good moves

FITNESS IN A CRUNCH

10-minute mini workouts

One busy reader had no time to exercise—until we introduced her to the following three supershort workouts.

By Megan McMorris

Cooking Light reader Barb Rothstein, 47, loves going to the gym as cycle, run on the treadmill, and lift weights. Unfortunately, the Chicago mother of two often can’t make it there in the first place. “With two girls, my time isn’t always my own,” she says. Her 75-year-old house also vie for attention, she’s often waiting hours for contractors to arrive. I would like to be able to work out at home, but distractions make staying focused difficult, she says. I need a quick workout I can squeeze in between laundry and cooking dinner.

If you also lack time for exercise, consider this. Research shows that 10-minute bouts of activity spread throughout the day can be just as effective as one continuous 30-minute routine. In fact, many health clubs have recently developed express classes that integrate aerobic activity and weight training for a faster workout, prompting the American Council on Exercise (ACE) to name the express concept one of the biggest trends in 2005. “With time as a premium for everyone, the get it all done fast class format is one of the most popular,” says Georgia-based trainer Leith Crews, a spokesperson for ACE and the American College of Sports Medicine.

Crews designed three 10-minute workouts—one each for upper body, lower body, and abs—that Rothstein can do separately or all at once. Either way, by day’s end she’ll have completed a full-body workout. “These short, high-intensity sessions increase heart rate and burn calories quickly, and the weight training tones and shapes the body,” Crews says. Try the workouts yourself, and see how Rothstein did on page 39.

Portland, Oregon-based freelance writer Megan McMorris has written for Fitness, Self, and Runner’s World and is the author of Oregon Hikes.
The Game Plan: Do all three of these workouts two to three days a week, with one day of rest in between. Perform each move for one minute, unless instructed otherwise. If you do the three routines in succession, save the cool downs and stretches for the end, rather than after each mini workout.

mini workout 1

Focus: Upper Body

**What you’ll need:** a mat or carpet, a step or low bench, two sturdy chairs of the same height, a three- to five-pound dumbbell, and a dowel or broomstick

**Minute 1**

Cardio

**Step-Ups on a Bench**

Stand facing a bench or step. Quickly step up with your right foot, then your left, then step down with the right foot, followed by the left. Repeat, moving comfortably as fast as you can. After 30 seconds, switch the lead leg.

**Minute 2**

Toning

**Wall Push-Ups (works chest, front of shoulders, and triceps)**

Stand facing a wall, slightly more than arm’s length away. Lean forward, and place hands on wall so arms are parallel to floor, shoulder-width apart. Bend elbows, and bring chest forward until your forehead nearly touches the wall. Hover for a count of three, then slowly return to start.

*To increase difficulty:* Lift one leg about a foot off the floor behind you, switching legs with each pushup.

**Minute 3**

Cardio

**Sideways Shuffle**

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Step to the right with right foot, then quickly bring left foot to meet it. Repeat, picking up the pace as you shuffle sideways all the way across the room; return with left foot leading. Continue going back and forth for a full minute.

**Minute 4**

Toning

**Broomstick Pull-Ups (works the back, rear shoulders, biceps, and abdominals)**

Place two chairs three or four feet apart, and lay a broomstick across the seats. Sit on the floor between chairs. Bend knees with feet flat on floor, grabbing broomstick firmly with hands shoulder-width apart, as shown (broomstick remains steady throughout move). Lean back to feel a stretch in upper back and shoulders, and a strong contraction in your abdominals, then pull upper body toward broomstick. Hold for a count of three, then slowly lower.

*To increase difficulty:* Straighten legs.

**Minute 5**

Cardio

**Football Drill**

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Run in place as fast as you can. Take periodic 10-second breaks to jog, if needed.
good moves

Minute 6 Toning

One-Arm Push-Ups (works triceps and shoulders)

Lie on right side on the mat or carpet, with right elbow under right shoulder. Place left hand on floor next to right hand. Switch upper body weight to left hand as you reach your right arm around front of chest to hold left shoulder, as shown. Now bend left arm, bringing right shoulder to ground. Hold for a count of three, and return to starting position. After 30 seconds, switch sides.

* To make it easier: Do these standing instead. Stand with your right side facing a wall, and wrap right arm around body so right hand holds left shoulder. Place left palm on wall at shoulder height. Bend elbow, and bring away toward wall. Return to start.

Minute 7 Cardio

High Knee Lifts

Log in place, bringing each knee up until thigh is parallel with the floor.

