



Hit the  
**GYM**

# HIIT Workout Basics

High-intensity interval training, short but brutally intense, has quickly become one of the most popular workout routines for busy Americans.

HIIT allows you to burn more calories and push your heart rate more than you can with normal exercise routines. This helps boost your overall aerobic capacity, which leads to health benefits, leaner muscles and great results.

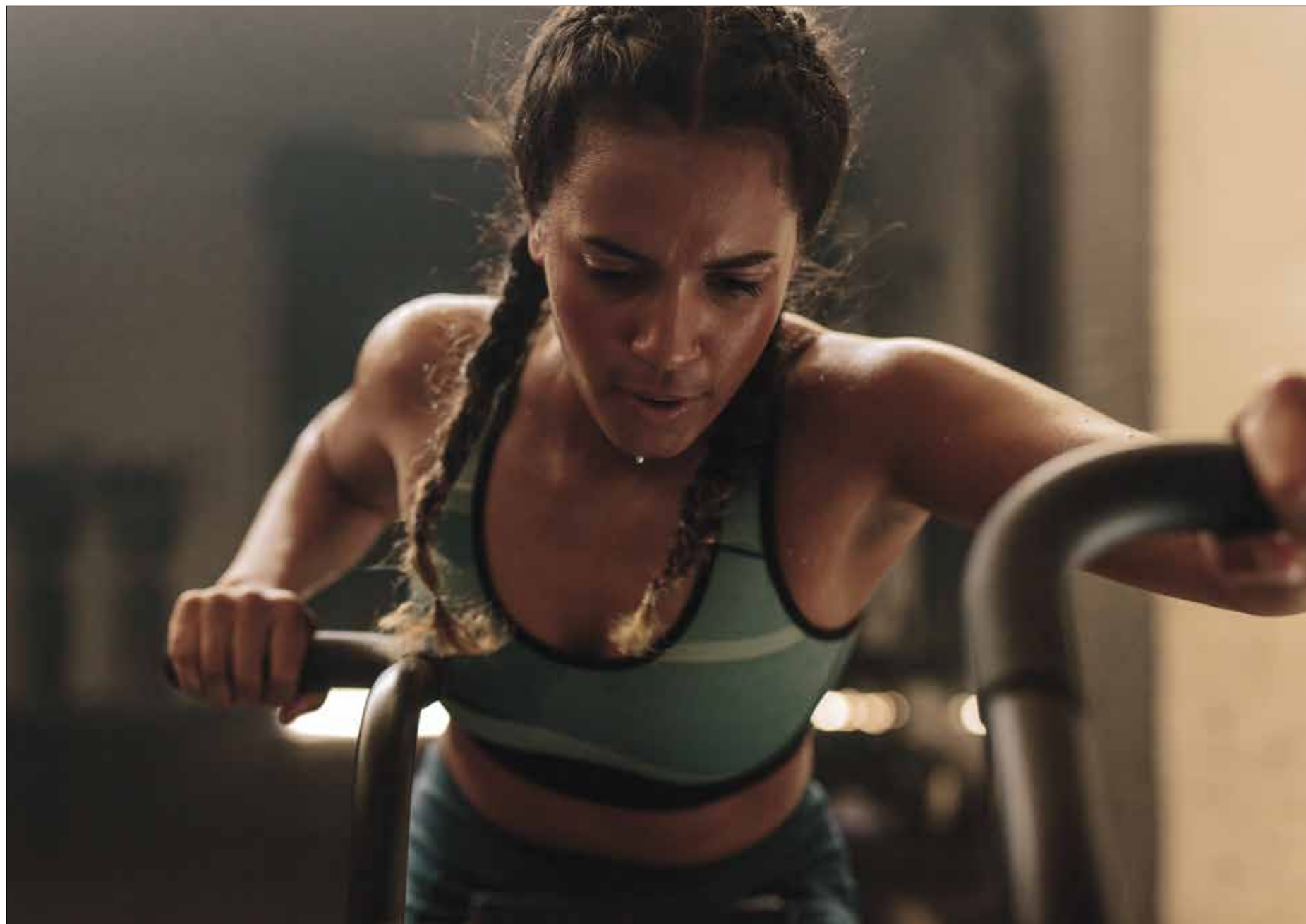
## WHAT ARE HIIT WORKOUTS?

