

LEAN UP TO TV

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HALFWAY through The Post's eight-week Get Fit by Memorial Day Challenge, 15 staffers have lost a total of 76.4 pounds, and I'm down 3 (see video updates at blogs.nypost.com). In addition to a mid-Challenge trip to Germany filled with good bread and beer, one of the things I've struggled with is that, since having a baby five months ago, getting to the gym involves choreography more complicated than a hip-hop dance class.

Because I don't think I'm alone in this, I tried to find real workouts that I can do from home, anytime. Living-room exercise has changed since the Jane Fonda Workout in the '80s, and today there's a host of options, from 10-minute quickies to multi-disc programs that promise results.

Here are some that I tried - top videos rate four dumbbells.

Self: Your Best Butt Fast! (\$12.99; amazon.com)

My butt's not my issue, but I really liked this workout. No complicated choreography, just lots of squats and lunges. I worked up a nice sweat doing moves inspired by kickboxing, dancing and yoga.

Rating: 3 ½ dumbbells

Turbo Jam (\$73; beachbody.com)

This superfun system - and it is a system: five full workouts, plus a diet plan and lots of tips - combines core work with dance and kickboxing moves. The bangin' music (funk, dance, hip-hop) keeps things high-energy; the Turbo Sculpt workout is like my favorite gym class in a box. Love it.

Rating: 4 dumbbells

10 Minute Solution: Pilates on-the-Ball (\$14.98, anchorbayent.com; available May 6)

It's five 10-minute routines; do one if you're pressed for time, all five for a total-body program. The ab and lower-body workouts were challenging; the upper-body segment was just so-so. The fun (and challenge) is trying to balance on the ball (not included). You won't work up a sweat, but you will feel more toned and tight. I'd pair it with a cardio DVD.

Rating: 3 dumbbells

Fat-Burning Kickboxing Workout for Dummies (\$14.98; anchorbayent.com)

Upside: The moves are easy enough to master, and kicking's kinda fun. Downside: You'll need lots of space, and the canned techno doesn't jibe with the movements, so it's easy to get confused.

Rating: 2 ½ dumbbells

SmartBells Core and Functional Training (\$19.99; thinkfit.com)

A SmartBell is an ergonomic thingy that looks like an alien head. Yes, it's a gimmick, but the 4.6-pound SmartBell (included) is comfy to hold, and the combination moves (such as lunges with overhead presses) provide a total-body workout. Call me stupid, but next time I do this DVD, I'll use traditional (and heavier) dumbbells for greater intensity.

Rating: 3 dumbbells

Dance Off the Inches: Fat-Burning Belly Dance (\$14.98; anchorbayent.com; available May 6)

Lots of dangly earrings and new-age music in this low-key workout. You'll glisten with sweat, but it's remarkably mellow as dance workouts go. With bits such as "Cleopatra Cardio Combo," it's a little silly, too.

Rating: 2 dumbbells

P90X (\$140; beachbody.com)

When I complained how hard it was to get a challenging workout at home, many people told me to check out the P90X. They were right. This 12-disc system (with diet plan) includes workouts for your entire body. It's not newfangled but it's *intense* - some workouts last 90 minutes - and designed for those already in shape. After the Plyometrics (jumping) DVD, I waddled. It hurts, but it hurts so good.

Rating: 4 dumbbells