

First of all, congratulations on taking your first steps to fitness! Or if you're already into your fitness, congratulations on taking this opportunity to shake it up. We're introducing our 40 Days of Fitness campaign, which will run from Wednesday 18th February, right up until Sunday 5th April. That's more than 40 days, but don't forget that Sunday is a rest day, and a chance to reflect on your successes from the past week.

We have collaborated with certified health coach, and founder of [Fit Girls Eat Burgers](#), Courtney Berlin, to bring you a tightly-packed food and fitness schedule which will help inspire you to eat well and move more. One of our PTs, Lee Pickering, has provided us with some great motivational tips to support and inspire you too!

We'd love it if you could share your progress and inspiration on your blog. We want you to own this challenge, mix it up into your workout routines and daily life. For sharing on social media, please use the official hashtag #FitnessRevolution

We've set different levels for different abilities, so don't be afraid to challenge yourself and move up to the next level if you can!



Wednesday 18th February – #WednesdayWorkout

Lee: It only takes one step to get started. You've made that first step by joining in with our 40 Days of Fitness Challenge! Congratulations!

We're throwing you in the deep end here, so don't worry about pushing yourself too hard. **Complete your chosen level of exercise for 20 minutes and see how far you can travel.**

Beginner	- Walk
Intermediate	- Jog
Expert	- Run

Thursday 19th February – 3 sets of squats with 60 second rest in between

Get as low as you can, but make sure your knees don't travel too far over your toes, and keep your chin up and your back straight.

Beginner	- 10
Intermediate	- 20
Expert-	- 30 (add 3kg weights if you don't feel this is challenging enough!)

Friday 20th February – Planking

Lie on your front, resting on either your hands or elbows, and lift yourself up. Ensure that your bodyweight is spread out evenly, keeping your back straight and neck neutral. Time how long you can hold the plank, make a note and try to beat it next week!

Time held:



Saturday 21st February – 3 minute (#SaturdayChallenge)

How many of each exercise can you do for 1 minute each? Make a note and get ready to beat it next week.

Jump squats:

Star jumps:

Sit ups:

Sunday 22nd February – Rest day

Lee: Rest days are often overlooked, but it is important to incorporate them into your routine. Rest days allow your muscles chance to repair and grow. Without rest days you are at risk of overtraining, but this doesn't mean you get to veg out all day! Keep moving at a low intensity and ensure you're still eating healthily.

Try this great Thai Red Curry as a delicious alternative to Sunday roast (switch the chicken with tofu for a vegetarian option):

1tbsp vegetable oil	2tsp grated fresh ginger
500g (1lb 2oz) skinless chicken breasts, cut into chunks	200ml coconut milk
1 large onion, thinly sliced	1 chicken stock cube, dissolved in 150ml (¼ pint) hot water
2 garlic cloves, crushed	2tbsp Thai red curry paste
1 red pepper, deseeded and cut into chunks	1tbsp light soy sauce
1 stalk fresh lemon grass, bashed with a rolling pin	2tbsp fresh coriander, chopped, plus extra for garnish

Cook the chicken, garlic and onion for 5 minutes, add all other ingredients, bring to the boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 20-25 minutes. Once cooked, remove the lemongrass from the sauce and serve with rice or noodles.

Monday 23rd February – Tricep Dips

Lee: Whilst you might think that getting up early and hitting the gym is good for you, if it means that you're missing out on valuable sleep, you're probably doing more harm than good.

3 sets of tricep dips with 60 second rest in between

Beginner	- 10 with legs bent
Intermediate	- 10 with legs straight
Expert	- 20 with legs straight

Tuesday 24th February – Ingredient of the week: Substitute milk

Courtney: Dairy can be difficult for many people to digest. It can cause gas and bloating, and unless you eliminate it for a significant period of time you won't know if it is the source of your discomfort. Unsweetened versions of milk alternatives also tend to have less calories, one cup of almond milk has around 30 calories, whilst skimmed milk has 90. Despite the reduction in calories, dairy alternatives often have similar percentages of vitamins and minerals.

