

Want Incredible Fitness Results in a Short Amount of Time?

Fitness expert-author Krista Stryker tells us how to get them

Words by Vanessa Pascale
Photo Credit: Tamara Muth King



With work, family life, and a calendar full of social engagements consuming the hours in our day, sometimes it's hard to find the time to workout. However, when you workout with Krista Stryker, all you need is 12 minutes. The NSCA-certified personal trainer is the founder of 12 Minute Athlete, a popular website and app that helps people get fit in less than 15 minutes! Amazing, right?

HIIT, a high-intensity interval training workout regimen, consists of short, effective workouts based on calisthenics, cross-training, and functional fitness --and you don't need to hit the gym or use a crazy amount of equipment to get results. Krista has been featured in *Shape Magazine*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Muscle & Fitness HERS*, and was named one of Athleta's 100 Women to Watch in Wellness. The author of *The 12 Minute Athlete: Get in the Best Shape of Your Life in 12 Minutes a Day* kindly shared her fitness tips and advice with us.

Tell us about your 12-minute workout and how it came about.

Krista Stryker: When I first got into the fitness industry after college, I was working long hours as a personal trainer at a popular gym in New York City. On top of working with my clients, I was working out for hours each day and I wasn't seeing the results I wanted. I was incredibly exhausted having little time and energy in my days to do anything else.

After trying all kinds of workouts, I discovered high intensity interval training, which is known as HIIT. HIIT changed everything for me. All of a sudden, I was busting out push-ups, pull-ups, burpees and still had energy left over to enjoy life; this led to my strength and confidence skyrocketing. These short, powerful workouts led to great results for my clients, too. I started 12 Minute Athlete to share my workouts with more people at all stages of their fitness journey, and to help them unlock their full athletic potential.

12 Minute Athlete is a program of HIIT workouts that you can do with limited space, little or no equipment, and a very short amount of time. It's a super-efficient, and super-effective approach to fitness. One of our core beliefs is that 'Everybody is an athlete.' You can adapt the workouts to start at any level and keep adjusting them as you progress. You can see incredible results from these workouts in a short amount of time, even if you don't think of yourself as an athlete or a fitness person when you're starting out.

What's your favorite way to stay active?

KS: I am a huge fan of HIIT workouts because of how short and effective they are. A real HIIT workout (where you're really going all out) should take no longer than 10 or 15 minutes, taking away the most common excuse of not having enough time to get a workout in. Plus, you can do them with minimal or no equipment, meaning you can do them anywhere, whether you're in a tiny apartment, a hotel room, or a nearby park. I'm also a fan of trying new sports and activities that sound like fun. Get some friends together for a hike, go try a fun, new class, or just learn something new. Being active shouldn't always feel like a workout --it should be fun!

What core exercise do you swear by?

KS: I'm a huge fan of the gymnastics-inspired core exercise, hollow body holds. These will not only get you a rock-solid core, they also mimic the position that you should aim to be in for many more advanced exercises like handstands and pull-ups.

Hollow Body Hold: Lie on your back with your legs straight and arms straight by your ears. Contract your abs as you try and think about pulling your belly button down to the floor. Slowly raise your arms and legs simultaneously off the ground. (Your arms and head should raise at the same time, while your lower back keeps in contact to the ground.) Your goal should be to find the lowest position you can hold your arms and legs at without allowing your lower back to arch or raise off of the ground. To make this exercise easier, you can reach your arms towards your feet instead, or tuck your knees towards your chest to modify even further. Hold for time and feel the burn!

What's your best advice for when someone plateaus?

KS: In my experience, when someone plateaus, it's almost always because they haven't set specific enough goals to start with. Setting clear and measurable goals and actually tracking them via some sort of training journal is a much better way to make progress long-term because it gives you a way to actually see and track your progress. Then you can adjust as needed along the way if something isn't working out as you expected. I'm also a much big fan of setting performance goals [rather] than weight loss ones because not only are these easier to track, they're also so much more motivating long-term. These goals could be to do your first push-up or pull-up, to compete in an obstacle race, or to take up/learn a new sport or activity, such as surfing, boxing, acroyoga, skiing, etc. It's best to make sure your goals are specific, such as to be able to do one clean pull-up rather than overly broad, such as to get stronger. And make sure to keep track of your progress in a training journal --this can be a physical notebook, a note on your phone, or whatever you'll actually use.

When you don't feel like working out, how do you motivate yourself?

KS: It's taken *years*, but I've finally gotten to the point that I know how much better I'll feel after working out, so I actually don't want to skip it. If I'm not feeling up for something overly intense, I'll at least do something light, such as jump rope and do some simple bodyweight exercises. Even on my rest days I make sure to walk a lot because I've found that movement helps me keep my head cleared and energy levels up. Even if you're not feeling up for a full workout, try and get a little movement in. Go for a walk, take an easy bike ride, or play with your kids or dog at the park. It's important to remember that something is always better than nothing!



What are some of your fitness goals this year?

KS: While I do my 12-minute HIIT workouts most days of the week, I've personally been training on both handstands and boxing for the past few years. This year, I hope to get a freestanding one arm handstand as well as compete in my first amateur boxing match. **ML**

Keep up with Krista at www.12minuteathlete.com and follow her on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram: @12MinuteAthlete