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Your Complete 7-Level Exercise Program — Bariatric & Medical Weight Loss

⚠️ IMPORTANT: Get clearance from your medical provider before starting or advancing levels. If you have had bariatric surgery, follow your surgeon's specific timeline for activity restrictions (see page XX).

HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAM

1. Find your starting level using the quiz on the next page

2. Follow the program for your level — every exercise, set, rep, and rest period is spelled out

3. Spend at least 2–4 weeks at each level before advancing

4. Advance only when you can complete the full routine without excessive soreness, joint pain, or shortness of breath that doesn't recover within a few minutes

5. Use the weekly tracking sheets at the end to log your workouts

6. Choose either the GYM version or the HOME version for each level — both produce the same results

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WHAT LEVEL AM I? — QUICK START QUIZ

Answer honestly — starting too high causes injuries and burnout.

- "I barely move around my house most days." → **Start at Level 1**

- "I can walk around my neighborhood for 10–15 minutes without stopping." → **Start at Level 2**

- "I walk regularly (20–30 min) but don't do any strength exercises." → **Start at Level 3**

- "I walk regularly AND have done some strength training before." → **Start at Level 4**

- "I exercise 3–4 days a week and am comfortable with squats, lunges, and presses." → **Start at Level 5**

- "I exercise 4–5 days a week and want to maximize fat burning." → **Start at Level 6**

- "I'm ready for a long-term maintenance program at full intensity." → **Start at Level 7**

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KEY TERMS YOU'LL SEE IN THIS PROGRAM

- **RPE (Rate of Perceived Exertion):** How hard the exercise feels on a 0–10 scale. 0 = sitting still. 3 = easy. 5 = moderate (can talk but not sing). 7 = hard (short sentences only). 9 = near maximum.

- **Superset:** Two exercises performed back to back with no rest between them. You rest after completing both.

- **Tri-set:** Three exercises performed back to back with no rest between them. You rest after completing all three.

- **Compound movement:** An exercise that uses multiple joints and large muscle groups (e.g., squat, lunge, row, press). These burn 4x more calories per minute than isolation exercises.

- **Progressive overload:** Gradually increasing the challenge over time — more weight, more reps, shorter rest, or slower tempo.

- **Circuit:** Performing exercises one after another with minimal rest, then repeating the full sequence.

WHY THIS PROGRAM WORKS

This program is built on three research-backed principles:

1. **Full-body training every session.** Training your entire body in one workout burns significantly more fat than splitting exercises across different days — even when the total work is identical. Your metabolism stays elevated for up to 21 hours after a full-body session.

2. **Compound movements first.** Squats, lunges, deadlifts, rows, and presses burn over 20 calories per minute. Bicep curls burn less than 5. At least 70% of your exercises should be compound movements.

3. **Short rest, high metabolic demand.** The superset and circuit format keeps your heart rate elevated throughout the workout, burning more calories per minute and creating a longer "afterburn" effect compared to traditional set-rest-set training.

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EQUIPMENT NEEDED

For the HOME version:

- ☐ Set of looped resistance bands (light, medium, heavy)

- ☐ One long resistance band with handles

- ☐ Adjustable dumbbells OR 3 pairs (light: 3–8 lbs, medium: 10–20 lbs, heavy: 20–35 lbs)

- ☐ Sturdy chair (no wheels)

- ☐ Yoga mat or towel

- ☐ A step or low bench (a bottom stair works)

- ☐ Optional: door-mounted band anchor (under $10)

For the GYM version:

- Access to dumbbells, barbells, cable machines, and standard gym equipment

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LEVEL 1 — "GETTING MOVING"

Who this is for: Sedentary, housebound, or immediately post-surgery

Frequency: Daily (7 days/week)

Weekly goal: 15–30 minutes of total walking per day

Aerobic Activity

Walk inside your home for 5–10 minutes, 2–3 times per day. RPE: 2–3 (easy, conversational).

