

 **MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Work It Circuit

GUIDE



**WELL
AWARE**

The education you need
for the health you want

MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS





WELCOME

to the Work It Circuit Challenge

The *Work It Circuit Challenge* is a 12-week fitness and wellness challenge to help motivate elementary school staff, school bus operators, and bus attendants to increase their physical activity and build on the success of *MCPS on the Move*. *Work It Circuit* makes use of circuit training as another tool in helping you reach your personal health and fitness goals. The circuit consists of moderate intensity aerobics combined with strength stations and allows for a brief rest period in between sets of exercises. Circuit training is an efficient and challenging way to develop strength, endurance, flexibility, and coordination. The versatility of circuit training has made it popular with beginning exercisers and experienced athletes alike. A great time saver, it can be a refreshing and fun change from more monotonous types of exercise.

Always consult a physician before starting any physical activity program. As with any exercise program, start slowly and pay attention to signs that you may be doing too much. You can always choose a low-intensity activity to replace a moderate-intensity activity, or start off with shorter intervals and build up.

This guide will walk you through the circuit training component of the *Work It Circuit Challenge*. For additional program details, including competition dates, rules, and awards, please visit the *Work It Circuit* webpage.

Simply search

“WORK IT CIRCUIT”

from any MCPS webpage.

A large, light gray gear graphic with a circular center, serving as a background for the text.

MCPS MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Work It Circuit
Challenge



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GETTING READY

Before you begin circuit training for the *Work It Circuit Challenge*, you will need to assemble a Fit Kit at your school or home and use it to set up your circuit training space.

THE FIT KIT

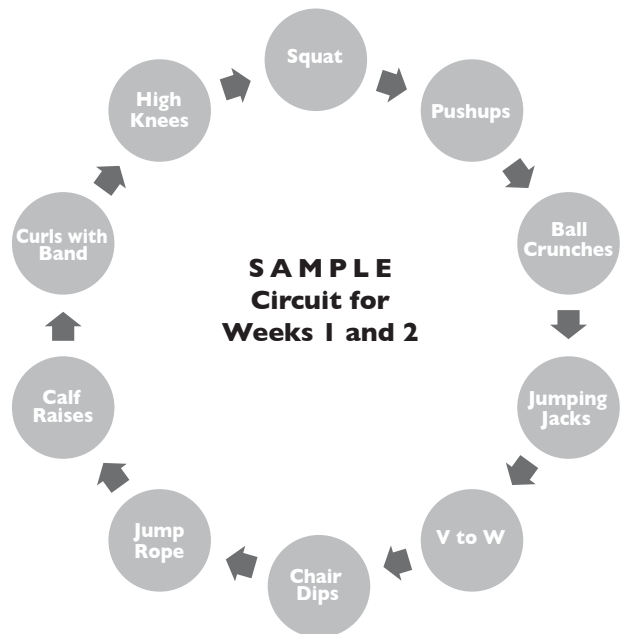
To complete the exercises in this guide, you will need a Fit Kit. Each school will receive two fit kits as part of the *Work It Circuit Challenge*. You also can complete circuit training at home by creating a Personal Fit Kit.

What You Will Need to Create a Personal Fit Kit

- A timer or watch with a second hand
- Exercise ball
- Exercise band
- Sneakers with a non-slip sole
- Jump rope
- Water bottle
- Towel or exercise mat

How to Set Up Your Circuit Training Space

- Set up your circuit training space in an open room, or move chairs and other obstacles to ensure safe space in between stations. Make sure the jump rope station has extra room.
- Make a sign for each exercise, and label the space where this exercise will be done. Find the program week in the section “Your Weekly Circuits” and follow the order of exercises for that week. This will ensure that you are alternating strength/cardiovascular as well as upper- and lower-body exercises.
- Familiarize yourself with the exercise ahead of time, and make sure that any items needed for the exercise are in the designated space before beginning the circuit.
- Assign a time keeper who will announce when to start and stop the exercise. After 30 seconds, all participants move to the next exercise and begin again until the circuit is completed.
- You may begin with any exercise. However, you must follow the same order of exercises.





GETTING READY

HOW TO COMPLETE THE CIRCUIT


The circuits in the *Work It Circuit Challenge* have been designed to give you a total body workout, providing cardiovascular exercise and moves to work your upper and lower body. Every two weeks, you will progress to a more difficult circuit.

To complete a circuit, find the week of the competition in the section “Your Weekly Circuits.” Do the exercises in the order in which they appear, completing as many repetitions as possible within the allotted time. When you have completed all of the exercises listed for that week, you have completed one circuit.

Based on your personal level of physical fitness, you may choose to complete more than one circuit. If so, give yourself one minute of rest time between circuits.

For optimal results, complete the circuit two to three times per week. It is very important to give your muscles 48 hours between resistance training activities to rest and rebuild, so never do the circuit two days in a row. On days between circuit training, you can always participate in cardiovascular activities such as taking a brisk walk or going for a bike ride.

Here’s the Breakdown —

- 
- Find the competition week in “Your Weekly Circuits.”
 - Begin with any exercise you would like for that week.
 - Complete as many repetitions as you can in the allotted time.
 - Move to the next exercise, until you have moved through all the exercises listed for that week.
 - Repeat the circuit as many times as you are able.

STEPS TO COMPLETING A SUCCESSFUL CIRCUIT

1. Warm Up.

Before any exercise, you should warm up by completing five to ten minutes of light aerobic activity such as:

- Walking
- Marching in place
- Light stretching. Suggested stretches and photographs are provided in the “Stretches” section of this book.

2. Complete Your Circuit.

- Complete the circuit exercises in the order they are outlined in “Your Weekly Circuits.”
- Do as many repetitions as you can within the time allotted for the exercises.



GETTING READY

3. Cool Down.

Stopping exercise abruptly could place undue stress on the heart. A cool-down brings the heart rate down to near-normal and gets blood circulating freely back to the heart. It also may help to reduce after-exercise muscle soreness. Some cool-down options are:

- Slow walk
- Light stretching; suggested stretches and photographs are included in the “Stretches” section of this guide.

4. Track Your Progress.

As part of the *Work It Circuit Challenge*, you have access to an online journaling program, Thrive Across America. As you log your activity, you will travel across the country, reach important milestones, and become eligible for competition prizes. You choose whether to compete as an individual or as a member of a team. Find the Thrive Across America online journal on the wellness website. Just search “Work It Circuit” from any MCPS webpage.

CIRCUIT TRAINING TIPS

USE PROPER FORM: Performing an exercise with the appropriate form means following the recommended body position and movement to ensure an efficient lift as well as protection from injury. Make sure to read the exercise descriptions carefully for proper form.

BREATHE: Except for certain advanced techniques, you should exhale on effort—when you push, lift, or pull—and inhale as you return to the starting position. It is easy to forget to breathe when doing strength moves, so it is worthwhile to remind yourself occasionally about your breathing.

LOOKING FOR A CHALLENGE?



Depending on your personal level of physical fitness, you may choose to adjust the intensity or duration of your circuits. If you are seeking an extra challenge, then you can increase the length of time during which you repeat an exercise or you may choose to do the circuit more than once.



WORK IT CIRCUIT
STRETCHES





SHOULDER ROLLS



PURPOSE: Sitting in front of a computer for hours can cause neck and upper-back pain. Shoulder rolls reduce tightness in your upper body. If you work on a computer for long periods of time, doing this exercise can help you ease tension in your neck, shoulders, and upper back.

1. Stand with your feet hip-width apart. Lengthen your spine and contract your abdominal muscles. Look straight ahead and relax your shoulders.
2. Raise your shoulders straight up toward your ears, as if you are shrugging them.
3. Push your shoulders backward and bring your shoulder blades as close together as you can. Move your chest slightly forward to achieve a greater range of motion.
4. Lower your shoulders back down to the starting position. Repeat the exercise four more times.
5. Perform five forward shoulder rolls. Raise your shoulders straight up toward your ears.
6. Roll your shoulders forward while slightly rounding your upper back.
7. Lower your shoulders to the starting position.
8. Repeat the exercise four more times.



NECK LATERAL FLEXION



PURPOSE: A significant amount of the pain that occurs in your upper back and neck is because of tight muscles. The neck lateral flexion stretch targets the muscles not only in your upper back and neck, but also your shoulders.

1. This stretch can be done standing or sitting in a chair. Sit or stand up straight and contract your abdominal muscles. Rest your arms at your sides.
2. Slowly and carefully lower your left ear toward your left shoulder, until you reach the end of your range of motion.
3. Do not rotate your head or neck while you are performing this stretch.
4. At your end range of motion, you should feel a light stretch on the right side of your neck and in the area over your right shoulder.
5. Keep your head and neck in this position while, using your left hand, reach over your head and apply gentle pressure to your right temple with your fingertips. This will help augment your stretch.
6. Hold your stretch for 30 seconds before switching directions and stretching your other side.
7. Perform this stretch on both sides.



CHEST STRETCH

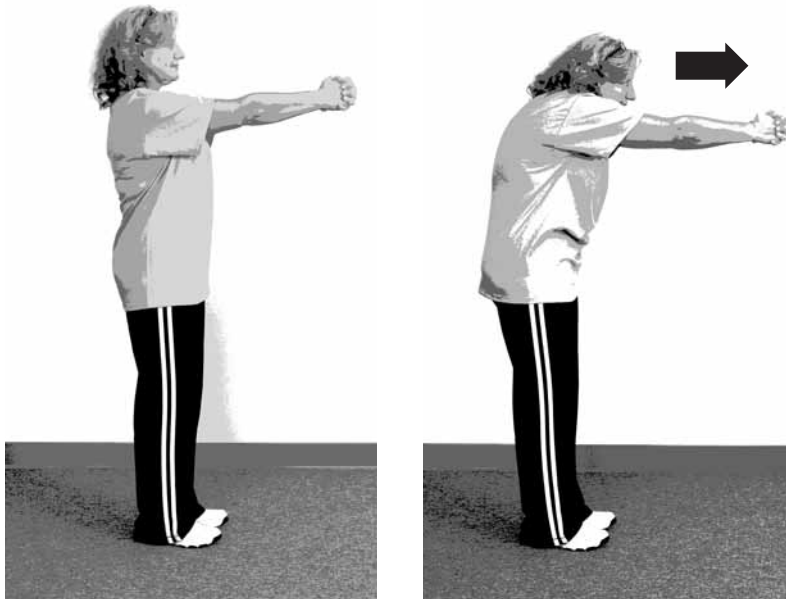


PURPOSE: The muscles of your upper body, including your chest, can become tight, especially as you age. Tight muscles limit your range of motion and interfere with daily activities. Daily stretching can improve flexibility, circulation, and energy level.

