

GET FIT FOR FREE!

Gym membership costs making you wince this winter? Discover how you can get fit for less with our top tips

Words: Joanna Ebsworth

As the cost of living crisis continues to negatively impact the lives of millions of Brits up and down the country, new research shows it's not just our financial health that's being affected - it's our physical and mental health, too. A new report by ChooseMyCar.com has found the crisis is forcing 90 per cent of under-34s to stop taking part in hobbies, including fitness classes and sports, while a survey from vouchercodes.co.uk has found that 32 per cent of UK adults are already doing less exercise than they used to because they can no longer afford gym memberships.

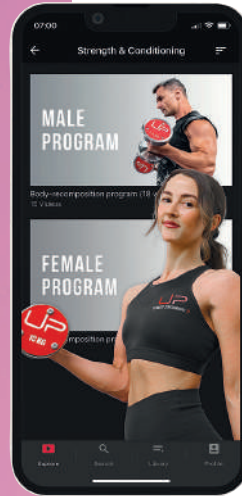
The figures are concerning, not just for our fitness levels but also for our general wellbeing. Exercise is a powerful tool to reduce stress and anxiety levels, enjoy social interaction with others and gain much-needed time away from money worries, as well as the focus and clarity of mind to deal with them. It is vital, therefore, that we find new ways to keep moving and make our money go further. So, with that in mind, we've rounded up the best money-saving kit, workouts, tips and fitspiration to keep you active without breaking the bank. Enjoy!





HALF-PRICE HEROES

Award-winning fitness app Gymondo (gymondo.com) combines more than 40 exercise programmes ranging from two to 12 weeks. There are 500-plus workouts, from guided running and walking, to dance, weight training, yoga, barre and Pilates, including training sessions with celeb fitness fanatic Vogue Williams. Now, Gymondo has a special offer for the new year – 50 per cent off a 12-month membership if you sign up between the following: Jan 27-30 and Feb 10-13. That works out at £4.99 per month if you take up the offer. Race you there!



UP AND AWAY!

Want to train like the stars for a fraction of the cost? Ultimate Performance (UP) has launched a new fitness app called UP On Demand, and the best bit is it only costs £2.99 a month to access (or £30 a year), compared to the £1,700 a month

price tag it would cost to train with the company's expert PTs in person! The video-based app gives users access to a progressive, 'no BS' 18-week strength and conditioning programme for women and men (based on the real training sessions UP has built its global reputation on), and shows you how to master every move perfectly for impressive body transformation results. Sign up for a seven-day free trial at ultimateperformance.com/upondemand



WALK TO FITNESS

'Check your local forums for walking groups, or make your own!' says Rosie Stockley, founder of postnatal fitness organisation and online workout platform Mamawell (mamawell.org). 'This is a great option if you don't think you can commit to a running group but still want the social focus and cardio aspect of getting out for a brisk walk. Walking is such a great way to combine mindfulness with exercise, plus it's a lovely way to see your local area and get some fresh air – and it's free!'

FREE FOR ALL

Leading workout app Fiit is on a mission to breakdown the financial barriers some may be facing to keep fit in 2023. How? By making its scheduled Group Classes free for all from mid-January, including those not on a paying subscription. Visit at fiit.tv to enjoy freemium access to the UK's most in-demand trainers.



