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## Do 30-day fitness challenges actually work?

30-day fitness challenges have rocketed in popularity over recent years, becoming more accessible thanks to social media and platforms such as YouTube. But is it possible to change your body in just 30 days and do these challenges offer other benefits?

### What are 30-day fitness challenges?

30-day fitness challenges are exactly what they sound like – exercise regimes designed to last 30 days and get the ball rolling on a new, healthier lifestyle.

There are several types of [fitness challenges](#) that can seem appealing because they only last a month and promise major [health and fitness benefits](#). They can vary in difficulty levels – some will become more challenging as time progresses, while others can just be for fun. They tend to vary in terms of how often you do the exercises – some might require daily routine sessions while others are just a couple of times a week with rest periods in between. Different challenges also target different muscle groups and areas of the body, such as legs, arms, or abdominal muscles.

Some 30-day fitness challenges include:

- 30-day flat abs challenge.
- 30-day beginner yoga challenge.
- 30-day squat challenge.
- 30-day strength workout.

# Why do people like 30-day fitness challenges?

Fiona Hawker is a certified personal trainer and manager at [Curves Gym](#). She explains how having a finite goal is a great way to focus, learn healthy habits, and get started on a fitness journey.

However, choosing the right type of 30-day fitness challenge is key if you want to see results. It's important to consider what it is that you hope to achieve in 30 days and where you are starting from.

## Examples of 30-day fitness challenges

### 30-day burpee challenge

"Burpees are a fantastic exercise as they work your whole body, rather than just your legs or core. With burpees, you are doing a squat, a jump, and a press-up, so you are working your arms, legs, and core, and elevating your heart rate while you do it," says Hawker.

#### How to do a burpee:

1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Place your arms straight by your sides.
3. Lower into a squat position before placing your hands on the floor.
4. Jump or step your legs back into a plank position, with arms straight, shoulders straight above your hands and your body in a straight line from head to toes
5. Jump or step your legs forward to return to a squat position.
6. Return to your original standing position.
7. Repeat.

An example of a 30-day burpee challenge is below.

# 30-DAY burpee challenge

DAY 1 10 burpees	DAY 2 15 burpees	DAY 3 20 burpees	DAY 4 25 burpees	DAY 5 30 burpees
DAY 6 rest	DAY 7 25 burpees	DAY 8 30 burpees	DAY 9 35 burpees	DAY 10 40 burpees
DAY 11 45 burpees	DAY 12 rest	DAY 13 35 burpees	DAY 14 35 burpees	DAY 15 35 burpees
DAY 16 35 burpees	DAY 17 35 burpees	DAY 18 rest	DAY 19 40 burpees	DAY 20 40 burpees
DAY 21 40 burpees	DAY 22 40 burpees	DAY 23 40 burpees	DAY 24 rest	DAY 25 50 burpees
DAY 26 50 burpees	DAY 27 50 burpees	DAY 28 50 burpees	DAY 29 50 burpees	DAY 30 rest



Maintaining good form is essential, if you are struggling to complete your burpees in one go you should split them up throughout the day.

## Virtual distance challenges

Hawker says virtual challenges are great because they allow for flexibility to move at your own pace. Often these challenges allow you to walk, [run](#), [swim](#), or cycle a specific distance over the 30 days.

"For example, you might decide to virtually walk Hadrian's wall path (85 miles) in 30 days or virtually cycle the Pennine Way (268 miles). With these challenges, you have a specific distance to cover in the 30 days, so if you miss a day because something comes up, then it's OK; you can simply cover the distance on another day or add a little extra to the next few days."

# Do 30-day fitness challenges work?

Whether or not 30-day fitness challenges work is a question many of us ask. How will your body feel once the challenge ends and where do you go from there?

Hawker says these challenges have potential to be effective if you stick with them and stay motivated. Undertaking a 30-day fitness challenge increases your activity levels at a gradual pace, elevates your heart rate and can provide gains in fitness and strength. Even if you do just 10 extra minutes of exercise per day, you are reaping the [physical and well-being benefits](#).

