



We can work it out

Turn your guy into the ultimate exercise buddy—no matter how different your fitness mentalities may be

By Kate Ashford

You don't need scientific research to tell you that dragging your man to Anthropologie to help you pick out the perfect new party top is a colossal waste of time. Some endeavors, however, are worth a team approach. Consider this: A University of Pittsburgh study showed that women who work out with a partner lose a third more weight than those who go it alone. And then there's this: Exercise increases blood flow throughout your body—including down *there*. So yeah, working out with him is a pound-shedding, sex drive-revving option you should take advantage of—pronto.

Which is great advice if you can use it, but few couples are matches made in fitness heaven. (Him in your Cardio Capoeira class? Um, no.) Don't despair, though: Even if the only "gym" in his life is a stick of mystery meat called Slim, you can still benefit from working out together, no matter what your exercise personality or goal. Try these tricks from leading trainers, physiologists, and fitness pros to get your butts moving together in no time.

You... Love to work out
He... Hasn't broken a sweat since high school



PARTNER ROW
 works core and upper back

Stand facing each other, with 5 to 10 feet between you, each holding an end of a set of bands. With feet hip-width apart, extend your arms to shoulder height, with bands slightly taut (A). Pull your elbows back until your upper-back muscles contract (B). Return to start—that's one rep. Do three to five sets of 20 to 30 reps, resting 30 to 60 seconds between sets.

» DO-IT-TOGETHER STRATEGY
 Your best plan of attack: motivation. "Men are goal-oriented," says Eleanor Cole, Ph.D., a psychologist in New York City, "so set up rewards for meeting small goals." (Kinda like when you bought yourself that new Stella gym bag.) It takes about 4 weeks—or, say, 12 trips to the gym—for exercise to become a habit. Get him addicted by offering a small incentive after every four workouts, like an Amazon.com gift card for a pair of weight-lifting gloves or movie tickets for *Blades of Glory*, the Will Ferrell figure-skating flick. (Warning: Be prepared for 2-plus hours of Ferrell in spandex. On ice.) After he makes it to week 4, cement his new habit with the 0.55-ounce, 1-gig

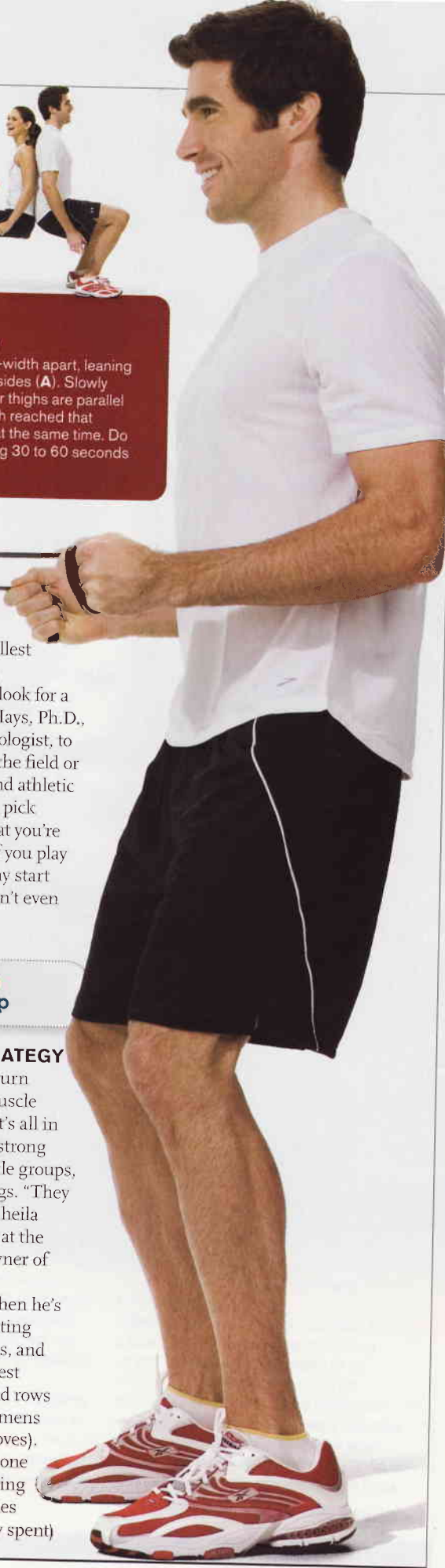
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PARTNER SQUAT

works core and entire lower body

Stand back to back with legs hip-width apart, leaning against each other, arms at your sides (A). Slowly lower your hips together until your thighs are parallel to the floor (B). When you've both reached that point, push back up to standing at the same time. Do three sets of 10 to 12 reps, resting 30 to 60 seconds between sets.