Movement Snacks — Do 2–3 Times Daily

#	Exercise	How to Do It	Sets × Reps
1	Seated marching	Sit in chair, march knees up alternately	1 min continuous
2	Seated arm circles	Arms out to sides, make small circles	10 forward, 10 backward
3	Chair-assisted squat	Stand up from chair, sit back down slowly	2 × 5
4	Wall push-ups	Hands on wall, feet 2 feet back, push away	2 × 5
5	Standing calf raises	Hold counter, rise onto toes, lower slowly	2 × 10

Key habit: Set a timer to stand and move for 2 minutes every waking hour.

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LEVEL 2 — "BUILDING A BASE"

Who this is for: Can walk 10–15 minutes without stopping

Frequency: 5 days/week (3 walking + 2 resistance)

Weekly goal: 75–100 minutes of walking

Aerobic (3 days/week — e.g., Mon/Wed/Fri)

Walk outdoors or indoors: 15–20 minutes per session. RPE: 3–4.

Full-Body Resistance Circuit (2 days/week — e.g., Tue/Thu)

Do all exercises in order. Rest 60–90 seconds between exercises. Complete 2 full rounds.

#	Exercise	HOME Version	GYM Version	Sets × Reps
1	Squat	Chair-assisted squat (sit to stand)	Chair-assisted squat	2 × 10
2	Push	Wall push-ups	Wall push-ups	2 × 10
3	Pull	Band seated row (band around feet or door)	Seated row machine (light)	2 × 10
4	Hip	Standing hip abduction (band around ankles)	Standing hip abduction (band)	2 × 10 each leg
5	Arms	Band bicep curls	Dumbbell bicep curls (light)	2 × 10
6	Calves	Standing calf raises (hold chair)	Standing calf raises (hold rail)	2 × 12
7	Core	Dead bug (on back, alternate arm/leg)	Dead bug	2 × 8 total

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LEVEL 3 — "ESTABLISHING THE ROUTINE"

Who this is for: Walks regularly but hasn't done structured resistance training

Frequency: 5 days/week (3 aerobic + 2 resistance)

Weekly goal: 150 minutes of aerobic activity

Aerobic (3 days/week)

Brisk walking: 30 minutes per session. RPE: 4–5 (can talk but not sing). Add daily lifestyle walking to reach 150 min/week total.

Full-Body Resistance Circuit (2 days/week, non-consecutive)

Use light dumbbells (3–8 lbs) or resistance bands. Do all exercises in order. Rest 45–60 seconds between exercises. Complete 2 full rounds.

#	Exercise	HOME Version	GYM Version	Sets × Reps
1	Squat	Goblet squat (DB at chest) or bodyweight	Goblet squat or leg press	2 × 12
2	Chest press	DB floor press (lying on mat)	DB bench press	2 × 10
3	Row	Band row (anchored at chest height)	DB bent-over row	2 × 10
4	Shoulder press	DB shoulder press (seated in chair)	DB shoulder press (seated)	2 × 10
5	Hip hinge	DB Romanian deadlift (light)	DB Romanian deadlift (light)	2 × 10
6	Core	Plank on knees	Plank on knees	2 × 15–20 sec
7	Calves	Calf raises with DBs	Calf raises on machine	2 × 12
8	Upper back	Band pull-aparts	Band pull-aparts	2 × 12

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LEVEL 4 — "BUILDING THE ENGINE"

Who this is for: Comfortable with Level 3 exercises, ready for supersets

Frequency: 5 days/week (2–3 aerobic + 2 resistance)

Weekly goal: 150 minutes aerobic + superset resistance training

Aerobic (2–3 days/week)

Brisk walking, elliptical, cycling, or stair climbing: 30–40 minutes per session. RPE: 5–6. Begin light intervals: 2 min brisk / 1 min easy.

