

Partner POWER

BY ANDREW HEFFERNAN, CSCS

At the gym, solo workouts are the norm. Even at rush hour, you rarely witness much interaction beyond the occasional “Can I work in?”

There's nothing wrong with cranking the tunes and grinding out a workout in solitude. But research shows that working out with a partner has perks, too — for your friendship as

well as your health.

“You work harder in a group setting,” explains Life Time trainer Jason Sweetnam, NASM.

For an additional health boost, take your workout — and workout buddy — outside. It's more than just a change of scenery, says Sweetnam: Research has shown that exercising in the great outdoors produces more energy and

higher engagement with the activity than many indoor routines.

So grab a partner and run through this alfresco interval workout. You'll not only test your fitness by tackling odd-shaped obstacles and varied terrain, but you'll also experience the mind-body benefits of reconnecting with a sweaty pal — and Mother Nature.

Research shows that working out with a partner has perks, too — **for your friendship as well as your health.**

THE WORKOUT

Find a green space — a public park or wooded area — equipped with a bench and a hill or staircase. After a dynamic warm-up (for ideas, visit ELmag.com/perfectwarmup), perform this workout in superset fashion, moving through pairs of exercises with minimal rest between moves.

The first two moves, for example, involve one partner performing pushups as the other does broad jumps. The partners then switch stations, proceeding through the superset one or two more times, depending on their fitness levels, before moving to the next pair of moves. It's helpful to choose a partner with roughly the same fitness level as you.

Exercise	Sets x Time		
	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
1A. Pushups	2 x 15 secs	2-3 x 30 secs	3 x 30 secs
1B. Broad Jumps	2 x 15 secs	2-3 x 30 secs	3 x 30 secs
2A. Bench Dips	2 x 20 secs	2-3 x 30 secs	3 x 30 secs
2B. Alternating Lunge Jumps	2 x 20 secs	2-3 x 30 secs	3 x 30 secs
3A. Hill or Stair Sprints	2 x 20 secs	2-3 x 30 secs	3 x 40 secs
3B. Bear Crawls	2 x 20 secs	2-3 x 30 secs	3 x 40 secs
4A. Burpees	2 x 20 secs	2-3 x 30 secs	3 x 40 secs
4B. Crab Pose Alternating Toe Touches	2 x 20 secs	2-3 x 30 secs	3 x 40 secs

ILLUSTRATIONS: KVETA

1A. PUSHUPS

Keep your body straight from head to heels, your neck in a neutral position, and your shoulders away from your ears. Engage your core and point your elbows back at about a 45-degree angle. Make this easier by elevating yourself with hands on a bench.



1B. BROAD JUMPS

Assume an athletic stance — feet shoulder width apart, back straight, gaze forward — and use power from your hips and arms to jump forward. Land as softly and quietly as possible.



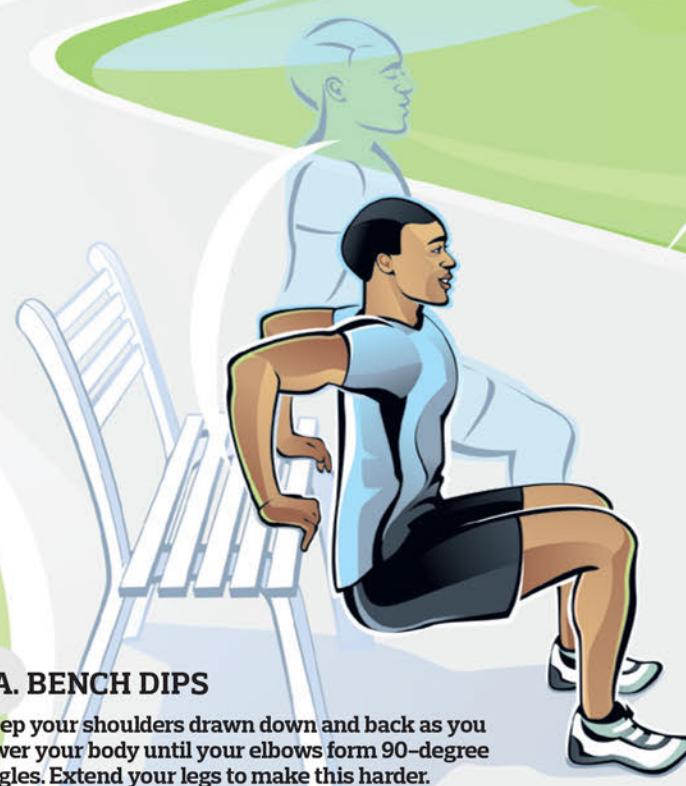
2B. ALTERNATING LUNGE JUMPS

Keep your chest up, core tight, and shoulders relaxed. Land softly and as quietly as possible, alternating legs with each jump.



2A. BENCH DIPS

Keep your shoulders drawn down and back as you lower your body until your elbows form 90-degree angles. Extend your legs to make this harder.



Learn the Moves

For full exercise descriptions, visit ELmag.com/builtfortwo.



3A. HILL OR STAIR SPRINTS

Sprint up a set of stairs, a hill, or an embankment at a steady, full-tilt pace. Lean slightly forward and pump your arms for speed.

3B. BEAR CRAWLS

Begin on all fours with knees hovering about 1 inch off the ground. Crawl forward with opposite arm and leg by matching your moving knee to your planted hand. Keep your hips low.



4A. BURPEES

Take your time to maintain proper form: Squat down, plant your hands, jump back and forward with control, and land softly. Make it easier by stepping feet back and forward instead of jumping.



4B. CRAB POSE ALTERNATING TOE TOUCHES

Keep your hips high and shoulders relaxed throughout the movement. Alternate sides with each rep.



Partner STRETCHES

BY ANDREW HEFFERNAN, CSCS

For many of us, stretching is like flossing — tedious but necessary. When someone helps you stretch, however, it can change the equation altogether.

"Humans are social animals," says Los Angeles-based yoga and martial-arts instructor Steven Schilling. "Helping another person stretch appeals to our caretaking impulses."

Working together also provides valuable feedback. "Alignment is crucial," says Schilling. "But not everyone can see what their back, toes, or chest is doing when they're in a deep stretch." The extra pair of eyes helps ensure that you're lengthening the correct muscles without putting undue strain on your joints.

After your next workout — or any time you're feeling stiff — grab a friend and run through these four moves. Take turns as the stretcher and stretchee, assisting with the stretch and allowing yourself to be stretched in turn.



Get the Details

For full exercise descriptions and solo stretching options, visit ELmag.com/partnerstretches.

HIGH-KICKER'S STRETCH



Sit facing your partner, back straight, legs wide, hands clasped. One partner leans back while pulling the other one forward. Keep spines straight, not rounded. Hold for 30 seconds.

WALL STRETCH



One partner stands with palms planted on a wall at shoulder height. The other partner guides the hips back into a deep hinge with a straight back. Hold for up to 60 seconds.

PECTORAL RELEASE



Partners stand facing each other, one with arms on the other's shoulders and the other with hands crossed on the inside of the partner's elbows. Press against each other for five to 10 seconds, six to eight times.

ECCENTRIC HAMSTRING STRETCH



Kneel beside your partner's bent leg, hands on hamstring and heel. While the prone partner resists, alternate between pressing the heel back and forward three to four times per leg. Move slowly. ☀

ANDREW HEFFERNAN, CSCS, is an *Experience Life* contributing editor.