Courtney suggests using coconut milk instead of eggs to fry up your French toast. You could also try coconut or rice milk in a smoothie, which gives your drink the consistency of a milkshake, helping you to feel fuller for longer.

Wednesday 25th February – 25 minutes

You did a really great job last week, now travel a little further for an extra five minutes. If you're lacking in motivation, create a playlist of your favourite feel-good songs to listen to whilst you're out and about.

Beginner	- Walk
Intermediate	- Jog
Expert	- Run

Thursday 26th February – 3 sets of squats with 60 second rest in between

Lee: If you feel like your workout doesn't challenge you, make an appointment with a personal trainer or join a class. You'll get some great feedback on proper form and inspiration as to some new moves you can incorporate into your own workout.

We've increased your reps this week, you can do these during the adverts of your favourite TV show!

Beginner	- 20
Intermediate	- 30
Expert	- 40

Friday 27th February – Plank

It's Friday, so it's time to plank. Look at your time to beat and see how much your fitness has increased in the space of a week!

Time to beat:

Time held:

Saturday 28th February – 3 minute #SaturdayChallenge

It's that time again! Time yourself doing the Saturday challenge and see if you can beat last week's scores.

How many of each exercise can you do for 1 minute each?

Jump squats:	Last week:	Difference:
Sit ups:	Last week:	Difference:
Star jumps:	Last week:	Difference:

Sunday 1st March – Rest day

Take it easy today and do some gentle stretches. Try a few at home, or visit a yoga class for some real relaxation.

Lee: If you're feeling sore from a workout, take a bath or do some simple stretches. A general ache in your muscles means that you're working hard and your muscles are repairing. Any sharp pains that feel unusual, check with your doctor.

Step your right foot forward into a lunge, placing your fingers on top of your extended foot. Breathe in, and exhale as you gently straighten your right leg. Repeat on the other side.

Stand with your feet together and arms over your head. Exhale as you bend your upper body to the right. Inhale as you return to the centre and repeat on the left side.

Sit on the floor with the soles of your feet placed together, letting your knees fall to the side. Grasp your feet and stretch your chest upwards as you inhale. As you exhale, slowly lean forward from your hips without rounding your back.

Monday 2nd March – 3 sets of each exercise

Lee: According to our survey, only 1 in 5 women manage to stick to their fitness resolutions. Falling off the wagon is fine, as long as you can jump straight back on!

<http://www.dwfitnessclubs.com/blog/2014/infographic-can-stick-2015-fitness-plan/>

Beginner	- 10 chair squats (sit and stand up with arms raised at a 90degree angle) - 10 modified press ups (use your knees) - 15 step ups (Can use your stairs or sturdy box)
Intermediate	- 20 chair squats - 10 press ups - 30 step ups (can use stairs or sturdy box)
Expert	- 30 chair squats - 20 press ups - 30 jump ups (jump on and off the box/step)

Tuesday 3rd March – Ingredient of the week: Sweet Potato

Get creative this week with Sweet Potato. If you're stuck for ideas, we'd suggest you wash them, slice into wedges, sprinkle with salt and paprika and roast in the oven for around 40 minutes, or until crisp outside and soft inside. Alternatively, you could use Courtney's recipe for Sweet Potato Pancakes!

One sweet potato cooked and mashed

2 eggs

One tbsp olive oil

1/2 tsp baking soda

One tbsp flour your choice. Almond coconut rice or whole wheat flours work well

Any spice of your choice. If you'd like a sweet pancake, add in cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and one tbsp sugar.

You can also use coconut, dates, or brown sugar.

Salty or savoury pancakes make a great choice for either lunch or dinner. Add in onion and garlic powder, and season with salt and pepper.

Mix all your ingredients together and drop the batter into a hot pan, lightly sprayed with cooking oil.

Wednesday 4th March – Intervals, continue for 20 minutes

Interval training helps to challenge your body and increase overall endurance.

