STRETCH it up a notch!

Ballerina body? Yes, please! Essentrics, the latest fitness craze, combines stretching and strengthening to get you ready for the spotlight in as little as three weeks

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERTO CARUSO
CONSULTING TRAINER SAHRA ESMONDE-WHITE

1. Tai Chi Pliés

With arms stretched toward ceiling and torso stacked above hips, lower into a modified wide-legged squat. Slowly pull one arm down (keep that bicep activated!) and crunch to the side. Repeat on other side. Do 16 reps before releasing from the plié. Shake it out. Do one more set.
PERFECT YOUR FORM: Keep your leg muscles engaged. The more you flex your legs, the leaner they'll get!

BEST WAY TO sculpt strong, sleek legs

BEST WAY TO tone triceps & shoulders

2. Lateral Arm Pumps

With wrists flexed, raise arms out to sides to shoulder height, keeping elbows straight (but not locked). You should feel a slight burn and good stretch here. Hold this position, then slowly pump arms up and down a few inches eight times. Without dropping your arms, pulse them back eight times. Repeat set three times.
PERFECT YOUR FORM: Keep arm pumps slow and focused for more definition in less time.

Meet Our Expert!

Montrealer Sahra Esmonde-White and her mother (a former ballerina with the National Ballet of Canada) are the creators of the Essentrics Technique. It fuses the principles of physiotherapy, tai chi and ballet into one stretching and strengthening program, now a go-to workout for models and actors like Lily Cole and Sarah Gadon.

Sahra's TOP FIT TIPS

STAND TALL!
"Good posture improves confidence and pulls your waist in like a corset."

CHALLENGE EVERY MUSCLE
"Total-body moves mean you see a big difference faster."

DO COMBO WORKOUTS
"A combo of stretch and strength training burns more calories, even when at rest."

Smile! When you learn on the outside, you learn on the inside, too. Research links happiness with strong hearts.

7. Lullaby Rock

Stand with feet apart and tailbone tucked under. Cradle arms up toward head. Round your shoulders and sway gently from side to side, keeping your elbows up and lower back rounded. Repeat eight times. Do one more set.

PERFECT YOUR FORM: Avoid touching your head or dropping your elbows below your heart.

8. Figure-Four Stretch

Lie on your back with one leg crossed over the other like the number four. Reach one hand through the triangle-shaped window between your legs and hold hands just under knee. Use biceps to pull that leg closer to your chest. Once you have pulled your leg as close as possible to your chest, gently move your hips from side to side. Repeat on opposite side.

PERFECT YOUR FORM: Pull lower abs toward spine and round lower back to touch floor.

WHY WE LOVE IT

These calming but active stretches strengthen as they tone your waist, abs, butt and legs – all in a single move.

Check nutrition labels: If sugar is the first or second ingredient, just say no! It's not a healthy choice.

health
EXCLUSIVE WORKOUT

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BONUS!
Each move gives you an instant energy boost, because it sends a targeted rush of oxygen rich blood to all your muscles.

3. Windmills

Stand with feet apart. Reach one arm forward and the other back with palms facing down, allowing hips to rotate slightly. Stretch arms a little farther and twist spine as you slowly rotate arms in a circular motion. Repeat eight times. Do one more set.
PERFECT YOUR FORM: Think about your back and ab muscles while rotating – keep them pulled in tight!

4. Diagonal Reaches

Lunge with right leg forward, raising arms to shoulder height, with left arm in front. Lift left arm toward your ear. You should feel a great stretch down your torso as you open up your chest. Return to start and repeat three times. Switch sides. Do four sets.
PERFECT YOUR FORM: Lift from your hips to avoid putting pressure on your spine.

Let go of anger: Holding on to frustration hurts your heart. Repeated bouts can thicken artery walls.

EXCLUSIVE WORKOUT

5. Leg Lifts

Leaning on one elbow and using the other arm to stabilize your torso, lie with your lower leg bent and the upper leg lifted slightly above the ground, extended. Keep your hips stacked above one another and both knees facing forward. With toes pointed, extend your upper leg from your hip socket as far as you can. Now slowly lift this leg up. Do three sets of eight lifts with each leg.
PERFECT YOUR FORM: After you've stretched your leg out, you won't be able to lift it very high – and that's a good thing. This move activates all the small muscles in your legs for an overall leaner look.

6. Side-to-Side Lunges

Step into a wide-legged stance and stretch arms above head. Lunge to side, keeping hips facing forward, and bring one arm down. Return to start and repeat on opposite side. Switch from side to side four times. Do one more set.
PERFECT YOUR FORM:
Pull up through your waist as you stretch to the side. You should feel a slight burn along your side.

Pump up the volume! Listening to music releases feel-good hormones.