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If the gym isn't his thing, look for a coed sports team, says Kate Hays, Ph.D., a Toronto-based sports psychologist, to provide a steady play date on the field or court. Check active.com to find athletic leagues in your area. "Ideally, pick something different than what you're already good at," Hays says. If you play tennis Sharapova-style, he may start to lose motivation when he can't even return your serves.

You... Want to tone up
He... Wants to bulk up

DO-IT-TOGETHER STRATEGY

Lifting weights isn't going to turn either of you into a bulging muscle freak—unless you want it to. It's all in the approach. To get lean and strong with weights, work large muscle groups, such as the back, chest, and legs. "They burn the most calories," says Sheila Kalas, an exercise physiologist at the University of Kentucky and owner of Fitness Plus in Lexington.

So join your man on days when he's doing the following fat-obliterating exercises: squats, leg extensions, and leg curls for the lower body; chest presses, flies, lat pulldowns, and rows for the chest and back (visit womenshealthmag.com to learn the moves). To tone up and kill calories, do one to three sets of 12 to 15 reps, using enough weight that your muscles are fatigued (but not completely spent)

Karma Bar Says:

You can't judge a person by their clothing.

Shoes? That's another story.



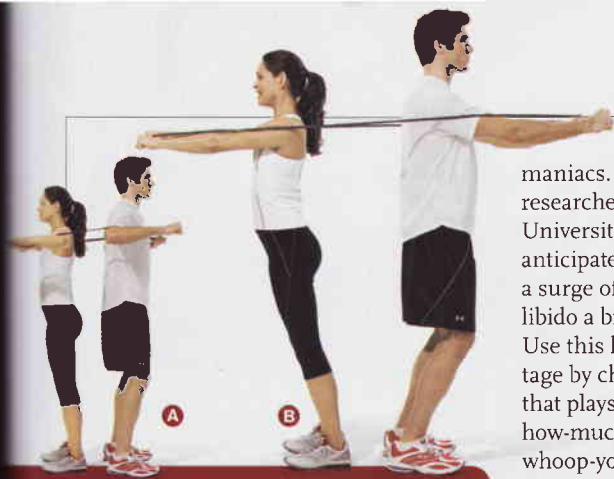
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FITNESS



PARTNER CHEST PRESS

works chest, core, shoulders, and triceps

Stand facing away from each other, holding a set of exercise bands. Walk forward until bands are taut. With feet hip-width apart, hold hands at chest height with elbows bent 90 degrees (A). Together, push your arms straight out (B). Take 2 seconds to extend and 4 seconds to get back to start. Do three to five sets of 20 to 30 reps, resting 30 to 60 seconds between sets.

when you get to the last rep. To build mass, he should do three to five sets of 8 to 10 reps, using enough weight that by the end of the last set, he can't do one more rep. Sick of waiting around for your turn on the machine? Finish your session with a few time-saving, calorie-busting tandem moves like the three on these pages from Michael Curry, owner of Stronghold Fitness in West Los Angeles.

You... Play to win
He... Plays to annihilate

DO-IT-TOGETHER STRATEGY
Okay, so both of you are cutthroat



Womenshealthmag.com/workout
Log on for more great advice on how to work out with your man.

Spot On

How to man his bench even when he's lifting twice your body weight

> Get hands on. Spotting is nine-tenths psychological—just the fact that you're touching him or the weights can help him eke out a few more reps, says Los Angeles-based trainer Mike Curry. If he's lifting a barbell, put your palms lightly on the underside of the bar inside his hands (no help, though). If he's got dumbbells, put your hands under his wrists, not his elbows, to avoid throwing him off balance at a critical moment.

> Don't be intimidated. If he's struggling, get him over the hump by boosting just 5 to 10 percent of the weight for him. So even if he's hefting 80-pound dumbbells, you're only lifting 4 to 8 pounds with each hand. You can handle it.

> Find your stance. Be prepared to act if he needs some assistance by standing with your knees bent and your feet slightly wider than your shoulders. Position yourself close enough to the weight that you won't have to lean forward to help him lift it.

> Be alert. He may need your help for either part of the exercise: the lifting or the lowering. It's important to be aware that people can get injured during the relaxation phase if they put weights down too quickly, says exercise physiologist Sheila Kalas. Make sure you're paying attention the whole time so you can help him guide the weight back to the rack safely.

Karma Bar Says:

It does not take courage to fight your enemies.

But getting a Brazilian wax?

That's another story.



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