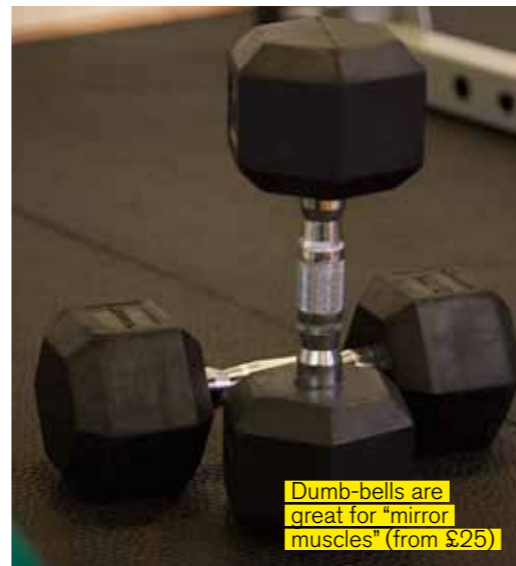
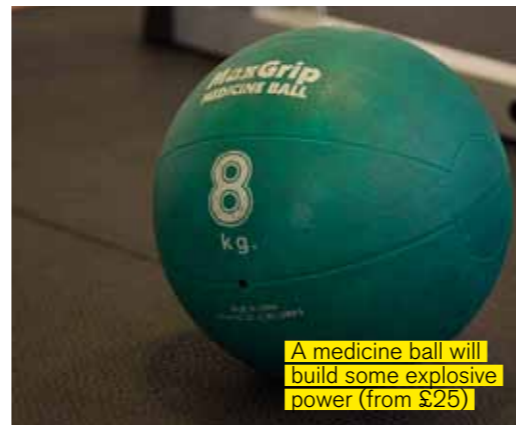




Every man needs a big rack in his life (from £250)



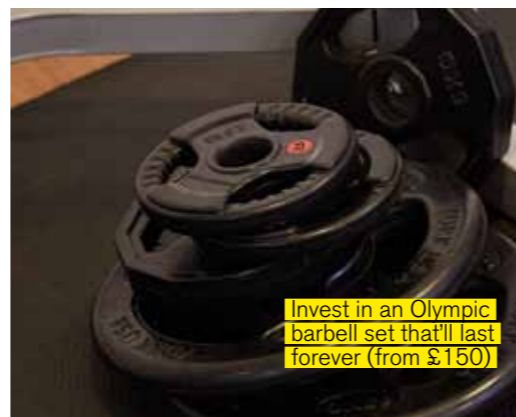
Dumb-bells are great for "mirror muscles" (from £25)



A medicine ball will build some explosive power (from £25)



Use kettle bells for full-body fat-burning workouts (from £20)



Invest in an Olympic barbell set that'll last forever (from £150)

BUFF NOT BROKE

BUILD YOUR OWN GYM

Create your own fitness mecca for less than the price of a year's gym membership and get ripped, not ripped off



Tim Walker is a personal trainer and body-transformation guru who's more at home flipping tractor tyres and slamming sledgehammers than jogging on a treadmill. The creator of the Warrior Workout programme explains how to beef up without shelling out...

01 Putting together a home gym is really affordable. A gym membership can easily cost you £60 and up a month, or more than £600 a year, but you can spend under £600 on equipment that will last you forever.

After the initial outlay, you're not tied into anything, and it's convenient – just go downstairs, do 10 minutes of bench-press or some chin-ups, and feel the benefits.

02 Fitness companies are there to make money; you don't need those £12,000 treadmills and £10,000 leg-press machines at the gym. And there's no such thing as miracle exercise equipment, whatever those late-night infomercials might say. That doesn't mean you should go completely DIY – you're better off buying dumb-bells for £10 than lifting water bottles.

03 The starting point for any home gym is something called a power rack – a big rectangular steel frame. They're very simple, but very effective, and you can get one for £250 that'll last you years. Most of them come with dip bars and chin-up bars, which are great for building strength. The only downside is it will take up around 1.5m by 1.5m, so you'll need space. You can buy ones you can take apart and shove in the corner, but I always feel safer with a steel-framed power rack.

04 Every guy likes a bench-press – it's the number one exercise for men – because it works the mirror muscles, the ones that make you look good: chest, shoulders, arms. You could just lie on the floor, but with an adjustable bench you can set it to different angles and work different parts of the chest. If you're tight on space, get a bench that can just slide under your bed.

05 For everything from bench-press to dead lifts, a barbell set is essential. You can go down the cheap route and get some from Argos for 40 quid, but they're a bit flimsy. You're better off investing in an Olympic barbell set – with a thicker, sturdier grip. It could cost up to £200, but it's worth it.

06 Kettle bells are really versatile – you can do a lot of different exercises with a 16kg one. You can use them for static exercises such as bicep curls and lying chest presses, or for explosive power exercises, like swings – where you hold the handle with both hands and thrust your hips forward in a big swinging motion.

07 Your mind always gives up before your body, so music is really important. Listening to the right tunes affects your performance and not having speakers set up is one of the reasons people struggle in their home gyms. Even if you don't normally like it, some heavy metal or dubstep will get you in the right mindset.

08 Having a mirror in the room is good for checking your technique, which is crucial when you don't have anyone to spot you. Otherwise you can be doing a shoulder press with one hand higher than the other and create unhealthy imbalances. Plus, if you're looking good, it inspires you to carry on exercising.