# Helen Mirren credits 1950s XBX workout for her lifelong fitness at 79



Helen Mirren’s illustrious acting career spans over six decades, showcasing her talent across various genres and mediums. However, one element that has remained a consistent part of her life is her commitment to fitness. At 79 years old, Mirren continues to advocate for a workout routine that many might find surprising: the XBX programme, developed in the 1950s for the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Mirren asserts that she has engaged with the XBX workout "off and on my whole life," believing that it provides a gentle way to maintain fitness without the need for expensive gym memberships. This sentiment resonates with many, as the XBX plan, which is only 12 minutes long, consists entirely of bodyweight exercises that can be performed virtually anywhere.

The plan incorporates ten foundational exercises designed to enhance muscle strength, endurance, flexibility, and cardiovascular health. Each exercise is accompanied by a structured progression that includes 48 difficulty levels, allowing practitioners to advance at their own pace. For instance, the regimen begins with simple movements, such as toe touches and knee raises, gradually increasing in complexity and intensity. According to Mirren, the design of the XBX plan subtly encourages its users to gain confidence in their abilities and strive for incremental improvements.

Numerous articles discussing this workout highlight not just its accessibility but also the long-standing commitment it demands from its users. The structured approach encourages participants to focus on progressive overload, which is crucial for continuous fitness development. By adhering to this philosophy, Mirren's experience exemplifies the plan's effectiveness over many years.

The appeal of the XBX routine lies in its simplicity. Each session requires minimal equipment and relies solely on bodyweight exercises. This aspect aligns perfectly with Mirren's belief that fitness does not need to involve lavish gym memberships or elaborate equipment, making it a viable option for people at various fitness levels. Furthermore, the programme’s design encourages users to perform the exercises within strict time limits, raising the workout's intensity akin to modern HIIT (high-intensity interval training) methods.

However, while Mirren's dedication to the XBX plan demonstrates its efficacy for maintaining fitness, there are some considerations to bear in mind. The rigid structure of the XBX plan may not cater to every individual, particularly those seeking more challenging or varied forms of exercise. For many women, the desire for strength training often leads them to favour weights or alternative training modalities that can offer more substantial gains.

Some fitness experts suggest that while the XBX plan succeeds in promoting mobility and functional movement—an area where many contemporary workout plans fall short—it may lack the progressive challenge that serious athletes seek. The male equivalent of the programme, known as 5BX, includes more complex exercises that may represent a better fit for those looking to push their limits further. These nuances highlight the potential for diverse exercise approaches within any fitness journey.

Another challenge is the initial intimidation posed by the XBX booklet, which is dense with charts and instructions. Those accustomed to contemporary video workouts might find the manual somewhat unforgiving. As with any fitness programme, individuals must be willing to engage with the material to achieve meaningful results.

Ultimately, Mirren’s experience underscores a vital principle of fitness: what matters most is finding a form of movement that resonates personally, thereby establishing a sustainable routine. The XBX plan has undeniably stood the test of time and has proven effective for Mirren, reflecting her enduring commitment to health and fitness. In an era where the fitness industry often complicates exercises with exhaustive jargon and high-cost implementations, the simplicity and accessibility of the XBX approach offer a refreshing perspective. Whether one finds their fitness rhythm through the XBX plan, weightlifting, yoga, or walking, the key is to find joy in movement and stay active.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8
2. Paragraphs 1, 4, 5
3. Paragraphs 1, 4, 6
4. Paragraphs 1, 4, 5
5. Paragraph 1, 4, 5
6. Paragraphs 1, 4, 6
7. Paragraphs 1, 4, 5

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/health-and-fitness/helen-mirren-workout-fitness-routine-b2749140.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/fitness/a63397433/helen-mirren-workout/> - This article discusses Helen Mirren's commitment to the Royal Canadian Air Force's 12-minute XBX workout, a regimen she has followed for over 60 years. Developed in the 1950s, the XBX plan consists of ten basic exercises aimed at improving muscle strength, endurance, flexibility, and cardiovascular efficiency. Mirren emphasizes that the program is accessible and doesn't require expensive gym memberships, aligning with her belief that exercise can be simple and effective.
3. <https://www.businessinsider.com/helen-mirren-workout-routine-air-force-cannes-2023-5> - This article highlights Helen Mirren's dedication to the Royal Canadian Air Force's 12-minute XBX workout, a regimen she has practiced intermittently throughout her life. The XBX plan, developed in the 1950s, includes ten basic exercises designed to enhance muscle strength, endurance, flexibility, and cardiovascular health. Mirren notes that the program is straightforward and doesn't necessitate expensive gym memberships, reflecting her belief in accessible fitness routines.
4. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/fitness/the-12-minute-military-workout-helen-mirren-swears-by/articleshow/117215456.cms> - This article explores the 12-minute military workout known as the XBX plan, which Helen Mirren has followed for over 60 years. Developed in the 1950s by Dr. Bill Orban to improve fitness among women in the Air Force, the XBX plan consists of ten basic exercises aimed at enhancing muscle strength, endurance, flexibility, and cardiovascular efficiency. The program is structured in levels, with each level increasing in difficulty, and is designed to be performed daily.
5. <https://www.hellomagazine.com/healthandbeauty/health-and-fitness/740071/helen-mirren-military-workout-so-disciplined/> - This article details Helen Mirren's disciplined adherence to the Royal Canadian Air Force's 12-minute XBX workout, a regimen she has followed for over 60 years. The XBX plan, developed in the 1950s, consists of ten basic exercises aimed at improving muscle strength, endurance, flexibility, and cardiovascular efficiency. The program is structured in levels, with each level increasing in difficulty, and is designed to be performed daily, reflecting Mirren's commitment to maintaining her fitness.
6. <https://www.womenshealthmag.com/fitness/a63364046/helen-mirren-workout/> - This article discusses Helen Mirren's commitment to the Royal Canadian Air Force's 12-minute XBX workout, a regimen she has followed for over 60 years. Developed in the 1950s, the XBX plan consists of ten basic exercises aimed at improving muscle strength, endurance, flexibility, and cardiovascular efficiency. Mirren emphasizes that the program is accessible and doesn't require expensive gym memberships, aligning with her belief that exercise can be simple and effective.
7. <https://www.womanandhome.com/health-wellbeing/fitness/helen-mirren-12-minute-workout/> - This article reveals Helen Mirren's 12-minute workout routine, known as the XBX plan, which she has followed for over 60 years. Developed in the 1950s by Dr. Bill Orban to improve fitness among women in the Air Force, the XBX plan consists of ten basic exercises aimed at enhancing muscle strength, endurance, flexibility, and cardiovascular efficiency. The program is structured in levels, with each level increasing in difficulty, and is designed to be performed daily.