

RECORD RESULTS

... *in just two weeks*

Get tight and toned – and look great – with this three-day push/pull workout. You'll burn off fat – torch 300 calories in just one workout in fact – and max your muscle development. BY PEGGY HALL | PHOTOGRAPHY ROBERT REIFF

Reader Letter

Dear Oxygen, I've heard a push/pull workout is an effective one that works all your muscles without the risk of overtraining. I'd love to get a week-long plan along with some exercises for my lower body. Thanks. – Kara, via email



Mind and Muscle

"Visualize the target muscle and consciously focus on making that muscle do the work throughout the exercise," says Brad Schoenfeld, a certified trainer and author. "This will improve results immeasurably as it forces the target muscle to carry the brunt of the work." In other words, put your mind where your muscle is, and get ready for the results!

If getting tight, trim and toned – in less time than you think it takes – is what you're after, then consider the tried-and-true push/pull approach where muscles with a similar function are grouped together. In this scheme, you train the pushing muscles of the chest, triceps and shoulders in one workout, and the pulling muscles of the back, biceps and posterior delts in another.

According to certified trainer Brad Schoenfeld, author of several books including *Sculpting Her Body Perfect* (Human Kinetics, 2007) and *Look Great Naked* (Prentice Hall, 2001), push/pull is a desirable split. "First, by training muscles that have similar functions in the same workout, you maximize the pump in these muscles which can aid in improving muscular development," he explains. "Moreover, since push muscles and pull muscles don't have much overlap in function, you can conceivably work out on successive days without risking overtraining."

Perhaps one of the most compelling

reasons for implementing the push/pull approach is that it can yield maximum results in minimum time. "Assuming the routine is properly executed," says Schoenfeld, "you should expect to see results quickly, generally within a couple of weeks."

The workout presented here employs the push/pull approach for the upper body two days a week and includes a complete lower body workout one day a week. "Push/pull doesn't work nearly as well for the lower body," Schoenfeld says. "The only true pulling muscles in the legs are the hamstrings. And because the hams are involved in co-contractions on any multi-joint thigh movement such as squats, lunges and leg presses, they would end up being trained twice as much as the quads in a push/pull scheme."

To shake things up after a few weeks, try doing a four-day split with squats and calf raises added to the upper body push day, and abs, deadlifts and lunges added to the upper body pull day. Alternate these workouts, ideally getting two days of rest before doing the same workout again.