1. Stand straight with your hands by your side. Place your feet shoulder-width apart. Keep a slight bend in your knees. Keep your shoulders level.
2. Clasp your hands together and interlock your fingers behind your back. Your thumbs should be pointing down.
3. Push your shoulders back slowly. Lock your elbows to straighten your arms. Push your chest out and slightly up. You should feel a stretch in your chest and shoulders.
4. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds. Release your hands and bring your arms back to your sides.
5. Repeat the stretch 2–3 times. Stretch your chest daily to improve flexibility.



UPPER-BACK STRETCH



PURPOSE: If you work on a computer, you may be suffering from an achy back and shoulders. You can do a simple stretch at your desk to relieve the tightness.

1. You can stand or sit for this stretch. Put your arms out in front of you and clasp your hands together. Rotate your arms so that the palms are facing out away from each other.
2. Tilt your head down slightly and stretch your arms forward and away from your body. Shift your shoulders forward, arching them up and over an imaginary large ball in front of you. You should feel the stretch in your upper back.
3. Tighten your abdominal muscles and hold the position for 30 seconds. Repeat 2–3 times.
4. Repeat the stretch a few times throughout the day to relieve tightness in your upper back and shoulders.



QUAD STRETCH



PURPOSE: The four muscles that make up the front of the thigh are called the quadriceps. Stretching them can prevent injuries and may help reduce soreness.

1. Place a hand on a wall or chair for balance.
2. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Grab one of your ankles or forefoot. Gently pull your foot to your buttocks.
3. Keep in mind while stretching that you should feel tension in the quadriceps muscle, but not pain. Go slow and stop if it becomes painful.
4. Do not arch your back. Squeeze your buttocks and keep your knees close. Try not to flail the knee you are stretching out to the side.
5. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds.
6. Repeat 2–3 times and repeat the same stretch on the other leg.



CALF STRETCH



PURPOSE: By stretching your calf muscles, you reduce the risk of Achilles tendonitis, a painful tendon rupture, or problems with your feet such as plantar fasciitis, which is arch or heel pain that develops from long periods of standing.

1. Stand facing the wall about 3 feet away.
2. Take 1 step forward with your left foot.
3. Place your hands on the wall in front of you. Your elbows should be slightly bent, and your shoulders, hips, and feet should be pointed directly toward the wall.
4. Bend your left knee slowly using the movement to control the amount of stretch you feel in your right calf muscle. Both heels stay on the ground.
5. Keep your right knee (back leg) straight and hold still for 30 seconds. Repeat 2–3 times.
6. Switch legs and repeat on the other side.



LOWER-BACK STRETCH



PURPOSE: Sometimes, back pain is the result of standing too long and is often experienced by people who stand at work for long periods of time. Some good stretches may alleviate the pain. If you have determined that your back pain is not the result of an illness or injury, try the following stretch.

1. Lie on your back, knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
2. Pull your feet in closer to your buttocks. Grasp one knee, bringing it to the chest, and keep the other foot flat on the floor.
3. Bring the other knee to the chest and hold them both there for 30 seconds. Relax and return one leg at a time to the beginning position.
4. Repeat 2–3 times.



HAMSTRING STRETCH

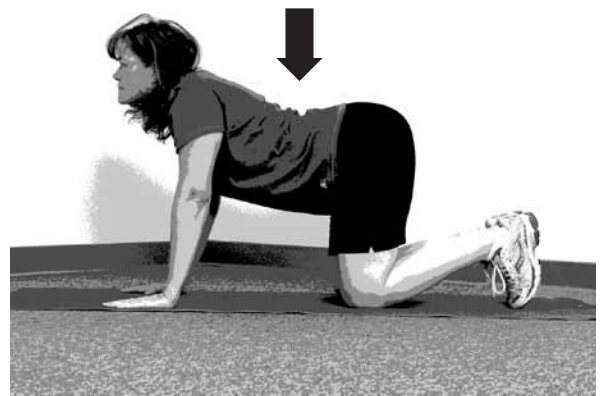
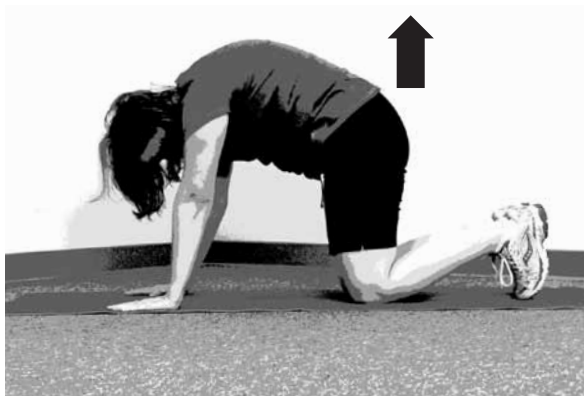


PURPOSE: The hamstring muscles are the most powerful posterior thigh muscles. With this stretch, your muscles will be in optimum shape for almost any activity and you will avoid painful hamstring injuries.

1. Lie down on your back, knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
2. Grab the right leg behind the thigh and pull your knee into your chest.
3. While holding the thigh, straighten out the knee so that your foot is up in the air.
4. Hold a comfortable stretch for 30 seconds. Keep your abdominals lightly contracted, with your back flat. Avoid arching your back.
5. Return your foot to the ground and repeat 2–3 times.
6. Switch legs and repeat on the other side.



CAT/CAMEL STRETCH



PURPOSE: This is an exercise to prevent back pain, strengthen the lower back, and increase flexibility and range of motion.

1. Begin these stretches on your hands and knees. Position your hands under your shoulders and knees under your hips.
2. The cat stretch consists of dropping your head and tucking your hips under by tightening the buttocks and abdominals. Slowly raise your back toward the ceiling, similar to the way a cat does when stretching.
3. The camel stretch is the opposite of the cat stretch. Instead of raising your back toward the ceiling, lower your stomach toward the floor as you lift your head toward the ceiling.
4. Hold each of these stretches for 5 seconds, and repeat each move 10 times.

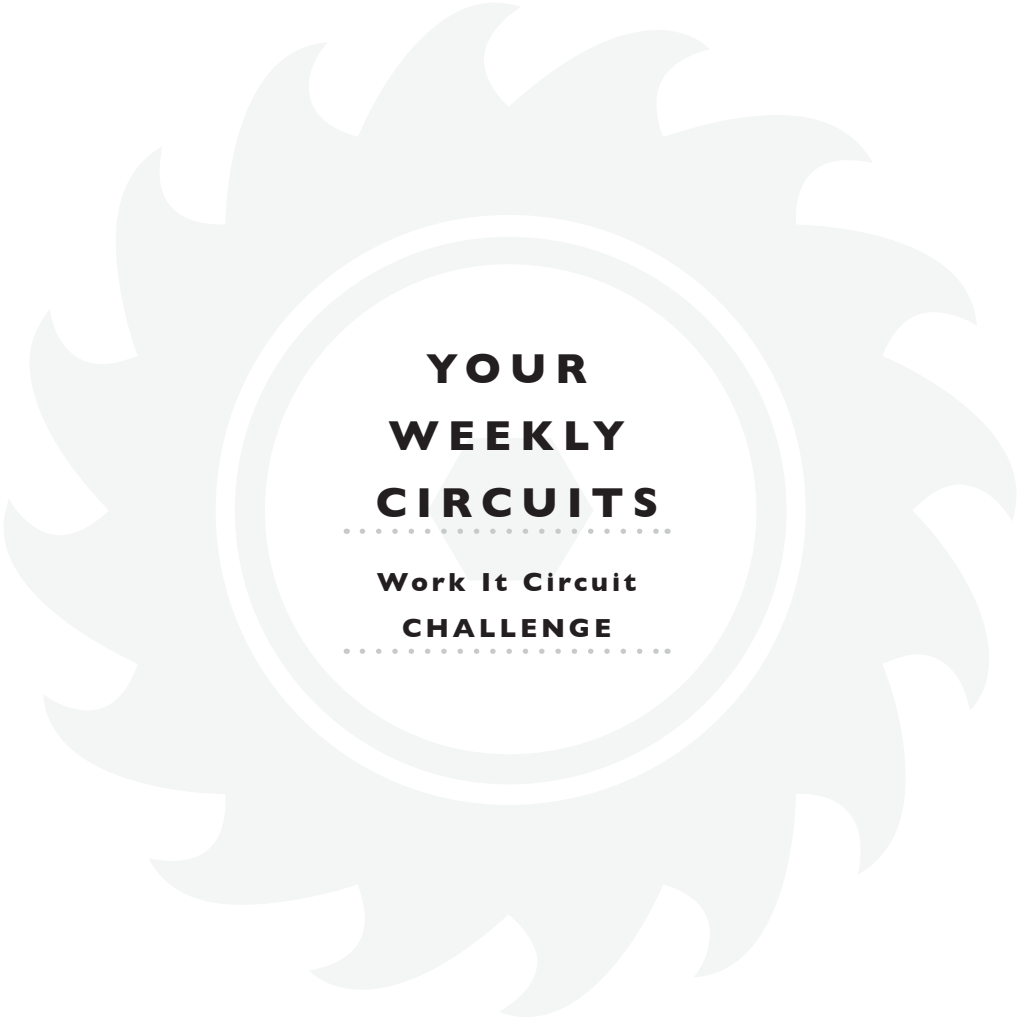


CHILD'S POSE



PURPOSE: This stretch is used with abdominal routines and helps to stretch the lower back, upper back, and the length of the stomach.

