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Promotion Booklet : *Las Vegas Athletic Club*

(Given to new members as intro to diet / exercise; promoted personal training services)

The Fat-Burner's Guide to Getting in Shape – Las Vegas Athletic Club

Welcome to the Las Vegas Athletic Club!

As a new member, we'd like to welcome you to our facilities and show our appreciation with this small booklet that should get you on your way to achieving the health and fitness you're here for!

If you're new to diet and exercise, please read on to get a good grasp of the fundamentals of losing weight and feeling great. Feel free to ask any of our personal trainers (the friendly folks walking around in yellow shirts) if any concepts in this booklet need a little clarification, or if you'd like a demonstration on how to use the equipment discussed in the 'strength training' section at the end of this guide.

Burning off that excess fat, getting into shape, and being healthy are going to require three main factors:

1. A simple, healthy diet
2. Cardio training
3. Strength (weight) training

1. Eating Your Way to Feeling Great : The Diet

Despite whatever they say in the fad diets, new technology, and dieting 'secrets' roaming around today, proper diet for healthy living and maintaining ideal weight (body fat percentage) is very simple.

We are human beings. Primates. Omnivores, whose internal processes and digestive tendencies were designed tens of thousands of years ago and haven't really changed since the times we were cavemen. Back in the times of cavemen, although we weren't as educated, and life was much more dangerous and short-lived, we sure were a lot healthier.

Primitive humans didn't have tooth decay, diabetes, or high blood pressure. They ate the foods that they could forage and the meat that they could kill. Fruits. Vegetables. Nuts, seeds, and berries. Meat and fish. Throughout the evolution of civilization, we ate what

we were *designed* to eat, and functioned magnificently—until advancement brought about the technology of agriculture.

With agriculture in place, we learned of the efficiency of wheat. Rice. While such foods were inferior in nutrients to the fruits and vegetables we ate before, they were easier to make, sell, and distribute to the populace. Eventually, civilization learned to process sugar—and then our good diets really went haywire.

To put proper diet simply: you can lose as much fat as you want and have as much energy as you want all by simply *refusing to eat anything processed*. Eat only raw foods, prepared as minimally as possible. (Cook your meat, of course.)

Easy enough to say, sure—but hard to do for someone accustomed to processed foods and sugary abundance all our lives. It's really, really hard to kick sugar. But, if it's important enough to you, as an addiction, it can be eliminated.

If you still want to include processed or sugary things in your diet, then it all comes down to this simple understanding: control your blood sugar levels.

When you eat, the stuff you eat breaks down in your stomach and goes into your blood. Certain types of things will raise your blood sugar (energy levels) more quickly than others. I'm sure you've heard about the 'glycemic index'. When your blood sugar gets too high (i.e. more immediate energy reserves than you need), your pancreas produces insulin, which bonds to the sugar and stores it away for long-term energy reserves (i.e. fat). If you guard your blood sugar from becoming too high, you won't be storing so much of what you eat away as fat. And, of course, you'll feel a lot better. Blood sugar going up and down all day really messes with your body chemistry.

Fiber is a big factor in controlling your blood sugar. Things that raise blood sugar are carbohydrates (carbs). That includes all kinds of carbohydrates: potatoes, rice, apples, grapes, Jolly Ranchers, noodles, potato chips, doughnuts, etc. The more fiber there is in the carbohydrates you eat (like apples, oranges, and oatmeal), the longer it will take to break those carbs down in your stomach, so the less likely they will suddenly raise your blood sugar. Candy, soda, and *processed* carbohydrates (like rice, cake, chips, and bread) don't really have any fiber in them ('processed'), so they will be broken down into sugars and cause your blood sugar to spike right away, insuring that everything will be stored away as fat. That's why everyone's attracted to processed foods. It's easier to eat (no fiber), and gets stored away as fat (our instincts try to make us fat). And it tastes better. All that sugar...