Beginner	- 2 minute walk, 1 minute jog
Intermediate	- 2 minute jog, 1 minute run
Expert	- 2 minute run, 1 minute sprint

Thursday 5th March – 3 sets of press ups with 60 second rest in between

Beginner	- 10 modified press ups (use your knees)
Intermediate	- 15 modified press ups
Expert	- 20 full press ups

Friday 6th March – Plank

Lee: Ignore what it says on the scale. Focus on how your body is changing, and recognise the small victories. You're more capable now than you were when you started!

Check your results from last week and try beat them this week.

Time to beat:

Time held:

Saturday 7th March – 1 minute #SaturdayChallenge

Lee: Slow progress is still progress. If you've only managed two more jump squats than you did last week, it's better than not improving at all!

Jump squats, star jumps and sit ups, beat last week's reps and see how well you're doing!

Jump squats: Last week: Difference:

Sit ups: Last week: Difference:

Star jumps: Last week: Difference:

Sunday 8th March – Rest day

Lee: It supposedly takes around 4 weeks of consistent training for you to notice results, 8 weeks for your family and friends, and 12 weeks for everybody else to notice your progress. Keep on moving when you feel like you're not getting anywhere.

Monday 9th March – Stairs only!

Take the stairs today instead of the lift or escalator. If you don't encounter any stairs today, find some! Or use the stairs in your home. An average flight of stairs is roughly 12 steps, if you choose to complete this challenge on a step machine.

- Beginner - 5 flights of stairs
- Intermediate - 10 flights of stairs
- Expert - 15 flights of stairs

Tuesday 10th March – Ingredient of the week: Quinoa

Courtney: Quinoa is a seed from a plant originally grown in South America. We think of it like a grain because it looks like cous cous. Quinoa is gluten free and has a large amount of protein of per gram and is low in carbohydrates.

We want to see you get creative with Quinoa this week, but if you're stuck for inspiration, check out our recipe for a light lunch below. Substitute chicken for kidney beans for a veggie option.

100g Quinoa

Chopped Red Pepper

Chopped spring onions

1 Chicken breast

1 tsp Cajun spice (plus extra)

Handful of baby spinach leaves

Marinate the chicken in Cajun spice, grill for around 20 minutes until cooked. Boil the quinoa until fluffy, drain and add chopped peppers and spring onion. Stir in extra Cajun spice and chicken and serve on a bed of spinach.

Wednesday 11th March – Intervals, continue for 30 minutes

Lee: Did you know that high intensity interval training can help to speed up your metabolic rate? You don't even need any gym equipment to get involved, just increase the intensity of your workout in 30-second bursts.

Beginner	- 2 minute walk, 1 minute jog
Intermediate	- 2 minute jog, 1 minute run
Expert	- 2 minute run, 1 minute sprint

Thursday 12th March – Abs challenge

Keep your hands crossed over your chest and your neck neutral. Sit up slowly and ask somebody to hold your feet down if needed!

Beginner	- 5 sit ups, 5 crunches, 5 bicycle crunches, 10 Russian twists
Intermediate	- 10 sit ups, 10 crunches, 10 bicycle crunches, 20 Russian twists
Expert	- 20 sit ups, 20 crunches, 20 bicycle crunches, 40 Russian twists

Friday 13th March – Plank

Aim to beat last week's time, can you see the results yet?

Time to beat:

Time held:

Saturday 14th March – 1 minute #SaturdayChallenge

Check last week's reps, and give it a real push today to try and beat them.

Jump squats:	Last week:	Difference:
Sit ups:	Last week:	Difference:
Star jumps:	Last week:	Difference:

Sunday 15th March – Rest day

Lee: Run, dance, walk, shake - it all counts. Don't stop moving just because it's supposed to be a rest day! Look back on what you've achieved so far and build on it.

Monday 16th March – Weight Training

Lee: Weight training is important to work into your routine, as it helps to increase your metabolic rate and helps to burn more calories in the time between your workouts.

