

Juliet Draper's Firefighter Workout

By Juliet Draper
Photos by Pam Jones

Day 1

A full-body weight-training circuit is a wake-up call to all the body parts. It uses super sets—two exercises done back-to-back without rest—designed to maximize a targeted muscle's workout. The high repetitions with moderate weights also count as cardiovascular exercise, since you'll move constantly throughout the program. This increases work capacity and muscular and cardiovascular endurance simultaneously.

Start with a ten-minute progressive warm-up on a StairMaster (two minutes at each level: 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8) then immediately begin the workout. Start with a weight that allows you to finish the set. Between each super set and each super-set group of exercises, take a 45-second rest.

Leg press X 20 reps + **bench press/high box step-ups** X ten reps, each leg = one super set. Repeat three times.

Lying leg curls X 20 reps + **reverse lunges** X ten reps on each leg = one super set. Repeat three times.

Chin-ups X 10 reps or max + **Single-arm rows** X 10 reps on each arm = one super set. Repeat three times.

Narrow-grip barbell bench press X 15 reps + **push-ups** X 15 reps = one super set. Repeat three times.

Seated dumbbell biceps curls X 10 reps + **overhead triceps presses** X 10 reps = one super set. Repeat three times.

Weighted decline crunches X 20 reps + **un-weighted decline crunches** X 20 reps = one super set. Repeat three times.

Day 2

Today utilizes power-lifting moves to strengthen your core. It's recommended that you have someone demonstrate the lift for you at the gym and then watch you as you perform the exercise. Done incorrectly, these moves can do more harm than good. For your first day, use weights that allow you to nail the form rather than cause you to struggle to lift the weight. Start with the ten-minute progressive warm-up on a StairMaster (two minutes at each level: 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8).

Power cleans: Five sets of five reps adding five to ten pounds of weight for each successive set. Rest until fully recovered.

Power snatches: Five sets of five reps adding five to ten pounds of weight for each successive set. Rest until fully recovered.

Good mornings (straight-leg dead lifts): Ten, eight, six, and six reps adding five to ten pounds of weight for each successive set. Rest until fully recovered.

Squats: Five sets of five reps + one set of 20 reps, adding five to ten pounds of weight for each of the first five successive sets, then back to weight of first set for 20 reps.

Decline bench crunches: Three sets of 40.

Day 3

Bleacher stair intervals: (Local high school football field with surrounding running track, or a steep hill with 30 seconds of climbing.)

Warm up with two laps around the track or a half-mile jog, making the first lap, or quarter-mile, a walk and the second lap, or quarter-mile, a jog. Now run up and back down the bleachers or hill for five minutes, taking 60 seconds total for each circuit. Recover with an easy lap around the track or a quarter-mile jog. Then repeat the climbing intervals four to six times. At the end of the last two intervals, drop to the ground and do 40 push-ups before the recovery lap.

Day 4

Like the previous power-lifting moves from Day 2, the moves in Day 4 should be done under supervision of a certified trainer at a gym. If this is your first experience with these moves, start with a weight that allows you to perfect the lifting technique before you go on to heavier loads. Start with a ten-minute progressive warm-up on a StairMaster (two minutes at each level: 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8).

Hang snatches: Five sets of five reps adding five to ten pounds of weight on each successive set. Recover fully between sets.

Hang cleans: Five sets of five reps adding five to ten pounds of weight for each successive set. Recover fully between sets.

Standing dumbbell shoulder presses: Five sets of five reps moving up to the next heaviest weight for each set. Recover fully between sets.

Front squats: Five sets of five reps adding five to ten pounds of weight for each set. Recover fully between sets.

Weighted decline crunches X 20 reps + Un-weighted decline crunches X 20 reps = one super set. Repeat three times.

Day 5

Vehicle Push: Today's workout will target your endurance. Warm up by doing jumping jacks or squat thrusts or jumping rope, or any type of calisthenic exercise, until you begin to feel "warm." This usually takes about five to ten minutes. You must have a partner to

complete this drill safely, and only do it on a flat surface. Have your partner sit in the driver's seat of a car and place the vehicle in neutral. Your partner's job is to put on the brakes at the end of each rep, or as needed.

From the rear of the car while facing it, push the car 100 feet. Rest until fully recovered. Then go to the front, facing away from the car and push it backward 100 feet. Repeat four times in each direction.

Day 6

High-rise stair run: Warm up by walking up 14 floors in a building, or walk up a steep hill for ten minutes. Then run back down. At the bottom, drop and do 20 push-ups. Recover fully before continuing. Now run to the tenth floor or uphill for seven minutes, skipping stairs on the way up or jumping from footstep to footstep on your way up the hill. On the way down, descend as fast as you can. Rest until fully recovered. Repeat four times. Then run to the fifth floor, skipping stairs on the way up or taking long strides uphill for four minutes. Once at the top, immediately return to the bottom. Once at the bottom, drop and do 20 push-ups. Rest until fully recovered. Repeat four times.

Day 7

Recovery day: Easy 30-minute walk on a treadmill, road, or track and 20 minutes of stretching or yoga.

Day 8

Start with a ten-minute progressive warm-up on a StairMaster (two minutes at each level: 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9).

Dead lifts: Five sets of five reps adding five to ten pounds of weight for each set. Recover fully between sets.

Bent-over barbell rows X 10 reps + straight-leg dead lifts X 10 reps = one superset. Repeat three times, adding five to ten pounds of weight for each set. Recover fully between super sets.

Hyperextensions X 15 reps + Decline bench crunches with weight X 20 reps = one super set. Repeat three times. Recover fully between super sets.

Day 9

Bleacher stair intervals: (See Day 3 and add another rep.)

Day 10

Start with a ten-minute progressive warm-up on a StairMaster (two minutes at each level: 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9). Then, under supervision, complete the following Olympic lifts.

Power snatches: Five sets of five reps adding five to ten pounds of weight for each set. Recover fully between sets.

Power cleans: Five sets of five reps adding five to ten pounds of weight for each set. Recover fully between sets.

Standing dumbbell shoulder presses: Five sets of five reps adding five pounds of weight for each set. Recover fully between sets.

Squats: Five sets of five reps adding five to ten pounds of weight for each set. Recover fully between sets.

Day 11

High-rise stair run: (See Day 6, add one rep to the tenth floor or seven-minute uphill run, and one rep to the fifth floor or four-minute uphill run.)

Day 12

Start with a ten-minute progressive warm-up on a StairMaster (two minutes at each level: 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9). Between each super set, rest 45 seconds before starting the next super set or exercise.

Bench/high box step-ups X 10 reps on each leg + **leg press** X 20 reps = one super set. Repeat three times.

Reverse lunges X 10 reps on each leg + **lying leg curls** X 20 reps = one super set. Repeat three times.

Single-arm rows X 10 reps on each arm + **chin-ups** X 10 reps or max = one super set. Repeat three times.

Push-ups X 15 reps + **narrow-grip barbell bench press** X 15 reps = one super set. Repeat three times.

Overhead triceps presses X 10 reps + **seated dumbbell biceps curls** X 10 reps = one super set. Repeat three times.

Un-weighted decline crunches X 20 reps + **Weighted decline crunches** X 20 reps = one super set. Repeat three times.

Day 13

Wheelbarrow push: Warm up by doing jumping jacks or squat thrusts or jumping rope, or any type of calisthenic exercise, for five to ten minutes.

Using a large wheelbarrow, add dirt, sand, bricks, gravel, or weight plates to create resistance. Once loaded, push the wheelbarrow 100 feet. Repeat up to ten times. Recover fully between sets. You may add weight or increase incline and speed as desired.

Day 14

Recovery day: Easy 30-minute walk on treadmill, road, or track, followed by 20 minutes

of stretching or yoga.

Day 15

Start with a ten-minute progressive warm-up on a StairMaster (two minutes at each level: 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9).

Squats: 12, ten, eight, and then six reps, adding five to ten pounds of weight on each set. Recover fully between sets.

Straight-leg dead lifts: 12, ten, eight, and six reps, adding five to ten pounds of weight on each set. Recover fully between sets.

Leg-press calf raises X 20. Repeat three times. Recover fully between sets.

Reverse lunges: 12, ten, eight, and eight reps on each leg.

Day 16

Do this day's exercises on a grassy area or padded surface. Start with a ten-minute warm-up of jumping rope, calisthenics, or jogging. The following exercise should be done in four sets of ten reps. Cool down with an easy ten-minute jog and light stretching.

Leg bounds: With both feet together, jump forward as far as possible, minimize ground contact, and jump forward again as quickly as possible nine more times.

Box jumps: With feet apart and in line with shoulders, jump up on a sturdy box or bench, then step down. Complete ten jumps as quickly as possible to equal one set.

Single-leg hops: On one leg, jump forward for ten hops, minimizing ground contact. Repeat with other leg to equal one set.

Tuck jumps: With feet apart and in line with hips, jump up and draw your knees toward your chest. Complete ten jumps as quickly as possible.

Day 17

Start with a ten-minute progressive warm-up on a StairMaster (two minutes at each level: 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9).

Power dead lifts: 12, ten, eight, and six reps, adding five to ten pounds of weight on each set. Recover fully between sets.

Barbell bent rows: 12, ten, eight, and six reps, adding five to ten pounds of weight on each set. Recover fully between sets.

Weighted hyperextensions: 12, ten, eight, and six reps, adding five to ten pounds of weight on each set. Recover fully between sets.

Biceps curls: 12, ten, eight, and six reps, adding five to ten pounds of weight for each set. Recover fully between sets.

Day 18

Start with a ten-minute warm-up of jumping rope, jogging, or calisthenics. For this drill you will need a hill or long set of stairs up to 40 yards in length.

Run up to the top and back down five times with out stopping. Recover fully. Now run up and down four times, recover, run up and down three times, recover, run up and down two times, recover, and then run up and down one last time. Cool down with up to ten minutes of easy jogging and stretching.

Day 19

Start with a ten-minute progressive warm-up on a StairMaster (two minutes at each level: 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9).

Narrow-grip flat bench press: 12, ten, eight, and then six reps, adding five to ten pounds of weight for each set. Recover fully between sets.

Parallel-bar dips: 12, ten, eight, and then six reps. Recover fully between sets.

Standing dumbbell shoulder presses: 12, ten, eight, and then six reps, adding five to ten pounds of weight on each set. Recover fully between sets.

Lying French presses (skull-crushers): 12, ten, eight, and then six reps, five to ten pounds of weight for each set. Recover fully between sets.

Day 20

Track workout: Start with a ten-minute warm-up of jumping rope, jogging, or calisthenics. This workout may be done on a treadmill but you must use time instead of distance to measure your intervals. Run hard for 90 seconds, then recover for 90 seconds. Repeat four times. Then sprint for 15 seconds, recover, and repeat four times. On the track, run hard for one lap, then recover for one lap. Repeat four times. Then sprint 100 yards. Recover fully, then sprint 100 yards again. Repeat four times. Cool down with up to ten minutes of easy jogging and stretching.

Day 21

Thirty-minute easy run on a treadmill, road, or track. Afterwards, you should feel like Superman. Go ahead and take four days off to enjoy your newfound powers. Then start the program over; after all, you can only get stronger and faster.

For more on Juliet Draper's approach to year-long approach to fitness, nutrition and the firefighter's psyche log onto www.firejock.com.

Back Squats

Stand erect with feet slightly wider than shoulder width, toes pointing slightly outward. Keep head and eyes forward. Place barbell across your traps and shoulders well away from your neck. Grasp the bar comfortably with your hands slightly wider than your shoulders. Keep chest up and back tight. Get in a comfortable upright stance with your feet shoulder width apart. Your toes should be either pointed, straight ahead, or slightly outward, never inward or knee strain will result). Focus your vision straight ahead. Do not tilt your head backwards or raise your eyes in your head, as this will disrupt your balance. Place the barbell squarely on your traps and shoulders (not the neck) and grip the bar comfortably with your hands slightly wider than shoulders. Keeping your heels planted firmly on the floor, inhale and move your butt back and downward. Do not start by bending the knees. Continue downward, by bending the knees, but be careful not to allow your knees to move forward. This will save you stress on your knees. When the thighs reach parallel, begin exhaling and return to the starting position.



Barbell bent over row

Bend knees slightly and bend over barbell with back straight. Grasp bar with a shoulder width overhand or underhand grip. Pull bar to upper waist. Return until arms are fully extended. Repeat.



Bench or box step ups

Stand facing the side of a sturdy weight bench, box or aerobic step. Keep your trunk erect throughout exercise. Place foot of first leg on bench. Step up onto bench by extending the hip and knee of the first leg. Place foot of second leg on bench. Step back down with second leg by flexing the hip and knee of first leg. Then return first leg to the floor. Alternate by stepping up with second leg, as with first. You have now done one rep with each leg. Repeat.



Chin-Ups

Using a chinning bar, grasp the bar over head suspending your full weight. Hold bar with hands about shoulder width apart. Palms may be either facing toward you (more biceps involvement), or away from you (more lat/rear deltoid involvement). Squeeze your body up. Try to touch your chin or upper chest to the bar. Slowly return to starting position. Maintain a tight body throughout, to minimize swinging.

Decline Bench Crunches

Lie on your back on a decline bench, hooking your feet under the rollers. Place your chin on your chest and fingertips to temples. Curl your head, shoulders, and upper back off the bench until your trunk is perpendicular to the floor. Reverse back down to the starting position. You may add resistance by holding a weight plate across your chest or increasing the angle of the bench. Repeat for the desired number of reps.



Front Squats

Stand erect facing the bar with your feet comfortably apart. Your toes may point forward or angle slightly outward. Keep your head and eyes forward at all times. Grasp the bar comfortably with your hands slightly wider than your



shoulders. Rest the barbell high on the chest and front deltoids. Make sure to keep your elbows high, or cross your forearms to balance the weight. Unrack the bar and step back. Keep your feet firmly planted to the floor. Begin your descent by moving your butt back and down, not by bending the knees. Continue downward keeping your knees aligned. When you reach parallel, squeeze to a stop and stand back up. Repeat for the desired number of reps.

Good Mornings

Stand erect with a barbell on your shoulders. Your feet should be slightly less than shoulder width apart with hands wider to balance the weight. Slightly bend the knees and keep the back tight. Begin by sticking your butt out and trying to touch the wall behind you while bending forward at the hips. As the body approaches parallel, squeeze to a stop. Reverse direction keeping the knees slightly bent, and the back tight until you are back where you started. Repeat for the desired number of reps.



Hang Clean

This lift is basically a Power Clean performed without pulling from the floor, and without dropping the bar. Approach the bar and position your feet slightly inside shoulder width. Place your hands on the bar with a grip that is just outside the width of your hips. Keeping your back flat and your shoulders above the bar in the bottom position, squeeze the bar off the floor with your legs until you are standing upright. Lower the bar to a point just above your knees. Knees should be slightly bent, hips flexed, and lower back flat and tight. Shoulders should be forward past your feet. Begin by pulling the bar up. As the bar reaches the middle to upper portion of your legs accelerate your hips forward, extend your knees, and shrug your shoulders. Then quickly drop under the bar to catch the weight on your front deltoids and upper chest. Keep the bar close to your body throughout the movement. Finish the lift by standing tall with your elbows high, hands open and the bar resting on your fingertips and shoulders. Return the bar to the starting position by rolling the bar off of your shoulders. As you move the bar from your shoulders, regain a full grip on the bar, flex the knees to absorb the force and stand tall again ready to repeat the movement.



Hang Snatch

Begin this lift by placing your hands in an overhand grip with palms facing your body. Your hands should be 16-18 inches wider than your shoulders. Squeeze the bar off the floor or from blocks to a standing position. Slowly lower the bar down until it is positioned slightly above your kneecaps. Keep your shoulders over the bar in this position. Keep your back flat and chest up as you elevate the bar until it reaches the upper part of your thighs. Explosively extend your hips through the bar. Shrug your shoulders up, and pull the bar as high as possible, leading with your elbows not your hands. Make sure the bar stays close to your body. At the top of your pull, quickly drop under and catch the bar with your arms extended overhead. Finish the lift by standing erect with the weight under control. Repeat for the desired number of reps.



Hyperextensions

To perform this exercise, position your body on the hyperextension bench with your hips on the hip pad, and your heels underneath the heel pad. Your torso should be hanging perpendicular to your lower body/legs. With your fingertips touching your temples, slowly squeeze your upper body to a parallel position, hold briefly, then slowly lower to the starting position. Once you become comfortable with this exercise, you may hold a weighted plate close to your chest, for added resistance.



Leg Press

Place your feet flat on the leg press machine's platform, about shoulder width apart with your toes pointing slightly outward. Lower the platform so that your legs form a 90-degree angle. Pressing through your heels, extend your legs fully but do not lock out your knees. Return to the starting position. Repeat for the desired number of reps.

Leg Press Calf Raises

Using the leg press machine, place the balls of your feet on the edge of the platform, so that your heels hang off. Keeping your knees locked, push the platform with your toes contracting the calves. Lower by pulling your toes toward your shins. Maintain control by squeezing the weight to a stop. Do not bounce the weight. Repeat for the desired number of reps.



Lying French presses (skull crushers)

Grasp a short straight bar or an e-z curl bar using narrow hand spacing, palms facing thighs. Lie flat on bench with head in a neutral position, eyes looking at ceiling. Extend the bar to arms' length directly above shoulders. Lower the bar in a semicircular motion to your forehead, by bending arms at elbows, keeping upper arms vertical. Extend the bar to arm's length, repeat.



Lying Leg Curls

Lay on your stomach on the Leg Curl machine with your legs straight out. Your knees should extend out over the end of the bench and be free of support. The back of your ankles should rest on the underside of the rollers. Squeeze your heels up as close as possible to your butt. Keep your knees and body as still as possible. Come to a complete stop at the top, pause and lower your feet back to the starting position. Repeat for the desired number of reps.



