



By Gretchen M. Ashton Aug 22, 2016

Although burpees aren't anyone's favorite exercise (are they anyone's favorite exercise??), incorporating them into a dive-fitness routine can offer a quick total-body workout.

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When I first heard the word "burpee," for a moment I thought of indigestion. Divers who've incorporated burpees into their exercise routine know that may not be far from the truth. Although burpees aren't everyone's favorite exercise, they're quite effective. Depending on individual goals, burpees for scuba divers can offer a quick total body workout.

Physiologist Royal H. Burpee developed burpees in the 1930s to measure fitness in athletes and new military recruits. The Burpee Test, as it became known, is more beneficial to divers as an exercise to help develop physical fitness for scuba diving. In fact, burpees break down into several individual body-weight exercises with unique fitness benefits that divers can master and perform separately. When comfortable with the individual components, divers can combine the vertical jump, squat thrust and plank into the burpee.

The burpee creates a high oxygen demand because it involves multiple muscles. At a low intensity the resulting elevated heart rate makes it seem to be an aerobic (presence of oxygen) exercise. In fact, as long as there is an aerobic pathway, this is partially the case. But as the muscles fatigue and become anaerobic (lack of oxygen), strength adaptations occur in the muscles. This makes for a great combination to increase strength and stamina for diving. Start with five or 10 repetitions and progress to about 25 per interval, then rest for one minute and repeat.

Breaking Down the Burpee

VERTICAL JUMP

Begin the vertical jump with the feet together and the arms alongside the torso. Sit into a squat then jump up while swinging the arms up and overhead. Extend the body and reach as high as possible. Your feet should leave the ground. On the way down, control the landing and return to a squat position with arms alongside the body. Repeat or move on to the squat thrust.



SQUAT THRUST AND PLANK

The squat thrust begins in the straight-arm plank position. The plank is a foundational exercise. Holding this position for one minute helps strengthen arms, abs, chest and low back. Transition into the squat thrust with hands in contact with the ground and arms straight. Push slightly with both feet at the same time and pull the knees up toward the chest between the elbows. Without more than a second's hesitation, lift the feet and return to the straight-leg position. Repeat or move onto the vertical jump.



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