Weights can always be switched with everyday house hold items. Complete 10 reps of bicep curls, shoulder presses, and tricep kickbacks, for 3 sets each.

Beginner	- 1.5kg – bag of flour
Intermediate	- 2.25kg – 4 pints of milk
Expert	- 4kg-5kg – 10x tins of pet food (you might just need to get the the gym for this one)

Tuesday 17th March – Ingredient of the Week: Avocado

Courtney: Avocado is good for us. Did you know it is a fruit? Although it is high in fat, the avocado is high in something called monounsaturated fat. It is just a fat molecule found in lots of types of food, which helps lower our cholesterol when we eat it. Lowering cholesterol also lowers our risk of heart disease. There is also evidence that eating items which include monounsaturated fat helps us to feel full for longer.

We all know and love avocado in Guacamole, but we'd love to know if you can put together a recipe which uses avocado. Alternatively, use our Avocado and Mango salsa as a side dish to a salmon fillet.

Chop red onion, mango, avocado, mint leaves and mix together with a tablespoon of lime juice. Sprinkle with chilli to give it a delicious kick.

Wednesday 18th March – Intervals, continue for 30 minutes

Lee: Never compare yourself to others. The person running alongside you on the treadmill might be going at 8mph uphill, but you know your body and what it is capable of. If a 6mph jog on a steady incline works for you, then you stick to that.

Beginner	- 2 minute walk, 2 minute jog
Intermediate	- 2 minute jog, 2 minute run
Expert	- 2 minute run, 2 minute sprint

Thursday 19th March - 3 sets of each back workout with 60 second intervals

Beginner	- 10 lateral raises
	- 10 back bows
	- 10 donkey kicks
Intermediate	- 15 lateral raises
	- 15 back bows
	- 15 donkey kicks
Expert	- 30 lateral raises
	- 30 back bows
	- 30 donkey kicks

Friday 20th March – Plank

You should be increasing each week by around 20 seconds, keep trying to beat your time.

Time to beat:

Time held:

Saturday 21st March – 1 minute 30 seconds #SaturdayChallenge

This should be easy by now, squats, star jumps and sit ups. So we've decided to bump it up, with an extra 30 seconds!

Check last week's reps, and give it a real push today to try and beat them.

Jump squats: Last week: Difference:

Sit ups: Last week: Difference:

Star jumps: Last week: Difference:

Sunday 22nd March – Rest day

Lee: Aside from the motivation to live a full and healthy life, a lot of people find it difficult to stick to a fitness regime without a goal in mind. Sign up for a 5k, 10k or half marathon to give you something to work towards. If you'd prefer to get your friends involved, check out some of the Mud Runs which the UK has to offer

.

Monday 23rd March – Stairs only!

Take the stairs again today instead of the lift or escalator. If you don't use any of these today, run up the stairs in your house instead of walking. An average flight of stairs is roughly 12 steps, if you choose to complete this challenge on a step machine.

Beginner - 10 flights of stairs

Intermediate - 20 flights of stairs

Expert - 30 flights of stairs

Tuesday 24th March – Ingredient of the week: Chilli powder

Time to turn up the heat! Add a sprinkle of chilli powder to your dish tonight, or try a spicy curry.

Courtney: Fighting fat starts by raising our resting metabolic rate, which is the rate at which our body burns calories. To help ignite your inner core you can always add in some hot spices to your diet. Not only will they flavour your food, they may actually raise your internal body temperature. Think about when you eat something hot and spicy. Do you get warm or even start to sweat? That's your internal fire revving up. So think about adding in fresh ginger, chili pepper and cinnamon to your meals for that extra zing.

Wednesday 25th March – Intervals, continue to 30 minutes

- Beginner - 1 minute walk, 2 minute jog
- Intermediate - 1 minute jog, 2 minute run
- Expert - 1 minute run, 2 minute sprint

Thursday 26th March - 3 sets of press ups with 60 second rest in between

- Beginner - 15 modified press ups (use your knees)
- Intermediate - 20 modified press ups
- Expert - 25 full press ups

Friday 27th March - Plank

How far have you come? Look at the time you held on your first attempt, and compare it to today. Keep going!