ADVANTAGE VINTAGE

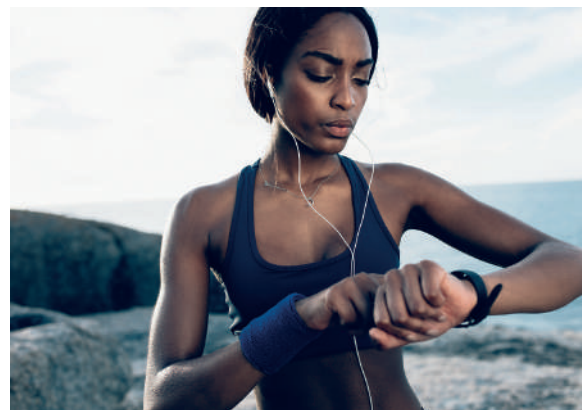
Can't afford to buy new exercise clothing? Don't sweat it! 'You can find lots of amazing new and pre-loved stuff for cheap on websites such as Depop (depop.com) and Vinted (vinted.co.uk),' says Frankie Taylor, founder of online and in-person retro fitness company Retroglow Studios (retroglowstudios.com). 'The key,' says Taylor, 'is to know your search terms, such as "Vintage 80s leotard, medium" or "Reebok High Tops, size 5". That's how I found the pieces I'm wearing here (pictured, below) for £6 and £14, and they were good as new! You'll find lots of big brands such as Nike, Adidas and Reebok that are usually good quality, so when you buy it second hand, it should still have a lot of wear in it. Plus, it's a more sustainable approach to shopping. I haven't bought new kit in 10 years!'



PSSST!
Head to retroglowstudios.com/two-for-ten now and sign up for two months of access to online classes for £10.

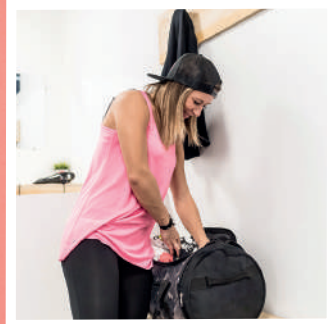
FREE AND EASY

They say the best things in life are free, and that includes the amazing NHS Couch to 5K app, which offers a nine-week training programme to help make running fun and easy. Train on your own or rope in a friend for some support and motivation, then sign up for a free (and highly sociable) parkrun for an extra challenge! Simply register at parkrun.org.uk, print off your unique bar code, find your local event and turn up!



ONE DAY AT A TIME

If your gym membership is an expense you could do without, switch to a Pay As You Go gym or studio, such as PureGym (puregym.com), which offers one-day passes

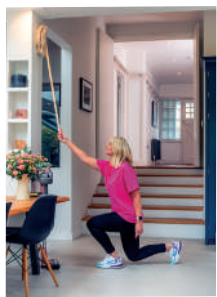


or three-, seven- and 30-day membership options. And don't forget to check out Huddle (huddle.com), which has a network of thousands of gyms, pools, and health and fitness spas you can search and access for one-off visits.



BARGAIN BUYS

Updating your workout wardrobe doesn't have to break the bank. Many supermarkets and high street stores, including Next, Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer, sell their own ranges of affordable activewear, all made from the latest high-tech and sweat-wicking fabrics but without the hefty price tag. We love the latest collection of activewear from Tesco's F&F range (pictured, above), featuring bright and bold prints plus popping sets, with prices starting at £12.50 each for leggings and tops. Find them in Tesco stores or online at next.co.uk



LEAN AND CLEAN

Get a workout while cleaning your home with these top tips from the UK's No1 home guru, Lynsey Crombie, aka the Queen of Clean (@lynsey_queenofclean)

- 'Add lunges when you are vacuuming the house to work the major muscles in your lower body, and don't forget to switch hands to use different muscles.'
- 'Set your timer to five or 10 minutes, and clean one

room as fast as you can. Working against a clock increases your heart rate and improves your productivity.'

- 'When reaching up high to clean your windows and high kitchen cabinets, stand on your tiptoes to engage and tone your calf muscles.'
- 'Ditch your mop and bucket, and clean your floors on your hands and knees instead to burn more calories. Work your abs at the same time by engaging your core.'
- 'Create a cleaning playlist to boost your motivation and get you dancing while you clean. For an extra challenge, add ankle and wrist weights.'
- 'Split laundry into piles so you go up and down the stairs several times rather than just once. This is a good cardio workout, and helps to improve arm strength, too.'
- 'When you need to pick up your children's or pet's toys off the floor, squat as deeply as possible. Your glutes will thank you later!'