Concerning carbohydrates, it really comes down to the question: "*How fast will these carbs be broken down?*" Avoid the processed junk as much as possible. Want to eat some bread? Make sure it's multigrain, or has a lot of fiber so it doesn't break down so fast. Want some rice? Make it brown rice, which will sit in your stomach a lot longer.

Now—let's move on to Protein.

Getting good, high quality protein will not only increase your lean mass (non-fatty tissue), but it will increase your metabolism, and burn away fat. You know how sugar makes you fat? Well, protein makes you lean. Whether you want to be buff, lean, or just ‘thin’, meat is what’s gonna give you the body you want. And, you can get what you want out of fish and poultry, too, if you’re one of those types of people who avoid the red stuff.

When it comes to meat: the leaner the better, and game meat is best of all. If you have plenty of deer and elk in your neck of the woods—dig in. When it comes to lean meat, you can eat as much as you want. Low-fat chicken breasts? Grilled fish? Eat as much as you feel like. It’s all good.

Speaking of meat—limit your fat intake. If the meat you’re eating doesn’t look like it came from an animal, forget it. Deli meats, processed meat, sausages, and fast food burgers are usually more fat than protein. And that makes for the worst kind of fat: “Saturated Fat”.

Saturated fat is the kind of fat that stays hard at room temperature—you know: the white, marble-like fat in a steak, or the flecks of ‘yuck’ in sandwich meat or pepperoni. It’s also what keeps cheese hard. This stuff will ‘stick’ around in your bloodstream and eventually clog up your arteries, leading to high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease.

Cut saturated fat and trans fat (artificially made saturated fat) as much as you can, and get plenty of mono-unsaturated and poly-saturated fat. Ditch dairy—we weren’t designed to drink the breast milk of cows. Whatever saturated fat you’re getting should come from the minimal amounts inevitable in lean meat. Poly/mono fats come from olive oil, nuts, avocados, seeds, and fish. When you’re watching out for the ‘evil trans-fats’, look out in a product’s ingredient list for the term “*partially hydrogenated*”. Even things that say “no trans fat” in the logos on front could still list “partially hydrogenated something-or-other” on the back. They lie.

So, that’s it about the diet stuff. Basically, it’s a natural diet. A raw food diet. A caveman diet—the way our bodies are biologically designed to eat, operate, and derive energy. Any other way breaks the body down.

I once came across a concept that works well for this sort of diet:

“Treat the grocery store like a running track. Stay on the outside edge. Produce in the front. Meats on the side. Dairy (fat-free if you really need it) in the back. All the bad stuff is on the inside, so limit your trips to the inside and be wary when you do.”

One of America’s biggest diet problems is portion size. It’s hard to break the habit most of us live with all our lives: Cleaning our plate, then following with desert. It’s an entire culture’s problem, and the main reason why America is one of the most obese countries in the world. We all, as Americans, eat too much. We super-size.

A more natural approach to portions, after overcoming this powerful bad habit, is to break those daily three huge meals down to six small meals a day. No more than 400 calories or so. It burns a lot of calories to fire up the stomach and start the digestive process, so starting that engine six times a day instead of three times a day will burn more calories overall. Thus, your metabolism will increase.

Lastly, one more way to make sure you store less food away as fat is to mix up your nutrients. That means mixing carbs, protein, and fat. We get much more nutrients and efficiency out of our meals when those *macronutrients* (fat, carbs, and protein) are eaten together instead of separately. The oils in the fats and proteins will act a lot like the fiber does, insofar as making the carbs take a longer time to break down in the stomach, thereby reducing the effect on your blood sugar. It's like a package deal.

It's amazing how everything works together. As you can see, the process is fairly simple, despite all the diet hype out there today. Keep your carbs fibrous, keep your proteins lean, and stay away from saturated/trans fats. Eat less, but more often, and keep things mixed together.

