

COSMOPOLITAN

20 Rules Fit Women Always Follow

Their ~secrets~ are yours for the taking.

Turns out, some of the fittest women have a whole lot in common. Steal their tricks, and fitness might just follow.

1. They exercise on most days, but they mix it up.

Amanda Butler, a NASM-certified personal trainer at [The Fhitting Room](#) in NYC, breaks a sweat five to six days a week, alternating between resistance training, running, and yoga or dance cardio.

Sylvie Curci, an NYC-based acro yogi, follows suit with her daily workouts, bopping between Crossfit, AcroYoga, CityRow, FlyWheel, Cyc, and Modo Yoga studios. "I am not a fitness monogamist," she says. "No two days are ever the same."

2. They're thoughtful about their meals.

If you ask just about any fit woman, she'll tell you the key to her success is preparation. "I stock up my snacks and all other foods at Trader Joe's every other week," says Layla Luciano, a trainer who appeared on Bravo's *Work Out New York*. The co-founder of the New York City studio PACT PARK especially likes to keep her go-to snacks (apple slices with a Justin's Almond Butter packet, soy yogurt, and TJ's trail mix) on hand.

Step into the kitchen of Astrid Swan, a trainer at Barry's Bootcamp in Los Angeles, and you'll almost always find bananas, eggs, 2 percent Greek

yogurt, almond butter, gluten-free oats, veggies, hummus, Ezekiel bread, tuna, and avocados — all ingredients she can use in countless healthy meal and snack combinations.

"I always have sweet potatoes, avocados, lemon, pineapple, kale or spinach," says Tamara Pridgett, a NASM-certified personal trainer and instructor at Tone House NYC in Manhattan. "I can concoct a billion meals with them."

3. They eat a lot of protein.

Kira Stokes, certified trainer at BFX Studio and creator of The Stoked Fitness Method, throws back at least four hard-boiled eggs with hummus every day, on top of the protein smoothie she drinks within 30 minutes of every workout to help her body recover.

Protein also help you fend off food cravings. It works for Classpass founder Payal Kadakia, who works out just about every day and drinks milk at night when her strongest food cravings tend to hit.

4. They stick to high-fiber carbs.

"I eat a lot of bread, pasta and rice — but the whole-grain, high-fiber version," says Luciano, who swears this hack keeps her full for longer.

5. They eat ASAP in the a.m.

Butler eats within 30 minutes of waking, right after a hot lemon water and coffee. For Swan, within 10 minutes of opening her eyes, she downs a bottle of water, makes a cup of green tea with a teaspoon of coconut oil, and starts whipping up homemade pancakes made from a banana, two egg whites, and gluten-free oats.

6. They front-load their food.

"I know I will be burning a lot of calories throughout the day," Luciano says of her morning meals, which sometimes include nine-grain organic pancakes with peanut butter and fresh fruit, or a whole grain wrap

breakfast burrito made with eggs, salsa, veggies, avocado, and beans. "So I like to eat *a lot* of it."

Stokes can relate: "I think of food as fuel — it's what my body needs for the activity level I'm going to experience after consumption," she says. It's why she'll often eat non-traditional morning foods like quinoa in the morning, then end her day with a lighter meal, like an egg white omelette with veggies.

7. They eat carbs before workouts and protein afterwards.

"Before my workouts, I *need* carbs," says Pridgett, who sometimes grabs a muffin on the fly because it's light and doesn't trigger nausea when she starts jumping around. Within 30 minutes after she stops sweating, she refuels with a snack or meal that's high in protein, like a protein shake or piece of fish.

Stokes reaches for quinoa with mixed veggies or avocado maki made with brown rice before her workouts, drinking a high-protein smoothie made from a plant-based protein powder (her favorites are Vega Sport or Ojio Sport), plus ½ cup of water, ½ cup unsweetened vanilla almond milk, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, and chia seeds after she finishes a workout.

8. They eat regularly and always have snacks around.

"I pack snacks in my bag for throughout the day so that when I do get hungry, I don't have to make myself wait until the next meal, and eat with a hungry stomach," says Luciano.

