



Ask the Trainer

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When it comes to weight training, which gives you a bigger fitness benefit: Completing three sets on one machine before moving to the next one in the circuit, or moving from machine to machine after one set and completing the circuit three times? -Karen T., Vienna

The short answer is it depends. To get the best growth and development in a muscle group, you should do three sets of a weight-training exercise with an appropriate amount of rest between sets. The goal is to reach muscle fatigue/failure by the end of a set with a weight setting that is heavy enough to challenge you, but not so heavy that it compromises good form. As a general rule:

1. 8-12 repetitions around 45 – 60 seconds rest.
2. 15 and higher repetitions 30 seconds rest.
3. Below 8 repetitions you'll need more recovery so you can lift the next set so maybe 2-3 minutes.

You can also make your workout more efficient by “super setting,” or using two different weight-training machines consecutively to allow an appropriate amount of time between sets for both muscle groups. For example, you could do a set on the leg extension machine and then immediately switch to a machine that works another muscle group, like arms, and alternate back and forth until you get to three sets on each machine. Not only does this give each muscle group the appropriate amount of time to rest between sets, it keeps your heart rate up, burns more calories and saves you time at the gym!



Laurie Strickland is an accomplished former body builder and certified personal trainer. Got a question for the trainer, email Parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov and write Ask the Trainer in the subject line.



Last call for Sully House Tours

Enjoy the Sully historical exhibits and candlelight tours while you can. As the sun sets on this year's holiday memories, the main house at Sully Historic Site will close for structural repairs and maintenance. Beginning Jan. 2, 2020, the exhibits, artifacts and furniture will be moved to make way for work crews to perform structural repairs and maintenance.

“Sully receives 25,000 visitors a year, and that volume of people takes a toll on the property over time,” manager Carol McDonnell said. “Once the interior repairs, plaster, paint, flooring, electrical upgrade and other details are complete, the house will continue to look as it did in 1794, just stronger and in better shape.”

Though the main house will be closed from January through May, the outbuildings -- kitchen, laundry, smokehouse, dairy, slave quarters and visitor center -- will remain open for tours and business. The main house repairs are being funded by the 2016 park bond.

There's still time to enjoy a holiday program or tour before the house closes Dec. 31. For details, turn to the History section.