First attempt:

Time to beat:

Time held:

Saturday 28th March – 1 minute 30 seconds #SaturdayChallenge

Check last week's reps, don't forget about the extra 30 seconds!

Don't forget to check last week's reps, and try and beat them.

Jump squats: Last week: Difference:

Sit ups: Last week: Difference:

Star jumps: Last week: Difference:

Sunday 29th March – Rest Day

Lee: When you're on a roll and reaching your fitness goals, don't reward yourself with food. If you've dropped a dress size, grab a new outfit which shows off your progress. If your confidence has increased, join a new class.

Monday 30th March – Grab a friend

Make this a bit more fun and grab a friend to work out with!

Push up high 5

- Face your partner arm's length apart. Get in push-up position, hands directly under your shoulders, legs extended, abs engaged.
- Do a push-up, bending elbows 90 degrees. Push back up to starting position and give each other a high five, extending arm straight out, rather than up.

Hook Squats

- Stand back to back with your partner and get into proper squat position with knees over ankles.
- Squat down together and slowly walk clockwise while still squatting in a circle.
- Once circle has been completed, count to 20 and walk in a circle counter clockwise.

Partner Pistol Squat

- Stand facing each other, balancing on right leg with left leg extended low in front of body with foot flexed, holding on to partner's right forearm.
- Bend right knee and sit back into hips, reaching left arm forward (continue holding on to partner's forearm for balance), lowering as far down into a squat position as possible without lifting right heel off the floor. Return to starting position. Switch legs to complete set.

Tuesday 31st March – Ingredient of the Week: Butternut squash soup

Butternut Squash is a great versatile ingredient. High in potassium and Vitamin A, it's great for maintaining a healthy blood pressure and keeping your skin and hair looking healthy.

2 tbsp olive oil	Salt and freshly ground black pepper
50g/1¾oz butter	2 vegetable stock cubes
200g/7oz onion, finely sliced	750ml/1¼ pint milk
900g/2lb butternut squash, peeled, seeds removed and cut into 1cm/½in cubes	1 lime, juice only

Gently fry the onions and butternut squash for 5 minutes. Season to taste, dissolve vegetable stock cubes in water and milk, add to the pan and bring to the boil. Reduce to a simmer until the butternut squash is tender, then transfer to a blender and pulse until smooth. Finish off with a dash of lime juice.

Wednesday 1st April - Intervals, continue to 30 minutes

Beginner	- 1 minute walk, 2 minute jog
Intermediate	- 1 minute jog, 2 minute run
Expert	- 1 minute run, 2 minute sprint

Thursday 2nd April - 3 sets of lunges with a 60 second rest in between

Beginner	- 20
Intermediate	- 30
Expert	- 30 (with weights) or 40 (without weights)

Friday 3rd April – Plank

This is your last planking Friday so really push yourself today! Try increase your time by at least 30 seconds.

First attempt:

Time to beat:

Time held:

Saturday 4th April – 1 minute 30 seconds #SaturdayChallenge

Squats, star jumps and sit ups. It's your last #SaturdayChallenge so really step up your game!

Jump squats:	Last week:	Difference:
Sit ups:	Last week:	Difference:
Star jumps:	Last week:	Difference:

Sunday 5th April – 5K run- Surprise challenge!

You've completed the 40 days of Fitness challenge, but we want you to continue the healthy lifestyle you've been working so hard towards.

This last challenge sounds a lot harder than it is, but don't worry! Grab your friends, family workout buddy, or even by yourself as there's no better feeling than finishing a challenge.

Map out a route near your preferred area and run, jog, walk or even dance 5km! Don't worry if you can't jog/run the whole thing, you've been working hard so keep it up and keep pushing yourself.

When you're finished, make a note of your time and use it as motivation to keep going, keep pushing and overall keep moving!

5k time: