

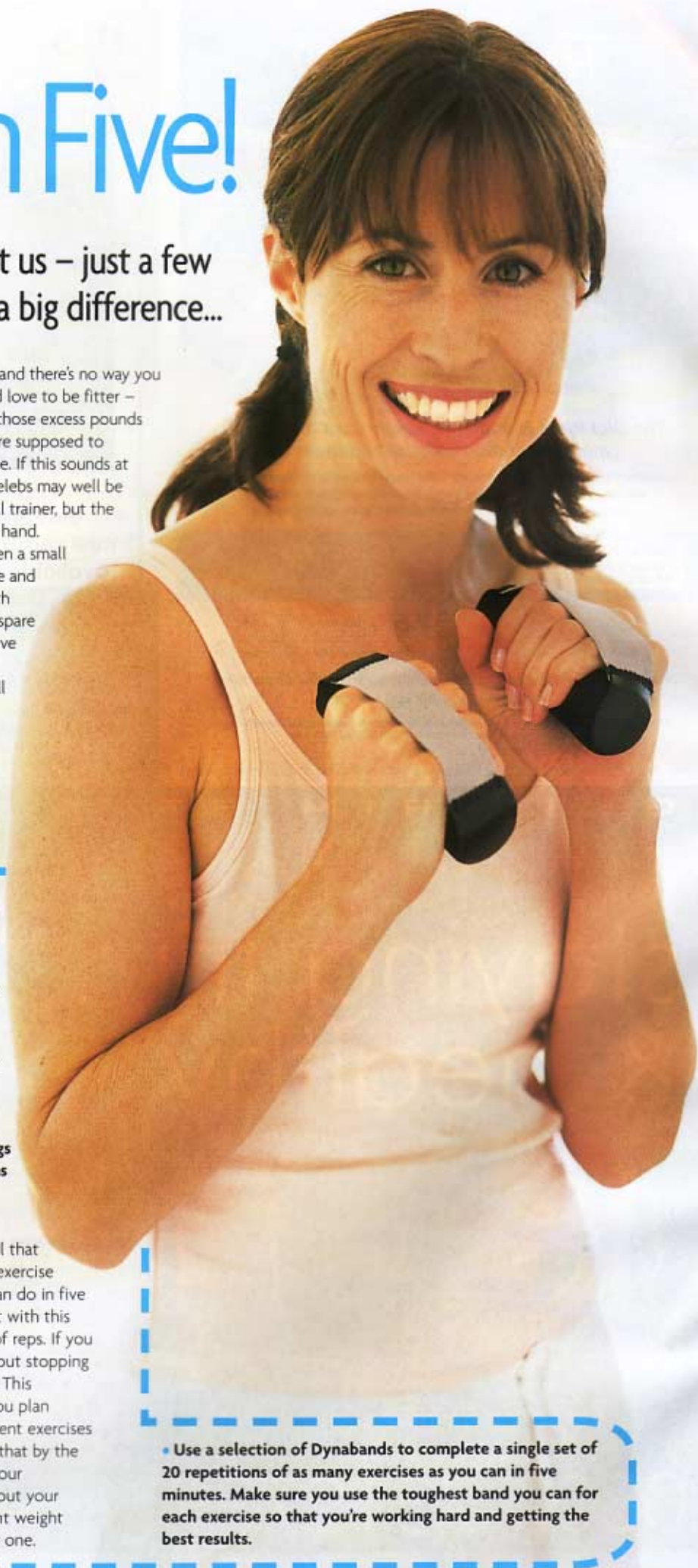
Fitter In Five!

No time for exercise? Trust us – just a few minutes a day could make a big difference...

So, you're far too busy to fit in a trip to the gym and there's no way you can commit to a team sport or yoga class. You'd love to be fitter – especially as you know it will help you to shift those excess pounds more efficiently – but really, you can't see how you're supposed to squeeze a regular workout into your packed schedule. If this sounds at all familiar, then you are certainly not alone. A-list celebs may well be able to spend several hours a day with their personal trainer, but the rest of us tend to have rather more pressing tasks at hand.

Don't give up, though. The good news is that even a small amount of exercise can have an effect on your shape and well being, as long as it is practised regularly and with enthusiasm. If you've only got five minutes a day to spare then it's vital to make it count. Five minutes a day, five days a week could add up to as much as 25 000 – 30 000 extra calories burnt in a year and all for a daily investment of about the same time as it would take you to make a couple of cups of tea.

Neal Chamberlain, director of The Tonic Personal Training, has some advice to steer us in the right direction, so set your alarm five minutes earlier than usual and let's get going!



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MINUTE

TONING WORKOUTS

- **March on the spot for a minute to get warm and then, with relatively light dumbbells, run through a sequence of four exercises spending a minute on each. You can rotate exercises for each workout to tone all parts of your body and prevent you getting bored – for example, legs on Monday, tummy on Tuesday, arms on Wednesday, chest on Thursday, bottom on Friday.**

- For quick results choose a dumbbell that you find challenging for a particular exercise and see how many repetitions you can do in five minutes. Each time you do a workout with this exercise try to increase the number of reps. If you can keep going for five minutes without stopping then it's time to try a heavier weight. This method of exercising works best if you plan consecutive workouts to cover different exercises and target new areas of the body so that by the end of the week you've covered all your muscles. Keep good posture throughout your exercises and always begin with a light weight and work gradually towards a heavier one.

