

Going for GOLD



Hurdles

✦VARY YOUR WORKOUT
"Variety is the key," says Denise. "By mixing up different types of exercise, your muscles have to keep adapting." This means you'll get stronger and fitter. Score! Check out the free Bupa Smart Runner app from iTunes for randomised workouts, or download a training plan online at Greatrun.org/training.



✦DISTRACT YOURSELF
Paula Radcliffe says her daughter's name over and over to distract herself while running marathons. This is a technique that's known as "disassociation".

Try counting the cars you pass on a run, or think about hot celeb dream boyfriends such as *Fabulous* favourite Ryan Gosling (above) in the gym to take your mind off any aches.

✦PUMP UP THE VOLUME
Scientists at Brunel University found that exercisers who listened to music put in 10 per cent more effort than those who didn't. The GB swimmers and pentathletes train to Kanye West and Beyoncé, apparently. "R&B's the favourite at the moment," reveals Chris McCloud, who coaches the British heptathlon team. A great excuse to make like Sasha Fierce!

✦PLAN TREAT NIGHT "If you're really craving a glass of Pinot or a bar of your favourite chocolate, plan when you'll have it," suggests Kriss. "For example, say: 'Friday night is chocolate night. But if I don't do my training, I don't get it.'" Even Olympians need the occasional naughty treat as part of a balanced diet.



✦EAT SMART Many athletes have personalised nutritional plans. "Eat a carb-rich meal two hours before working out," says Kriss. "It'll give you energy." Tucking into wholemeal bread, pasta and rice with protein such as beans, chicken and prawns helps blood sugar levels stay stable.

The Finish Line

✦TRY MASSAGE
Gold-medal swimmer Rebecca Adlington loves a massage after a training session in the pool. It increases blood flow to muscles and reduces inflammation. Chris gets his athletes to give themselves a rub down by lying on a foam roller and moving it around with their shoulders. "These are effective and you can pick them up quite cheaply," he says. Try the Jessica Ennis Foam Body Balance Roller, £19.99 from Argos.



✦REHYDRATE "This is really important when you've finished your workout," says Louis. "Water aids muscle repair and immediately helps you recover for the next session."

✦STRETCH (AGAIN) "Tight muscles can lead to injury," says Denise. "Try focusing on key muscle groups, like calves, quads, hamstrings and glutes." A study found that stretching three times a week not only improves flexibility, but also boosts endurance and strength*.

✦EAT SOMETHING "The pros call the 60 minutes after exercise the 'Golden Hour', when your body is most receptive to nutrients," says Andy. "Opt for a mix of protein and carbs to help your body recover." Double Olympic gold medalist Dame Kelly Holmes is a fan of zinc- and iron-rich cashew nuts, while US swimmer and holder of 14 gold medals Michael Phelps has chocolate milk – a good (occasional) post-workout treat, with key nutrients such as calcium and vitamin D.

✦REST "Olympians have rest days to allow their muscles to recover and rebuild," says Kriss. "Getting fit needs mental and physical effort. Giving your body time to recover and congratulating yourself on the work you've done so far is all part of the training process." So kick off your trainers and relax – and you'll be Olympic fit by the time the opening ceremony rocks around. **f**

Starters' Block

✦HAVE A CHECK-UP
advises Olympic sprinting hurdler Kriss Akabusi. "You wouldn't take a road trip

in a car that hadn't been driven for a few years," he says. "It's the same with your body." See a doctor before you begin any fitness regime, and they will flag up possible issues.

✦GET THE RIGHT GEAR
"Invest in quality trainers," says Denise Lewis, Olympic gold medallist and patron of the Jaguar Academy of Sport. "Poor-quality ones can lead to injury." Specialist running shops will examine your foot and the way you run to see what sort of trainer is best for you.

✦CHOOSE SOMETHING FUN!
If you're going to put in Olympic levels of effort, find a sport you love. Experts at Loughborough University have developed a tool to help you find your perfect sport. Visit Nhs.uk/olympics.

✦WARM UP advises Olympic gymnast Louis Smith. "This is key. You need to spend time stretching so your muscles are ready for the demands you're about to put on them."

✦HAVE A TARGET "Work out what you want to achieve for the week, the month and year ahead to help you stay focused," says Denise. Want to cycle 10k by the end of 2012? Break training into manageable chunks and you'll have a better chance of success.

2012 is ALL about the OLYMPICS. So start training ATHLETE STYLEEE

BY RACHEL BROWN

Britain is limbering up! Oh yes – the Olympics are around the corner, so there's never been a better time to bin the biscuits, and tear yourself away from the TV (watching Team GB do all the work doesn't count). Studies show that in addition to toning you, exercise can stop you getting a cold, help you live longer, boost your mood and aid sleep. Lycra at the ready, we've lined up Olympic pros to give you get a head-start.