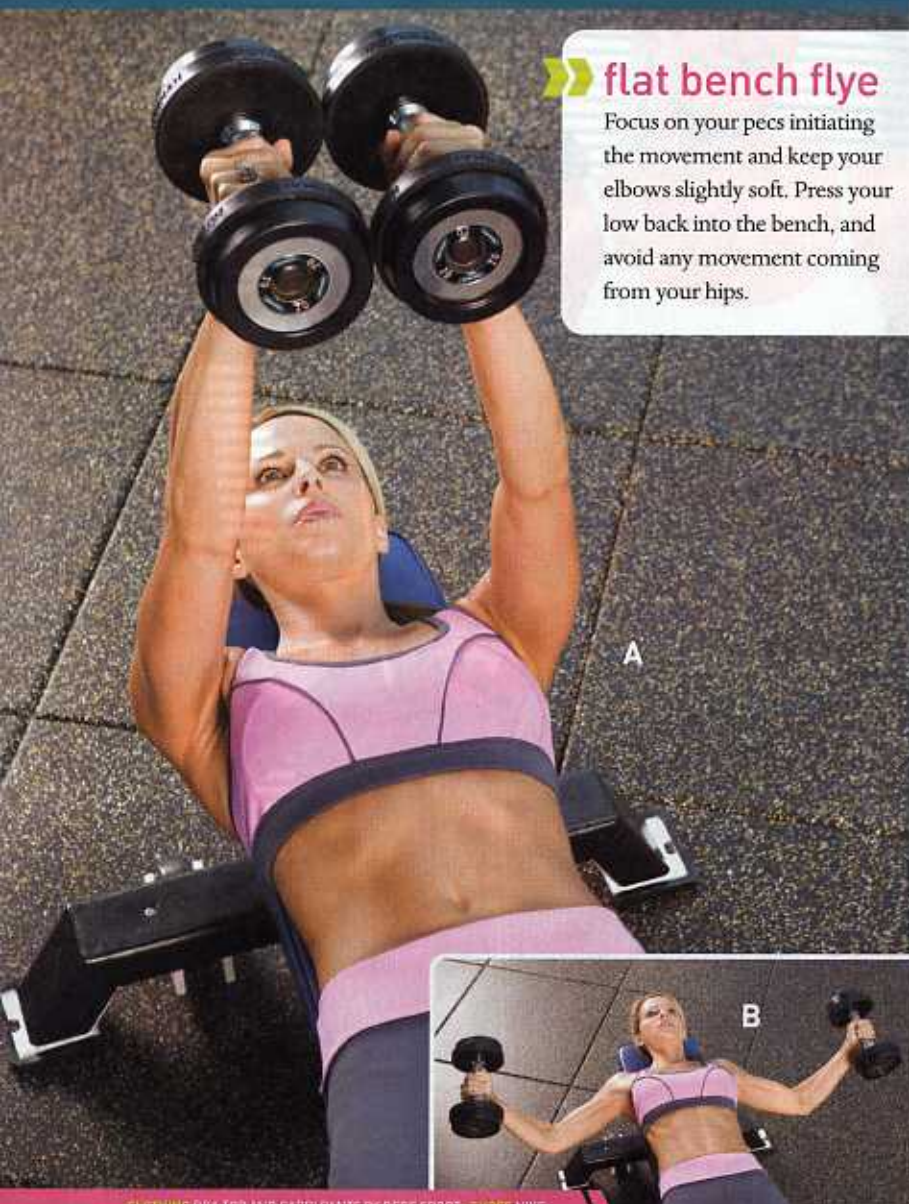
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Stand taller and look leaner with a push/pull workout.



CLOTHING BRA TOP BY ELISABETTA ROGLANI, CAPRI PANTS BY BEBE SPORT, SHOES ASICS

DAY 1: Upper Body **PUSH**



flat bench fly

Focus on your pecs initiating the movement and keep your elbows slightly soft. Press your low back into the bench, and avoid any movement coming from your hips.



barbell bench press

Take a wide grip on a barbell, lining up your wrists and elbows. Be sure to keep your lower back flat against the bench and your hips still throughout the exercise. Placing your feet on the bench or raising them into the air with your knees bent will help you achieve this.



dumbbell incline bench press

Hold a pair of dumbbells at chest level with an overhand grip. Press them together above your chest, squeezing your pecs for an isometric contraction. **Variation:** at the top of the movement, rotate your palms to face each other to accentuate the triceps work.

CLUTHING BRA, TOP AND CAPRI/PANTS BY BEBE SPORT, SHOES NIKE

By the Numbers

| PUSH WORKOUT | PULL WORKOUT | LEG WORKOUT |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Flat bench fly | Dumbbell curl | Dumbbell squat |
| Dumbbell incline bench press | Roman chair raise | Barbell split squat |
| Dumbbell triceps extension | Chin-up | Barbell side lunge |
| Arnold press | Close-grip pulldown | Dumbbell side lunge |
| Dumbbell lateral raise | Supported barbell row | Seated calf raise |

30
Minutes

Time to complete each workout

300
Calories

Amount burned in one workout

3
Days

Number of weekly cardio sessions

2
Weeks

Time frame to start seeing results



» Arnold press

Start with your palms facing you and rotate them to face out as you extend your arms overhead. Engage your abs and keep your spine straight throughout the movement.



» dumbbell triceps extension

Keep your elbows aligned with your shoulders and contract your abs to avoid arching your back. **Top tip:** Keep all movement below your elbows – your upper arms should remain as close to your ears as possible.

dumbbell lateral raise (NOT SHOWN)

Keep your elbows relatively straight to increase the load on the muscle. Lift and lower dumbbells out to your sides with control, avoiding any swinging of the weights.



TOP TIP:
Always lift facing a mirror – you can correct your form far more easily.