1. Kneel on the floor with your knees together.
2. Sit your buttocks onto your legs, heels, and feet. Beginners may not be able to reach all the way back to the legs.
3. Lower your upper body onto the ground in front of you while keeping your buttocks down. Lay your stomach onto your upper legs and your head as low to the ground as you can, with your arms stretched out straight over head.
4. Hold the pose for up to 30 seconds, pushing your arms farther out in front of you and pressing your buttocks toward your legs as you progress.
5. For an additional stretch, walk both hands to the left and pause.
6. Repeat to the right side.



**YOUR
WEEKLY
CIRCUITS**

.....
Work It Circuit
CHALLENGE
.....



YOUR WEEKLY CIRCUIT

WEEKS 1 & 2

Exercise	Interval
Squat	30 seconds
Push-Ups	30 seconds
Ball Crunches	30 seconds
Jumping Jacks	30 seconds
V to W	30 seconds
Chair Dips	30 seconds
Jump Rope	30 seconds
Calf Raises	30 seconds
Biceps Curls with Band	30 seconds
High Knees	30 seconds
Rest Interval: 1 minute after circuit	

Number of Circuits: 1 = 5 minutes, 2 = 10 minutes, etc.



SQUAT

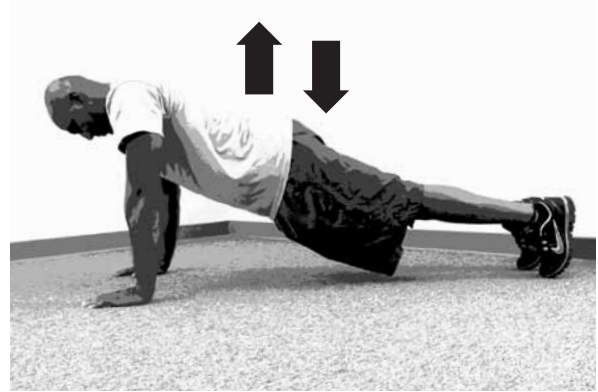


PURPOSE: Squats are the most effective exercise you can do to tone your legs and buttocks. The squat is an exercise that most people can do and may be modified to fit your individual fitness level.

1. Stand with feet hip-width apart. Your toes, knees, and hips should be in a straight line.
2. Contract your abdominal muscles.
3. Slowly lower your body, as though you are going to sit in a chair.
4. If you can, lower until your knees are at 90-degree angle. You do not have to go that low.
5. Make sure your knees are behind your toes.
6. Keeping the weight in your heels, slowly push your body back to starting position.
7. At the top of the movement, do not lock your knees. Maintain a slight knee bend.
8. Repeat.



PUSH-UPS



PURPOSE: Push-ups are a great upper-body, low-cost exercise. If you are just looking to tone or gain strength, push-ups are a great exercise.

1. Begin on your hands and knees, placing your hands on the floor about shoulder-width apart, palms flat.
2. Extend your legs straight, resting on your toes. Make sure your hands are directly under the shoulders (not forward).
3. Contract your abdominal muscles to stiffen the torso and keep your neck in neutral alignment. Your body should be in a straight line from the top of your head to your heels.
4. Bend the elbows, allowing them to flare naturally out to the sides, and lower your body. Keep your torso rigid and avoid sagging in the middle.
5. Push into the floor to push yourself back to starting position, continuing to keep the torso and legs braced. Push all the way up, but do not lock the elbows at the top of the movement.
6. Continue moving up and down in a flowing motion, avoiding pausing at the top of the movement.
7. If you are not able to do the move without lifting the hips or sagging through the middle, try one of the following push-up modifications and slowly work your way up to traditional push-ups.



PUSH-UPS Modifications



WALL PUSH-UPS:

Floor push-ups require you to lift a larger percentage of your body weight than wall push-ups, which allow you to practice your form without straining through the torso. You also can try these on a stair rail or other raised surface to reduce the amount of body weight you are lifting.

1. Rather than beginning on hands and knees, lean against a wall.
2. Follow steps 2–6 of push-ups, pushing off of the wall each time.



PUSH-UPS ON KNEES:

This modified version, on the knees, gives the back and upper body extra support. If you are a beginner or do not have as much upper-body strength, this is a good move to start with.

1. Begin on hands and knees. Do not extend legs straight.
2. Follow steps 3–6 of push-ups.



BALL CRUNCH



You will need an exercise ball to complete this move.

PURPOSE: Incorporating an exercise ball into your abdominal workout routine can help you isolate and target your abdominal muscles.

1. Lie on the ball with your lower back and shoulder blades resting on the ball. Clasp your hands behind your head. Your back and neck should be aligned as you look upward toward the ceiling. Feet remain flat on the floor.
2. Contract your abdominal muscles to curl your torso off the ball.
3. As you curl up, keep the ball stable (i.e., the ball should not roll). Keep your chin off of your chest. Your hands should be used as support and should not put added pressure on your neck.
4. Pause, and then lower your body to the starting position.
5. Repeat.



JUMPING JACKS



PURPOSE: Jumping jacks are for warming up and can be used to develop stamina. Jumping jacks increase your heart rate and fitness no matter your age.

1. Stand with your arms at your sides. Be sure your feet are straight and close together. Hold your head straight, but in a comfortable position to avoid strain.
2. Bend your knees. Jump up while spreading your arms and legs at the same time. Lift your arms to your ears and open your feet slightly wider than shoulder width. This all should be done in a fast, fluid movement.
3. Clap or touch your hands above your head. As you return from jumping up, bring your arms back down to your sides, and at the same time bring your feet back together. Continue with as many repetitions as you can do.



V to W



PURPOSE: Rounded shoulders are common among many people who work at a desk or in front of a computer all day. This causes muscles in the front (chest, anterior shoulders, abdominals, hip flexors) to shorten while your posterior muscles (neck, shoulders, back) lengthen, becoming tight and weak. If you want to improve your posture, here is an exercise for rounded shoulders and back.

1. Stand with feet hip-width apart with your toes, knees, and hips in a straight line. Contract your abdominal muscles.
2. Put both arms in the air in the shape of a “V.”
3. Squeezing both shoulder blades together, and wrapping them down your back, move both elbows as if you are putting them into your back pockets. This will make your arms into the shape of a “W.”
4. Return your arms to the “V” position while keeping your shoulder blades squeezed and wrapped.
5. Repeat.



CHAIR DIPS



You will need a chair to complete this move.

PURPOSE: The triceps muscle is located on the back of the upper arm. It can be a difficult area to tone, especially for women. The triceps dip is an effective toning exercise. It uses a person's own body weight as resistance. It can be performed almost anywhere and does not require weights.

1. Sit on the edge of a chair, and grip the edge of the chair with your hands.
2. Slide forward so that your buttocks clear the edge of the chair, and then lower yourself until your elbows are bent between 45 and 90 degrees. Keep your shoulders down, away from your ears.
3. Slowly push yourself back up to the start position and repeat. Control the movement throughout the range of motion.



JUMP ROPE

You will need a jump rope to complete this move.

PURPOSE: Jumping rope develops your heart, lungs, and leg muscles. In addition, it improves your eye/hand/foot coordination, strengthens your arms and shoulders, and burns a similar number of calories as running.

1. Hold one end of the rope in each hand. Position the rope behind you on the ground.
2. Raise your arms up and turn the rope over your head bringing it down in front of you. When it reaches the ground, jump over it.
3. Jump twice each time the rope comes around; one big jump over the rope and one small one when the rope is over your head.





CALF RAISES



PURPOSE: The calf muscles, located on the back and bottom half of the leg, are used for many sports and activities.

1. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointing forward. Do not lock your knees.
2. Contract your abdominal muscles.
3. Raise your feet so that you are on the tip of your toes. Lower your feet back down.
4. Repeat.



BICEPS CURLS with Resistance Band



You will need an exercise band to complete this move.

PURPOSE: The biceps are located on the front part of the arm, above the elbow. These muscles are used mainly for motions that flex the arm below the elbow.

1. Place both feet on the tube of the exercise band and grasp one end of the band in each hand (the wider the feet, the harder the exercise). Contract your abdominal muscles.
2. Hold elbows against your body.
3. Bend your elbows and bring your hands toward your shoulders while keeping elbows against the body. Keep your wrists in line with your forearm.
4. Lower and repeat.



HIGH KNEES



PURPOSE: This exercise is for warming up but can be used to develop stamina. High knees increase your heart rate and fitness no matter what your age.

1. Start in a standing position on the balls of your feet.
2. Starting with either leg, raise the leg until the knee is at least a 90-degree angle. Another way to ensure that the knee is high enough is to make sure that the foot of the raised leg is higher than the knee of the stationary leg.
3. Lower that leg to the ground and the repeat with the other leg.
4. Increase your speed with practice.



YOUR WEEKLY CIRCUIT

WEEKS 3 & 4

Exercise	Interval
Sumo Squat	30 seconds
Ball Crunches	30 seconds
Push-Ups	30 seconds
Jumping Jacks	30 seconds
Band Row	30 seconds
Bridges	30 seconds
High Knees	30 seconds
Arm Circles	30 seconds
Reverse Crunch	30 seconds
Jump Rope	30 seconds
Rest Interval: 1 minute after circuit	

Number of Circuits: 1 = 5 minutes, 2 = 10 minutes, etc.



SUMO SQUAT



PURPOSE: The sumo squat is a safe and effective exercise that targets your inner thighs and buttocks. The move can be performed anywhere and is modified easily for use with or without free weights.

1. Begin with your feet wider than shoulder width, toes pointed out and knees over the toes. Keep your back straight, chest out, and contract your abdominals throughout the move.
2. Squat down until your thighs are parallel to the ground. Focus on sitting down rather than bending your legs to avoid straining the knees. Keep your weight on your heels throughout the exercise while maintaining a straight posture.
3. Push off with your heels at the bottom of the squat, squeezing your buttocks and inner thighs until you are back in the starting position. Once you have completed the squat, check your alignment.
4. Repeat.



