

TREND ON TRIAL **THE LAB**

LIBERATE YOUR GYM ROUTINE

NEW FRANCHISE

FREELETICS PUTS 700+ WORKOUTS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS. WE GET TO GRIPS WITH ITS CLAIMS

If its austere monochrome website is to be believed, Freeletics is not just an app; it's a global community. Sure, that sounds like boardroom branding talk, but the numbers don't lie. Five million 'Free Athletes' in more than 160 countries worldwide are part of this digital fitness movement, which is no mean feat considering that the German-engineered app dropped on the scene less than two years ago.

Standing out in the sweaty crowd of fitness apps is tough – there's been a 62% rise in fitness app offerings so far this year. However, unlike other workout apps, Freeletics doesn't want to be your pal, quietly tracking your steps and counting your calories. It only wants to push you relentlessly toward muscular gains and consistent training.

With over 700 training variations accessible in your library as soon as you open the app, and more unlocked as your fitness improves, it seems a no-brainer. MH hit download to put the app through its paces.

DEFECT FROM YOUR OLD REGIME AND JOIN THE FREELETICS REBELLION



FREELETICS	
MH'S LAB RAT LOUËE	DESSERT-JACKSON
WEIGHT	63KG
HEIGHT	180CM
FITNESS LEVEL	HIGH
TEST STATION	ANYWHERE
MANUFACTURER	FREELETICS
COST	FREE
TAGLINE	UNLEASH YOUR POTENTIAL
EXTRAS	COACH: £25 NUTRITION PLAN: £21.23

THE LAB TREND ON TRIAL

■ **THE EXPERIENCE**

With a newsfeed, followers and regular notifications, Freeletics feels more like a social network than a workout app. Keying in my height, weight and activity level, my experience starts with a fitness assessment that finds out how many burpees I'm able to cram into five minutes. It's not as many as I hope.

My first session is Gain (as with CrossFit, workouts are named), one of the 19 basic Freeletics settings available on Level One. It comprises 400 reps of varied plyometrics. The circuit of burpees, sit-ups and squats induces something more akin to a pounding hangover than an endorphin rush. The app's coach tells me my aim is just to finish, not be perfect. It records my time and the motivational 'claps' come in from my 16 followers.

Since the community aspect is such a huge sell for the app, I dig onto the Facebook London group and arrange to train with fellow users in real life. It's a small turnout, but apparently similar sessions take place across the capital most days of the week. I start with Venus, hammering out four brutal rounds of 50 press-ups, 20 sit-ups and 50 squats, conscious of the others around me. It's hard to set my pace and by the final round I'm doing 10-rep bursts.

Still, I sear through 400 calories in just under 20 minutes – more with the routine's fat-burning aftereffects. I walk home, counting up the reward points like Mario collecting gold coins. It's been fun.



THE FREELETICS MOBILE IRREGULARS MEET FOR DRILLS IN LOCAL PARKS

■ **THE VERDICT**

It's always been possible to burn fat and build functional strength using your bodyweight alone, but Freeletics adds variety to standard workouts, extra community motivation and a reward points system that encourages competition. The app puts everything you need to succeed at your disposal: exercise tutorials, the option to add friends, transformation stories, data feedback on your workouts, even alternatives to difficult moves for when you have no more to give.

You might be put off by the idea of a newsfeed clogged with other athletes' progress reports and meal snaps, but the social aspect encourages regular training.

The app successfully establishes that working out gym-free, with the aid of nothing but your own willpower, can go head-to-head with our heavy metal culture. Although Freeletics can appear snug and somewhat cult-like, the bottom line is that sessions work you to breaking point and burn a lot of calories. As far as a free pocket-PT goes, you can't push for much more.

■ **USER FEEDBACK**



While free for the basic package, the pro upgrades for the coach and accompanying nutrition guide will cost you up to the £50 mark.



The Freeletics coach icon gives you constant progression and the confidence to do muscle-ups and handstand press-ups.



Some workouts require a pull-up bar and 400m of track in close proximity, if you live near a park, great, but not so good at home.

YOUR CLASS PRIMER

FIT TO FIGHT IN THE FIELD

Master these Freeletics moves before your first meet-up to keep you ahead of the pack



STAND-UP JUMP
20 REPS
Lie back, bringing your chest and knees up together, but with your feet flat. Using the momentum, drive through your knees into a jump.

FROGGER
20 REPS
Drop to a plank position. With your palms flat, jump your feet forward so they finish beside your hands. Kick back explosively and start again.

PIKE PRESS-UP
20 REPS
Form a triangle with straight legs and flat palms. Brace your core and bend your elbows until you touch your head to the floor; return.

AT A GLANCE

PRICED BELOW £20	✓
OFFERED NATIONWIDE	✓
HIGH CALORIE BURN	✓
TECHNIQUE ADVICE	✓
ACCESS TO OTHER FACILITIES	✗
EQUIPMENT FREE	✓
FOR ALL LEVELS OF FITNESS	✓
NO GYM MEMBERSHIP REQUIRED	✓
MOTIVATING MUSIC	✗
GROUP SUPPORT	✓

SCORE
8/10
●●●●●●●●
FREE YOUR MIND