2. Have a Heart - The Cardio Training

This is what most people imagine and fear when it comes to getting off their butts and shaping up. But now, we're going to set a few things straight and take away those fears. And then, we'll optimize that cardio training and make sure you're really getting done what you want to get done.

Cardio training serves two functions: strengthening your heart/lungs, and burning fat. You'll have to make sure it's intense enough and long enough to give your heart and lungs a good workout, but not so hard that we're taking you out of the 'fat-burning zone'.

There are two appropriate times for cardio training.

The first is directly *after* your weight-workout. Not before. The second is all on its own, first thing in the morning before you eat *anything*. The reason for this is the way your cardio uses fuel.

You have two types of fuel in your body that exercising will use. Glycogen, and fat. Glycogen is a kind of *sugar fuel*, taken from your immediate energy reserves (remember the blood sugar?) and from temporary reserves stored inside your muscles. To repeat: sugar fuel is stored in your blood and in your muscles. And you know where fat is.

Whenever you exercise, or exert yourself in any way, your body first pulls the energy it needs from this sugar fuel. It will *always* pull from the sugar fuel first, until it's all gone. After the sugar fuel is depleted, the body starts pulling its energy from fat stores. So, to start burning fat, you have to get all the way through that sugar fuel first.

Why should you do the cardio training *after* your weight training?

A decent-length weight training workout will burn away all of your sugar fuel. By the time you get to the treadmill, you'll only have *fat* left to burn. If you did your cardio first, you'd have to run for 30-40 minutes to burn away all that sugar fuel before you even *touched* the fat reserves. *Many people do not know this*. Plus, you *need* that sugar fuel for the weight workout, because fat is more complicated for the body to burn than sugar is, so if you did your weight workout with only fat fuel, you wouldn't have the energy level you'd need to get any worthwhile intensity. Of course, this also means that by the time you get to your cardio in the end, you'll be out of energy and won't feel like doing it. If you really don't feel like running after a workout, you know you're exactly where you need to be, because your body is out of energy and forcing your brain to be lazy.

The only *other* time of the day you don't have any sugar fuel in your body (or very little, at least) is first thing in the morning after you wake up. You've been fasting for eight hours, and need a "break fast". Hit the pavement before breakfast and you'll be burning fat right off the first step.

Moving on.

When exercising, there are two ways to burn fat. Cardio training is *direct* fat-burning. Weight training is *indirect* fat burning (more about that later).

Any time you spend doing cardio, you are *directly* burning fat (as long as you do it *after* your workout—when you're out of sugar fuel). As such, cardio offers a very simple formula, even though it's a bummer: *More time spent on cardio equals more fat burned*. The more time you spend on the treadmill, the more fat you'll burn. Therefore, if you're really looking to burn fat, you'll want to spend at least 45 minutes doing cardio at the end of your workout. Do more if you dare, but don't ever do more than an hour and a half. At that point, it becomes counter-productive and you're just tearing your body down. You can also do cardio *every day*, although I recommend at least a day off. But do it, minimum, three times a week (with your weight workouts).

When it comes to your heart-rate, you'll have a "target heart-rate". This is where a heart monitor will really come in handy. Here's how to find yours:

(Using the "Karvonen formula")

1. Measure your "Resting Heart Rate". First thing in the morning, before getting out of bed, measure your pulse for 60 seconds. (Most people range from 60-100 bpm.) For more accuracy, obtain an average from three different mornings. (*Example: 65*)
2. Find your "Max Heart Rate". This will be 220 minus your age. This is the highest your heart rate can safely go while exercising. (*Example: 220-30=190*)
3. Find your "Heart Rate Reserve". This is your 'Max Heart Rate' minus your 'Resting Heart Rate'. (*Example: 190-65=125*)
4. Calculate your targeted heart rate using these three numbers. For fat-burning, you'll want to keep it fairly low—say 50-60%. Multiply the 'Heart Rate Reserve' by 50%. Then, add your 'Resting Heart Rate'. That gives you your '50%' number. Do the same with 60%, and you'll have your range. (*Example: 125 * .5 = 62.5. 62.5 + 65 = 127.5. Again with 60%. 125 * .6 = 75. 75 + 65 = 140. With this example, the targeted range for 50-60% is "127.5 – 140".*)

This will be the ideal range for getting a good workout for your heart/lungs, as well as the most efficient range for burning fat. Use a heart-rate monitor (or the one built into a cardio machine if you don't have a monitor), and keep your heart-rate in your target range for the *entire time* you're doing your cardio, except for maybe the first minute when you're warming up and your cool-down period in the end.

