

Tabata Can Help Remove Those Extra Holiday Pounds

While January may be filled with New Year's Resolutions, December, I have found, is often teeming with "End of Year Excuses." With all the holiday parties and preparations, errand-running and gift-getting, workout schedules commonly get pushed to the back burner until January rolls around and damage control goes into full effect.

Now, I would be totally sympathetic if exercise, for whatever reason, could only be done within the confines of a gym and with lots of fancy equipment. It's true that getting to the gym in December isn't easy. But the fact is, exercise can be done *anywhere*, and the only necessary piece of equipment is *yourself*.

A few weeks ago, I gave you all an intense lower body Tabata-style workout that I did while vacationing in the mountains over Thanksgiving. Today, I want to give you an *upper body* Tabata routine that can also be done in less than a half-hour. (For a refresher on what "Tabata" is and why this workout style is beneficial, check out my post on it [here](#).)

I encourage you to stay committed to your fitness this month, and if you aren't committed yet, why wait until January? **There's no time like the present** to begin making changes and forming habits that will strengthen your body, clear (and destress!) your mind and glorify God!

"What? Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God, and that you are not your own? You were bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor, 6:19-20).

WARMUP

- 40 Jumping Jacks (get the blood flowing!)
- 40 Butt Kicks
- 40 High Knees
- 40 Russian Twists (warm up that core!)
- 20 Superman
- 40 Small Arm Circles each direction
- 20 Push-Ups (or wall push-ups if you cannot do traditional floor push-ups)

WORKOUT

8 Rounds Tabata Pushups (*Rest 1-3 minutes*).

8 Rounds Tabata Russian Twists (*Rest 1-3 minutes*).

8 Rounds Tabata Plank Up-Downs (*Rest 1-3 minutes*).

8 Rounds Tabata Bicycle Crunches

If you're new to high-intensity training, or if you're in a rush, perform four rounds of each exercise, but whatever you do, *don't skip the warmup*—doing so could result in injury.

EXERCISE INSTRUCTIONS (in order of appearance):

Jumping Jacks

- Stand with your feet together and your hands down by your side.
- In one motion jump your feet out to the side and raise your arms above your head.
- Immediately reverse that motion by jumping back to the starting position.

Butt Kicks

- Begin by jogging normally, either in place or traveling for a short distance.
- Then begin raising your heels up toward your bottom as you jog, using rapid, forceful movements. Again, you may

either do these in place or traveling.

High Knees

- Begin jogging, either in place or over a short distance.
- Drive one knee up toward your chest and quickly return it to the ground. Follow immediately with the opposite knee.
- Continue alternating for the given number of repetitions.

Russian Twists

- Sit on the floor. Lift your feet off the floor a few inches and cross your ankles.
- Keeping your core tight, twist to one side, bringing your hands toward your hip. Repeat on the opposite side.

Superman

- Lie face down on a soft surface with arms extended overhead. Keep your neck in a neutral position.
- Keeping your arms and legs straight (not locked) and torso stationary, lift your arms and legs toward the ceiling as if to form a "U" with your body.
- Hold arms and legs a few inches off the floor for 1 to 2 seconds and gently lower.

Arm Circles

- Stand in a neutral position with feet hip-width apart. Your arms should be straight out to the sides so your body forms a "T."
- Begin making slow circles in a forward motion with your arms, then gradually make larger ones and complete the given number of repetitions.
- Repeat in the opposite direction.

Pushups

- Get into a plank position on the ground: hands and feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart.
- Keeping your core (abdominals and back) tight, slowly lower yourself in a straight line. Make sure your neck stays neutral, naturally aligned with your spine. Don't let your hips pike up in the air or your lower back sag.
- Continue to lower yourself until your chest touches the mat or floor or, for beginners, your arms form a ninety-degree angle.
- Keeping your spine rigid and abdominals pulled in, press your hands into the floor to return to start position.

Note: Think about *exploding* powerfully from the bottom position to increase the intensity to this movement.

Wall Pushups (if needed)

- Face a wall, standing an arm's length away. Feet are slightly apart, legs straight with weight in your toes.
- Place your hands on the wall so that hands are just outside shoulder width and are even with your chest.
- Bend elbows about 90 degrees and lower body toward the wall without touching it.
- Straighten arms and return to the starting position.

Note: To make this more difficult, move your feet further away from the wall.

Plank Up-Downs

- Assume a push-up position.
- Lower yourself to your elbows.
- Raise the right side of your body by pressing your right hand against the floor and straightening your arm.
- Raise the left side of your body in the same manner.
- Lower yourself back to your elbows, first with your right arm, then with your left.
- Keep your body straight and core tight during the entire movement.

Note: Lead with the right hand for Tabata rounds 1-4, then switch directions for rounds 5-8.

Bicycle Crunches

- Lie flat on the floor with your lower back pressed to the ground (pull your bellybutton in).
- Put your hands behind your head, then bring your knees in towards your chest and lift your shoulder blades off the ground, but be sure not to pull on your neck.
- Straighten your right leg out to about a 45-degree angle to the ground while turning your upper body to the left, bringing your right elbow towards the left knee. Make sure your rib cage is moving and not just your elbows.
- Switch sides, performing the same motion on the other side.

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Diana Anderson-Tyler is the author of *Creation House's Fit for Faith: A Christian Woman's Guide to Total Fitness*, *Perfect Fit: Weekly Wisdom and Workouts for Women of Faith and Fitness*, and her latest book, *Immeasurable: Diving into the Depths of God's Love*. Her popular website can be found at www.dianatylertyler.com and she is the owner and a coach at CrossFit 925.

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