

Bring Back

Revive your workouts with some childhood classics

BY PEGGY HALL
PHOTOGRAPHY ALEX ARDENTI

So you've been diligently executing your workout plan, following a finely choreographed training split of three days on, one day off. You've made great gains in the last month or so, but things have stalled. You start working out even harder, doing cardio morning and evening and adding an extra set for each exercise. After a week, you're exhausted and frustrated, wondering what went wrong. Fitness expert and certified trainer Natalie Hunt will tell you it's time to put some fun back into your fitness. "Keeping things fresh and continuing to challenge your body are the best ways to avoid plateaus," says the former Miss Fitness America. "Try throwing in some classics like jumping jacks or the crab walk and you'll not only add excitement to your regular workouts but see better results as well."

The mastermind behind the transformation of Melissa Sanchez, *Oxygen's* June

THE JACKS!



Natalie Hunt

2006 Success Story, Natalie is a success story in her own right. As a young elite gymnast, she suffered a life-threatening condition that left her in a coma. Overcoming all odds, she not only survived but thrived and considers her brush with death a blessing. "I feel that I was given a second chance at life for a reason," she says, "and I never take a single day for granted."

Every three months, Natalie takes a complete break from weight training and cardio, doing nothing but relaxing for almost an entire week. "I come back refreshed, my body is recovered, and I'm even leaner than I was before!" she states. "Muscles need to rest every so often, otherwise they'll never grow." Another way Natalie recommends you reclaim your

edge is to take a break from typical weight training and simply enjoy the outdoors by taking a long brisk walk, a bike ride or a swim. Break out the rollerblades, play some tennis, or just hook up your iPod and dance!

You can also breathe some fresh air into your workouts by performing up to three rounds of the following circuit once or twice a week. "This routine not only trains every muscle in your body, but it also challenges your endurance, power and speed. Best of all, it's a lot of fun to do!", says Natalie. Sounds like a dream come true but with proper nutrition and regular cardio, you should experience gains in overall fitness in about three to six weeks.

A



B



C



D



walking bicep curl / shoulder-press combination

Improve your coordination and concentration while working your biceps and shoulders. Hold a dumbbell in your left hand and step forward with your left foot as you curl the weight to your shoulder. Take another step and lift the weight overhead for a shoulder press. Keep walking as you reverse the move, completing 10 to 15 reps before switching arms.

MODEL: NATALIE HUNT

jumping jacks

Fitness legend Jack LaLanne is credited for creating this classic that increases your heart rate while working your shoulders, abs and legs. Stand with your feet together and your arms at your sides. Jump your feet apart as you simultaneously clap

your hands overhead. Continue for 60 seconds or about 50 reps. Jacks are great to do as a warm-up for your weight training, as a cardio blast between sets, or just for an extra surge of energy at any time.

A



B



Hunt for Success

- You only have one body. Take care of it. Quit putting things into your body that you know aren't good for you.
- Nutrition is the most important component of any health and fitness program. Exercise alone will only take you so far. Be patient and never give up on yourself.
- Set a goal for yourself and take some sort of action today. Remember, the first step is the most important. Once you get the ball rolling, good things can happen!

Find more words of wisdom from Natalie at www.nataliehunt.net.

“THIS ROUTINE CHALLENGES YOUR ENDURANCE, POWER AND SPEED.”

squat jumps

This plyometric exercise strengthens your quads, hamstrings, glutes and calves and also gets your heart pumping. Squat with your feet shoulder-width apart and then spring up in one explosive move, pushing off your toes and using your arms to propel yourself into the air. Be sure to bend your knees as you land. Work up to 15 to 20 reps.

