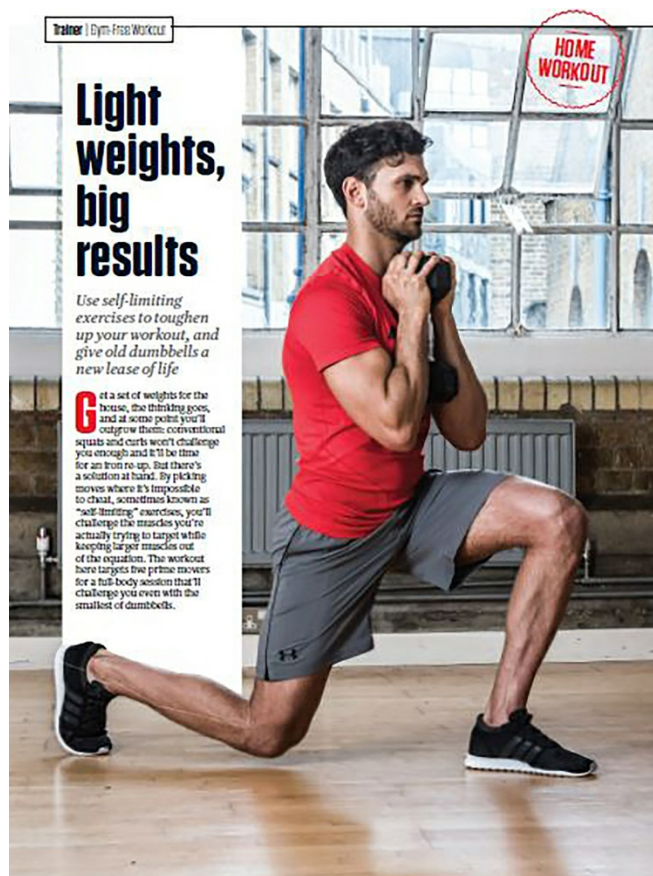




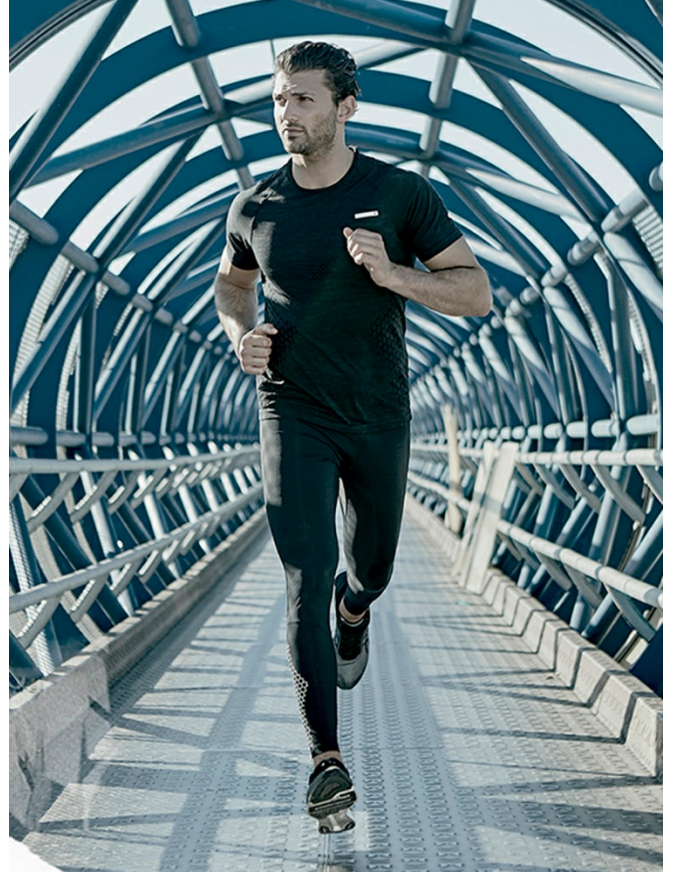
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Upgrade your plank plan

Turn the static core move into a full-body workout

It's now abundantly clear that planks are better than crunches. Why? They activate your abs more efficiently without forcing you to contract your lower back repeatedly. And that means "How long can you hold it?" has become the new "How many can you do" among exercise show-offs.

The current record - set by former US Marine George Hood earlier this year - stands at 8½ hours, 15 minutes and 15 seconds. If that gives you a twinge of shame, don't worry: although spine and core specialist Dr Stuart McGill suggests that any fit man should be able to hold the position for at least two minutes, he also says there's minimal benefit in struggling on for longer.

Our recommendation? Once you hit the two-minute mark, introduce variations that challenge your arms, legs, shoulders and core stability, mimicking movement patterns you'll use in real life. The circuit here, designed by trainer Josh Seale (sealefitness.com), does just that: use the 4½ hours you've just earned to catch up on some *Scores*.

HOME WORKOUT

 A man is in a plank position on a wooden floor, with one arm raised straight up. He is shirtless and wearing black shorts.



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