

get-fit tricks



THE MOVE: SQUATS

Tweak it! Looking down while doing a squat – many of us are guilty – makes your body lean forward about five degrees, which can strain your lower back. Keep your chest lifted so you can increase your reps and weights over time with less risk of lower-back injury.

THE MOVE: CHIN-UPS

Tweak it! You should aim to pull your chest (not your chin!) to the bar to reap the max body-strengthening benefits of this compound exercise. Doing this stops you from relying solely on your biceps and better engages the muscles around your shoulders. The result: more upper-body power.



THE MOVE: LUNGES

Tweak it! Holding a dumbbell on one side of your body during unilateral moves like lunges means your lower back muscles and obliques have to help keep your body stable. It turns this leg exercise into a core move, too, making your workout more efficient.



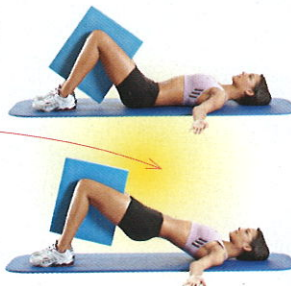
THE MOVE: BENCH PRESS

Tweak it! The next time you do a bench press, keep your feet on the floor. Resting them on the bench shifts as much as 30 per cent of the load off your upper body, significantly weakening your lift. Following the form in the images on left could up your bench-press speed by more than 180 per cent, allowing you to blast through sticking points and lift heavier weights.



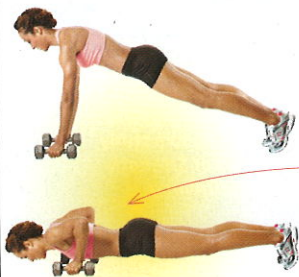
THE MOVE: HIP RAISES

Tweak it! If, during a hip raise, your knees tend to fall outward, you probably have weak hip adductors (aka, groin muscles). Squeezing a towel or cushion between your knees will activate more of the muscles in your thighs.



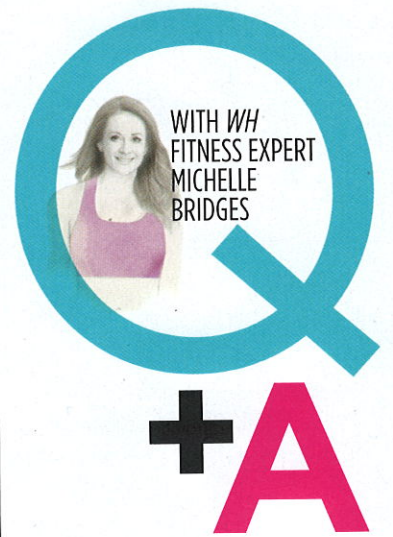
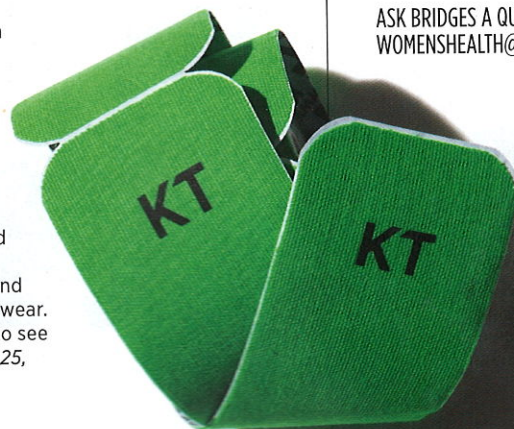
THE MOVE: PUSH-UPS

Tweak it! Doing push-ups with your palms flat on the floor can strain your wrists. Grasp the handles of a pair of hexagonal dumbbells to help straighten your wrists and ease any pressure – so you can work on clocking as many reps as possible. **WH**



KT Tape

The bright colours made me sceptical, but this kinesiology tape held its own against the beige my physio uses. I applied the sweat-proof adhesive tape to my dodgy runner's knee using the online tutorial and hit the road. It kept my joint stable, relieved pain and was comfy to wear. The best bit? It stayed on for my post-run dip. Check their website to see if KT Tape is right for you. \$19.99, kttape.com.au – *Ashleigh Austen, 25, Fitness Writer/Social Media Editor*



WITH *WH*
FITNESS EXPERT
MICHELLE
BRIDGES

Why does everyone say crunches are ineffective?

SAM, VIA EMAIL

> **Crunches don't engage the whole core but focus only on your abdominals. However, they're great if mixed with other core and abdominal exercises – try exercises on balance discs, round-the-world planks and twisting wood chops. Check with your PT or gym instructor that you're doing them properly.**

Should I wear compression tights every time I train or save them for race day?

KATE, VIA EMAIL

> **There's no reason to save them. Compression tights can keep muscles warm and supply more oxygen to them, improving your running speed (if only slightly). They can also help prevent injury, so this is another great reason to pop them on when you're training. Some studies have disputed the above claims, so make your own assessment, but they do seem to improve your recovery – so you can train again quicker!**

ASK BRIDGES A QUESTION* AT WOMENSHEALTH@PACIFICMAGS.COM.AU