Full-Body Metabolic Circuit — WORKOUT A (e.g., Tuesday)

Perform each superset: do both exercises back to back, rest 60 seconds, repeat for 3 rounds before moving to the next superset.

Superset	Exercise 1 (Lower Body)	Exercise 2 (Upper Body)	Reps
SS1	Goblet squat	DB floor press (HOME) / DB bench press (GYM)	10 each
SS2	DB reverse lunge	Band row (HOME) / Lat pulldown (GYM)	10 each leg / 10
SS3	DB Romanian deadlift	DB shoulder press	10 each
Finisher	Plank: 20–30 sec × 2 sets		

Full-Body Metabolic Circuit — WORKOUT B (e.g., Thursday)

Superset	Exercise 1 (Lower Body)	Exercise 2 (Upper Body)	Reps
SS1	DB sumo squat (HOME) / Leg press (GYM)	Push-ups (HOME) / Seated cable row (GYM)	12 / 10
SS2	Step-ups onto stair or bench	Band face pulls (HOME) / Face pulls (GYM)	10 each leg / 12
SS3	Glute bridge with DB on hips (HOME) / Hip thrust (GYM)	Band lateral raises (HOME) / DB lateral raises (GYM)	12 each

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Finisher	Dead bug: 10 reps total × 2 sets

LEVEL 5 — "METABOLIC TRAINING"

Who this is for: Ready for 3 resistance days/week and progressive overload

Frequency: 5–6 days/week (2–3 aerobic + 3 resistance)

Weekly goal: 200 minutes total activity

Aerobic (2–3 days/week)

- 1–2 steady-state sessions: 35–45 min at RPE 5–6

- 1 interval session: 5 min warm-up → alternate 2 min hard / 1 min easy × 8 rounds → 5 min cool-down (~30 min)

> 💡 **Fat-Burning Zone:** For steady-state cardio, aim for 61–66% of your peak heart rate if body fat is above 35%, or 57–64% if below 35%. Quick formula: (220 − your age) × 0.61 to 0.66. For most people, this is a brisk walk — not a jog.

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Full-Body Metabolic Circuit — WORKOUT A (Squat Focus)
3 rounds per superset. Rest 45–60 seconds between supersets.

Superset	Exercise 1 (Lower)	Exercise 2 (Upper)	Reps
SS1	DB goblet squat (HOME) / Barbell squat (GYM)	DB floor press (HOME) / DB bench press (GYM)	10 each
SS2	Walking lunges with DBs	Band lat pulldown over door (HOME) / Lat pulldown (GYM)	10 each leg / 10
SS3	Band leg curl (HOME) / Leg curl machine (GYM)	DB overhead press	12 / 10
SS4	Calf raises with DBs	Band face pulls (HOME) / Face pulls (GYM)	15 / 12

Full-Body Metabolic Circuit — WORKOUT B (Hinge Focus)

Superset	Exercise 1 (Lower)	Exercise 2 (Upper)	Reps
SS1	DB Romanian deadlift	Band seated row (HOME) / Seated cable row (GYM)	10 each
SS2	DB Bulgarian split squat, rear foot on chair (HOME) / Leg press (GYM)	DB incline push-up on chair (HOME) / DB incline press (GYM)	8 each leg / 10
SS3	Glute bridge with DB (HOME) / Hip thrust (GYM)	DB bent-over row	12 / 10
SS4	Plank (30 sec)	DB bicep curls	— / 10

Full-Body Metabolic Circuit — WORKOUT C (Lunge Focus)

Superset	Exercise 1 (Lower)	Exercise 2 (Upper)	Reps
SS1	DB reverse lunges	Push-ups (HOME) / DB chest press (GYM)	10 each leg / 10
SS2	DB sumo squat (HOME) / Goblet squat (GYM)	Band pulldown (HOME) / Lat pulldown (GYM)	12 / 10
SS3	DB step-ups	DB shoulder press	10 each leg / 10
SS4	Band woodchops (HOME) / Cable woodchops (GYM)	Band tricep pushdowns (HOME) / Tricep pushdowns (GYM)	10 each side / 12

Progressive overload rule: When you complete all sets and reps with good form for 2 sessions

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in a row, increase weight by the smallest amount available or move to the next heavier band.