Minute 8 Toning

Seated Concentration Curls (works biceps)

Sit in a chair, holding a three-to-five-pound dumbbell in right hand. With legs apart, lean torso forward a few inches, and rest right elbow on right inner thigh. Curl dumbbell toward chest, keeping elbow still, and hold for a count of three. Slowly lower, repeat for 30 seconds, then switch sides.

The cardio/toning mix elevates heart rate and shapes muscles.

Minute 9 Cardio Cooldown

Stair Climbers

Run up a flight of stairs as fast as you can, then jog down. Repeat for 30 seconds. (If you don’t have stairs, do the Sideways Shuffle.) Then walk in place for 30 seconds to slow your heart rate.

Minute 10 Stretch

Doorjamb Chest Stretch (stretches the chest and front of shoulders)

Stand near an open doorway with right elbow bent, as if swearing an oath. Place right palm on doorjamb, and slip it up slightly. Slowly lean forward into door opening until you feel a stretch in chest and front of shoulder. Hold for at least 15 seconds, then repeat on the other side.

Wall Slides (stretches the shoulders and back)

Stand with your back a couple of inches from a wall. Raise both arms and bend elbows, then place finger tips against wall near your ears. Slide hands up until you feel a stretch in shoulders. Keep back flat throughout stretch. Hold for 30 seconds.
Focus: Lower Body

**What you'll need:** A step or low bench, and a pair of five- to eight-pound dumbbells. (If any of the toning moves are difficult, do them without weights for the first few weeks.)

---

**Minute 1**

**Cardio**

---

**Minute 2**

**Toning**

Step-Ups on a Bench
(see page 56)

Skater's Lunge (works quadriceps, hips, gluteals, and hamstrings)

Stand on a hardwood or linoleum floor with socks on (remove shoes for this move). Lift left heel, and slowly slide leg back and to side at a 45-degree angle, bending right leg. (Lower as far as you can comfortably.) Keep chest lifted, and don't allow right knee to move past toes. Hold for a count of three, then squeeze buttocks as you slide leg back to start position. After 30 seconds, switch legs.

*To increase difficulty:* Lift foot off floor after you extend it, then place it back to return to start position.

---

**Minute 3**

**Cardio**

---

**Minute 4**

**Toning**

Sideways Shuffle (see page 56)

---

**Minute 5**

**Cardio**

---

Single-Leg Squat
(works quadriceps, hamstrings, calves, and gluteals)

Stand with knees slightly bent, holding a five- to eight-pound dumbbell in each hand. Lift right heel slightly off floor so you're standing on your left leg. Bend left knee, making sure it doesn't go past toes, as you sit back as far as you can comfortably (shown, left). Hold for a count of three; return to starting position. After 30 seconds, switch legs.

---

**Football Drill** (see page 56)
**Minute 6**

**Lunge Step-Ups (works quadriceps, hamstrings, and gluteals)**

Hold a five- to eight-pound dumbbell in each hand, and place left foot on a step or low bench. Take a big step back with right leg (at least three feet behind you), as you bend left knee to a 90-degree angle, as shown. Straighten left leg as you bring right leg forward, and touch step with right foot. Repeat. After 30 seconds, switch legs.

*To increase difficulty: Lift back knee instead of touching step.*

---

**Minute 7**

**High Knee Lifts (see page 58)**

---

**Minute 8**

**Three-Point Lunge (works inner and outer thighs, hamstrings, quadriceps, and gluteals)**

Stand with feet hip-width apart, holding a five- to eight-pound dumbbell in each hand. Take a large step forward with right leg (about three feet), then bend knee to a 90-degree angle, keeping left leg behind you, heel off the floor (1). Switching your weight to your left leg, bring right leg out to side so it's in line with left leg, and bend into a squat with both thighs close to parallel to the floor and arms in front of body, as shown (2). Push off right leg, and place it about three feet behind you, so left leg is forward and bent at 90 degrees (3). Return to start position. Repeat for 30 seconds, then switch legs.

---

**Minute 9**

**Stair Climbers (see page 58)**

Do them for 30 seconds, then jog or walk in place for 30 seconds to cool down.

---

**Minute 10**

**Hamstring Stretch (stretches hamstrings and calves)**

Place left heel on step, and keep knee straight but not locked. Bend torso forward until you feel a stretch in the back of your left leg. Try to keep back straight. Hold for 15 seconds, then switch legs, and repeat.

**Yoga Lunge (stretches hip flexors and quadriceps)**

Get on floor in an all-fours position with hands underneath shoulders and knees under hips, then bring right foot between hands. Slide left leg back slightly until you feel a stretch in the front of your left leg.