HIIT workouts typically use interval times with a specific work-to-rest ratio. Many instructors follow a 30:15 model, which means 30 seconds of work and 15 seconds of rest.

This is basically up to the instructor, so be flexible if you're trying HIIT workouts at your home. The important thing to remember is that the shorter amount of workout time, the more intense your exercise should be to get the best results.

## HIIT WORKOUT EXAMPLES

HIIT exercises combine a variety of movements and workouts, including box jumps, medicine ball slams, battle rope exercises, pushups, pullups, dips, burpees and



© ADOBE STOCK

planks. It also can include exercise done on equipment such as stationary bikes, treadmills and ellipticals.

## BENEFITS OF HIIT

HIIT has been shown to produce many health benefits, including the improvement of blood vessel function. In a 2015 Sports Medicine study, researchers found that performing HIIT three times per

week for 12 to 16 weeks improved measures of vascular function in the brachial artery — the primary supplier of blood to the arm and hand — twice as well as moderate-intensity training did.

HIIT has also been found to reverse age-related muscle decline. The publication *Cell Metabolism* found that it causes cells to make more proteins for their energy-pro-

ducing mitochondria, which slows down the aging process for muscles.

## FIND A GYM CLASS

Overwhelmed at the thought of starting your own HIIT routine? Check with trainers or program managers at your local gym. Find out if you can try a HIIT class for free before committing to it, just in case it's not something

you enjoy.

Your gym likely offers variations of HIIT classes, so you should be able to pick your comfort level with options ranging from basic to advanced. Always pay attention to your body when trying new workout classes for the first time. Your class instructor should be able to customize a HIIT routine to match your level of expertise.



# Pick the Right Gym

© ADOBE STOCK

There are more than 32,150 health clubs in the United States. Now is a great time to get started on meeting your workout goals by joining your local gym.

Sure, we all get the urge to start working out more as the calendar year changes to January, but there are many benefits to signing up whenever you feel the urge to get more active.

But what will be the key to showing up month after month to your gym? That's a little trickier. The International Health, Racquet and Sports Club Association estimates that gyms lose about 28% of their members every year. That means nearly a third of the fitness population loses interest, motivation

or both.

Here are some tips to keep you from becoming a statistic.

### **WORK OUT LOCALLY**

The further you have to drive to get to your gym, the more likely you are to find excuses not to go. Try to find a gym within 15 minutes of your home. When you're researching local gyms, keep geography in mind. Punch your potential gym's address into your favorite navigation app to find its distance from you.

### **CONSIDER THE MACHINES**

If you're relatively new to working out, you'll want to take a tour of your potential new gym to check out the equipment it offers. Look for equipment that is simple to use and that is clean.

Look for mandatory cleaning signs on the equipment and watch to see if employees are regularly wiping down workout machines. If cleanliness doesn't seem to be a focus, you may want to take your muscles elsewhere.

### **CHECK THE CONTRACT**

Before signing on the dotted line, get all verbal promises in writing from your gym. Ask your potential gym how they handle complaints and what their member satisfaction rating is. They should be able to put your mind at ease that they deliver great member service while maintaining a healthy retention rate.

Ask for a trial so you can get a better feel of the gym before committing to long-term payments. If you have a friend who works out at the gym you're scouting, ask if you can come along to try out some machines. Most gyms will allow one-time guests to check out the gym.

# Find a Personal Trainer

You're nervous to work out in front of other people. You're not sure if you'll be able to keep up. You're not even sure where to start.

Does this sound familiar? The key to getting into a consistent workout routine is overcoming barriers keeping you from better health. Finding a great personal trainer will help. By taking your time and doing your research, you can find a great local trainer who can challenge and push you to a better fitness level.