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LEVEL 6 — "HIGH-OUTPUT METABOLIC TRAINING"

Who this is for: Ready for tri-sets and 3–4 resistance days/week

Frequency: 5–6 days/week (2 aerobic + 3–4 resistance)

Weekly goal: 250–300 minutes total activity

Aerobic (2 dedicated sessions + 10–15 min warm-up on resistance days)

- 1 steady-state: 45–60 min at fat-burning zone heart rate (RPE 5–6)

- 1 interval: 5 min warm-up → 4 × 4 min at RPE 7–8 with 3 min easy recovery → 5 min cool-down

Full-Body Metabolic Circuit — WORKOUT A

Tri-sets: do all 3 exercises back to back, rest 45–60 seconds, repeat for 3 rounds.

Tri-set	Exercise 1 (Lower)	Exercise 2 (Upper)	Exercise 3 (Core/Accessory)	Reps
TS1	DB goblet squat (HOME) / Barbell back squat (GYM)	DB floor press (HOME) / Barbell bench press (GYM)	Plank (30 sec)	10 / 10 / —
TS2	Walking lunges with DBs	Band lat pulldown (HOME) / Lat pulldown (GYM)	Band woodchops (HOME) / Cable woodchops (GYM)	10 each leg / 10 / 10 each side
TS3	Band leg curl (HOME) / Leg curl machine (GYM)	Band lateral raises (HOME) / DB lateral raises (GYM)	Calf raises with DBs	12 / 12 / 15

Full-Body Metabolic Circuit — WORKOUT B

Tri-set	Exercise 1 (Lower)	Exercise 2 (Upper)	Exercise 3 (Core/Accessory)	Reps

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TS1	DB Romanian deadlift (HOME) / Barbell deadlift (GYM)	DB bent-over row (HOME) / Barbell bent-over row (GYM)	Dead bug	10 / 10 / 10 total
TS2	DB Bulgarian split squat (HOME) / Leg press (GYM)	DB overhead press	Band face pulls (HOME) / Face pulls (GYM)	8 each leg / 10 / 12
TS3	Glute bridge with DB (HOME) / Hip thrust (GYM)	DB bicep curls	Band tricep pushdowns (HOME) / Tricep pushdowns (GYM)	12 / 10 / 12

Full-Body Metabolic Circuit — WORKOUT C

Tri-set	Exercise 1 (Lower)	Exercise 2 (Upper)	Exercise 3 (Core/Accessory)	Reps
TS1	DB sumo squat	Push-ups to failure	Lying leg raises	10 / max / 10
TS2	DB reverse lunges	Band seated row (HOME) / Seated cable row (GYM)	Plank (30 sec)	10 each leg / 10 / —
TS3	DB step-ups	DB floor press (HOME) / DB chest press (GYM)	Calf raises	10 each leg / 10 / 15

WORKOUT D (Optional 4th Day — Lighter, Higher Rep)

Tri-set	Exercise 1 (Lower)	Exercise 2 (Upper)	Exercise 3 (Core/Accessory)	Reps
TS1	Bodyweight squat	Band rows	Mountain climbers	15 / 15 / 20 total
TS2	DB step-ups	Push-ups	Bicycle crunches	12 each leg / 12 / 20 total
TS3	DB single-leg deadlift (HOME) / Kettlebell swings (GYM)	Band lateral raises (HOME) / DB lateral raises (GYM)	Plank (30 sec)	10 each leg / 15 / —

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LEVEL 7 — "MAINTENANCE & OPTIMIZATION"

Who this is for: This is the destination — your long-term program for life

Frequency: 5–6 days/week (2 cardio + 3–4 resistance)