Place hands on your right knee, and hold for 15 seconds; switch legs, and repeat.

*To increase difficulty: Lift arms overhead, and gently arch your back.*

continued on page 64
Mini Workout 3

**Focus: Abdominals**

**What you’ll need:** a mat or carpet

- **Minute 1** Cardio
  - Step-Ups on a Bench  
    (see page 56)

- **Minute 2** Toning
  - Half Roll-Ups (works front and side abdominals, or obliques)
    Lie on back with legs extended, toes pointed, inhale and raise arms up, fingers pointing toward ceiling. Exhale and press lower back toward floor as you roll head, neck, and shoulders up, reaching fingers toward the ceiling, until you feel a strong contraction in stomach muscles. During the move, tighten your leg muscles to maintain intensity. Slowly return to start, and repeat.

- **Minute 3** Cardio
  - Sideways Shuffle  
    (see page 56)

- **Minute 4** Toning
  - Dead Bug (works front abdominals and obliques)
    Lie on back with hands on your sides, knees bent at a 90-degree angle, and feet off the floor. Tighten abs, and slowly lower left leg toward floor, straightening leg, as shown. Step when you feel lower back coming off the floor. Return to starting position, then switch legs. Alternate for one minute.

- **Minute 5** Cardio
  - Football Drill  
    (see page 56)

- **Minute 6** Toning
  - Hip Lifts (works front abdominals and obliques)
    Lie on left side. Prop left elbow directly under left shoulder, as shown. Keep head and neck lifted. Now raise left hip away from the floor so your left elbow and foot support your weight. Hold for a count of three, then lower to start position. Alternate for one minute.

*To decrease difficulty:* Bend knees to a 90-degree angle. When you lift, support your body with your elbow and knees.

Keep your abdominals contracted during these moves for even better results.

Continued on page 68
**Minute 7**

**Cardio**

**High Knee Lifts**  *(see page 58)*

- Lie on back with knees bent, feet flat on floor, and arms by your sides. Raise hips off floor as high as you can. Now straighten left leg (make sure hips remain level, and keep weight on shoulders, not neck). Hold for a count of three; lower to start position. Repeat for 30 seconds, then switch legs.

**Minute 8**

**Toning**

**One-Leg Bridge**  *(works front abdominals, obliques, back, gluteals, and hamstrings)*

**Minute 9**

**Cardio Cooldown**

**Stair Climbers**  *(see page 58)*

- Do them for 30 seconds, then walk or jog for 30 seconds to cool down.

**Minute 10**

**Stretching**

**Cobra** *(stretches front of shoulders and upper abdominals)*

- Lie facedown with palms on floor near shoulders and elbows close to body. Press hands into floor as you lift upper body, keeping hips on floor. Relax shoulders, and look straight ahead. Hold for 30 seconds.

**Cat/Cow Stretch** *(stretches abdominals and back)*

- From the Cobra, move into an all-fours position. Let belly button lower toward floor as you slowly arch back, looking up. Now bring belly in toward spine as you round back slowly, letting head drop. Return to start position and look over right shoulder, then left, for a slight spinal twist. Repeat once for a total of 30 seconds.

---

**"I Can Fit in Exercise"**

When Barb Rothstein saw the mini workout plan, she assumed 10-minute routines wouldn't be challenging—but quickly changed her mind. "I got a much better workout than I expected," she says. "You're not taking breaks between moves, so your heart rate increases in a short amount of time."

Rothstein appreciated the option of doing the segments separately, whenever she could fit them into her schedule. "I like being able to throw in one of these workouts when I have 10 minutes," she says. They're easy to do between household chores, too. "I'm the ultimate multitasker, so I like the speed of the segments. I can get a complete workout and do my laundry at the same time."

---

**Make It Happen**

Sometimes finding motivation is the hardest part of working out. These ideas from trainer Leigh Crews may be just the inspiration you need.

1. **Turn on the tunes:** Having a beat to follow will help you find a rhythm during the mini workouts. Plus, studies show that listening to music can help you work out harder and longer.

2. **Post a reminder:** Consider the reason you exercise, whether it's to prevent disease or run a race. Then post a visual reminder, such as a race calendar or article about exercise's benefits to the heart, on the fridge. It will help prompt you to lace up your sneakers.

3. **Find the right time:** Try workouts at various times of the day (morning, lunchtime, and evening), and see how you feel after each. Don't force yourself to rise and shine for a 6 A.M. aerobics class if you're not a morning person, for example.