

# Weight to GO!

Keep fit and healthy  
by exercising the right  
way for your age

WORDS SARAH PURCELL

YEAH, YEAH, we know it's important to keep fit in order to stay healthy. But did you realise that the type of exercise you do should change as you age?

Fitness expert and physiotherapist Sammy Margo says you need to adapt your physical activities as you get older to keep you in shape and injury-free.

"For example, in your 20s and 30s you can lift heavy weights," she says. "But in your 40s and 50s you need to lift lighter weights and keep up the repetitions to avoid joint strain."

The good news is that, as well as helping you lose weight, regular exercise can slow the ageing process.

"Exercise releases a growth hormone which scientists now believe is an important factor in ageing," reveals Sammy. "One function of the growth hormone is to keep muscles lean and maintain metabolism, which helps prevent weight gain."

While consistent exercise is ideal, don't lose heart if you've been lazy for a while. "It's never too late to start again," Sammy insists. "You can regain your fitness."

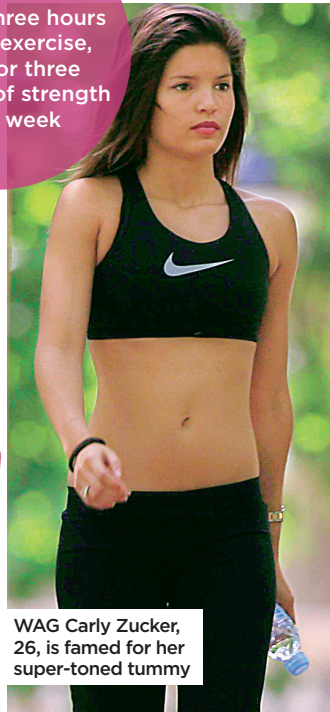
Here, exercise experts reveal the best workouts for your age. Whatever your age, it's time to get moving.

“THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT REGULAR EXERCISE CAN SLOW THE AGEING PROCESS”

# In your 20s

## HOW MUCH?

Around three hours of cardio exercise, plus two or three sessions of strength training a week



WAG Carly Zucker, 26, is famed for her super-toned tummy

### Fitness aids

- Digital Skipping Rope **£9.99 FITNESS-MAD.COM**
- Zumba Fitness DVD Kit **£49.95 ZUMBAFITNESSCO.UK**

“You have loads of energy in your 20s,” says celebrity personal trainer Sarah Maxwell. “So make the most of it and prepare your body for the years ahead so it will cope better.”

“Your body’s metabolic rate will start to slow down from your mid-20s onwards, so weight can creep on – and cellulite may suddenly appear on thighs.”

### Best exercise

“When you’re in your 20s,” says Sarah, “exercise should be about enjoyment and getting into the habit of doing it regularly.”

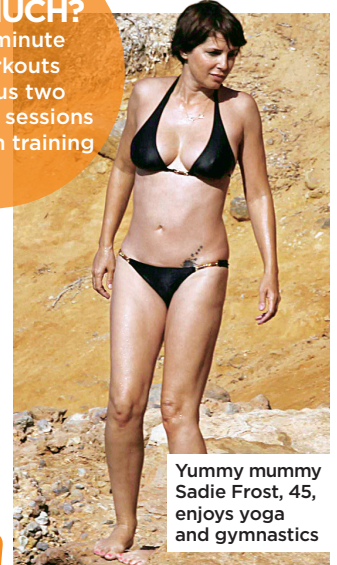
“Cardiovascular exercise is important for all ages as it burns fat and keeps your heart in good shape. Great cardio activities for 20-somethings include running, aerobics and racket sports.”

“Also, start weight training to build muscle definition – particularly in your upper arms, where we lose muscle tone first.”

# In your 40s

## HOW MUCH?

Three 45-minute cardio workouts a week, plus two 30-minute sessions of strength training



Yummy mummy Sadie Frost, 45, enjoys yoga and gymnastics

“Your metabolism slows down even further in your 40s,” says Sarah. “So if you haven’t lost post-baby weight, do it now before it becomes harder to shift.”

She adds: “As hormones change leading up to the menopause, women store more weight around their middle. Even if you’re the same size as you were in your 20s, the percentage of fat to muscle can increase massively unless you exercise regularly.”

### Best exercise

“Your 40s is a great time to try something new,” says Sarah. “Pole dancing, salsa and tap dancing are fun – and get you fit too.”

Weight training is also important at this age to combat muscle loss – aim for two or three sessions a week – while yoga is great for keeping joints supple, maintaining your flexibility and lengthening muscles.

### Fitness aids

- Bodywisdom Media Yoga For Beginners Three DVD Set **£12.99 AMAZON.CO.UK**
- Strictly Come Dancing Fitness DVD Box Set **£9.09 BBCSHOP.COM**
- Weights **From £9.49 FITNESS-MAD.COM**

# In your 30s

## HOW MUCH?

Aim for around two to four hours of cardiovascular and strength training a week



Spice Girl Mel B, 35, does 100 crunches a day

### Fitness aids

- Portable Pilates Home Gym With Cords, Mat & DVD **£38.96 QVUCUK.COM**

This is a busy decade for many women, and exercise often gets neglected as they juggle jobs, children and relationships.

“In your 30s, your hormones change and you see more fat being stored on the stomach, hips and upper arms,” says fitness expert Jill Franks.

In addition, muscle mass starts to decrease in your 30s and your metabolism slows by up to five per cent each decade. Plus, after pregnancy, many women find it difficult to lose those extra few pounds.

### Best exercise

“A combination of cardio and strength workouts [such as circuit training] is what you need in your 30s,” says Jill. “And Pilates is fantastic for toning and improving your posture.”

# In your 50s+

## HOW MUCH?

Thirty minutes of moderate activity five times a week is the recommended minimum



Film star Sharon Stone, 52, is a fan of Pilates

The menopause causes hormone changes which lead to weight gain, and our metabolism slows even further – making it harder to burn off calories.

“After the menopause, oestrogen levels fall which affects bone density, increasing the risk of osteoporosis,” says fitness expert Jill Franks.

Lower back problems are also common, and you may notice some joint pains.

### Best exercise

Swimming or aqua aerobics is great for toning your muscles, and is suitable for people with joint problems as the water supports your weight.

“Also, try making small, everyday changes to improve your fitness,” says Jill. “Park your car in the furthest space from the shops, use stairs not lifts...”

Instead of running, which can cause hairline fractures, try power walking at a speed that leaves you out of breath.

To keep bones strong and muscles toned, use weights and resistance bands. Exercising with a Swiss Ball or Pilates will help improve posture – and they’re good for toning your tummy and thighs.

### Fitness aids

- Nintendo Wii Fit Plus **£149.88 QVUCUK.COM**
- Swiss Ball With Pump And Exercise DVD **£20.69 WIGGLE.CO.UK**
- Resistance Bands **From £4.25 FITNESS-MAD.COM**

**50%** that's how much your metabolism slows down each decade