A



B





lunge twist

By literally putting a twist on the classic lunge, you'll work your core for better balance and stability. Hold a medicine ball close to your chest and stand with your feet together. Lunge forward with your left foot, bending your front knee until your thigh is parallel to the floor. (Make sure your knee is over your heel, not your toes.) Twist your torso to the left, reaching the ball to the outside of your thigh. Return to starting position and then lead with your right leg. Continue alternating sides to complete 20 reps.

crab walk

A fun, effective way to work your shoulders, triceps, legs and abs. From a seated position with your hands behind you, lift your hips and take several paces forward and backward for about 60 seconds.



chair push and pull

A novel way to work the shoulders, chest, legs and glutes. Load a chair with weights, making sure you have plenty of space in front of you. Push the chair forward for several feet and then pull it back to the starting position. Continue for 60 seconds. Keep your spine straight and your abs engaged to protect your back. (If you're working on a carpeted surface, place magazines under the legs of the chair so it will slide more easily.)

A

square run

This will test your agility, speed and footwork. Place four markers approximately 10 feet apart to form a square. Run from one to the other in a figure eight fashion, touching each as quickly as you can. Continue for 60 seconds.

B**C****D**

Mix it Up!

Certified trainer Mike Brandmeier of Core Gyms in Orange County, California shares his favorite tips for keeping workouts fresh and fun.

- **Use a balance ball in place of a bench.** You'll automatically work your core and stabilizer muscles while having fun in the process.
- **Train with a friend for extra motivation.** Take turns picking exercises and you'll get more variety in your workouts.

- **Be creative:**

Stand on one leg, close your eyes (when it's safe), or use a stability board. Put your body in unstable positions and you'll use more muscles, burn more calories and achieve better and quicker results!

**A****B**

barbell pullups

This do-it-yourself pullup strengthens the back, biceps and rear delts. Place a bar across two chairs. Lie down and take an overhand grip on the bar. Keep your body in one straight line and lift yourself toward the bar. Perform 10 to 15 reps.



B



C



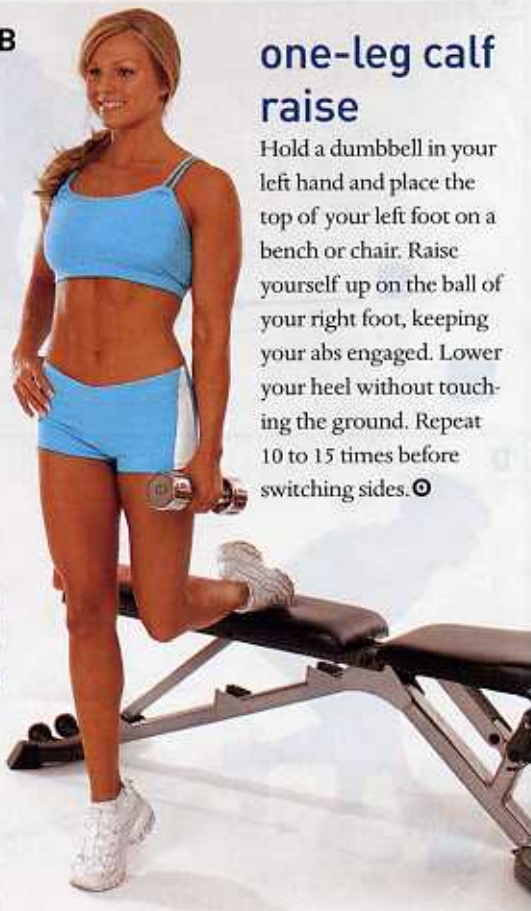
pike push-up

This is a unique twist on the standard push-up. Start with your feet on a bench or chair and lift your hips into a pike position. Walk your hands out to a push-up position, then lower yourself with control. Keep your abs firm to support your back. Push yourself back up and return to the starting position. Perform 10 to 15 reps.

A



B



one-leg calf raise

Hold a dumbbell in your left hand and place the top of your left foot on a bench or chair. Raise yourself up on the ball of your right foot, keeping your abs engaged. Lower your heel without touching the ground. Repeat 10 to 15 times before switching sides. Ⓞ