BALL CRUNCH



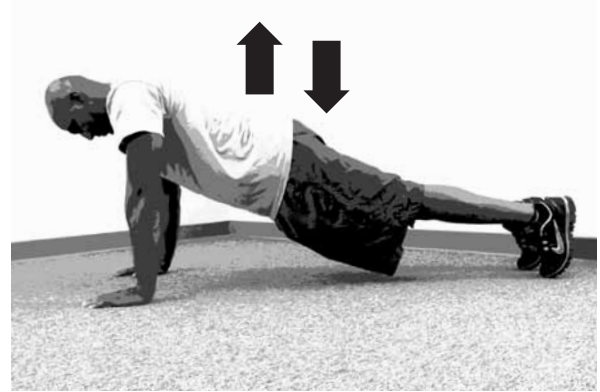
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4. Bend the elbows, allowing them to flare naturally out to the sides, and lower your body. Keep your torso rigid and avoid sagging in the middle.
5. Push into the floor to push yourself back to starting position, continuing to keep the torso and legs braced. Push all the way up, but do not lock the elbows at the top of the movement.
6. Continue moving up and down in a flowing motion, avoiding pausing at the top of the movement.
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PUSH-UPS ON KNEES: This modified version, on the knees, gives the back and upper body extra support. If you are a beginner or do not have as much upper-body strength, this is a good move to start with.

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JUMPING JACKS

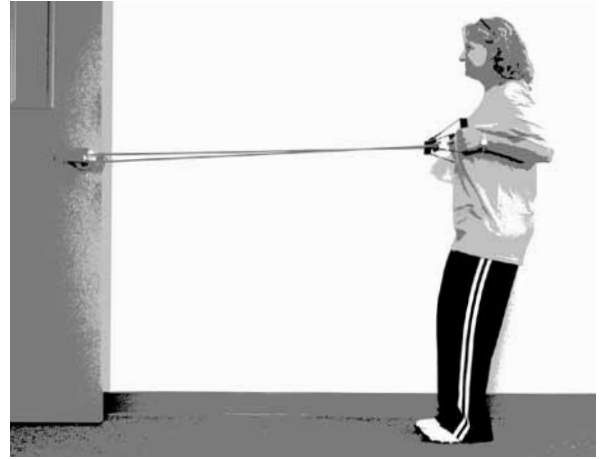


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1. Stand with your arms at your sides. Be sure your feet are straight and close together. Hold your head straight, but in a comfortable position to avoid strain.
2. Bend your knees. Jump up while spreading your arms and legs at the same time. Lift your arms to your ears and open your feet to slightly more than shoulder width. This all should be done in a fast, fluid movement.
3. Clap or touch your hands above your head. As you return from jumping up, bring your arms back down to your sides, and at the same time bring your feet back together. Continue with as many repetitions as you can do.



BAND ROW



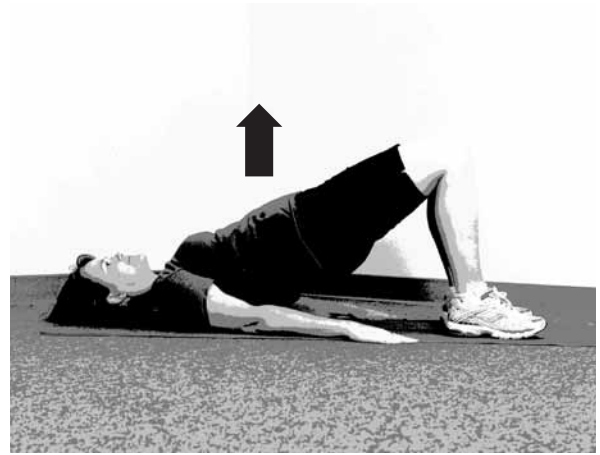
You will need an exercise band to complete this move.

PURPOSE: Rows work your back, shoulder, and bicep muscles. You can do rows anywhere with a resistance band.

1. Wrap the resistance band around a fixed object that allows the band to be stable at mid-torso level. Stand back, knees soft, arms extended, holding the band lightly toward your midsection. Contract your abdominal muscles.
2. With your palms facing each other pull the band back toward your stomach. Keep your elbows in close to your body.
3. Slowly return arms to starting position and repeat.



BRIDGES



PURPOSE: The bridge is a versatile exercise that strengthens the buttocks, abdominal, and lower-back muscles. It can be performed virtually anywhere.

1. Begin the bridge by lying on your back with feet on the floor hip-width apart and your knees bent. Your arms should rest at your sides.
2. Contract your abdominal muscles and pull your hips up by tightening your gluteal muscles until your body forms a diagonal from knees to chest.
3. Drop your hips 5 to 6 inches to the ground while keeping your abdominals contracted. Pause briefly, and then raise your hips back to the starting position.
4. Maintain proper form by keeping your back straight at the top of the exercise.



HIGH KNEES



PURPOSE: This exercise is for warming up but can be used to develop stamina. High knees increase your heart rate and fitness no matter what your age.

1. Start in a standing position on the balls of your feet.
2. Starting with either leg, raise the leg until the knee is at least a 90-degree angle. Another way to ensure that the knee is high enough is to make sure that the foot of the raised leg is higher than the knee of the stationary leg.
3. Lower that leg to the ground and then repeat with the other leg.
4. Increase your speed with practice.



ARM CIRCLES



You may need a chair to complete this move.

PURPOSE: This exercise is used to tone your triceps, biceps, and shoulders.

1. Either stand up straight or sit up straight in a chair without a back. Stretch out both arms to a 90-degree angle to your body.
2. Open your palms and face them toward the floor. Keeping your arms as straight as possible, begin making circles in a clockwise motion.
3. When you have done as many as you can in one direction, switch directions. Your arms will tire quickly with these exercises, so be prepared.



REVERSE CRUNCH



PURPOSE: Reverse crunches are a great exercise for working the lower abdominal muscles.

1. Lie on your mat or on the floor and place your hands on the floor beside you or behind your head.
2. Bring your knees in toward your chest until they are bent to 90 degrees. Your feet either can be together or crossed at the ankle.
3. Contract your abdominals and curl your hips off of the floor while reaching your legs up toward the ceiling.
4. Lower and repeat.



JUMP ROPE

You will need a jump rope to complete this move.

PURPOSE: Jumping rope develops your heart, lungs, and leg muscles. In addition, it improves your eye/hand/foot coordination, strengthens your arms and shoulders, and burns a similar number of calories as running.

1. Hold one end of the rope in each hand. Position the rope behind you on the ground.
2. Raise your arms up and turn the rope over your head bringing it down in front of you. When it reaches the ground, jump over it.
3. Jump twice each time the rope comes around; one big jump over the rope and one small one when the rope is over your head.





YOUR WEEKLY CIRCUIT

WEEKS 5 & 6

Exercise	Interval
Lunges	30 seconds
Ball Crunch	30 seconds
Steam Engines	30 seconds
Push-Ups	30 seconds
High Knees	30 seconds
Wall Angels	30 seconds
Bicep Curl to Shoulder Press	30 seconds
Jumping Jacks	30 seconds
Chair Dips	30 seconds
Jump Rope	30 seconds
Rest Interval: 1 minute after circuit	

Number of Circuits: 1 = 5 minutes, 2 = 10 minutes, etc.



LUNGES



PURPOSE: Lunges are an exercise that uses the hamstrings, buttocks, and quadriceps.

1. Place your feet approximately at shoulder width and step forward with the right foot. Flex your right hip and knee while keeping your knee pointed in the same direction as your foot.
2. Keep your torso upright as you continue to bend your right knee until it forms a right angle and your left knee is almost touching the floor. Ensure that your right knee does not extend beyond your toe.
3. Pause briefly in this position and exhale as you extend your right hip and knee to return to a standing position. You can continue to do lunges with your right leg for strength or alternate legs for endurance.



BALL CRUNCH



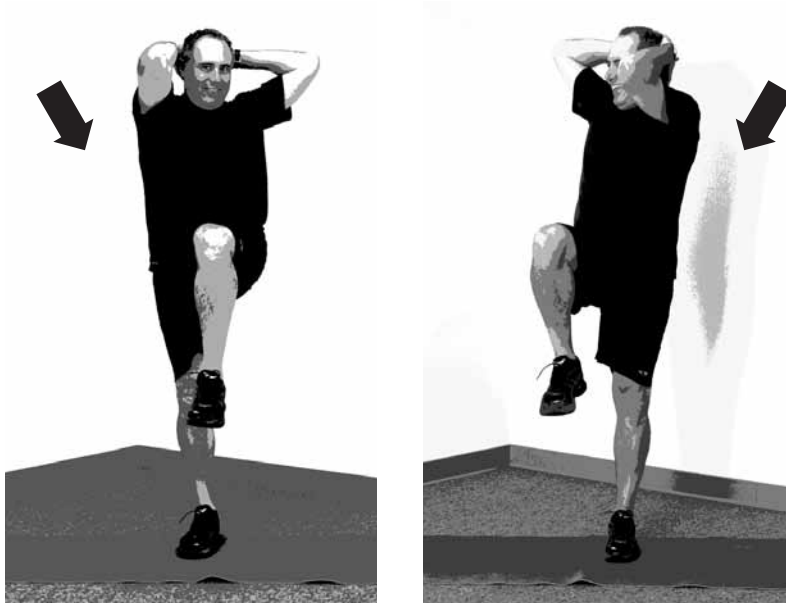
You will need an exercise ball to complete this move.

PURPOSE: Incorporating an exercise ball into your abdominal workout routine can help you isolate and target your abdominal muscles.

1. Lie on the ball with your lower back and shoulder blades resting on the ball. Clasp your hands behind your head. Your back and neck should be aligned as you look upward toward the ceiling. Feet remain flat on the floor.
2. Contract your abdominal muscles to curl your torso off the ball.
3. As you curl up, keep the ball stable (i.e., the ball should not roll). Keep your chin off of your chest. Your hands should be used as support and should not put added pressure on your neck.
4. Pause, and then lower your body to the starting position.
5. Repeat.