- **Use a selection of Dynabands to complete a single set of 20 repetitions of as many exercises as you can in five minutes. Make sure you use the toughest band you can for each exercise so that you're working hard and getting the best results.**



CARDIOVASCULAR WORKOUTS

- Put your trainers on and run up and down the stairs. Alternate between running up single steps for one ascent and then double steps for the next ascent. Always come down one at a time.
- Take a skipping rope into the garden and skip gently for a minute to get warmed up. Then skip fast for thirty seconds and slowly for 30 seconds until you've completed your five minutes of skipping in total.
- If you have a bike at home, and it's safe to ride, wipe the dust off it, jump on and ride round the block as fast as you can. Gradually expand your route until you are completing a circuit that takes 5 minutes, or as long as you have to spend, but only if you ride as fast as you can. Check the clock as you leave and return to make sure you're not slowing up.

MOTIVATION TIPS



If you really can't face exercising on any given day, use your allocated five minutes to make an exercise plan for the forthcoming days. **Jeff Archer**, director of Upgrade My Life Coaching has these tips for a successful exercise strategy:

- Think carefully about what you are trying to achieve and spend time visualising how great you'll feel when you have achieved it. Then plan activities and workouts that will lead you to your results so you know exactly what days and what times you'll be exercising. If you plan these times carefully and keep your end goals in mind, you won't talk yourself out of them.
- Take five minutes every so often to review your progress and think carefully about what's working for you, what isn't, what you enjoy and what you find boring in your exercise routine. If you can fine-tune your routine so that the thought of it inspires and motivates you, then you'll have no trouble putting it into action.
- Give yourself some rewards. Keep a record of every five minutes that you've spent exercising and, when you have sufficient time credits, cash them in for the equivalent time spent spoiling yourself – a massage, a special shopping trip, a meeting with friends – whatever gets you excited will get you exercising in order to make sure it happens.

• For further advice on quick workouts for quick results contact The Tonic: telephone 020 8405 1727; email info@the-tonic.com

• For further information on planning for success contact Upgrade My Life: telephone 020 8748 5563; email info@upgrade-my-life.com

"If you've only got five minutes a day to spend on exercise, then it's vital to make it count..."



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MINUTE

GADGETS

There are so many pieces of home exercise equipment on the market at the moment, many of which promise fantastic results with practically no effort. As all sensible slimmers know, however, there's no magic quick fix for fitness any more than there is for weight loss. You can only get out of an exercise regime what you put in. That being said, there are some brilliant gadgets around that can certainly help you get results, even in just five minutes a day, as long as you are prepared to do the work...

1. FLAT OUT

For many of us, a taut, toned tummy is the Holy Grail of fitness and so any gadget or gizmo that claims it will shape that particular part of our body is bound to awaken an interest – which is probably why there are so many of them from which to choose! Again, no piece of kit, however cunning, will give you astounding results unless you bring some commitment and effort to the equation; but if you do, a well-designed ab cradle, roller or band can certainly help you make the most of

the time you have to work out. We particularly like the **Speed Shaper**

(£14.95 from Home Shopping Selections),

which is a bit like a super-deluxe resistance band. It's sturdily constructed, simple to use and comes with an instruction booklet of easy-to-follow exercises and some no-nonsense eating advice. Plus, it takes up hardly any room at all and you can easily slip it in your bag to take advantage of any five-minute gaps that might crop up during your day...

2. STARTER'S ORDERS



One of the secrets of planning the perfect fitness routine is to include as much variety as possible. Doing the same thing day after day, no matter how effective it is, leads inevitably to boredom and then possibly to abandonment of the scheme altogether. That's why we like the new range of fitness kits from **Totally Fitness**, each of which includes a selection of top quality items selected according to the desired result of the user.

For a manageable five-minutes-a-day plan, we reckon the **Totally FitKit** is ideal. It costs £59.95 and combines the versatility of a super high quality exercise ball to improve stability, dumbbells to help build strength, a stretchy **Dynaband** to work every muscle group and a **Reebok Speed Rope** for



cardiovascular fitness. It's the attention to detail that really impresses us – for example, the **Hampton hand weights** are soft and cushioned rather than cold, hard chrome, and they're hexagonal so you can put them down safe in the knowledge that they won't roll away! The **FitKit** should provide you with all you need to put together a routine that will keep you interested as well as trim and toned, without the need to turn an entire room into a home gym!



3. CROSS WORDS

If you are thinking about investing in a slightly larger piece of kit then you might wish to consider an elliptical (cross) trainer. These machines offer an excellent cardio vascular workout, yet minimise stress to back and joints, because of the way they simulate natural movement – making them ideal for short, intense sessions. You can work both

your upper and lower body at the same time and even beginners generally find them pretty easy to use. The new **Orbit Trend**, from **Bolton Stirland Fitness**, takes up a surprisingly small amount of space and has transport wheels to make sure it's easy to move around at home. It incorporates magnetic resistance and belt transmission for smooth elliptical movement, has an ear sensor pulse meter for safe and efficient workouts and an electronic meter showing steps, time, resistance, RPM and calories – all for under £400.



Contact details

- Bolton Stirland Fitness 0115 981 0205 www.bsfitness.co.uk
- Home Shopping Selection 0870 300 0340 www.shoppersempire.co.uk
- **Totally Fitness** 020 7467 5925 or visit www.totallyfitness.com