Your target heart-rate range shouldn't feel too difficult. Just keep it there and adjust the intensity of the exercise little-by-little until you reach it ... and maintain it. On a treadmill, that means speed and incline. To get a good cardio workout on the treadmill, you don't have to run. Take advantage of the incline. It is hugely useful. You can get into your range plodding along like molasses if you put the incline high enough. Use variety. Run sometimes; hike other times.

Treadmills are basic and useful, but the best cardio machine I've seen so far is what I call a "stairmill"—a tower of rotating stairs like an escalator. Kind of like walking *up* the *down* escalator. That'll get your heart-rate up there in a hurry, and really tone up your legs, as well. Just pace yourself and stay in your range.

3. Build a Fat-Burning Furnace - The Strength Training

Strength training is necessary. If you only did cardio, you might have some results in the beginning, but in time, you'd lose muscle mass as your body adjusted to being more efficient at running/whatever, which would lower your metabolism, and make it easier to put on and hold onto your fat, which would continue on in a downward spiral.

Muscle = Metabolism.

Besides the obvious benefits of increasing your lean (muscle) mass of increased strength, energy, and tone, something you must consider is the effect muscle has on your metabolism. Muscle is a fat burner. It requires more energy (calories) to maintain than fat does, so as you replace your fat with muscle, your metabolism will shoot through the roof and it will be easier to burn fat.

Remember when I said that weight training is the *indirect* fat burner? That's because it increases your lean mass, which requires more energy to exist, which increases your metabolism. This means that you'll be burning more fat while *away* from the gym—at home, while sleeping, at work, etc. That's 'indirect' fat burning.

If you're a woman, and you suffer from the common female fear that weight training will leave you a muscle-bound she-man—forget it. If you work out according to the program I given you here, even work out as *hard as you can*, that'll never happen. Female hulks only get that way from working out three hours a day, every day, for a decade, *and*, from having unnaturally *high* testosterone levels (i.e. 'juicing'). All that will happen if you work out regularly is your body will become a toner, stronger, sexier version of itself. No bulk—worry not.

On to the program.

In the beginning, especially for burning off the fat, you'll want to go through a sort of 'endurance' program, which will be designed to toughen up your body, and get you accustomed to the rigors and discomforts of exercise. You'll also be establishing a mind-body connection—that's where a lot of your initial strength gains will come from—where your brain will be teaching your muscles the motions. Because of these things, you'll be looking at lighter weights, higher repetitions, and short rests. This design will kick your body into fat-burning mode.

Here's the most important thing: form. Technique. Not how much weight you're pushing, and not pounding out all those repetitions. Technique is making sure you're fully paying attention to the movement, going in and out evenly. Controlled. In and out, slow and controlled—at an easy pace. Not so fast that you gain any momentum (no slinging). Not so slow that it takes you more than a minute to get through the set. (That's about one-two seconds in, one-two seconds out.) Always make sure you're ready *before* you *start* an exercise (body set, spine neutral, everything in proper position).

Repetition (Rep) = (*push/pull* ... “one” ... done)

Set = A set of reps (“One, two, three, four ...” ... done)

Make sure to go through the order I've set below for all of the exercises. Go through all three sets on one before moving on to the next. Between sets, keep your rests short. 30-45 seconds is good—just long enough to catch your breath. Use machines if you're new to exercising, since they help restrict your body into the proper form. Have a good trainer at your gym help you find the machines you'll need for this program (that's what they're there for) if you're not familiar with the below descriptions. Make sure whatever machine you use offers the basic version of the following exercises and not an alternate version (i.e. for the “row”, you'll want “row”—not “low row” or “iso-lateral high row”). They all have descriptions. Don't deviate from the order. Remember to breathe while you're working out, and remember: “form”.