Weekly goal: 250–300 minutes total activity

Aerobic (2 dedicated sessions + warm-ups)

- 1 moderate steady-state: 45–60 min at fat-burning zone heart rate

- 1 HIIT: 10 min warm-up → 8–10 × 1 min at RPE 8–9 with 1 min recovery → 5 min cool-down

Resistance Training (3–4 days/week)

Continue Level 6 workouts with progressive overload. Follow these rules:

- 8–10 compound exercises per session in supersets or tri-sets

- 3 rounds per grouping, 8–12 reps per exercise

- Rest 45–60 seconds between groupings

- Compound movements = at least 70% of each session

- Every 4–6 weeks, rotate exercises to prevent adaptation

Exercise Rotation Ideas:

Swap This	For This
Goblet squat	Sumo squat or front squat
DB floor press	Push-up variations or incline press
Bilateral lunges	Bulgarian split squats
DB Romanian deadlift	Single-leg deadlift
Band row	DB bent-over row
Plank	Dead bug or mountain climbers

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How to Keep Progressing (Especially at Home):

- Increase dumbbell weight by the smallest increment

- Move to the next heavier resistance band

- Slow the lowering phase to 3–4 seconds per rep

- Add a 1–2 second pause at the bottom of squats, lunges, and presses

- Increase reps from 10 → 12 → 15 before adding weight

- Shorten rest from 60 → 45 → 30 seconds

- Add a 4th resistance day

POST-BARIATRIC SURGERY EXERCISE TIMELINE

Time After Surgery	Allowed Activity	Program Level
Day of surgery	Walk short distances as tolerated	Level 1
Weeks 1–4	Walking and daily movement only	Level 1
Weeks 4–6	Light resistance with bands and bodyweight	Level 2
Weeks 8–12	Structured resistance training (avoid heavy abdominal loading)	Level 3
After 12 weeks	Progress through levels with surgeon clearance	Level 4+

⚠️ These are general guidelines. Your surgeon may have specific restrictions based on your procedure and recovery. Always follow your surgical team's instructions.

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EXERCISE DESCRIPTIONS & FORM CUES

LOWER BODY EXERCISES

Chair-Assisted Squat (Levels 1–2)

Stand in front of a sturdy chair. Feet shoulder-width apart. Slowly lower yourself until your bottom touches the chair seat, then stand back up. Keep your chest up and weight in your heels. Use armrests for support if needed.

Goblet Squat (Levels 3–7)

Hold a dumbbell vertically at your chest with both hands. Feet shoulder-width apart or slightly wider. Squat down until your thighs are parallel to the floor (or as low as comfortable). Keep your chest up, elbows inside your knees. Push through your heels to stand.

Dumbbell Reverse Lunge (Levels 4–7)

Hold dumbbells at your sides. Step one foot backward and lower your back knee toward the floor. Front knee stays over your ankle. Push through your front heel to return to standing. Alternate legs.

Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift (Levels 3–7)

Hold dumbbells in front of your thighs. With a slight bend in your knees, hinge forward at your hips, sliding the dumbbells down your thighs toward your shins. Keep your back flat. Squeeze your glutes to return to standing. You should feel a stretch in your hamstrings.

Bulgarian Split Squat (Levels 5–7)

Stand about 2 feet in front of a chair. Place the top of one foot on the chair seat behind you. Lower your back knee toward the floor while keeping your front knee over your ankle. Push through your front heel to stand. Complete all reps on one side, then switch.

Glute Bridge with Dumbbell (Levels 4–7)

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Lie on your back, knees bent, feet flat on the floor. Place a dumbbell on your hip crease. Push through your heels to lift your hips until your body forms a straight line from shoulders to knees. Squeeze your glutes at the top. Lower slowly.