STEAM ENGINES

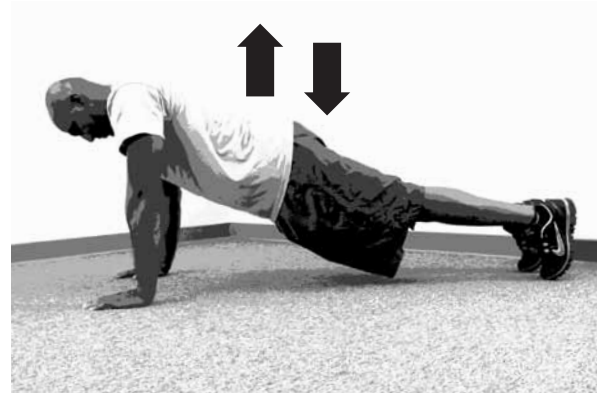


PURPOSE: Steam engines are great because they work your upper and lower abdominal muscles, your oblique muscles, your quadriceps, and also are cardiovascular in nature.

1. Start with your feet shoulder-width apart, and your hands behind your head with your elbows out.
2. Bring your left knee up as high as you can and across your body and twist your torso, bringing your right elbow to your knee.
3. Then alternate, so your right knee is up, and twist bringing your left elbow to your knee.
4. Carefully speed up the movement as you go.



PUSH-UPS



PURPOSE: Push-ups are a great upper-body, low-cost exercise. If you are just looking to tone or gain strength, push-ups are a great exercise.

1. Begin on your hands and knees, placing your hands on the floor about shoulder-width apart, palms flat.
2. Extend your legs straight, resting on your toes. Make sure your hands are directly under the shoulders (not forward).
3. Contract your abdominal muscles to stiffen the torso and keep your neck in neutral alignment. Your body should be in a straight line from the top of your head to your heels.
4. Bend the elbows, allowing them to flare naturally out to the sides, and lower your body. Keep your torso rigid and avoid sagging in the middle.
5. Push into the floor to push yourself back to starting position, continuing to keep the torso and legs braced. Push all the way up, but do not lock the elbows at the top of the movement.
6. Continue moving up and down in a flowing motion, avoiding pausing at the top of the movement.
7. If you are not able to do the move without lifting the hips or sagging through the middle, try one of the following push-up modifications and slowly work your way up to traditional push-ups.



PUSH-UPS Modifications



WALL PUSH-UPS: Floor push-ups require you to lift a larger percentage of your body weight than wall push-ups, which allow you to practice your form without straining through the torso. You also can try these on a stair rail or other raised surface to reduce the amount of body weight you are lifting.

1. Rather than beginning on hands and knees, lean against a wall.
2. Follow steps 2–6 of push-ups, pushing off of the wall each time.



PUSH-UPS ON KNEES: This modified version, on the knees, gives the back and upper body extra support. If you are a beginner or do not have as much upper-body strength, this is a good move to start with.

1. Begin on hands and knees. Do not extend legs straight.
2. Follow steps 3–6 of push-ups.



HIGH KNEES



PURPOSE: This exercise is for warming up but can be used to develop stamina. High knees increase your heart rate and fitness no matter what your age.

1. Start in a standing position on the balls of your feet.
2. Starting with either leg, raise the leg until the knee is at least a 90-degree angle. Another way to ensure that the knee is high enough is to make sure that the foot of the raised leg is higher than the knee of the stationary leg.
3. Lower that leg to the ground and the repeat with the other leg.
4. Increase your speed with practice.



WALL ANGELS



PURPOSE: Good posture is important to prevent strain and stress to the ligaments and muscles. This exercise will help you work toward creating perfect posture. The core and back muscles are the focus of this exercise.

1. Stand with your entire back against the wall, with your feet shoulder-width apart. Contract your abdominal muscles.
2. Place the backs of your arms against the wall with your elbows bent at about 90 degrees.
3. Trace an arc pattern with your arms, making sure that your elbows stay in contact with the wall the entire time.
4. Continue the motion.



BICEPS CURL TO SHOULDER PRESS



You will need an exercise band to complete this move.

PURPOSE: The biceps are located on the front part of the arm, above the elbow. These muscles are used mainly for motions that flex the arm below the elbow. The shoulder press is a great weight-training exercise for the shoulders and triceps. This exercise combines the two movements to get a total body workout.

1. Place both feet on the tube of the exercise band and grasp one end of the band in each hand (the wider the feet, the harder the exercise). Hold elbows against your body.
2. Bend the elbows and bring your hands toward your shoulders while keeping elbows against the body. Keep wrists in a neutral position. Contract your abdominal muscles.
3. Instead of lowering hands back to start, continue to press your hands over your head. Continue until your arms are straight, but do not lock your elbows.
4. Lower arms down so your elbows are at your sides and your hands in front of your shoulders.
5. Lower your hands to the start of the biceps curl exercise.
6. Repeat.



JUMPING JACKS



PURPOSE: Jumping jacks are for warming up and can be used to develop stamina. Jumping jacks increase your heart rate and fitness no matter your age.

1. Stand with your arms at your sides. Be sure your feet are straight and close together. Hold your head straight, but in a comfortable position to avoid strain.
2. Bend your knees. Jump up while spreading your arms and legs at the same time. Lift your arms to your ears and open your feet to a little wider than shoulder width. This all should be done in a fast, fluid movement.
3. Clap or touch your hands above your head. As you return from jumping up, bring your arms back down to your sides, and at the same time bring your feet back together. Continue with as many repetitions as you can do.



CHAIR DIPS



You will need a chair to complete this move.

PURPOSE: The triceps muscle is located on the back of the upper arm. It can be a difficult area to tone, especially for women. The triceps dip is an effective toning exercise. It uses a person's own body weight as resistance. It can be performed almost anywhere and does not require weights.

1. Sit on the edge of a chair, and grip the edge of the chair with your hands.
2. Slide forward so that your buttocks clear the edge of the chair, and then lower yourself until your elbows are bent between 45 and 90 degrees. Keep your shoulders down, away from your ears.
3. Slowly push yourself back up to the start position and repeat. Control the movement throughout the range of motion.



JUMP ROPE

You will need a jump rope to complete this move.

PURPOSE: Jumping rope develops your heart, lungs, and leg muscles. In addition, it improves your eye/hand/foot coordination, strengthens your arms and shoulders, and burns a similar number of calories as running.

1. Hold one end of the rope in each hand. Position the rope behind you on the ground.
2. Raise your arms up and turn the rope over your head bringing it down in front of you. When it reaches the ground, jump over it.
3. Jump twice each time the rope comes around; one big jump over the rope and one small one when the rope is over your head.





YOUR WEEKLY CIRCUIT

WEEKS 7 & 8

Exercise	Interval
Squat with Front Kick	30 seconds
Abdominal Ball Pass	30 seconds
Push-Ups	30 seconds
Steam Engines	30 seconds
Bent Over Fly	30 seconds
Side to Side Jumps	30 seconds
Bicep Curl to Shoulder Press	30 seconds
Fire Hydrant	30 seconds
Plank	30 seconds
Jump Rope	30 seconds
Rest Interval: 1 minute after circuit	

Number of Circuits: 1 = 5 minutes, 2 = 10 minutes, etc.



SQUAT WITH FRONT KICK



PURPOSE: This exercise does a great job of getting your heart rate up with low joint impact. It works your legs and core and is cardiovascular in nature.

1. Stand with feet together and fists up, as if you are protecting your face. Contract your abdominal muscles.
2. Bring the right knee up and extend the leg in a front kick, without locking the knee.
3. Lower leg and bend knees into a squat making sure your knees do not extend beyond your toes.
4. Stand and kick with the left leg. Repeat by continuing to alternate legs.



ABDOMINAL BALL PASS



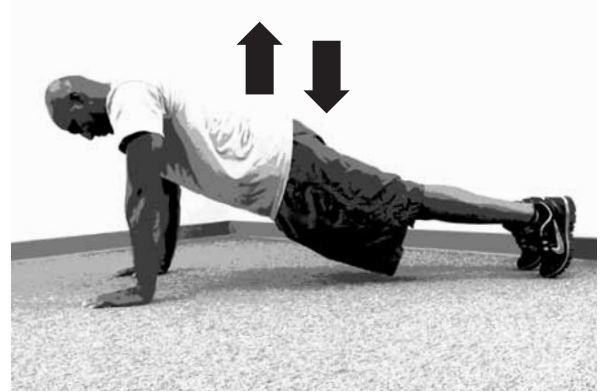
You will need an exercise ball to complete this move.

PURPOSE: The ball pass tones the upper, middle, and lower abdominal muscles and works on coordination.

1. Lie on the floor with your arms stretched out above your head and squeeze the ball between your ankles.
2. Lift your arms and legs together so that your body comes up into a V-shape and just your bottom is on the floor.
3. At the top of the movement, pass the ball from your feet to your hands and lower your body down with control, extending your arms overhead.
4. Lift your arms and legs back up into a V-shape and pass the ball from your hands to your feet again.
5. Lower down with control.
6. Repeat.



PUSH-UPS



PURPOSE: Push-ups are a great upper-body, low-cost exercise. If you are just looking to tone or gain strength, push-ups are a great exercise.

1. Begin on your hands and knees, placing your hands on the floor about shoulder-width apart, palms flat.
2. Extend your legs straight, resting on your toes. Make sure your hands are directly under the shoulders (not forward).
3. Contract your abdominal muscles to stiffen the torso and keep your neck in neutral alignment. Your body should be in a straight line from the top of your head to your heels.
4. Bend the elbows, allowing them to flare naturally out to the sides, and lower your body. Keep your torso rigid and avoid sagging in the middle.
5. Push into the floor to push yourself back to starting position, continuing to keep the torso and legs braced. Push all the way up, but do not lock the elbows at the top of the movement.
6. Continue moving up and down in a flowing motion, avoiding pausing at the top of the movement.
7. If you are not able to do the move without lifting the hips or sagging through the middle, try one of the following push-up modifications and slowly work your way up to traditional push-ups.



PUSH-UPS Modifications



WALL PUSH-UPS:

Floor push-ups require you to lift a larger percentage of your body weight than wall push-ups, which allow you to practice your form without straining through the torso. You also can try these on a stair rail or other raised surface to reduce the amount of body weight you are lifting.