Lying Leg Curls

Lay on your stomach on the Leg Curl machine with your legs straight out. Your knees should extend out over the end of the bench and be free of support. The back of your ankles should rest on the underside of the rollers. Squeeze your heels up as close as possible to your butt. Keep your knees and body as still as possible. Come to a complete stop at the top, pause and lower your feet back to the starting position. Repeat for the desired number of reps.



Overhead Triceps Press

Sitting upright on the end of a bench, grasp a dumbbell with both hands and hold it overhead. Make sure to keep your torso erect and lower back tight. Bend at the elbow, lowering the weight behind your head, while keeping your elbows pointed toward the ceiling. Squeeze to a stop, then extend your arms and return to the starting position. Do not lock out the elbow. Repeat for the desired number of reps.



Power Cleans

Approach the bar and position your feet slightly less than shoulder width apart. Squat down and place your hands on the bar with a grip that is slightly wider than your hips. Keep your back flat and your shoulders above the bar. Squeeze the bar off the floor with your legs not your back, until the weight clears your knees. Accelerate your hips forward and shrug your shoulders when the bar reaches the middle portion of your thighs. Quickly drop under the bar to catch the weight on your front deltoids and upper chest. Keep the bar close to your body throughout the movement. Finish the lift by standing erect with your elbows high, hands open and the bar resting on your fingertips and shoulders. Return the bar to the starting position by rolling the bar off your shoulders, and allowing the bar to fall to the floor.



Power Deadlift

Begin With feet flat beneath bar about shoulder width apart. Squat down and grasp barbell with a slightly wider than shoulder width over handgrip. Keeping chest high and butt low, lift bar by fully extending hips and knees. Pull shoulders back at top of lift. Arms and back should remain straight throughout the movement. Lower barbell to the floor to a full stop. Repeat.



Power Snatch

Position your feet slightly less than shoulder width. Squat down and grasp the bar about 6 - 8 inches wider than your shoulders. Make sure your shoulders are positioned over the bar and your back is flat and tight, as you begin squeezing the bar off the floor. Leading with your elbows, explode your hips forward and shrug your shoulders up hard. When the weight reaches mid-thigh level, quickly jump under, and catch the bar over head. Your hips should be back and the bar above and slightly behind your head. Complete the lift by extending your legs standing up with the bar overhead.



Push Ups

Lie face down on the floor. Your hands should be in line with your shoulders, feet together. Using your hands and the balls of your feet, push your entire body up until your arms are fully extended keeping elbows unlocked. Lower your body until your chest is almost touching the floor. Keep your torso tight and don't allow your body to sag in the middle. Repeat for the desired number of reps.

Reverse Lunges

Stand erect with your feet about shoulder width apart. Clasp hands together behind your head, or place them on hips. Keeping the torso vertical, take a step rearward lowering the body perpendicularly to the floor. The back knee should practically touch the floor. Using your front leg raise your body back up and return to the start position. Alternate legs and repeat for the desired number of reps per leg.



Seated Bicep Curls

Grasp dumbbells. Sit erect on the end of a bench. Keep back straight, head up, both feet on the floor. Begin curl with palms in until past thighs, and then turn palms up for remainder of curl until dumbbell is at shoulder height. Keep palms up while lowering until past thighs, then turn palms in. Keep upper arms close to sides and concentrate on biceps while lowering and raising.



Single Arm Dumbbell Rows

Place dumbbell on the floor next to a flat bench. Extend left leg to the rear keeping knee firm. Place right knee on bench. Reach down and grasp dumbbell with left hand holding dumbbell off the floor. Keep head and eyes forward. Place right hand on bench, elbow firm. With a sawing motion, pull dumbbell into armpit, keeping arm close to body. Return to starting position using the same path of movement. Repeat for desired number of reps. Switch to other side and repeat for desired number of reps.



Straight-Legged Deadlift

Stand erect with feet hip width apart, legs and upper body straight. Keeping the lower back tight, stick the butt out, the chest up and slowly bend over until your body is parallel to the floor. Grasp a barbell on the floor. Your hands should be slightly less than shoulder width, using an overhand grip. With barbell in hand, and squeezing with your hamstrings, raise your body to an upright position. Once at the top, slowly return to the bent over start position. You should maintain your starting body position throughout. If you have the flexibility, you may need to perform this exercise from a platform to achieve a greater range of motion.



Parallel-Bar Dips

Place your hands on a dip bar, fully supporting your body with your arms. You may use 2 chairs, stools, or any sturdy equipment of equal height. Your trunk should remain upright, tight, and without swinging, throughout the exercise. Keep your head and eyes forward. Slowly lower your body until your arms form a 45-degree angle and your chin is near the height of the bar. Keep your elbows parallel to each other. Now push your body upward using your arms, until you are back in the starting position.