For most of the exercises, you'll want to keep your upper body completely immobile, with your shoulders locked back, your back perfectly straight (*whack* “sit up straight!”), and moving only your arms. Always try to get the full range of motion, to insure you're working the entire muscle. More on that in the individual exercises.

Before working out, always start with a five minute warm-up, on the treadmill or cardio machine of your choice. This will raise your heart-rate and limber up your muscles a little to prepare them for the weights.

Now that you're warmed up, here are the exercises (to be transcribed into a work-out journal later on), in order from beginning to end:

(Remember: This workout is tailored for beginners and/or fat-burners. Keep to the number of sets/reps described. Other numbers mean different results.)

1. Chest Press (for chest, shoulders, and backs of arms)
[*picture of Chest Press Machine*]
 - a. 3 Sets of 20 Repetitions
 - b. Find a weight that you can barely do 20 reps on the first set. Probably about 30 pounds (for women) or 50 pounds (for men). You'll use the same principle here for the other exercises. The way to find your weight is to find the right amount that you can *barely* get to the full set of repetitions on the first set. On the second and third set, you probably won't get all the way to 20, but you'll always try to.

- c. Sit with your back flat and the back of your head against the pad. The handles should be level with the middle of your chest (nipple level). Once you're ready, push out as far as you can without locking your elbows (*never* lock your joints), and let the weight back in (slowly) as far as you can without letting the weights touch the bottom. Keep your shoulders back and your chest puffed out.

2. Lat Pull-down (for back and fronts of arms)

[*picture of Lat Pull-down Machine*]

- a. 3 Sets of 20 Repetitions
- b. Probably about 40-50 (women) or 60-70 (men) pounds.
- c. Grab the bar with a wide grip, with about 2.5-3 feet or bar between your hands. Sit down with the bar in your hands, but don't sit down right into the first repetition. Leave your arms pulling, so you can adjust your starting position before you start. Now that you're sitting, holding the bar above your head, your arms should be straight and extended, but not locked. Almost locked. Lock your shoulders back—don't let them pull out. Keep your shoulders down and your neck long. As you pull down, think of it like doing a *pull-up*. Pull the bar down just enough to clear your chin. No further. The bar should be *in front* of your face—not behind your head. As you pull down and (slowly) release back up, keep your upper body totally immobile. Only your arms should be doing the work.

3. Dip (for chest and backs of arms)

[*picture of Dip Machine*]

- a. 3 Sets of 20 Repetitions
- b. Probably 50-60 (women) or 80-90 (men) pounds.
- c. This one will really tone up the backs of your arms, and it'll be burning good by the end of the set. The motion of the exercise is hard to describe, so check out the picture on the machine, or have someone show you, and then I'll go over the finer points. It's most similar to pushing yourself up on parallel bars in gymnastics. Set the chair a little lower than you normally would, because you want a good stretch in your chest when you sit down (which will also help the range of motion). As you push down with your hands on the bars/oars/whatever, all the way down, then let it back up (until the weights are almost touching—right?), keep your shoulders flat and your neck long. Don't hunch. The most important thing is keeping your elbows folded back like chicken's wings. The elbows should be pointing directly behind you, which requires a little playing around with rotation. You'll know when you've got it. Keeping your elbows in the right place will focus the exercise more on the backs of your arms. Once you're going through your reps with the elbows pointed straight back, you may or may not notice that it's a lot easier to push down with the elbows out. Because of this, your elbows will naturally drift out over the course of the set. So, *watch out*, and constantly remind yourself to keep those elbows back.

