

Annette M. Musta

A Beginner's Fitness Program

This is the first of a three part series presenting complete training programs for all levels of fitness. This beginner's program is appropriate for those who do not participate in a structured fitness program and those who rarely or occasionally participate in a structured fitness program. You should get medical clearance from your doctor before starting any fitness program.

A Beginner's Guide to Fitness

The purpose of this stage is to establish a basic fitness program for archers. This program will benefit your overall fitness which in turn will help with your archery training. This program covers the three main areas of a standard fitness program: cardiorespiratory, strength, and flexibility.

If you are at the beginner's level, your cardiorespiratory endurance is probably low. It is imperative you know how to correctly take your pulse. A good alternative is to purchase a heart rate monitor. A heart rate monitor consists of a watch which you wear on your wrist and a belt you wear around your chest. The belt contains sensors which pick up your heart beat. The information is transmitted to the watch. Heart rate monitors have a number of features. Some features you should look for is time spent in the target zone and an alarm for when you go above or below the target zone. Features you do *not* need are calories burned and fat calories burned. These are unreliable estimates and not worth the extra money.

You can choose any method or mode of exercise. A good starting exercise for beginners is walking. It is an activity that most can do and requires little more than a pair of shoes. If you are trapped indoors in the winter, you can walk on a

treadmill or you can walk around your house. One of my favorite wintertime workouts is a walking program covering the distance from my shooting line to my indoor target.

If you have not exercised before, you will probably be able to get your heart rate in the target zone just by walking briskly. An increase in speed of movement or an incline will increase your heart rate if you need it to get into your target zone.

If you are not a walker you can choose just about any other type of exercise. Recumbent bicycles and stair climbers are a good choices. An elliptical trainer is an excellent choice for those with joint problems in their lower body or for the obese. An elliptical trainer allows you to get a cardiorespiratory workout without placing stress on the joints of the legs, hips, and lower back. Whatever mode you choose, you can achieve benefits from it with a regular program.

The strength elements are designed to get you accustomed to the exercises. Once you have mastered the basics of the movements, you will gradually add weight and sets.

The flexibility elements are an integral part of your program. As you add muscle from your strength and cardiorespiratory program you will need to protect your body. A general stretching and flexibility program will ease the stress on your joints, improve your range of motion, and give your body a reward for all of the hard work you are doing.

The Beginner's Program

This program is a maxi cycle which lasts for four to six months. If you find the first week too easy, skip to the Week Three. This maxi cycle will

require 20-45 minutes of exercise time 4-6 days a week.

Week One - Introduction to Exercise

Monday - This is your first cardio day. Choose your method of cardio exercise, put on your shoes and get out and do it for a minimum of 20 minutes. Go at a comfortable pace. At the end of your cardio session, stretch your hamstrings, calves, quadriceps, back, and shoulders.

Tuesday - This is your first day of strength training. Perform 10-15 repetitions of each exercise without weights, stretch your major muscle groups, and then repeat your set. Concentrate on form and the movement. Do the first set at regular pace (3 counts down, 3 counts up). Perform the second set at half pace (6 counts down, 6 counts up).

Wednesday - Rest day for week one. If you really have the exercise bug, put in another twenty minutes of your cardio program and then stretch.

Thursday - Repeat Monday. Try to push your pace a little harder or faster.

Friday - Repeat Tuesday. Really take the time to get a good stretch in between your sets.

Saturday - Make this a fun fitness day for the entire family or with your group of friends. Go to the neighborhood pool, take a walk with your special someone, play a pickup game of basketball. Just get out and get moving.

Sunday - This is your rest day. Congratulate yourself on starting your program to better fitness.

Week Two - Continuing your Workout

Repeat Week One with the following variation: during your cardio, quicken your pace for thirty seconds and then return to your regular pace. Repeat three times during your twenty minute workout.

Week Three - Increasing the Intensity

If you feel challenged by your current level, repeat week two. If you feel a need to increase your effort, add five minutes to your cardio program each day. Add two more high intensity bursts to each cardio workout. Add a third strength day to your workout week. Make sure you maintain a minimum of 24 hours in between your strength workouts.

Weeks Four through Six - Your Target Heart Rate Zone

Use these weeks to increase your workout intensity. For cardio, quicken your pace. This will be your first time you are aiming for your target heart zone. During your cardio workout include twenty minutes of time in your target heart rate zone. Warm-up at a slower pace for five minutes and cool down for five minutes. See Sidebar below for information on calculating THR.

