

Go with the slow

Midtown is the new traffic zone for high-intensity strength training

The idea is simple: Move a heavy weight at a slow speed until the muscle goes kaput. But when trainer Ken Hutchins's mid-'80s study proposed the idea, it was revolutionary. This kind of high-intensity strength training, it turns out, is not only safer (eliminating momentum reduces the risk of injury) but is also more effective than doing dozens of repetitions of a lighter weight, and a person can use several machines in 30 minutes without ever breaking a sweat. The scientific and highly specialized method named SuperSlow, quickly garnered attention and spawned famous copycats Slow Burn and the Power of Ten. But 20 years is a long time for a protocol to go unrevised. Each of these four fitness experts updates it in his own special way—and they're all located within a few blocks of one another in Midtown, giving time-crunched suits a fast way to slow down and shape up.

—Jane Borden



Chill Out

Pure Conditioning

\$100 per 30-minute session

The trainer: Energetic Daniel Pachter is as excited to educate clients as he is to work them out.
How it's unique: Pachter believes it's counterproductive to push a muscle to failure every time you exercise it. In his highly regimented program, which also includes nutrition counseling, you'll train more frequently (two to three times per week) on more machines (6 to 12 per session) for a shorter period of time on each machine (sometimes only 20 seconds). And you'll only completely exhaust yourself every fourth visit.
 532 Madison Ave at 54th St, seventh floor (917-207-8335, pureconditioning.com).

ChronoDynaMetrics

\$75 per 15-minute session

The trainer: The method was created by owner Pete Cerqua, but I worked with Mary-Beth Holland, a soft-spoken specialist who strikes a motivating balance between patient and prodding.
How it's unique: The Greek-derived name loosely translates to "timed strength measurement" and Cerqua holds that one or two 90- or 60-second repetitions per machine, once a week, will still have devastating effects on muscles, which then have the entire week to recover—building new fibers in the process. *Essential Exercise*, 226 E 54th St between Second and Third Aves, suite 300 (646-325-7038, chronodynametrics.com).

Strength training

\$75 per 30-minute session

The trainer: "It is not impossible that I am the oldest active strength trainer in the city" says Jon Rothschild. The gray-ponytailed 59-year-old has a penchant for exhaustive trial and error and is constantly tweaking his forms.
How it's unique: In an effort to reach all fiber types of the muscle, Rothschild combines both slow and fast movements—and he rarely, if ever, pushes a muscle group to failure, calling the practice "self-flagellating."
 Living Proof, 226 E 54th St between Second and Third Aves, suite 501 (212-308-2990, livingproofnyc.com).

The Quickie

\$333 for 12 weeks (28 sessions)

The trainer: Several staff members are always on hand; I worked with Mark Natale, the gym's well-informed and concise executive director who co-created the program.
How it's unique: The computerized Fitlinx system turns every Nautilus machine into a virtual coach, guiding you with clocks and counters through repetitions. You'll move faster, do more reps and always go to failure. Each session is cheaper thanks to the fitness bots, but humans do standby correcting form and offering advice.
 Gravity Fitness and Spa at Le Parker Meridien, 119 W 56th St between Sixth and Seventh Aves (212-708-7340, gravityfitness.net).

Self-indulgent

FEET DON'T FAIL Sandal season is in full flip-flop and if you want your dogs to be ready for their public airing, a regular date with a pumice stone is essential. But those crumbly rocks tend to get grimy after a few uses—and they aren't exactly a sexy addition to your shower's decor. **Kerasal Exfoliating Pumice-Paste** is a clean-smelling combination of volcanic pumice and moisturizing oils that works to exfoliate and nourish your hooves in one step. And at \$5.99 for 2.5 ounces, you can stock up on a whole summer's worth for the cost of a pedi. Available at drug stores throughout the city.—Ethan LaCroix



TOP: ROXANA MARROQUIN