

**SHILPI MADAN**

✓ Juggling the calorie shrug with the demands of the daily routine: home admin plus #WFH is a different ride altogether. But fitness experts such as Meenakshi Mohanty see a way out. "With our hectic lifestyles, and sedentary grid, free hand exercises are a superb, versatile option," she says. "You could exercise anywhere and at any time."

Explaining that freehand exercises consist of workouts that can be done from the comfort of your home, Meenakshi points out that the intensity, workout and time will depend on the fitness goals you set for yourself. "Every exercise requires a different duration depending on your fitness abilities," Meenakshi adds, emphasising on the need for a 40-minute workout every day, with the flexing including push-ups, dips between chairs, pull-ups, knee bends and sprinting. "This has a toning effect on the muscles and internal organs as well as improves your circulatory system function, bettering health. Advanced level free-hand exercises can also help shape and add muscles to your body."

**USE YOUR BODY WEIGHT**



While everyone goes on about the use of weights in building bone density, how far are we better placed with exercises that make use of our body weight?

Prateek Kumar, fitness expert, founder FitCru, explains, "Freehand exercises work on both the stabiliser muscle groups and the principle targeted muscle groups. These exercises build up true strength, and when performed with the right form, range of motion and tempo, they work even better than traditional weight training exercises. Keep in mind that true progress will happen with time under tension (TUT) which significantly increases dense hard muscle."

**AMRAP DECODER**

The latest jargon to hit the fitness circuit is "as many repetitions as possible" (AMRAP). This works to a superb advantage for beginners as well as seasoned

# Hit the freeway

Score high on burning the fat, using these freehand exercises



you keep a towel, stopwatch and a water bottle handy."

**HOME PROPS**

Forget the fancy resistance bands; instead, make use of elevated surfaces like a chair. One or two-litre water bottles replace weights well, while basketball or football can work as props. "You can even use backpacks with loaded grocery, or heavy coffee books for exercises such as weighted Russian twists to squats or lunges," suggests Meenakshi.

Prateek recommends using a sofa as a leg press machine or a barbell, while substituting a pull up bar with a towel anchored in a door frame. "A PVC pipe can be used for mobility drills and one or two-litre bottles can be used in place of dumbbells for arm exercises such as arm curls, arm overhead extensions and arm overhead presses," adds Prateek.

**DIVISION IN THE EXERCISE GRID**



"The split/ratio between cardio, weights and body-weights mainly depends on the goals and the nutrition/caloric intake," explains Prateek. "If overall fitness is the goal then three to four forty-five-minute strength-training sessions with a good warm up before and a good cool down post the session is ideal."

In addition to all this, Prateek also suggests a sum total of 20-30 minutes of brisk walking daily to improve upon the quality of life.

But more importantly, go easy, go strong. Listen to your own body signals and chart your own route.

**DIY**

- Set a timer for 20 mins and do as many rounds as possible of the following until the time is up: 20 Jumping Jacks, 25 Squat Jumps, 10 Burpees, 15 high knees and Planks.
- AMRAP (as many repetitions as possible) works well for busy people who are looking at getting toned. Do it four times a week, and divide your split as Day 1-upper, Day 2-lower, Day 3-push and Day 4-pull exercises.
- Forget the fancy resistance bands; instead, make use of elevated surfaces like a chair. One or two-litre water bottles replace weights well, while basketball or football can work as props.

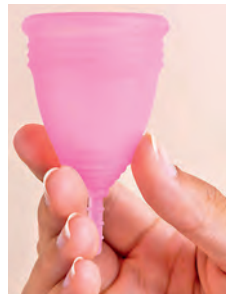


# This cup is a woman's BFF

**TWINKLE GURNANI**

DECCAN CHRONICLE

✓ A menstrual cup is a flexible funnel-shaped made of rubber or silicone that you insert into your vagina to collect period fluid. And an increasing number of influencers have been vouching for these cups because of the many benefits. Gynaecologist and Padmashree Awardee Dr Manjula Anagani clears the many questions about menstrual cups.



*Excerpts from the interview:*

**Are menstrual cups better than sanitary pads?**  
Menstrual cups are made of silicon, an inert material, which means it doesn't lead to tissue reactions or release any endocrine destructive chemicals. Most sanitary napkins today, if not organic, contain bleached cotton or plastics, which release endocrine destructive chemicals (EDCs). These EDCs near the vagina cause changes in the receptor level, which affects the inner lining of the uterus. This results in an increase in oestrogen-synthesis and decreased progesterone action, which disturbs the receptor level activity and can lead to many diseases.

**Are menstrual cups only for married women?**  
Just like tampons can be used by young girls, similarly menstrual cups can also be used by virgins. Also as many young girls across the world are into sports and some kind of activity, their hymen is broken. If some young girls find it uncomfortable, then they can use an organic sanitary napkin instead.

**Is it painful?**  
It depends on the comfort zone and the size of the cup. First-time users generally are sceptical. But once they use it, almost 99% of them are comfortable.

**Do these cups leak?**  
One can expect a maximum per month capacity of 80 ml menstrual flow. The capacity of the cup is at least 30 ml. So, it is not likely that the cup will overflow.

**How to pick the right size?**  
Post-natal, i.e., women who have had a vaginal delivery should choose a large size. Sexually active women can try a medium-sized cup while young girls can use a small-sized cup. However, if it's loose, they can pick a larger-sized cup.

**Can the cup get stuck inside or fall out?**  
The vagina is not vertical, it is transverse. So, there is no question of the cup falling out. Likewise, it cannot get stuck inside either. The length of a vagina is about 9 cm to 11 cm. Therefore, a finger can go in and bring it out. There is a cervix before the beginning of the uterus. The opening of the cervix is as small as a pinhole; hence, the cup can't go inside.

**MENSTRUAL CUP HYGIENE**

A menstrual cup is a once-in-a-lifetime investment. After using it you just have to wash it with soap water before reusing it. The vagina is a self-cleansing organ. It sheds on its own. So, cleaning the cup with simple soap and water before inserting it back inside is enough.

