HOW IT WORKS

The first month of the Rock Hard Challenge program is a classic bodybuilding split with a twist. You'll include a handful of intensity techniques that will help keep your metabolic rate firing while you're reducing calories (see the Rock Hard Muscle Meals on p.124). The net effect is that you'll keep your muscle mass — or even add to it — while you burn body fat. The keys to success are to weight train with intensity, include cardio activities that emphasise fat-burning and also help you avoid overtraining, and reduce calorie consumption only enough that you target fat loss while preserving muscle mass.

You'll follow this workout plan for four weeks. In our next issue, look for Part 2 of the Rock Hard Challenge program.

DIRECTIONS

Perform the exercises as directed, and make sure to reference the “Specialty Techniques” column on this page for specific instructions on how to complete certain moves. Paired exercises (marked “a” and “b”) are done as a superset — complete a set of the first move and then the next without rest in between. Repeat until all sets are done.

TRAINING SPLIT

Below is the schedule you'll follow for the first four weeks. See above for descriptions of each intensity technique.

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DAY 1  (LEGS, ABS, CARDIO)

1a) Leg Extension
Sets: 4
Reps: 20, 20, 15, 15

> Set the cam of the machine so it’s in line with your knees. Bend your knees to curl your heels toward your butt.

1b) Lying Leg Curl
Sets: 4
Reps: 15

> Set the cam of the machine so it’s in line with your knees. Bend your knees to curl your legs off the floor during a set of lunges.

2) Squat
Sets: 4
Reps: 15, 12, 10, 8

> Grasp the bar outside shoulder width and squeeze tightly. Step under it and pull your shoulder blades together. Arch your back to take the bar off the rack — it should rest on your traps or rear delts. Step back and set your feet shoulder-width apart. Take a deep breath and sit back, lowering yourself as far as you can while keeping your lower back in its natural arch. Push your knees outward as you descend.

3) Wide-stance Leg Press
Sets: 3
Reps: 15, 12, 10

> Place your feet outside shoulder width on the foot plate. Turn your toes out about 15 degrees and bend your knees 90 degrees on each rep.

4) Dumbbell Walking Lunge
Sets: 3
Reps: 20 (each leg)

> Hold a dumbbell in each hand and step into a lunge. Lower your body and then step forward to begin the next rep.

5) Stiff-leg Deadlift
Sets: 3
Reps: 12

> Hold the bar at shoulder width and stand shoulder width. Push your hips back and lower your torso as far as you can while keeping your lower back arched and your knees nearly locked.

6) Leg Extension
Sets: 1
Reps: 30

> Perform a burnout set as described on p.114. Hold the top of each rep.

7) Lying Leg Curl
Sets: 3
Reps: 20

> Lie on your back and bend your hips and knees 90 degrees. Raise your hips off the floor and crunch them to your chest.

8) Kneeling Cable Crunch
Sets: 3
Reps: 20

> Attach a rope handle to the high pulley of a cable station. Kneel and pull the handle down around the back of your neck to put tension on the cable. Crunch your torso to your hips and hold the bottom position for a moment. Focus on your abs.

9) Reverse Crunch
Sets: 3
Reps: 20

> Choose a low-intensity exercise such as walking or use an elliptical trainer or bike and work at a moderate pace. You should be mildly out of breath.

10) Steady-state Cardio
Reps: 30 minutes

> Choose a low-intensity exercise such as walking or use an elliptical trainer or bike and work at a moderate pace. You should be mildly out of breath.
DAY 2 (CHEST, TRICEPS)

1) Dumbbell Bench Press
Sets: 4
Reps: 15, 12, 10, 8
Hold a dumbbell in each hand and lie back on a flat bench. Press the weights directly over your chest.

2) Incline Bench Press
Sets: 4
Reps: 15, 12, 10, 8
Lie back against an adjustable bench set to a 30- to 45-degree angle and do dumbbell presses.

3a) Push-up INTENSITY SET
Sets: 4
Reps: 20
Keep your abs braced and your body in a straight line.

3b) Step-up INTENSITY SET
Sets: 4
Reps: 20 (each leg)
Set up a bench or other platform so that when you place one foot on it your thigh is parallel to the floor. Step up onto a bench, but leaving your trailing leg hanging off.

4) Dumbbell Fly
Sets: 4
Reps: 15, 15, 10, 10
Lie back on a flat bench with a dumbbell in each hand. Spread your arms apart, keeping a slight bend in your elbows. Then bring your arms together in front of your chest.

5) Cable Crossover BURNOUT SET
Sets: 1
Reps: 30
Perform a fly motion using two facing cable stations. Bend at the hips so your torso is 90 degrees.

6) Dip
Sets: 4
Reps: As many as possible
Suspend yourself over parallel bars and lower your body until your upper arms are parallel to the floor.

