunteering, for instance, can not only help us become more intelligent, they can teach us skills that translate to other fields, making us better at our jobs too. Personally, outside of work and my active pursuits (which include everything from gym fitness, parkour, and dancing to swimming, paddleboarding and surfing, among others), I love to paint and draw, sing, cook, read, listen to and explore music (I can’t live without it!), and learn new things. What do you enjoy? Tell us on social media at @womenshealthme! We hope you enjoy the issue—see you next month!

*Yi-Hwa*  
**YI-HWA HANNA**  
 Editor-in-Chief  
 yi.hwa.hanna@itp.com

## TIME FOR A CHANGE

### IF YOU HAVE...

#### 15 SECONDS

Get onto YouTube and look up the channel for online episodes of Fighting Fit Dubai, the now-renamed second season of the boxing reality TV show formerly known as White Collar DXB. “This Month,” p.110

#### 5 MINUTES

Next time you’re at the beach, hop into the sea water for a splash even if you don’t want to go for an actual swim: It will help to improve your state of mind. “Vitamin Sea” p.13

#### 15 MINUTES

Torch fat and sculpt a tighter, stronger, and leaner body with this simple do-anywhere workout—no dumbbells needed either! Just grab a step and get to it. “Step Right Up,” p.53


#### 20 MINUTES

Craving a cool pick-me-up in this sticky summer heat? Of course you are. Try this simple raspberry gazpacho recipe for a delicious and refreshing quick meal. “Ripe With Possibility,” p.71

#### 60 MINUTES

Grab your goggles and try one of these pool- and land-based workouts to mix up your fitness routine and improve everything from endurance to strength. “Just Keep Swimming,” p.56

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