

FITNESS LIFESTYLE

THE CHAMPIONS' CIRCUIT

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Let our 2009 MaxFormation Life Challenge winners help you jumpstart your fitness program.

Circuit training can be used in a variety of settings. Whether you too are trying to “transform” your body, just get a good sweat going, or start a new workout program, this Champion Circuit, which features Max Muscle’s MaxFormation Life Challenge top three winners, will challenge all of your major muscle groups while using the principles of supersetting (two exercises done immediately after one another with no rest). Do these exercises back to back and you’ll get in your cardio for the day, too!

For this workout, you will need an incline bench, one barbell or BodyBar, and two or three sizes of dumbbells.

The Champion Circuit will focus on two exercises for each large muscle group: chest, back, legs (for maximum calorie burn) and one exercise or variation for biceps, triceps, shoulders and abs. We’ll start with the back.

Reverse Flys: *First, set the incline bench to where you are at a comfortable angle. You may need to put a knee on the seat rest. Choose a weight that is relatively light, as rear delts tend to be a weaker muscle group. Keep your chest up and eyes looking straight ahead. Lift both arms out with a slight elbow bend like you are an eagle trying to fly. Stay in complete control as you lower the weights and bring hands back together. Aim for higher repetitions, 20-25 to ensure muscle fatigue. Then immediately superset with two-arm dumbbell rows.*

Two-Arm Dumbbell Rows: *You can keep the same weight, but keep the repetitions high, to failure. Or, if you have a partner, have her or him quickly hand you a weight that is just slightly heavier for 12-15 reps. For rows make sure to maintain your posture and pull the elbows up and back, trying to squeeze the shoulder blades together.*

Next, you can turn around on the bench and move right into the following chest exercises. It is virtually the same as the back, but reversed.

Chest Flys: Keep a slight bend in the arms, and open like a big hug. It is important not to open too far to protect your shoulders. Bring your hands back together over your chest and open again. Choose a weight that will fatigue you after 12-15 reps. Immediately superset with chest presses.

Chest Press: Press the dumbbells from your chest up. Chest presses should be a controlled movement. Arms bent at 90-degrees and then all the way straight at the top. Keep going until you've reached failure.

Shoulders are next. You can stay on your bench and sit up, or you can find a large stability ball (as pictured) to use as your seat if you want to challenge your core a little more.

Overhead Shoulder Press: Begin with arms at 90-degree angles out at your sides and press them straight overhead and together. Choose a weight that you can press for about 15 repetitions. You can then set the weights down for a lighter set, or go right into the lateral raises.

Lateral Shoulder Raises: Lift the dumbbells straight out to the sides, making sure to sit up straight and relax the neck and traps. Try 12 to 15 lateral raises (side raises)

Next, we do arms! Are you ready?

Tricep Pass: Take a body bar or barbell and grab the very top over your head. Then pass it, hand over hand, until you get halfway up, then lower back down. Do this as many times as you can!!

Bicep Curls: As soon as you burn out those tris, use the same weight for some good old fashioned curls. For more of a challenge, stand on one leg for a full set. Make sure your back is straight, chest is up and eyes are looking ahead. The balance on one leg should keep you from swinging the weight.

The following leg exercises will focus on quads and hamstrings and will really challenge your balance as well. NOTE: If you are a beginner, you may want to hold onto someone or something until you are comfortable with the movement and balanced. If you are advanced you can add weights (as shown).

One-legged Deadlift: This exercise is a variation of the stiff-legged dead lift. Beginners may want to try this with no weight or just a very light bar to begin. Start upright with eyes focused forward and chest up. As you start to lean forward like a teeter-totter, your back leg will lift up in a straight line. Return to start position. Go only as far as you can without breaking form in your back or losing balance. This is a great exercise for strengthening your balance and your legs and you'll really feel it the next day. Start with 10 reps and work up to 15

before adding more weight.

One-legged Squat: *Place the back leg on a bench, not much higher than your knee level. Hop forward far enough so that when you squat, your knee does not extend over your toes. Keep the chest up and eyes straight ahead. You should try to push through your front heel to focus movement in your glutes as well as your quads. Start with 10 and work up to 15. Then add weight. Repeat on other side.*

Last but not least is a floor ab exercise.

Leg Lifts: *This one uses the bodybar as a counter weight. Hold the bar directly over your chest. Let the legs lower toward the ground, making sure to keep the lower back on the ground. Bring the legs back up. If your lower back hurts on these or arches too much while lowering the legs, then try the exercise with your knees bent (not pictured).*

*After a set of 20-30 leg lifts, take a one minute break and then run through the entire circuit again. Happy Training!! **MS&F***