Step-Ups (Levels 4–7)

Stand facing a sturdy step, bench, or bottom stair. Step up with one foot, pressing through your heel to bring your other foot up. Step back down with control. Complete all reps on one side, then switch. Hold dumbbells at your sides for added resistance.

Standing Calf Raises (All Levels)

Stand on flat ground (or the edge of a step for greater range). Rise up onto your toes as high as possible. Hold for 1 second. Lower slowly. Hold a chair, wall, or dumbbells for balance/resistance.

UPPER BODY EXERCISES

Wall Push-Ups (Levels 1–2)

Stand facing a wall, hands at shoulder height and shoulder-width apart, feet about 2 feet from the wall. Bend your elbows to bring your chest toward the wall. Push back to start. Keep your body in a straight line.

Push-Ups — Knees or Full (Levels 3–7)

Hands slightly wider than shoulder-width. Lower your chest toward the floor, keeping your body in a straight line. Push back up. Start on your knees if needed; progress to full push-ups from your toes.

Dumbbell Floor Press (Levels 3–7, HOME)

Lie on your back on a mat. Hold dumbbells above your chest, arms extended. Lower the dumbbells until your upper arms touch the floor. Press back up. The floor limits your range of motion, which is easier on your shoulders.

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Dumbbell Shoulder Press (Levels 3–7)

Sit in a sturdy chair. Hold dumbbells at shoulder height, palms facing forward. Press the dumbbells overhead until your arms are fully extended. Lower slowly to shoulder height.

Resistance Band Row (Levels 2–7, HOME)

Anchor the band to a door at chest height (or wrap around your feet if seated on the floor). Hold the handles and pull toward your ribcage, squeezing your shoulder blades together. Slowly return to start.

Dumbbell Bent-Over Row (Levels 3–7)

Hinge forward at your hips with a flat back, knees slightly bent. Hold dumbbells hanging below your shoulders. Pull the dumbbells to your ribcage, squeezing your shoulder blades together. Lower slowly.

Resistance Band Lat Pulldown (Levels 5–7, HOME)

Loop a band over the top of a door (use a door anchor). Kneel facing the door. Grab the band with both hands above your head. Pull down to your chest, squeezing your shoulder blades together. Slowly return to start.

Resistance Band Face Pulls (Levels 4–7)

Anchor band at face height. Hold with both hands, palms down. Pull the band toward your face, separating your hands and squeezing your shoulder blades. Slowly return.

CORE EXERCISES

Dead Bug (Levels 2–7)

Lie on your back. Arms extended toward the ceiling, knees bent at 90 degrees above your hips. Slowly extend your right arm overhead and your left leg toward the floor simultaneously. Return to start. Alternate sides. Keep your lower back pressed into the floor throughout.

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Plank — Knees or Full (Levels 3–7)

Support yourself on your forearms and toes (or knees). Keep your body in a straight line from head to heels (or knees). Don't let your hips sag or pike up. Hold for the prescribed time. Breathe normally.

Resistance Band Woodchops (Levels 5–7)

Anchor band low (under a door or around a table leg). Stand sideways to the anchor. Grab the band with both hands. Rotate your torso as you pull the band diagonally from low to high across your body. Control the return. Complete all reps, then switch sides.

Mountain Climbers (Levels 6–7)

Start in a push-up position. Alternate driving your knees toward your chest quickly, as if running in place horizontally. Keep your hips level and core tight.

YOUR FAT-BURNING HEART RATE ZONE

Use this chart to find your target heart rate for steady-state cardio (the intensity where your body burns the most fat per minute):

If your body fat is ABOVE 35%: Target 61–66% of peak heart rate

If your body fat is BELOW 35%: Target 57–64% of peak heart rate

Your Age	Peak HR (est.)	Fat-Burning Zone (>35% BF)	Fat-Burning Zone (<35% BF)
30	190	116–125 bpm	108–122 bpm
35	185	113–122 bpm	105–118 bpm
40	180	110–119 bpm	103–115 bpm

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