7) Narrow-grip Bench Press
Sets: 3
Reps: 15, 12, 10
Grasp the bar just inside shoulder width. Lower the bar to your solar plexus, tucking your elbows to your sides.

8) Tricep Pushdown
Sets: 3
Reps: 15, 12, 10
Attach a rope handle to the pulley of a cable station and grasp an end in each hand. Fix your elbows at your sides and extend them downward.

9) Tricep Pushdown BURNOUT SET
Sets: 1
Reps: 30
The handles should be set high enough that you feel a mild stretch in the top position.
**DAY 3**  
(HIIT CARDIO)

**Intervals**
Sets: 3-5

Choose any cardio activity such as running, cycling on an exercise bike or using a row machine and work as hard as you can for a 60-second interval. Rest for 120-150 seconds and then repeat three to five times. Add some time to the work interval each week until you reach 90 seconds.

1) **Pull-up**
Sets: 4  
Reps: As many as possible

2) **Reverse-grip Lat Pulldown**
Sets: 4  
Reps: 15, 12, 10, 8

**DAY 4**  
(BACK, BICEPS, ABS)

3) **Bentover Row**
Sets: 4  
Reps: 15, 12, 10, 8

4a) **Seated Cable Row**: INTENSITY SET  
Sets: 4  
Reps: 20

4b) **Step-up**: INTENSITY SET  
Sets: 4  
Reps: 20 (each leg)

5) **Lat Pulldown**  
**BURNOUT SET**
Sets: 1  
Reps: 30

6) **Dumbbell Curl**
Sets: 3  
Reps: 15, 12, 10

7) **EZ-bar Curl**
Sets: 3  
Reps: 15, 12, 10

8) **EZ-bar Curl**  
**BURNOUT SET**
Sets: 1  
Reps: 30

9) **Bench Knee-in**
Sets: 3  
Reps: 15

10) **Twisting Crunch**
Sets: 3  
Reps: 20

Hang from a pull-up bar and squeeze your shoulder blades together as you raise your body up until your chin is over the bar.

Sit at a lat-pulldown station and grasp the bar with hands inside shoulder width and palms facing you. Pull the bar to your collarbone.

Grasp the bar at shoulder width and row the bar to your belly.

Attach a neutral-grip handle to a cable station. Row the handle to your sternum.

Keep your elbows close to your sides throughout to keep tension on the biceps and not the shoulders.

Use an EZ bar and grasp it at shoulder width.

Sit perpendicular on a bench and lean back while extending your legs. Crunch your torso forward as you bring your knees in.

Lie on your back and twist your right elbow to your left knee as you perform a crunch. Then repeat on the other side.

Pinch your shoulder blades together as you pull the handle.
DAY 5

(SHOULDERS, CALVES, FOREARMS)

1) **Arnold Press**
   Sets: 4
   Reps: 15, 12, 10, 8
   Hold a dumbbell in each hand at shoulder level with palms facing you. Press the weights overhead as you turn your palms to face forward.

2) **Cable Lateral Raise**
   Sets: 4
   Reps: 15
   Attach a D-handle to the low pulley of a cable station and grasp it far enough away from the machine that your shoulder feels a stretch. Raise the handle out to 90 degrees.

3) **Machine Shoulder Press**
   Sets: 3
   Reps: 15
   Align the cam of the machine with your shoulders and press overhead.

4) **Bentover Lateral Raise**
   Sets: 3
   Reps: 15
   Hold a dumbbell in each hand and bend over at the hips until your torso is parallel to the floor. Raise the weights out 90 degrees.

5) **Dumbbell Shrug**
   Sets: 4
   Reps: 20, 15, 12, 10
   Hold a dumbbell in each hand and shrug your shoulders to your ears.

6) **Machine Shoulder Press: Burnout Set**
   Sets: 1
   Reps: 30

7) **Standing Calf Raise**
   Sets: 3
   Reps: 20, 15, 15
   Use a standing calf-raise machine and lower your heels until you feel a stretch in your calves. Drive the balls of your feet into the platform to raise your heels.

8) **Seated Calf Raise**
   Sets: 3
   Reps: 20, 15, 15
   Use a seated calf-raise machine to perform the exercise as described above.

9a) **Wrist Curl**
   Sets: 3
   Reps: 15
   Hold a barbell inside shoulder width and rest the backs of your forearms on a bench. Allow the weight to slide down to your fingertips and then close your hand and bend your wrists.

9b) **Reverse Wrist Curl**
   Sets: 3
   Reps: 15
   Place the meat of your forearms on the bench and extend your wrists.

10) **HIIT Cardio**
    Sets: 1
    Reps: 3-5
    Choose any cardio activity such as running, cycling on an exercise bike or using a row machine and work as hard as you can for a 60-second interval. Rest for 120-150 seconds, and then repeat three to five times. Add some time to the work interval each week until you reach 90 seconds.

*If you have elbow pain, you can stop your reps short of lockout.*