A 30-day challenge alone isn't enough to see changes that will last for the rest of your life. In fact, research suggests it takes [an average of 66 days](#) for a new behaviour to become [an ingrained habit](#). However, it can provide a stepping stone to making healthier lifestyle choices and a foundation for [improved fitness](#).

"You will typically start to feel the benefits after 2-3 weeks. Completing a 30-day challenge is rewarding and can provide motivation to continue onto the next challenge."

Further benefits of 30-day fitness challenges can include:

- Improved focus and determination.
- Increased self-esteem.
- Reduced stress and anxiety.
- Increased productivity due to higher energy levels.
- Better-quality sleep.
- More structure to your everyday life.
- Feelings of pride and achievement.
- Companionship when doing challenges with friends.
- Reduced risk of some diseases in the long term.

## Are 30-day fitness challenges safe?

"To keep a 30-day challenge safe, you first need to think about your current fitness and [activity levels](#)," reminds Hawker.

"For example, if you are not a frequent runner already, trying to run 5k every day for 30-days is not sensible. Building up to it over the 30 days is more manageable. It is important to remember that the challenge should aim to push you a little but not cause injury. If you're starting from a low fitness base, apps such as the Couch to 5k (available from the [App store](#) or [Google Play](#)) might be more suitable for you.

As you progress further in the challenge, it can be tempting to continue pushing yourself, but you must remember the [importance of rest days](#). Days off shouldn't be viewed as cheating or lazy - they are vital as they allow your body and muscles to recover.

"It is also important to ensure your workout routine is well balanced. Workouts focused on one exercise such as squats, walking or running can leave important muscles out," adds Hawker.

## Can you actually transform your body in 30 days?

A lot of people embark on 30-day fitness challenges to lose weight, build muscle or otherwise change their [physical appearance](#) and improve their mental health. But you should be patient and not push yourself if you aren't seeing the results you hoped for straightaway.

Hawker says it takes a few weeks to start feeling the benefits of exercise, and around eight weeks to visibly notice the benefits. A 30-day challenge can kickstart the process but maintaining your activity levels afterwards will help you progress further.

"30 days can be enough time to see initial weight loss or fitness gains, but you can't work miracles in 30 days. These challenges are laying the foundation for better health and fitness, which includes adopting good habits, getting your mind and body focused on committing to a [regular exercise plan](#), and setting yourself up for success."

# What might be an alternative to a 30-day challenge?

30-day challenges aren't for everyone. Fortunately, there are other ways to improve your health and fitness without committing to a specific challenge.

Accountability, motivation, courage, and self-belief are needed to succeed at either a 30-day fitness challenge or a longer-term fitness plan.

Just because you aren't taking part in a 30-day fitness challenge doesn't mean you can't set a goal. Hawker suggests that, if you are already a member of a gym, talk to your coach and decide what your goal is for the next 30 days. You should write it down and check off each milestone you hit along the way. A personal trainer isn't a necessity. You can do this alone or buddy up so you and a friend can hold one another accountable.

Other ways of introducing more physical activity into your life can include using a fitness app that allows you to build balanced workouts and even access helpful meal plans. Apps can be good if you are new to exercise, as many can teach you the correct form for exercises and provide a log where you can keep track of your progress.

"Working towards exercise guidelines is a great way to ensure you are hitting the minimum activity levels for health. This means 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week with at least two strength-training full-body workouts," says Hawker.

## Top tips for completing a 30-day fitness challenge

- Have patience with yourself.
- Set realistic expectations.
- Listen to your body and stop when necessary.
- Continue to nourish yourself in other ways (food, water, sleep).
- Learn the correct form first to reduce the risk of injury.
- Always warm up and cool down properly.
- Make the workout challenge your own and incorporate exercises you enjoy.

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