4. Row (for back and fronts of arms)

[*picture of Rowing Machine*]

- a. 3 Sets of 20 Repetitions
- b. Probably 20-30 (women) or 50-60 (men) pounds.
- c. This one will be hard, because by now your arms should be nearly shot. Most rowing machines will have an adjustable pad that presses against your sternum as you row. Adjust the sternum pad out enough to where, when pressing firmly against your chest, your extended arms can just *barely* reach the rowing handles. This way, when you begin, you can give a little extra stretch to grab the handles, then adjust yourself, and the weight should be a little lifted at the bottom end of the exercise. Sit up *straight*—as in *military* straight—and keep your shoulders locked back. Do *not* slump forward at the beginning/end of the exercise like the picture on the machine might show. Now, sitting up straight (very little pressure on the sternum pad), arms extended and parallel to the floor (if not parallel, adjust the height of the seat), pull those handles back to your ribs as far as you can. Don't move your upper body, and don't bob your head (or you'll strain your neck). Keep your elbows in tight. Then release back out. Slowly.

5. Leg Press (for thighs and butt)

[*picture of Leg Press Machine*]

- a. 3 Sets of 20 Repetitions
- b. Probably 80-90 (women) or 110-120 (men) pounds to start. Your goal on this is eventually to press your bodyweight. The right amount of weight will start burning your thighs right around number 5. But, they're big muscles, so there's a lot of room to burn. Keep at it until the end.
- c. Sit in the machine and put your feet up on the plate. Your feet should be shoulder width apart, with your heels down near the bottom of the plate (but not hanging over), and your toes pointing straight up. Find the seat adjustment (probably under your seat on the left), and adjust the seat as *low* as you can go with your heels still touching. Try to go to the bottom if you can. Range of motion is very important on this one. Once ready, grab on wherever available, and *push* out. Either the plate will move out, or the seat will move along a track, depending on the machine. Push all the way out until your legs are extended, put *don't pop your knees*. It's easy to do. Be *very* careful with your knees at the top, because if you lock them, you're transferring the weight from your muscles to your bones, and that's a lot of weight for your knees. Then, watching the weight stack, come back down as low as you can without letting the weights touch. When you push, you'll be driving mostly with your *heels*, and balancing with the balls of your feet. Grip the plate with your whole foot. The power comes from the heels. When you're at the top, you shouldn't be seeing either your heels or your toes coming off the plate, else you're not balanced correctly. As you go in and out, keep your legs straight. You should see

your ankles, your knees, and your hips all tracking together in alignment. Try to get as much range of motion as you can—the upper range mostly works your thighs, and the lower range mostly works your butt (so get as low as you can).

6. Lying (prone) Hamstring Curl (for backs of thighs)

[*picture of Prone Leg Curl Machine*]

- a. 3 Sets of 20 Repetitions
- b. Probably 20-30 (women) or 50-60 (men) pounds.
- c. This is the hamstring machine where you lay down on your stomach and curl a rolling pad with your legs. Every gym has one. Most will have two adjustments: one for the range of motion (always go maximum), and one for the roller pad (which should be level with the backs of your ankles—probably “Medium” to “Large” for most people). Stand in between the bench and the roller, facing the front of the bench. Line the edge of the bench’s padding with an imaginary line between the tops of your knee-caps and your thigh muscles, then lay forward. Keep the edge of the padding just above your knee-caps so that you don’t hurt your knees when you curl around. Now, laying down, the roller pad should be behind your ankles. There’s probably some railing for you to hold onto below the head-side of the bench. Keep your head up instead of laying it down—this will keep your lower back tight and safe. Now, *curl* that roller pad all the way around (like a biceps curl for the legs) until that pad touches your butt. Then, lower it back down *slowly*, watching the weight stack to get as close to touching bottom (without actually touching) as you can. Now do it 19 more times. As the exercise gets tougher, you might find yourself getting stuck at a ‘halfway point’. At this point, it’s okay to use a little extra *power* to get the roller all the way up, but compensate by going *extra* slow on the way back down.
 - i. A note about hamstrings. Hamstrings (these muscles used) don’t feel the same as other muscles do. Where other muscles start to *burn* through your set, until it burns like crazy and you have to stop; hamstrings don’t burn—they *cramp*. It might be a little weird in the beginning, but you’ll get used to it. By the end of your set, they’ll be cramping up bad. This is normal. Nothing wrong. In fact, if they’re *not* cramping up by number 20, your weight is too light.

7. Back Extension (lower back, butt, hamstrings)

[*picture of Lower Back Rack*]

- a. 3 Sets of 15 Repetitions
- b. Bodyweight only. Specifically for *core* exercises (abs, obliques, lower back), you’ll want to *only* use your own bodyweight. Don’t use the machine, and don’t hold on to extra weight plates or anything. It’s too easy to hurt yourself. Plus, you don’t want to encourage those muscles to grow—you want them to be trim and compact. Extra weight encourages

growth. I've seen pictures of (male) bodybuilders that use those machines and look like they're pregnant. Gross.

- c. Good luck finding this machine. It looks kind of like a footplate (maybe with rollers, maybe not), with a base-bar extending at a 45 degree angle, with a pad for leaning on at the top that makes it look like a "T". It'll be around there somewhere. This is an exercise primarily for the lower back, and it's the best one you can do for those muscles. Form is super important to avoid potential injury. These machines typically have *one* adjustment, a pull-knob that lowers the leaning pad. Lower it all the way down to the bottom. You'll be bending over that pad, and you don't want it to interfere with your bend. Start by climbing in (when you see it, you'll see how). Hook your heels into the footplate, whether by the heels in a metal ridge, or the ankles in a roller (similar to the last exercise), depending on what brand the machine is. Hooking your feet in like this is what's going to hold up your bodyweight when you're leaning over the top pad out into open space. Now that you're hooked in, lean out across the pad. Your upper body should be unsupported in open air. Having your weight on your thighs might be uncomfortable, but you'll get used to it, and it won't be a big deal after your thighs grow more muscle. The exercise starts with your legs straight, and your upper body out in space, and your whole body making a straight line. Cross your arms and put your hands on your shoulders. Now, here's the mega-important form part: throughout the whole exercise, keep your *spine perfectly straight*. It helps *a lot* to keep your chin up. The spine follows the head, so keep your chin up and out (more as you go down—just pivot your head with the motion), and your spine will stay straight. To start the movement, you simply crack at the hips and lower the (keep that spine straight!) upper body down to a 90 degree angle (chin up!), then back up. Slow. Controlled. It helps if you keep your sight on something ahead of you as you go down and up. Fix your eyes on a spot on the floor, or a nut/bolt in a machine in front of you. Keep that spine straight.

8. Crunches (abs)

[*picture of abdominal exercise and stretching area*]

- a. 4 Sets of 20 Repetitions
- b. Bodyweight only
- c. You likely already know these. On the floor, or on a decline board for a little more intensity. Cross your arms over your chest. Roll the spine on this one. Come up far enough to let your shoulder-blades off the ground. Don't pull on your head or your neck. If 4 sets of 20 is too much, do 4 sets of as many as you can, up to 20, until you get there. Just make sure you get in all the sets. The same principle applies with the back extensions and other core exercises. You will very likely *not* be able to do 3 of all 15 of the back extensions in the beginning. Work up to it.

At this point, you're done with the strength training, and it's time to move on to your 45 minutes of cardio. By now, you should feel pretty damned wiped out, but be happy to know that your body is ready, grudgingly, to burn fat. As bad as you feel now (during the first two weeks, anyway), just think that an hour or two after you're done at the gym, you'll be feeling awesome. Your body will feel great, because you worked it like it's designed to be worked (we are designed to be in motion).