## SET GOALS

The first question a potential personal trainer is going to ask is, "What are your goals?" Beat them to the punch by understanding what you're hoping to accomplish in the gym.

Are you looking to lose a certain amount of weight? Are you trying to train for a 5K or other type of fitness event? Is your goal to add some muscle to your upper body?

Regardless of what you're thinking, putting some goals down on paper is the first step to successfully finding a quality, local personal trainer. That way they can craft a customized workout plan to help you achieve your objectives.

## DO SOME RESEARCH

Once you define your goals, it's time to dig deep into your



© ADOBE STOCK

gym's offerings, including the cost and schedule of their personal trainers. Many gyms offer trainers as an upsell package, but you can also find independent personal trainers who can accompany you to the gym.

Search your local newspaper for ads or look online for local personal trainers with great

reviews. If they work for the gym, ask for success stories or other gym members who could tell you about their experience. Look for specialties when you're learning about personal trainers. You'll want someone whose experience closely matches the goals you're trying to reach.

## GET STARTED

Before you sign up for a long-term — or even a short-term — contract with your personal trainer, ask what kinds of options they have for new clients. They may be able to give you a complimentary workout so you can gauge their style and personality.

See if you can book a consultation with your potential trainer so you can get an idea of how they would specifically support you. Don't be afraid to ask a lot of questions. Remember, their job is to give you the confidence that they can help you optimize your fitness.

# Cardio Workout Tips



The most well-rounded workout routines include a healthy dose of cardio.

Short for “cardiovascular,” this type of exercise involves the large muscles in your arms, legs and hips moving frequently. Your heart rate increases and you breathe faster and more deeply during a cardio workout. This, in turn, maximizes the amount of oxygen in your blood and ultimately helps you use oxygen in a more efficient manner.

## HOW TO START

If you’re new to cardio activity, it’s

best to start slowly. Begin with a low to moderately intense cardio routine so you can perform it for long periods of time. These longer stretches of cardio come with many health benefits, including:

- Strengthening your heart and muscles;
- Burn more calories;
- Help control your appetite;
- Reduce arthritis and general soreness;
- Help prevent high blood pressure and heart disease; and
- Increase stamina and endurance.

Consider starting with walking, bicycling, swimming, dancing or water aerobics. Other cardio activities

include kayaking, skating, golfing or martial arts. If you’re starting a workout routine after an injury, be sure to check with your physician to set up a custom plan for your particular situation.

## REMEMBER TO STRETCH

A good cardio routine begins with a thorough stretch and warmup. Before each session, warm up for at least five minutes to gradually prepare your cardiovascular system for your exercise. This helps your body rev up before jumping into your exercise. Stretch all the muscles in your legs to prevent injuries during your cardio workout. If you plan to take a brisk

walk, warm up by walking slowly. If you’re jumping into a kayak or canoe, give your arms a good stretch.

## COOL DOWN

Almost as important as a good stretch, always remember to build in a cooldown period to your workout. If you’re running a 5K or jogging around a track, it’s critical to add a couple laps of walking to finish your cardio workout. This helps your cardiovascular system and muscles gradually calm down after a brisk workout.

Remember to always bring a bottle of water with you so you can stay hydrated before, during and after your workout.

# Safety in the Gym

Going to the gym is supposed to be a safe, healthy experience. Exercise is proven to reduce your risk for heart disease, diabetes and other issues, while building up muscle for better health.

But it's important to follow certain safety measures before entering a gym and starting a workout program. Follow the steps below to make sure you're staying safe in the gym and reaping the benefits of your hard work.

## CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR

If you have risk factors for heart disease, a respiratory ailment like asthma, high blood pressure, joint or bone disease, a neurological illness, or diabetes, it's critical to consult with your doctor before starting an exercise routine. Pushing yourself into a workout program can exacerbate these issues and leave you at greater risk for injury or sickness. Symptoms like chest pain, shortness of breath or dizziness are definite red flags you should be paying attention to. If you're experiencing any of these issues, it's time to seek physician help.