Add light weights to your strength workout. Start with one to two pound dumbbells in each hand.

Maintain your proper form throughout your exercises. Hold a dumbbell to your chest during the crunches to add resistance.

Weeks Seven through Nine - Adding Time and Intensity

Increase the time you spend in your target heart rate zone to thirty minutes per cardio session. Include your warm up and cool down period.

Increase your dumbbell weights to three to five pounds in each hand. Add a third set once a week at an ultra slow pace (8 counts down, 8 counts up). Breathe in on the contraction phase and out on the relaxation phase.

Add a twenty minutes of stretching on a rest day. Warm-up for five minutes and then perform complete body stretches. Yoga is a good source of whole body stretching.

Weeks Ten through Twelve - Pumping it Up

Keep your target heart rate at thirty minutes per cardio session but add a day of cardio. This should put you at three days of mode cardio per week. Maintain your strength training schedule and resistance. Keep Sunday as your rest day. This gives your body a chance to recover and get ready for another week of exercise.

See Page 12 for a Table Summary of This Exercise Plan

Finding Your Target Heart Rate (THR)

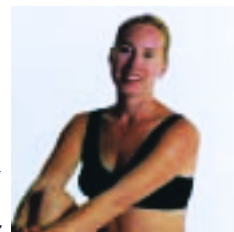
Step One Subtract your age from 220.

Step Two Multiply this number by 0.60. This is the lower end of your THR Zone.

Step Three Take the number from Step One and multiply it by 0.75. This is the upper end of your THR Zone.

Example: $220 - 35 = 185$ then $185 \times 0.60 = 111$ then $185 \times 0.75 = 138.75$ round up to 139. So THR Zone 111-139 beats per minute. To find your heart rate when exercising take your pulse or use a heart rate monitor.

Annette Musta is a certified personal trainer who owns and operates her own business, ARH Sports and Fitness in Pennsylvania. She has been shooting for 25 years, but not seriously (she says) until the last seven years. She has been a professional ballet dancer (which is why she is known around the ARCO Training Center as "the dancer") and is currently a licensed pilot. She is the founder and Executive Director of the Pass the Torch Foundation, which matches school age children with athletes training for international competition.



TWELVE WEEK BEGINNER'S EXERCISE PROGRAM

	Week 1-2	Week 3	Weeks 4-6	Weeks 7-9	Weeks 10-12
Monday	Cardio-20 min/ comfortable pace	Cardio-20-25 min with three intensity bursts/add two extra bursts in week three	Cardio-25-30 min with five intensity bursts/spend 20 min in your THR Zone	Cardio-35-40 min with five intensity bursts/spend 30 min in your THR Zone	Cardio-35-40 min with five intensity bursts/spend 30 min in your THR Zone
Tuesday	Strength Program- no weights/two sets first at regular pace/ second at half pace	Strength Program- no weights/two sets first at regular pace/ second at half pace	20 min of Yoga or whole body stretching	20 min of Yoga or whole body stretching	Cardio-35-40 min with five intensity bursts/spend 30 min in your THR Zone
Wednesday	Rest day	Rest Day	Strength Program-1-2 pound dumbbells in each hand/two sets first at regular pace/ second at half pace	Strength Program-3-4 pound dumbbells in each hand/two sets first at regular pace/ second at half pace	Strength Program-3-4 pound dumbbells in each hand/two sets first at regular pace/ second at half pace/ third ultra slow
Thursday	Cardio-20 min/ comfortable pace	Cardio-20-25 min with three intensity bursts Week Three-Add a strength workout	Cardio-25-30 min with five intensity bursts/spend 20 min in your THR Zone	Cardio-35-40 min with five intensity bursts/spend 30 min in your THR Zone	20 min of Yoga or whole body stretching
Friday	Strength Program- no weights/two sets first at regular pace/ second at half pace	Strength Program- no weights/two sets first at regular pace/ second at half pace	Strength Program-1-2 pound dumbbells in each hand/two sets first at regular pace/ second at half pace	Strength Program-3-4 pound dumbbells in each hand/two sets first at regular pace/ second at half pace	Cardio-35-40 min with five intensity bursts/spend 30 min in your THR Zone
Saturday	Fun Day	Fun Day	Fun Day	Fun Day	Fun Day
Sunday	Rest	Rest	Rest	Rest	Rest