

Get fit on any budget



Great workouts and motivators—starting at \$0

Even the most dedicated jogger, walker, or aerobics junkie can lose her motivation. And we all know what happens if you're not motivated (hello, Häagen-Dazs!). So we've come up with dozens of new ideas to jump-start your workouts, whether you're on a tight budget or have money to burn. Some really fun options are free. We cover everything from the best fitness phone apps and podcasts to cushy sneakers to get you off and running again. And if you decide to spring for a personal trainer, we tell you how to get the most for your money. If you're looking to buy new equipment for your home gym, we can help with that, too—turn to page 62 for our latest ratings on treadmills and ellipticals. So no more excuses! We've got the skinny on everything you need to know to get started.

ILLUSTRATIONS: LEIGH WELLS

COST FREE (or almost)

Web sites

If you want to learn a new workout or just track what you're doing, check out these sites. Just beware of exercise "professionals" who aren't certified by the American College of Sports Medicine, The American Council on Exercise, or another group accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies. (Certifications should be displayed.) We found lots of YouTube videos that didn't meet this standard. Also check privacy policies to protect your info.



AceFitness.org

Price Free

Best for Learning new moves.

The skinny Whether you're looking to strengthen your shoulders or tone up your tush, this site has all kinds of exercise advice. It's run by the American Council on Exercise, so you can be sure all the personal trainers are certified. Read step-by-step instructions with animated photos to help you get it right. To get started, click the "Get Fit" tab and then search in the exercise library by body part, experience level, or equipment or under the workouts tab for the desired type of regimen.

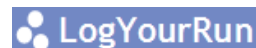


FitDay.com

Price Free

Best for Counting calories.

The skinny This Web-based diet-and-fitness journal lets you track what you're eating by calories, carbs, fat, fiber, and protein, plus it lets you see how your nutritional intake measures up against RDA recommendations. It also calculates calorie burning and helps you chart your progress toward goals.



LogYourRun.com

Price Free

Best for Recording your runs.

The skinny This site logs everything a runner might track, from the sneakers

you wear to what routes to take to the events you're training for. Follow free training programs for first-time runners, new marathoners, and more, then track your progress. It syncs with Facebook, so you can share your runs with friends or training groups, and it has an iPhone app that uses GPS to record your mileage and time for every run (just remember to tuck your phone in your pocket).



MapMyHike.com

Price Free

Best for Finding and sharing hikes.

The skinny What started out as a sort of Google maps for hikers has evolved into an online outpost where you can map a hiking route anywhere in the world, then view the trail in 3D. Share hikes with friends or search maps created by others, choosing from nearly 25,000 hikes in 72 countries (so far). The site offers an interactive training calendar, workout and gear trackers, calorie and heart-rate calculators, a journal for notes about goals and challenges, and info about local races. This is the sister site to Map My Run, Map My Ride (for cyclists), Map My Walk, Map My Tri (for triathletes), and Map My Mountain.

NIKERUNNING

Nikerunning.nike.com

Price Free access to site; equipment costs extra

Best for Training for a race.

The skinny If you're a runner, check out



videos or print out PDFs featuring new workouts to try, all free at nikerunning.nike.com. Or go one step further by signing up for the Nike+ system, a Web-based tool that helps you track your progress. This might be especially helpful if you're training for a race. Here's how it works: Order the Nike+ sensor (\$19, sold on the site). It will sync with your iPod (or iPod Touch, iPhone 3GS, or Nike SportBand) to track your time, distance, pace, and calories burned—all without interrupting your tunes. Sync the iPod with your computer, and it will upload your info to the Nike+ Web site, where you can track your runs and others', too. Some specially designed Nike+ running shoes feature a small recess in the sole to accommodate the sensor. But those are a somewhat bigger investment, \$50 to \$185.



SparkPeople.com

Price Free

Best for Getting pro tips.

The skinny If you're not sure where to start, this site will create a personalized diet and fitness plan for you. You'll get access to lots of motivational tips (new ones every day!) from nutritionists, personal trainers, and regular folks, too. You can see them in action; go to SparkPeople.com/videos to watch YouTube-powered demos from a certified personal trainer, a top chef showing you how to prepare healthful meals, and real people sharing their weight-loss stories (a site favorite).