## PREVENT PAIN

Many injuries in the gym are



© ADOBE STOCK

from pushing your body too far, too fast. Issues like stress fractures, stiff or sore joints and muscles, and inflamed tendons and ligaments can be prevented by backing off of your routine or by mixing in different exercises.

Overuse can also drive regular injuries due to their wear and tear on certain parts of the body. Exercises like swimming, jogging and tennis are often to blame for injuries to the shoulders and legs. Being able to listen to your body will be

key to reducing your risk for ongoing injuries due to overuse.

## WORK UP

We all want to walk into the gym and dominate our workout. Realistically, the best

results come from steady, consistent workouts over a sustained period of time, not from one amazing workout. If you stop exercising for a while, drop back to a lower level of exercise initially to recondition your body.

# Dressing for your Workout

Whether you prefer running, CrossFit classes or cycling, you need to be dressed for success.

There are many different types of shoes, pants and shirts to choose from when building up your workout wardrobe.

Activities like running, golf, spinning and racquet sports require specialized footwear, as well as different outfits for comfort, durability and effectiveness. You wouldn't wear golf spikes while running a 5K.

## COMMON FOOT INJURIES

Improper shoes are a big culprit in ankle, foot or toe injuries, so choosing the right footwear is key to maximizing your workouts while preventing injury. Adequate shoe support is critical to preventing injury and helps you maintain a proper movement pattern. Shoes that don't fit your activity can lead to shin splints or plantar fasciitis, both of which are caused by improper arch support or poor foot alignment.

Less common injuries include tendinitis of any muscles in the lower leg or hip problems. These can all be caused by footwear that



© ADOBE STOCK

doesn't match the activity you're engaged in. Choosing style over function, for example, can leave your feet or lower legs in pain due to lack of support.

It's best to purchase shoes and other workout gear locally so you can try them on and get a sense of how they will

hold up. Ask your local clothing experts and personal trainers if you have questions on the type of workout gear you need.

## DRESS APPROPRIATELY

How you dress definitely matters when it comes to the weather. Experts warn to slow

your pace when temperatures rise above 70 degrees. On warmer days, try to exercise during the cooler morning or evening hours, or in the temperature-controlled gym.

Always choose clothes and shoes designed for your type of exercise, and remember to replace your shoes every six

months as the cushioning wears out. If you don't, you'll end up with shoes that hurt your feet, cause blisters and possibly slow you down.

Exercising is all about feeling and looking good, so put an emphasis on heading to the gym with the right workout clothing.

# What to Eat after you Exercise

Time at the gym requires a lot of energy, which can lead your body feeling exhausted and undernourished when you get home.

It can be difficult for the body to recover if energy levels are not replenished within 15 to 30 minutes after finishing a workout.

This means eating a snack shortly after exercising can play a big role in restoring your energy, curbing your appetite and maximizing the effectiveness of your workout.

But how do you know what to eat? Are all foods created equally when it comes to revamping your body's energy levels? Unfortunately, no. You need to be strategic.

## **BENEFITS OF PROPER EATING**

Eating the right things after your workout is critical to your recovery and overall energy levels. Getting nutritional balance after exercise restores your energy and reduces fatigue. This helps your body repair muscles and build strength. When you're considering how to boost your energy levels after a great workout, consider proteins, carbohydrates and healthful fats from nuts — all essential for your body's recovery.

## **PROTEIN**

Consuming protein after your exercise helps the muscles to heal and prevents the loss of lean mass, which contributes to a muscular and toned appearance. Good protein choices include fish, chicken, nuts and healthy protein shakes.