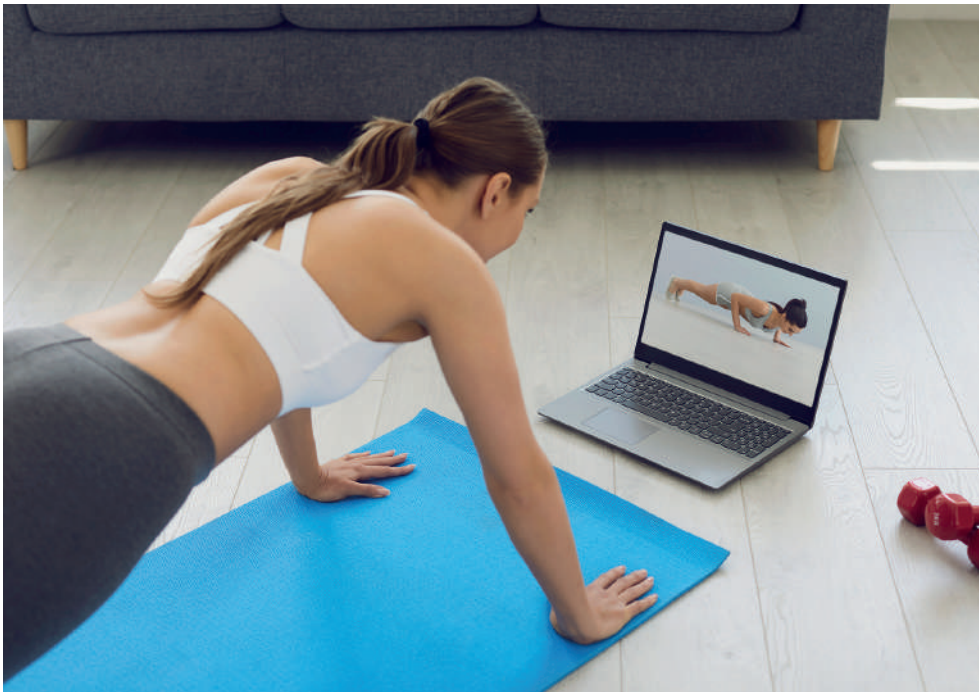
HIT THE HIIT

'Create your own HIIT sessions, inside or outdoors, using objects around the house or garden. Think: water bottles for weights and chairs for tricep dips and push-ups, or choose equipment-free moves such as star jumps, mountain climbers, burpees and high knees,' says Jonny Kibble, head of physical activity at Vitality (vitality.co.uk). 'A good starting point is to create a simple routine, doing three-to-five exercises in one-minute blocks of time, for three-to-five rounds.'



SWAP SHOP

'If you're looking to take up a new sport or just need some new kit and equipment, how about a kit swap?' says Lily Rice, creative director of climate-positive sportswear brand Presca (prescasportswear.com). 'Gather some friends or even ask your team or gym if they will share the word. Everyone brings kit they don't need and takes home something that suits them better. Not brave enough to try it in real life? No problem. There are online groups for swaps, too.'



TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

Most online fitness programmes offer free trials for a week or two, so take advantage of as many as possible! It's a great way to add some variety into your workouts or do a class you might never have tried before, and you might just discover a favourite teacher or workout to commit to later down the line when your finances are healthier.

'There are more than 1,500 free outdoor gyms in the UK, containing cardio and resistance equipment'



Photography: Shutterstock

SOUNDS GOOD

The No1 audio fitness app WithU (withutraining.com) is now offering a range of its audio-led workouts free of charge - including walking, guided runs, yoga and Pilates - for you to enjoy at your own pace. All workouts are led by world-renowned coaches who will encourage people of all ages, abilities and fitness levels.

GO GREEN

There are more than 1,500 free outdoor gyms across the UK, all typically containing cardio and resistance equipment, such as cross-trainers, press machines, exercise bikes and pull-up bars. Find your nearest outdoor gym at tgogc.com/find-a-gym and combine a workout with a walk or jog around the park.



EASY ACCESS

Top global fitness app Freeletics (freeletics.com) gives you free access to many of its top signature workouts, as well as a library of single exercises, runs and audio sessions. Simply download the free app, visit the Coach tab, go onto the current day and tap 'Explore all' to access the content. 