The same goes for Pridgett, who munches on dried mango, cashews, and almonds. "Depending on my day, [I can eat a snack] every other hour or just a mid-day snack between breakfast and lunch, and lunch and dinner," she says.

Butler even carries around a Tupperware container full of [homemade energy balls](#) made from oats, chocolate chips, peanut butter, chia seeds, and cinnamon for a quick snack.

9. They only indulge in unhealthy foods when they're out.

"To avoid going overboard, I try to keep things like candy and cupcakes out of my home. Out of sight, out of mind, and not in my mouth," Pridgett says.

10. They mentally order their meals before they get to the restaurant.

"Then I have a game plan going in," says Swan, who always Googles restaurants to scan the menu ahead of time.

11. They actually drink alcohol moderately (or not at all).

Butler lays off the bottle on weeknights, digging into lighter cocktails like tequila soda with a lime on weekends.

Then of course there are some women who don't touch the stuff at all, like Pridgett, who was a competitive sprinter in college.

"My college coach would always remind us to think, 'Is it going to help you be great?' and that always stuck with me," she adds, implying that alcohol won't boost your performance (unless, of course, you're talking about karaoke).

12. They swear by organized classes.

Granted, many of the all-time fittest women teach the classes, but they also take them. "I can come in and commit that hour to myself and not have to think about what to do as it is already programmed," Swan says of taking other instructor's classes at her Barry's Bootcamp studio.

13. They try new things.

"I make it a point to try at least one totally new workout each week," says Kadakia. "It's great for your muscles to adapt to something new, and I love the mental challenge of pushing myself to try something different."

14. They work different body parts on different days.

"At the gym, I do weight training and choose a couple of body parts to really focus on each day," Luciano says. This strategy also promotes muscle recovery because it gives sore spots a chance to rest and prevents over-training: "On the days that I'm training aerial, I try not to do any back or shoulders at the gym so I don't injure myself," Luciano adds.

Assuming you nail down your routine before you arrive at the gym, planning which body parts to work can even boost your efficiency. "Knowing what you want to accomplish saves a lot of time," Pridgett says.

15. They watch the clock during their workouts and waste no time.

"I love to do exercises based on time when I am working out by myself, says Swan, who sets her iPhone timer to track 60, 45, then 30 seconds of work, taking 15-second breathers in between.

Pridgett takes a similar approach when counting reps: "I try not to rest longer than one minute in between sets," she says.

16. They don't mess with their phones while they work out.

Even women who appear to be super active IRL *and* on social media detach from their phones religiously. "I never shoot Instagrams *during* my workout, as I hate to disrupt the flow," says Stokes of the #SMOTD (Stoked Moves of the Day) she posts on the regular.

Her trick: "I dedicate five minutes or so once my workout is complete to create awesome content." She doesn't even bring her phone on outdoor runs, instead using an old-school iPod for music, or going tech-free to ~embrace the moment.~

17. They find random ways to stay active when there's no time for a Real Workout.

"I'm that weirdo who bicep curls her grocery bags back to the car," says Jamie Franco, fitness trainer at Rise Nation in Los Angeles. "I'll be carrying my baby nephew, and I'll hear my sister whisper, 'Watch, she's probably gonna goblet-squat him.' Which is right — I'd probably do 20 reps and shoulder press him on my way up."

18. They don't really rest on rest days.

"Sometimes my rest days are my teaching days so I am actually pretty active demoing exercises and running around the studio," Butler says.

19. They don't let busy days turn into cheat days.

"When I want to be unhealthy I'm getting a Sicilian slice of pepperoni pizza," says Pridgett. "On days I don't have time to workout, I make sure I eat very clean."

20. They don't freak out on days when they can't squeeze in a workout.

Instead, they work on other parts of their lives. "On days that I'm not physically active, I typically use that opportunity to invest in my mental health, whether that's spending time with my friends, family and fiancé, reading a good book or even just vegging out on the couch," Kadakia says. #TimeWellSpent.