Podcasts

All podcasts work on smart phones and computers. More are available on iTunes and online.

iTrain.com

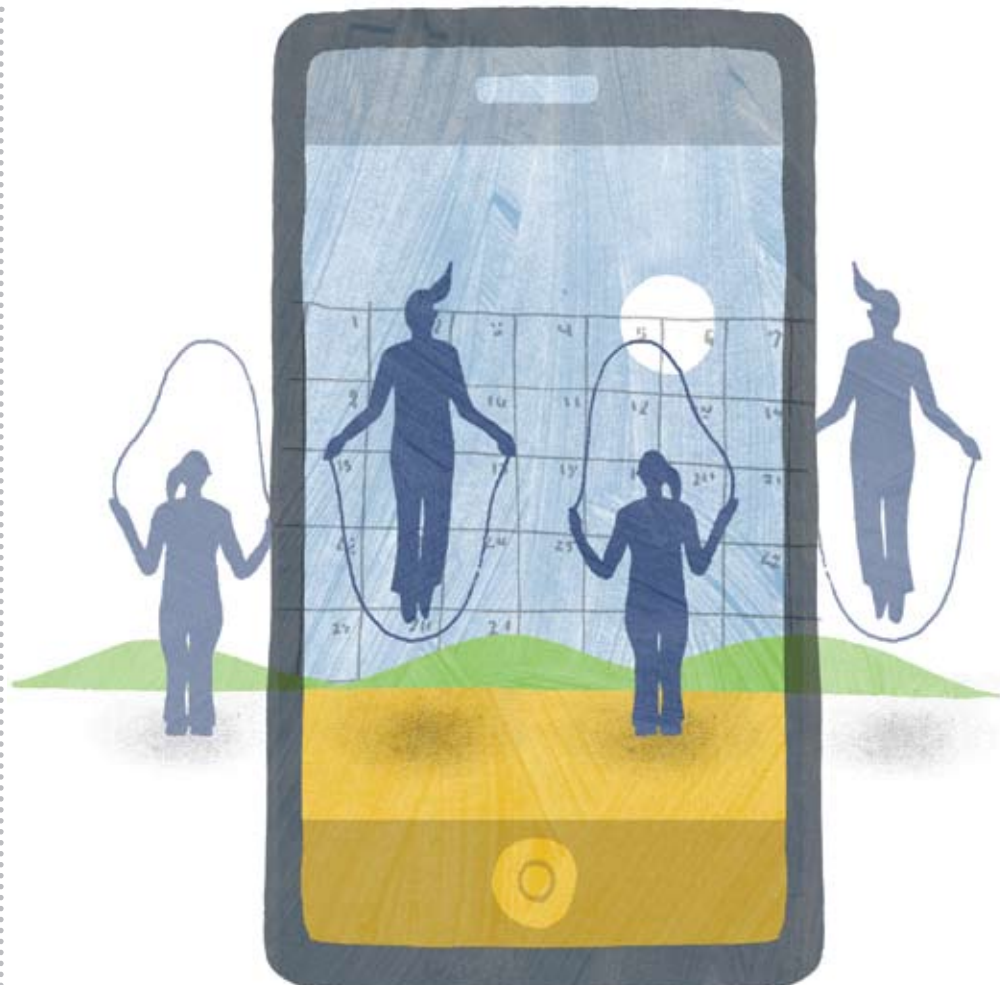
Price 99 cents and up
The skinny The site has 300+ workouts including cycling, ballet, boxing, stretching, sculpting, and strength training, for beginners to jocks.
Where to get it
 iTrain.com

Nutrition Diva

Price Free
The skinny Get inspired with fun cooking tips and other info—quick, what's more filling, pasta or potatoes?—shared by professionally trained chef Monica Reinagel during her weekly audio podcasts.
Where to get it
 QuickandDirtyTips.com

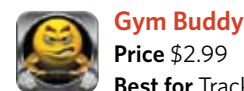
YogaToday.com

Price Free access to one new class every week, \$3.99 to download any class you like, or \$9.99 a month for unlimited access to 180 classes for various skill levels.
The skinny Try different types, from Ashtanga to Kundalini. The video classes are taught by certified instructors and range in skill level from beginning to guru.
Where to get it
 YogaToday.com



Apps

Yep, there's an app for everything, and there are some great ones to help you get fit. Most are designed for the iPhone, which starts at \$99, but they also work on the iPod Touch, which starts at \$199 (no contract required). The apps here work only on the iPhone, except for iMapMyRide/iMapMyRun, which also runs on BlackBerry models. But keep an eye out because new apps are becoming available on other smart phones all the time.



Gym Buddy

Price \$2.99
Best for Tracking your workouts.

The skinny Forget about that fitness journal or chart you use to pencil in your progress.

