

# Strength Training Sessions for Runners: Circuits



Circuit training is a broad term used to describe a group of exercises performed for a set amount of time one after the other, a rest period is then taken after one complete set of each exercise is completed then the full circuit is repeated a number of times (the amount of times the circuit is repeated will vary depending on the complexity of the circuit and the fitness level of those completing it).

This sample [PlyometricsProgramme](#) is an example of a circuit. This section will focus on circuits with added resistance, such as exercises involving dumbbells, vipers, barbells, kettlebells, medicine balls etc. As

a result of the equipment involved, this will generally need to be carried out in a gym, unless you have your own equipment at home.

If you are completing a circuit on your own it is a good idea to download an app for your phone that allows you to set up timed intervals. This way you don't need to worry about watching the clock! If you have a training partner then you can take turns to time each other and push each other on until the bitter end!

Circuit training combines aerobic training and strength training, and is therefore a useful addition to a running schedule, helping not only with overall form but also with your cardiovascular fitness.

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## **Pros**

- Increases strength and aerobic fitness levels.
  - Can be specifically designed to address personal weaknesses.
  - Generally a short workout time-wise, with far reaching results.
  - There are so many ways to vary a circuit, it should always be fresh and exciting!
  - Can be done alone or with a partner or group.
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## **Cons**

- Circuits with added resistance require some equipment, so you may need to go to the gym to make use of this.
  - It can be awkward to time yourself if you are training alone but there are now a variety of free apps that are very useful tools to overcome this.
  - You get the best results from circuit training if you are working at a high intensity, so if your level of fitness is low you should choose your own pace accordingly. The main thing is to work harder than you usually would for a much shorter length of time.
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## **Sample Circuit Session for Runners, with Added Resistance**

**Medicine Ball Lunge with Twist**

**Kettlebell Bent Over Row**

**Side Lunge Ball Push (Medicine Ball)**

**Kettlebell Front Squat**

**Viper Curl and Press**

**Medicine Ball Slam**

Complete each exercise for 20-30 seconds, one after the other (no rest in between exercises). Repeat the full set 4-6 times, with 1-2 minutes of rest between sets.



### **Medicine Ball Lunge with Twist**

Holding a medicine ball close to your chest (of appropriate weight to your own strength/level of fitness), lunge forwards, as you do this push the ball away from you and twist your torso and your arms (holding the medicine ball) towards the side of the leg that is forward. Step back bringing the medicine ball back towards your chest and then repeat with the opposite leg.

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Start with your feet hip width apart, knees slightly bent, backside out spine neutral and shoulders back and down. Holding one kettlebell in each hand of an appropriate weight suited to your own strength and fitness level, draw your arms back towards your hips, giving your back a big squeeze at the top of the movement. Starting with a big deep breath in, breath out as you draw your arms back towards your hips, breathing in again on the return.

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Again starting by standing in neutral, with an appropriately weighted medicine ball held close to your chest. Take a big step to the side, sticking your backside out and keeping your chest up, shoulders back and down and head facing forwards. As you lunge to the side push the medicine ball away from you, holding it with your arms as straight as you can hold them, directly in front of you and at shoulder height. With a little skip in the middle bring the medicine ball back to your chest and repeat on the other side.

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### **Kettlebell Front Squat**

Start from standing with your feet a little wider than hip width apart. Hold either one kettlebell with both hands or two kettlebells (one in each hand). If you have one in each hand then clasp your hands together in the middle (as shown in the photo). Keeping your chest up, shoulders back and down and your spine neutral, squat down to 90 degrees or a little lower if you can, keeping your weight on your heels and your

backside sticking out. It is more important to hold correct form than to use heavy weights so if you are not at a stage in your training where you are able to add additional resistance then stick to regular squats with no kettlebells or a very light weight to begin with.





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### **Viper Curl and Press**

Start from standing in neutral, holding an appropriately weighted viper with both hands, it should be held in front of you and just rest on your thighs to begin with. Curl the viper up towards your chest using your biceps and then push it up to the ceiling using your shoulders. Bring the viper back down towards your chest and then back to the initial resting position, then repeat.







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### **Medicine Ball Slam**

Start from standing in neutral. Choose an appropriate weight of medicine ball (or slam ball) and raise it above your head with both hands. Using all the power you have, slam the ball to the floor, bending down to meet it on the return, standing up again and repeating the same motion. It should be one big smooth movement from slamming the ball down to the floor to catching it on rebound and bringing it straight back above your head to begin again. As always, keep your core strong throughout and always use a weight of ball you can manage.





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**Disclaimer:** Please note that at any time if you feel any stress or strain on your body whilst carrying out these exercises, you should stop immediately and consult a fitness professional.