

Low Budget Cardio For the Change Of Season

By John Fike
The Low Budget Warrior

As the weather is turning cold, bleak and unpredictable, we exercise fiends need to have a backup plan for our cardio workout. Outdoor exercise like running, shootin' hoops and biking are as quality a workout as you can get, but unless you have a gym membership, they're uncomfortable or impossible to do when it's raining, snowing or just plain cold. So, here are three workouts for getting that cardio in while enjoying the comfort of your living room.

1. Jumping Jacks, crossovers, lunge switch, mountain climbers — Jumping jacks you know about. Do two minutes of these to warm up to some of the tougher exercises. Crossovers: just like jumping jacks, but you cross your feet when you bring them together, which requires you to jump higher, think more, and put more energy into it. Lunge switch: Take a lunge position, with your feet about three feet apart. Push off the ground and switch feet so that you land in a lunge position with the opposite foot forward. Mountain Climbers are like the lunge switch, but lean over your front foot and place your hands on the floor to either side. Switch the position of your feet while leaning on your hands. This can get quite grueling. Try to do two minutes of each exercise. For a rest between sets, run in place for 60 seconds.

2. Hit the stairs—If you have a basement or second floor in your house, walk or run up and down the stairs for 15 to 20 minutes. Take it easy the first couple of times—this isn't like running on a level surface. If you have knee problems, check with your doctor first.

3. Dumbbell Clean, Squat & Press—This is a weightlifting tradition, but it makes a great cardio workout for the upper body when moderately light weights are used. Combine it with one of the two routines above to get a complete challenge. Grab a couple of dumbbells or homemade weights—I'm talkin' 10 or 20-pound dumbbells, not those wimpy aerobic

dumbbells—and place them on the floor between your feet, which should be slightly more than shoulder-width apart. From a standing position, reach down and grab a dumbbell in each hand. Looking straight ahead, and with your back straight, press through your heels and stand up. As you stand, swing your arms out in front, and when the dumbbells are almost shoulder height, curl them into your chest. That's the clean. Keeping the dumbbells at your shoulders and your back vertical, bend your knees until your thighs are parallel to the floor and hold the position for a couple of seconds. That's the squat. Now stand up, and when you reach your full height press the dumbbells high overhead. That's the press. Lower the dumbbells to your shoulders, then straight down to the floor. Do it all again. Use a weight that allows you to do 10 to 20 reps before you need to take a rest. Rest 30 to 60 seconds and do another set. Done right, three to five sets of these should have your running for the oxygen tank. This is also a great exercise for kettlebells. Find out more about kettlebells in the War Chest section.

Good luck, and happy winter cardio.