1. Rather than beginning on hands and knees, lean against a wall.
2. Follow steps 2–6 of push-ups, pushing off of the wall each time.



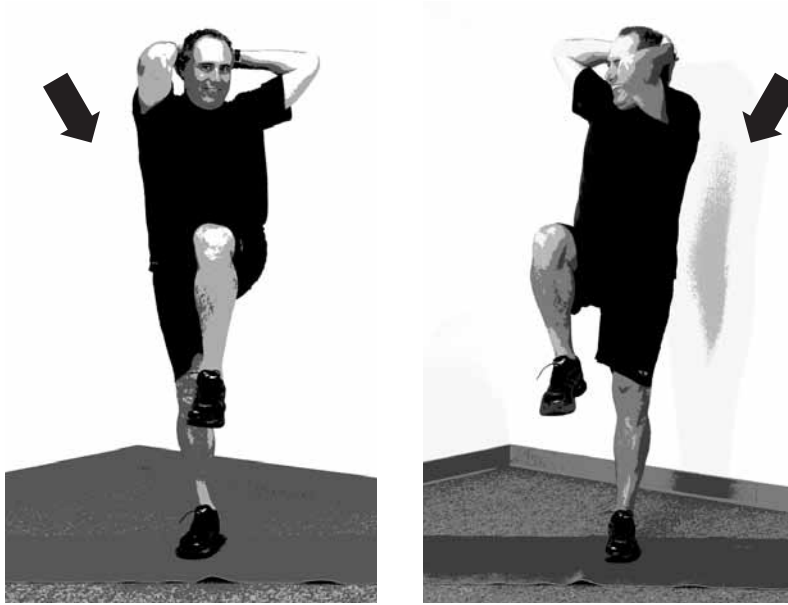
PUSH-UPS ON KNEES:

This modified version, on the knees, gives the back and upper body extra support. If you are a beginner or do not have as much upper-body strength, this is a good move to start with.

1. Begin on hands and knees. Do not extend legs straight.
2. Follow steps 3–6 of push-ups.



STEAM ENGINES



PURPOSE: Steam engines are great because they work your upper and lower abdominal muscles, your oblique muscles, your quadriceps, and also are cardiovascular in nature.

1. Start with your feet shoulder-width apart, and your hands behind your head, with your elbows out.
2. Bring your left knee up as high as you can and across your body and twist your torso, bringing your right elbow to your knee.
3. Then alternate, so your right knee is up, and twist bringing your left elbow to your knee.
4. Carefully speed up the movement as you go.



BENT-OVER FLY

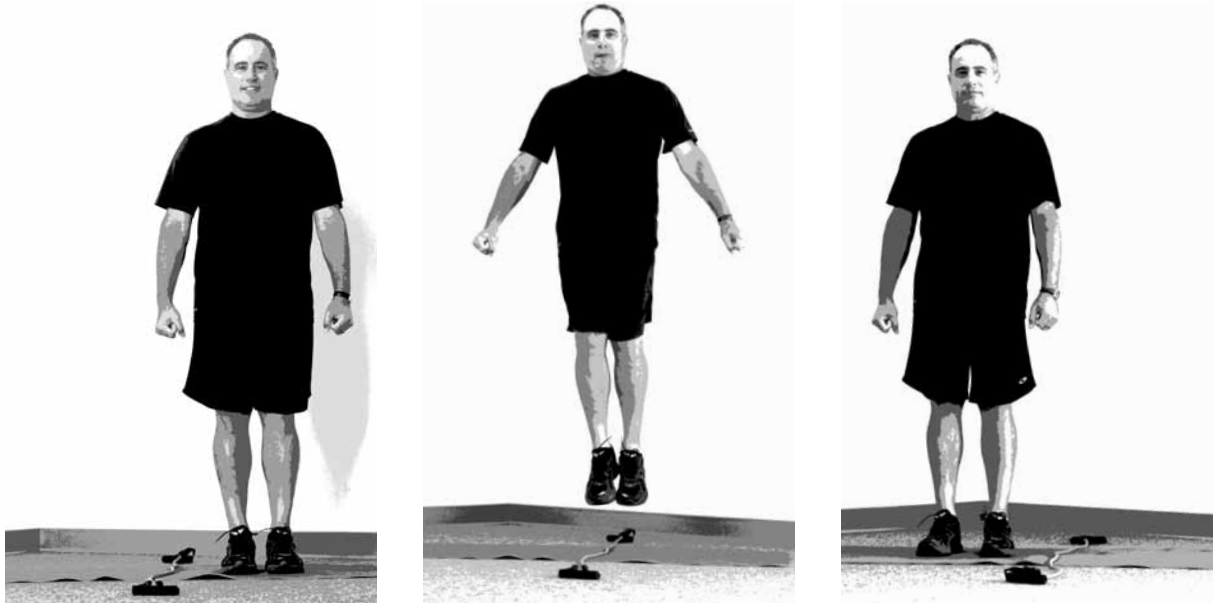


PURPOSE: The core and upper-back muscles are the focus of this exercise. This exercise can be done seated in a chair.

1. Bend your knees and flex forward at the hips at a 45-degree angle. Contract your abdominals to protect your back.
2. Let your arms hang in a slight arc in line with your shoulders, palms facing in.
3. Squeeze shoulder blades together and make sure your shoulders are down, not up against your ears.
4. Lift your arms up and out to shoulder height without changing elbow position. Squeeze your shoulder blades.
5. Return to the start with a slow and controlled movement.
6. Repeat.



SIDE TO SIDE JUMPS



PURPOSE: This exercise offers lower-body strengthening and cardiovascular endurance.

1. Visualize a line on the floor or use an exercise band and stand beside it. Stand with your feet hip-width apart and knees slightly bent.
2. Spring up and over to the other side of the line. A lower-impact version would be a toe tap instead of a jump.
3. Continue to jump across and back.



BICEPS CURL TO SHOULDER PRESS



You will need an exercise band to complete this move.

PURPOSE: The biceps are located on the front part of the arm, above the elbow. These muscles are used mainly for motions that flex the arm below the elbow. The shoulder press is a great weight-training exercise for the shoulders and triceps. This exercise combines the two movements to get a total body workout.

1. Place both feet on the tube of the exercise band and grasp one end of the band in each hand (the wider the feet, the harder the exercise). Hold elbows against your body.
2. Bend the elbows and bring your hands toward your shoulders while keeping elbows against the body. Keep wrists in a neutral position. Contract your abdominal muscles.
3. Instead of lowering hands back to start, continue to press your hands over your head. Continue until your arms are straight, but do not lock your elbows.
4. Lower arms down so your elbows are at your sides and your hands in front of your shoulders.
5. Lower your hands to the start of the biceps curl exercise.
6. Repeat.



FIRE HYDRANTS



PURPOSE: When working the gluteal muscles, it is important to change the routine in order to maintain constant progression. This is a great exercise to engage the gluteal muscles.

1. Get down on hands and knees. Contract your abdominal muscles.
2. Pick either your left or right side for your first set.
3. While keeping your leg bent, lift the chosen leg up and rotate it out to your side until the inside of your thigh is parallel with ground.
4. Return to the original position on hands and knees.
5. After performing 10–15 on one leg, switch sides.



PLANK



PURPOSE: Plank exercises are one of the best moves to strengthen your core, which comprises not only your abdominal muscles, but also the muscles of the back, hips, and pelvic floor. Strengthening these will give you stability in your trunk and spine, helping to prevent many injuries and giving you better posture.

1. Start by lying face down on a mat or towel. Place your forearms on the mat with your shoulders aligned directly over your elbows. Clasp your hands in front of you.
2. Extend your legs behind you and rest on your toes as if you are going to do a push-up. Your hips should not be lifted to the ceiling, nor should your back be arched. You should look to attain a straight line between your shoulders and toes.
3. Contract your abdominal muscles to help you hold the position correctly. Hold the position as long as you can. When you begin to feel your lower back start to sag from fatigue, take a break, then get back into the proper position and hold the move once again.
4. Breathe evenly throughout this exercise.



JUMP ROPE

You will need a jump rope to complete this move.

PURPOSE: Jumping rope develops your heart, lungs, and leg muscles. In addition, it improves your eye/hand/foot coordination, strengthens your arms and shoulders, and burns a similar number of calories as running.

1. Hold one end of the rope in each hand. Position the rope behind you on the ground.
2. Raise your arms up and turn the rope over your head bringing it down in front of you. When it reaches the ground, jump over it.
3. Jump twice each time the rope comes around; one big jump over the rope and one small one when the rope is over your head.





YOUR WEEKLY CIRCUIT

WEEKS 9 & 10

Exercise	Interval
Sumo Squat	30 seconds
Ball Crunch	30 seconds
Push-Ups	30 seconds
Jumping Jacks	30 seconds
Band Row	30 seconds
Side to Side Jumps	30 seconds
Bridges	30 seconds
Arm Circles	30 seconds
Reverse Crunch	30 seconds
Jump Rope	30 seconds
Rest Interval: 1 minute after circuit	

Number of Circuits: 1 = 5 minutes, 2 = 10 minutes, etc.



SUMO SQUAT



PURPOSE: The sumo squat is a safe and effective exercise that targets your inner thighs and buttocks. The move can be performed anywhere and is modified easily for use with or without free weights.

1. Begin with your feet wider than shoulder width, toes pointed out and knees over the toes. Keep your back straight, chest out, and contract your abdominals throughout the move.
2. Squat down until your thighs are parallel to the ground. Focus on sitting down rather than bending your legs to avoid straining the knees. Keep your weight on your heels throughout the exercise while maintaining a straight posture.
3. Push off with your heels at the bottom of the squat, squeezing your buttocks and inner thighs until you are back in the starting position. Once you have completed the squat, check your alignment.
4. Repeat.