There's an app that makes it fun and easy. Strength-training devotees can set up workouts and then track weights, reps, sets, and more. View your workout history as a calendar or a graph, and e-mail entries to your computer to create spreadsheets of your progress.



Health Cubby

Price Free trial
Best for Linking up with your workout buddies.

The skinny It's a social networking app for those of us who don't like to go it alone. Set weekly goals for your weight, cardio, and weight-training workouts. You can even control your vices. Sample goal: just one

doughnut this week! Charts make it easy to see your progress. You can connect with others working toward similar goals, using accountability and good old-fashioned competition to stay on track.



Hundred PushUps

Price \$2.99
Best for Building muscles.

The skinny Whether you can do five push-ups or 50, this app designs a six-week training program to help you build the strength to perform 100 in a row. (Try Two Hundred Sit-ups and Two Hundred Squats, too.)



iHeartRate

Price \$2.99
Best for Measuring heart rate.

The skinny Take your pulse and tap the screen to get your heart rate. Use it while you're working out to see if you're hitting target heart rates and also to calculate calories burned.



iMapMyRide/iMapMyRun

Price Free (\$4.99 for an ad-free version)

Best for Tracking rides and runs.

The skinny It uses the GPS on your phone to measure the distance, time, pace, and speed of bike rides and runs. Sync to MapMyFitness.com to create a training log and view maps of past routes and chart new ones.



FitnessBuilder

Price \$9.99 (You can download two free full-body workouts.)

Best for Trying new workouts.

The skinny It turns your device into a mobile library of more than 2,000 exercise images and videos demonstrating step-by-step instructions on how to perform each move. You can tap through screens to follow fitness professionals doing more than 200 ready-made workouts or use a special feature that lets you create your own personal routines.



iTreadmill

Price 99 cents
Best for Counting steps.

The skinny It turns your phone into a pedometer that calibrates to your natural gait and measures the distance, time, speed, steps, average pace, and

calories burned for walks and runs, whether you're cruising the neighborhood or the mall or even if you're moving in place (say, in front of the television). E-mail your stats to your computer so you can keep track of your progress.



Lose It

Price Free
Best for Creating a diet plan.

The skinny Using your height, weight, age, and gender, this app calculates your metabolic rate and sets up a daily calorie budget to help you lose one-half to 2 pounds a week. You can chart your progress and pinpoint where you might need to make adjustments to reach your goal weight.

PLUS ONE MORE FUN ONE

Eight Glasses a Day

Price 99 cents
Best for Staying hydrated.

The skinny OK, it isn't technically a fitness app, but it's a great addition to any workout. Tap the screen when you drink a glass of water and it will let you know when you hit that old standard of eight glasses.

COST less than \$50

Software

If you want to thoroughly chart your progress as you get fit, it might be worth spending a few bucks for a good software program. The latest ones have features you might not even realize you need, but once you start using the graphs, calendars, journals, and other organizing tools, you might wonder how you ever got along without them. Buy them online or at office-supply stores. **Bonus:** Some programs, like the one here, work on smart phones, too (get more info at www.vidaone.com).

VidaOne Diet & Fitness 3

Price \$39.95
The skinny This is a comprehensive, interactive workout and weight-loss software package combining two popular programs, MySportTraining and MyPersonalDiet. Colorful graphics note your measurements, weight, and even your mood in addition to weather conditions and other details for each workout day. The weight-loss functions include suggested daily calories based on your goals (you can customize the diet to skip foods you don't eat, especially if you're a vegetarian or have food allergies), plus a rundown of diet plans (low-fat, high-protein, based on the food pyramid, and more). Calculators make it easy to figure your body mass index.





COST \$5 and up

New gear

If a health-club membership is a luxury you can't afford right now, you can still get a great workout at home or outdoors. But maybe you need a new toy to get you motivated. Here are some relatively inexpensive items that might do the trick. Find them at sporting goods stores, mass retailers, and online.

Accelerometer

Price \$45+

The skinny It's sort of like a pedometer, but it measures more than just the steps you take. It captures your every move, whether you're grocery shopping, washing dishes, or working out. It also measures intensity, so you get more credit for running than you do for reaching for the remote. Some accelerometers even track the calories you burn in a day or a week.

Balls, bands, and other toys

Price \$5 to \$90

The skinny You can spend just a few bucks and get a fun toy with get-fit potential. Many come with DVDs or instruction sheets to show you how to use them for the best results. Great options include a set of stretchy resistance bands (\$5 for a single band to \$40 for a set), a jump rope (\$7.50 to \$45), a pair of hand weights (\$10 to \$50), or an oversized stability ball (\$9 to \$90). Because they're so

affordable, there's no excuse. If you start to get bored, simply try something else! (If you're in the market for a bigger piece of equipment, like an elliptical machine or treadmill, see page 62).