## **DAIRY PROTEIN**

You can also try dairy protein to help

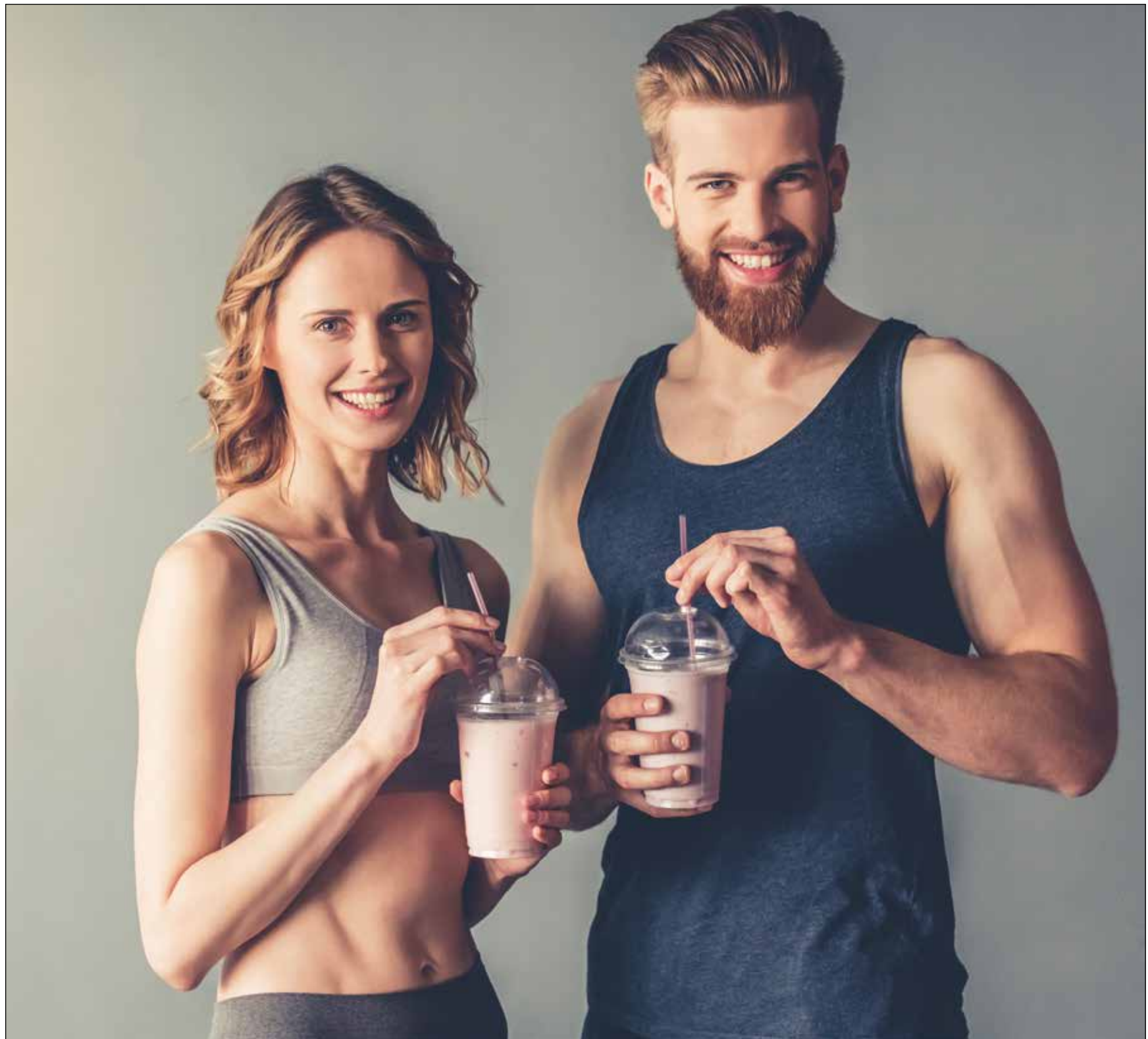
your recovery. This type of protein can repair new cells and rebuild your amino acids.

Other than milk, dairy products rich in protein include Greek yogurt and cottage cheese.

## **OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS**

A 2017 Washington University School of Medicine study suggests that supplementation with omega-3 fatty acids helps boost the synthesis of muscle proteins and increase the size of mus-

cle cells in healthy young and middle-aged adults. Tuna and fatty fish, including salmon, are rich in omega-3 fatty acids. Research also shows that oil drawn from these types of fish can help reduce muscle soreness after exercise.



© ADOBE STOCK