BALL CRUNCH



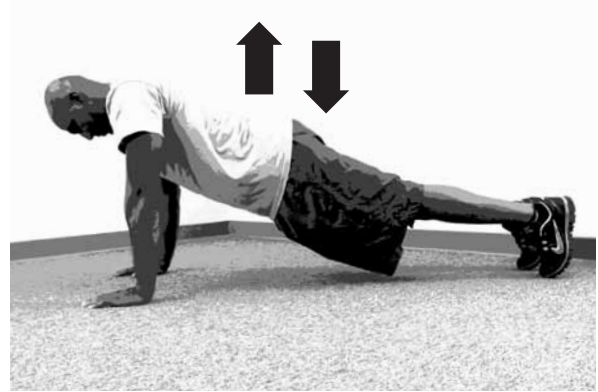
You will need an exercise ball to complete this move.

PURPOSE: Incorporating an exercise ball into your abdominal workout routine can help you isolate and target your abdominal muscles.

1. Lie on the ball with your lower back and shoulder blades resting on the ball. Clasp your hands behind your head. Your back and neck should be aligned as you look upward toward the ceiling. Feet remain flat on the floor.
2. Contract your abdominal muscles to curl your torso off the ball.
3. As you curl up, keep the ball stable (i.e., the ball should not roll). Keep your chin off of your chest. Your hands should be used as support, and should not put added pressure on your neck.
4. Pause, and then lower your body to the starting position.
5. Repeat.



PUSH-UPS



PURPOSE: Push-ups are a great upper-body, low-cost exercise. If you are just looking to tone or gain strength, push-ups are a great exercise.

1. Begin on your hands and knees, placing your hands on the floor about shoulder-width apart, palms flat.
2. Extend your legs straight, resting on your toes. Make sure your hands are directly under the shoulders (not forward).
3. Contract your abdominal muscles to stiffen the torso and keep your neck in neutral alignment. Your body should be in a straight line from the top of your head to your heels.
4. Bend the elbows, allowing them to flare naturally out to the sides, and lower your body. Keep your torso rigid and avoid sagging in the middle.
5. Push into the floor to push yourself back to starting position, continuing to keep the torso and legs braced. Push all the way up, but do not lock the elbows at the top of the movement.
6. Continue moving up and down in a flowing motion, avoiding pausing at the top of the movement.
7. If you are not able to do the move without lifting the hips or sagging through the middle, try one of the following push-up modifications and slowly work your way up to traditional push-ups.



PUSH-UPS Modifications



WALL PUSH-UPS: Floor push-ups require you to lift a larger percentage of your body weight than wall push-ups, which allow you to practice your form without straining through the torso. You also can try these on a stair rail or other raised surface to reduce the amount of body weight you are lifting.

1. Rather than beginning on hands and knees, lean against a wall.
2. Follow steps 2–6 of push-ups, pushing off of the wall each time.



PUSH-UPS ON KNEES: This modified version, on the knees, gives the back and upper body extra support. If you are a beginner or do not have as much upper-body strength, this is a good move to start with.

1. Begin on hands and knees. Do not extend legs straight.
2. Follow steps 3–6 of push-ups.



JUMPING JACKS

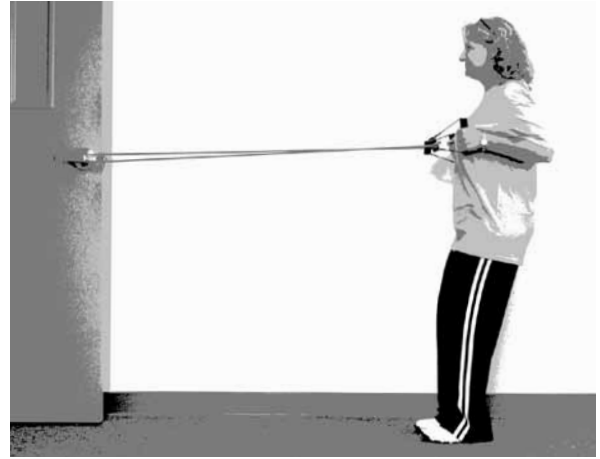
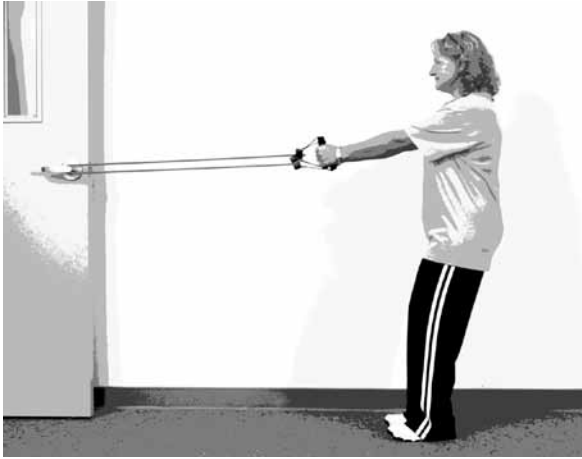


PURPOSE: Jumping jacks are for warming up and can be used to develop stamina. Jumping jacks increase your heart rate and fitness no matter your age.

1. Stand with your arms at your sides. Be sure your feet are straight and close together. Hold your head straight, but in a comfortable position to avoid strain.
2. Bend your knees. Jump up while spreading your arms and legs at the same time. Lift your arms to your ears and open your feet slightly wider than shoulder width. This should all be done in a fast, fluid movement.
3. Clap or touch your hands above your head. As you return from jumping up, bring your arms back down to your sides, and at the same time bring your feet back together. Continue with as many repetitions as you can do.



BAND ROW



You will need an exercise band to complete this move.

PURPOSE: Rows work your back, shoulder, and bicep muscles. You can do rows anywhere, with a resistance band.

1. Wrap the resistance band around a fixed object that allows the band to be stable at mid-torso level. Stand back, knees soft, arms extended, holding the band lightly toward your midsection. Contract your abdominal muscles.
2. With your palms facing each other pull the band back toward your stomach. Keep your elbows in close to your body.
3. Slowly return arms to starting position and repeat.



SIDE TO SIDE JUMPS



PURPOSE: This exercise offers lower-body strengthening and cardiovascular endurance.

1. Visualize a line on the floor or use an exercise band and stand beside it. Stand with your feet hip-width apart and knees slightly bent.
2. Spring up and over to the other side of the line. A lower-impact version would be a toe tap instead of a jump.
3. Continue to jump across and back.



BRIDGES



PURPOSE: The bridge is a versatile exercise that strengthens the buttocks, abdominal, and lower-back muscles. It can be performed virtually anywhere.

1. Begin the bridge by lying on your back with feet on the floor hip-distance apart and your knees bent. Your arms should rest at your sides.
2. Contract your abdominal muscles and pull your hips up by tightening your gluteal muscles until your body forms a diagonal from knees to chest.
3. Drop your hips 5 to 6 inches to the ground while keeping your abdominals contracted. Pause briefly, and then raise your hips back to the starting position.
4. Maintain proper form by keeping your back straight at the top of the exercise.



ARM CIRCLES



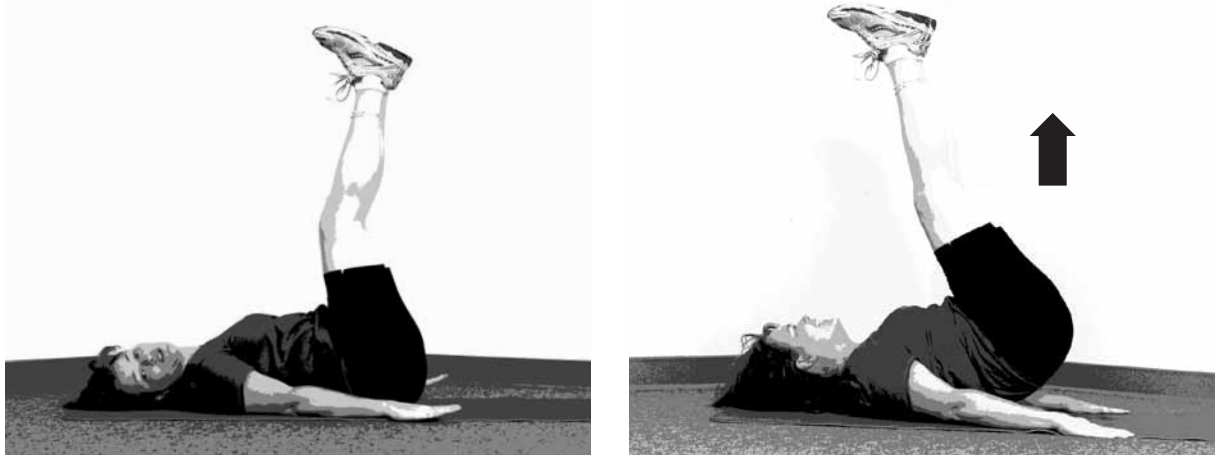
You may need a chair to complete this move.

PURPOSE: This exercise is used to tone your triceps, biceps, and shoulders.

1. Either stand up straight or sit up straight in a chair without a back. Stretch out both arms to a 90-degree angle to your body.
2. Open your palms and face them toward the floor. Keeping your arms as straight as possible, begin making circles in a clockwise motion.
3. When you have done as many as you can in one direction, switch directions. Your arms will tire quickly with these exercises, so be prepared.



REVERSE CRUNCH



PURPOSE: Reverse crunches are a great exercise for working the lower abdominal muscles.

1. Lie on your mat or on the floor and place your hands on the floor beside you or behind your head.
2. Bring your knees in toward your chest until they are bent to 90 degrees. Your feet either can be together or crossed at the ankle.
3. Contract your abdominals and curl your hips off of the floor while reaching your legs up toward the ceiling.
4. Lower and repeat.



JUMP ROPE

You will need a jump rope to complete this move.

PURPOSE: Jumping rope develops your heart, lungs, and leg muscles. In addition, it improves your eye/hand/foot coordination, strengthens your arms and shoulders, and burns a similar number of calories as running.

1. Hold one end of the rope in each hand. Position the rope behind you on the ground.
2. Raise your arms up and turn the rope over your head bringing it down in front of you. When it reaches the ground, jump over it.
3. Jump twice each time the rope comes around; one big jump over the rope and one small one when the rope is over your head.