And if you really want to burn even more fat, skip the after-workout snack. With no food to speed up the process, the body will be working in overdrive to convert fat to sugar fuel and replenish the fuel you used up during the workout.

After two weeks of regular workouts, you'll feel more energetic than ever. Everything will seem to be working better. After four weeks, you should start to see some physical results, be it in pants size or more toning in your arms and legs.

Some final words about the weight workout:

We are, by nature, lazy. If you're not careful and focused, you'll find yourself stopping before the end of your set, and being content to set your weights below what you can do. Don't get like so many women I see in the gym, pushing around 10-15 pounds on everything, or men throwing away the technique and playing around with more weight than they should. Honestly, they don't call it working out for nothing. The only way to make gains is to force the body to *adapt*. To force an adaptation, you've got to push yourself, and bring your body out of its comfort zone. Then, the body will react by pushing out the borders of that comfort zone. That means getting stronger. Leaner. Toner. Tougher. Good stuff.

And proper *diet*. For all you can accomplish with strength training and cardio, it won't be worth much without proper diet. Diet is supreme. Kicking your body into a higher gear to make it into a better operating machine will only get results if you feed it the proper fuel. Exercising with a junky diet will give you *some* results, but it'll really hold you back. Processed foods are like fake fuel. It'll mess up your engine. High-quality fruits, veggies, meats, fish, nuts, seeds, and oils is the high-octane stuff.

Make sure you keep track of everything. Accurately. Use a journal. Record every set, and how many reps you did. This way you can see your progress, advance your weight as you need, and set goals for yourself. For example, if you're doing the chest press, you'll try to get all 3 sets of 20. Of course, that probably won't happen, even though you'll always try, since it gets harder from set to set. So, you might get 20, then 17, then 15. So write:

Chest Press 30lb 20 / 17 / 15

Then, the next day you come in, you can shoot for 20 / 18 / 17, for example. Always try to make a little progress in each exercise. When you get to where you can do all 20's, *in perfect form*, you'll want to up the weight a little. Just a little.

By the way: You may already know about how muscles work: taking slight damage when you work out, then healing, then growing back bigger and stronger. So, you can't do this workout day after day, back to back. This is something you can do three times a week. Put at least a day in between. Do it Monday-Wednesday-Friday, for example. If you want to come in any extra days, you can always do cardio. Remember? You can do cardio every day, and more time spent equals more fat burned. (Just try to do those cardio-only days on an empty stomach.)

Good luck with your workout, and contact me or your favorite personal trainer if you have any questions.

(Eddie Patin is a Personal Fitness Trainer and Freelance Writer working for the Las Vegas Athletic Club. He specializes in activating sedentary individuals and increasing the flexibility and mobility of elderly or otherwise challenged members.)

[appendix]

The Fat-Burner's Workout:

5 minute warm-up

Strength training:

30-45 second rests in between sets

Focus on FORM. 1-2 seconds in, 1-2 seconds out. (Weight example set for women)

Chest Press	3 sets	20 reps	~ 30 lb
Lat Pull-down	3 sets	20 reps	~ 40-50 lb
Dip	3 sets	20 reps	~ 50-60 lb
Row	3 sets	20 reps	~ 20-30 lb
Leg Press	3 sets	20 reps	~ 70-90 lb
Lying Hamstring Curl	3 sets	20 reps	~ 20-30 lb
Back Extension	3 sets	15 reps	Bodyweight only
Crunches	4 sets	20 reps	Bodyweight only

Cardio:

45 minutes, no more than 90 minutes

Don't forget about the incline!

Music *really* helps to take the mind off of cardio. The hardest thing about it is boredom.

Bring water. Drink water.

Target Heart-rate zone: 50-60%

- Use a workout journal. Write down everything.
- Don't let yourself get complacent. Working out is work. Rise above that comfort zone and adapt.
- Have fun!
- If you're not sure of anything, please **ask a personal trainer!** Our trainers are always on the lookout for members in need of assistance, and will provide free advice when asked.