Shoes

Price \$45+

The skinny There's nothing like a good run or a long walk to clear your mind and recharge your batteries. And don't underestimate the power of some new athletic shoes as a motivating force to get you going. Over time, shoes lose their most important features—shock absorption, cushioning, and stability. If your favorite shoes have started to wear out (even if it's not obvious from looking at them), running or walking in them

could cause excessive impact on your legs and joints, which can lead to muscle fatigue, joint pain, and even injury. So if you haven't bought new athletic shoes in a while, it's time to treat yourself. A good rule of thumb: Replace them about 300 to 500 miles or once a year.

We recently tested athletic shoes from a variety of manufacturers and gave top honors to those by Ryka and Asics for fit, cushioning, flexibility, stability, breathability, and weight. Cross trainers are great if you do a variety of activities. But if you're a big-time runner, basketball player, or whatever, you need sport-specific shoes. We recommend that you get some advice on the proper fit and try on as many brands and models as possible to find the most comfy shoe.

WHAT ABOUT THE Wii?

Can you really get in shape by working out with a video game? Researchers at the University of Wisconsin La Crosse evaluated adults who used Wii Fit and found that the running games (Island Run and Free Run) produced the best results but step, hula hoop, and boxing weren't as effective as the real activities. Our tests found that games work best for folks who need inspiration to get off the couch. The new Wii Fit Plus (\$99, not including the console) has tools for personalizing your workout.



PLAYED OUT The Wii is hot, but some games are better than others for getting fit.

COST \$10 and up

Classes/personal trainers

If you've got a few more bucks to spend, it can really be worth it to join a health club or sign up for some sessions with a personal trainer. That way, you've got other people—trained professionals!—to get you motivated and show you different workouts that can help you get the results you want. A big advantage of belonging to a health club is that there are so many workout options, all under one roof. True, a gym membership can be pricey, but if you're someone who needs to change your routine often, it can really pay off. Besides, if you do the same exercises all the time, they eventually stop working. If you don't push yourself and try new things, your muscles adjust to the activity, and you might stop seeing the results you want, says William J. Kraemer, Ph.D., a professor in the department of kinesiology at the University of Connecticut. Ready to sign up? You've got different options depending on your budget.

Join a gym or take some classes

Price \$10 and up for classes, \$20 and up for monthly gym membership

The skinny The best way to get your money's worth at a gym is to view the class schedule as a smorgasbord. Try new things, don't overdo any one activity, and change up your workout before you get bored. In one week you could go from aerobics to Zumba Dance with lots of other moves in between. If you don't want to commit to a gym (many require you to sign up for a year), sample some classes at the local Y, a martial-arts studio, community center, or yoga center. Mixing it up like this can be an easy way to keep your workouts interesting and—dare we say fun?

Hire a personal trainer

Price \$30 to \$75 per session

The skinny If you can afford one, a personal trainer can be the best motivator of all. It's hard to slack off when there's someone standing there saying, "Give me one more!" Plus trainers can keep things fresh so you don't get bored, and the good ones stay on top of the trends, so they can keep pushing you to try new things. And if you've reached a plateau,



a trainer can design a safe and effective workout program to get to your personal next level of fitness. Here's how to pick a qualified personal trainer. Above all, make sure she has at least these four important credentials:

- A four-year degree from an accredited university in exercise science, kinesiology, exercise physiology, physical education, or a related health-and-fitness field.
- Training that is certified by a nationally recognized organization such as the American College of Sports Medicine, the American Council on Exercise, the Aerobics & Fitness Association of America, or the National Strength and Conditioning Association.
- Up-to-date certification in first aid and CPR.
- Liability insurance in case an accident occurs while you're working together.

Get the scoop on fees and cancellation policies. Check with your doctor before starting any exercise program. A trainer should require that you get a medical clearance form from your physician. Make sure the trainer is someone you trust and is trained in what you want her to do so that you'll get the most from your investment.

HOW TO GET A DEAL

If you really want to try a trainer but can't quite swing the cost, here are some tips.

- **Schedule one session** or an affordable package of, say, three sessions. Pay close attention to the techniques so you can use them when you work out on your own.
- **Ask for a better rate.** Sometimes trainers offer a sliding scale.
- **See if the trainer will train you and a friend together.** Or maybe she'll match you with another compatible client. You can split the cost, and you'll both get the results!