YOUR WEEKLY CIRCUIT
WEEKS 11 & 12

Exercise	Interval
Wall Sit	30 seconds
Steam Engines	30 seconds
Push-Ups	30 seconds
Abdominal Ball Pass	30 seconds
Bent Over Fly	30 seconds
Jump Rope	30 seconds
Bicep Curl to Shoulder Press	30 seconds
Plank	30 seconds
Fire Hydrant Plus Kick	30 seconds
Side to Side Jumps	30 seconds
Rest Interval: 1 minute after circuit	

Number of Circuits: 1 = 5 minutes, 2 = 10 minutes, etc.



WALL SIT

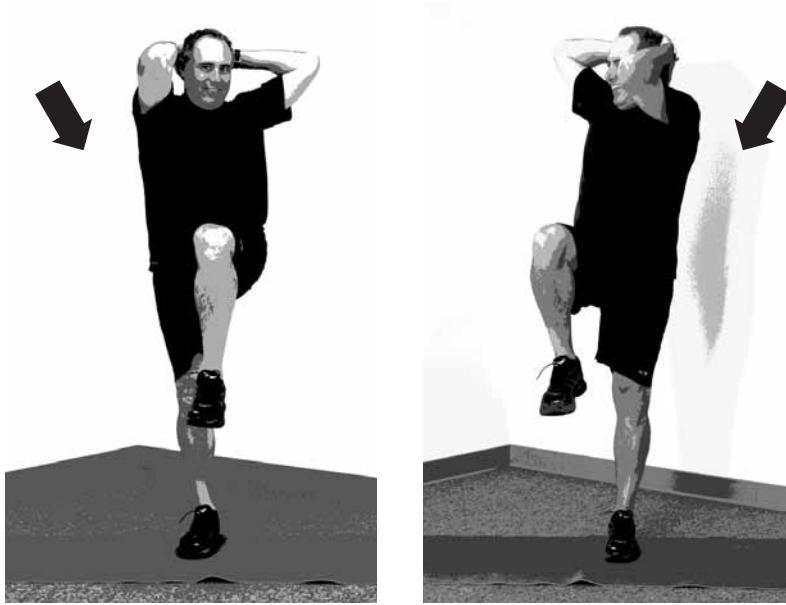


PURPOSE: This is a very basic two-legged isometric exercise. Isometric exercises do not move the joints, so this is a great exercise if you have knee problems.

1. Locate a solid, sturdy wall that supports the full weight of the body with additional pressure applied. Choose a location free of nearby furniture or other obstacles.
2. Stand with your back to the wall. Press your buttocks and your back into the wall. Keep your shins vertical regardless of the angle of the thighs.
3. Determine the difficulty of the exercise by how far down the wall the upper body moves, thus increasing the angle of the thighs.
4. Maximize the exercise by sliding down the wall until your thighs form a 90-degree angle with your hips. Press your lower back flat against the wall. Keep your shoulders low and relaxed.
5. Resist the temptation to lean into your thighs. Keep arms loose and relaxed at your sides. Keep your thighs parallel with your knees pointing forward and feet parallel to hips. Hold the position.



STEAM ENGINES

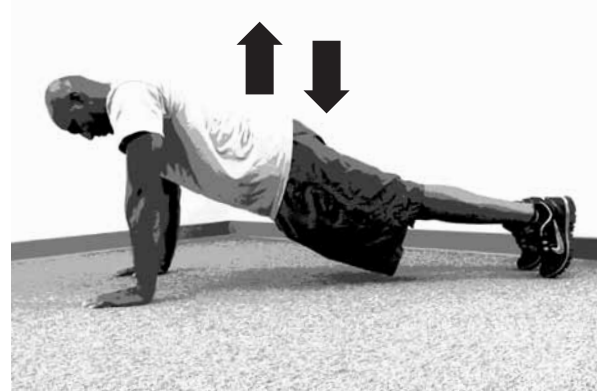


PURPOSE: Steam engines are great because they work your upper and lower abdominal muscles, your oblique muscles, your quadriceps, and also are cardiovascular in nature.

1. Start with your feet shoulder-width apart, and your hands behind your head, with your elbows out.
2. Bring your left knee up as high as you can and across your body and twist your torso, bringing your right elbow to your knee.
3. Then alternate, so your right knee is up, and twist bringing your left elbow to your knee.
4. Carefully speed up the movement as you go.



PUSH-UPS



PURPOSE: Push-ups are a great upper-body, low-cost exercise. If you are just looking to tone or gain strength, push-ups are a great exercise.

1. Begin on your hands and knees, placing your hands on the floor about shoulder-width apart, palms flat.
2. Extend your legs straight, resting on your toes. Make sure your hands are directly under the shoulders (not forward).
3. Contract your abdominal muscles to stiffen the torso and keep your neck in neutral alignment. Your body should be in a straight line from the top of your head to your heels.
4. Bend the elbows, allowing them to flare naturally out to the sides, and lower your body. Keep your torso rigid and avoid sagging in the middle.
5. Push into the floor to push yourself back to starting position, continuing to keep the torso and legs braced. Push all the way up, but do not lock the elbows at the top of the movement.
6. Continue moving up and down in a flowing motion, avoiding pausing at the top of the movement.
7. If you are not able to do the move without lifting the hips or sagging through the middle, try one of the following push-up modifications and slowly work your way up to traditional push-ups.



PUSH-UPS Modifications



WALL PUSH-UPS:

Floor push-ups require you to lift a larger percentage of your body weight than wall push-ups, which allow you to practice your form without straining through the torso. You also can try these on a stair rail or other raised surface to reduce the amount of body weight you are lifting.

1. Rather than beginning on hands and knees, lean against a wall.
2. Follow steps 2–6 of push-ups, pushing off of the wall each time.



PUSH-UPS ON KNEES:

This modified version, on the knees, gives the back and upper body extra support. If you are a beginner or do not have as much upper-body strength, this is a good move to start with.

1. Begin on hands and knees. Do not extend legs straight.
2. Follow steps 3–6 of push-ups.



ABDOMINAL BALL PASS



You will need an exercise ball to complete this move.

PURPOSE: The ball pass tones the upper, middle, and lower abdominal muscles and works on coordination.

1. Lie on the floor with your arms stretched out above your head and squeeze the ball between your ankles.
2. Lift your arms and legs together so that your body comes up into a V-shape and just your bottom is on the floor.
3. At the top of the movement, pass the ball from your feet to your hands and lower your body down with control, extending your arms overhead.
4. Lift your arms and legs back up into a V-shape and pass the ball from your hands to your feet again.
5. Lower down with control.
6. Repeat.



BENT-OVER FLY



PURPOSE: The core and upper-back muscles are the focus of this exercise. This exercise can be done seated in a chair.

1. Bend your knees and flex forward at the hips at a 45-degree angle. Contract your abdominals to protect your back.
2. Let your arms hang in a slight arc in line with your shoulders, palms facing in.
3. Squeeze shoulder blades together and make sure your shoulders are down, not up against your ears.
4. Lift your arms up and out to shoulder height without changing elbow position. Squeeze your shoulder blades.
5. Return to the start with a slow and controlled movement.
6. Repeat.



JUMP ROPE

You will need a jump rope to complete this move.

PURPOSE: Jumping rope develops your heart, lungs, and leg muscles. In addition, it improves your eye/hand/foot coordination, strengthens your arms and shoulders, and burns a similar number of calories as running.

1. Hold one end of the rope in each hand. Position the rope behind you on the ground.
2. Raise your arms up and turn the rope over your head bringing it down in front of you. When it reaches the ground, jump over it.
3. Jump twice each time the rope comes around; one big jump over the rope and one small one when the rope is over your head.





BICEPS CURL TO SHOULDER PRESS



You will need an exercise band to complete this move.

PURPOSE: The biceps are located on the front part of the arm, above the elbow. These muscles are used mainly for motions that flex the arm below the elbow. The shoulder press is a great weight-training exercise for the shoulders and triceps. This exercise combines the two movements to get a total body workout.

1. Place both feet on the tube of the exercise band and grasp one end of the band in each hand (the wider the feet, the harder the exercise). Hold elbows against your body.
2. Bend the elbows and bring your hands toward your shoulders while keeping elbows against the body. Keep wrists in a neutral position. Contract your abdominal muscles.
3. Instead of lowering hands back to start, continue to press your hands over your head. Continue until your arms are straight, but do not lock your elbows.
4. Lower arms down so your elbows are at your sides and your hands in front of your shoulders.
5. Lower your hands to the start of the biceps curl exercise.
6. Repeat.



PLANK



PURPOSE: Plank exercises are one of the best moves to strengthen your core, which comprises not only your abdominal muscles, but also the muscles of the back, hips, and pelvic floor. Strengthening these will give you stability in your trunk and spine, helping to prevent many injuries and giving you better posture.

1. Start by lying face down on a mat or towel. Place your forearms on the mat with your shoulders aligned directly over your elbows. Clasp your hands in front of you.
2. Extend your legs behind you and rest on your toes as if you are going to do a push-up. Your hips should not be lifted to the ceiling, nor should your back be arched. You should look to attain a straight line between your shoulders and toes.
3. Contract your abdominal muscles to help you hold the position correctly. Hold the position as long as you can. When you begin to feel your lower back start to sag from fatigue, take a break, then get back into the proper position and hold the move once again.
4. Breathe evenly throughout this exercise.



FIRE HYDRANTS PLUS KICK



PURPOSE: When working the gluteal muscles, it is important to change the routine in order to maintain constant progression. This is a great exercise to engage the gluteal muscles.

1. Get down on hands and knees.
2. Pick either your left or right side for your first set.
3. While keeping your leg bent, lift the chosen leg up and rotate it out to your side until the inside of your thigh is parallel with the ground.
4. Keep the knee high and kick out the foot. Do not lower the knee between kicks. Repeat 10–15 times.
5. Return to the original position on hands and knees. Repeat on the other side.



SIDE TO SIDE JUMPS



PURPOSE: This exercise offers lower-body strengthening and cardiovascular endurance.

1. Visualize a line on the floor or use an exercise band and stand beside it. Stand with your feet hip-width apart and knees slightly bent.
2. Spring up and over to the other side of the line. A lower-impact version would be a toe tap instead of a jump.
3. Continue to jump across and back.

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