19 Office Exercises to Stay Fit

One of the biggest fitness misconceptions is that you need access to all sorts of fancy gym machines to have effective workouts.

Fortunately, that’s not the case because you *can do* countless simple, fun, and challenging movements to train your entire body, even at work.

Don’t believe us?

Here is a list of 19 office exercises that don’t require equipment. You don’t even have to lie on the floor to perform these.

1. Chair Dips

The movement is fantastic for developing the back of your upper arms (triceps), chest, and midsection. As an added benefit, you only need a sturdy chair to take full advantage.

How to:

1. Place a chair against a wall or your desk.
2. Face away from the chair, lean back, and place your hands flat on the seat near the edge.
3. Extend your legs forward and straighten your knees.
4. Take a deep breath and engage your abs.
5. Lower yourself by bending your elbows and descending until your elbows form a 90-degree angle.
6. Press to straighten your arms and exhale.

2. Desk Push-Ups

Can’t do regular push-ups yet? Desk push-ups are a version of the incline push-up, where you develop the chest (primarily the middle and lower portion), shoulders, triceps, and midsection.

How to:

1. Lean forward and place your hands on the edge of your desk.
2. Bring your feet back to lean your torso forward.
3. Straighten your body by squeezing your buttocks, engaging your abs, and retracting your shoulder blades.
4. Take a deep breath and slowly lower your torso to the desk. Your elbows should be to your sides; don’t flare them up, as that can lead to shoulder stress.
5. Press through your hands to extend your elbows and exhale.

3. Floor Push-Ups

If you can do regular push-ups, drop to the floor and bang out a few sets. It’s a great way to build up a solid chest, along with toned shoulders and triceps.

How to:

1. Get down on all fours and extend your body into a push-up position.
2. Rotate your hands slightly outward, retract your shoulder blades, and take a deep breath.
3. Lower yourself until your face is an inch or two from the floor, and pause for a moment.
4. Press through your hands to bring yourself to the top as you exhale.

4. Lunges

Lunges are one of the most versatile lower body exercises you can do to train your glutes (buttocks), quadriceps (the front of your thighs), hamstrings (the rear thigh muscles), and midsection.

You can pick from multiple variations, including stationary, walking, reverse, and front lunges.

How to (stationary):

1. Stand tall with your feet close, shoulders back, and gaze directed forward.
2. Place your hands on your hips, take a deep breath, and tense your abs.
3. Bring your right leg forward and plant your foot on the floor.
4. Descend into a lunge by bending your front knee.
5. Move down until your back knee taps the floor.
6. Press through your front heel to extend your knee and exhale.
7. Inhale and repeat.
8. Once finished, switch foot positions and do the same number of reps.

5. Bodyweight Squat

Squats are one of the most natural movement patterns we can do. Most small kids possess an impeccable squatting technique, but the loss of mobility and weak lower body muscles prevent adults from performing the squat well.

Doing the movement consistently is a great way to strengthen your entire lower body.

How to:

1. Stand tall with your feet shoulder-width apart and your toes pointing slightly out.
2. Raise your arms in front of your body for balance and retract your shoulder blades.
3. Take a deep breath and engage your abs.
4. Squat by bending your knees.
5. Move down until your thighs are parallel to the floor. Keep your heels on the ground.
6. Pause briefly and push through your heels to straighten your knees as you exhale.

6. Bodyweight Jump Squat

Jump squats are a more advanced version of the classic exercise. Including a vertical jump in the equation leads to better lower body strength development.

How to:

1. Stand tall with your feet shoulder-width apart and your toes pointing slightly out.
2. Bend your elbows and lean forward slightly.
3. Engage your abs and inhale.
4. Slowly descend into a squat until your thighs are almost parallel to the floor.
5. Press through your heels as powerfully as possible and straighten your legs, propelling yourself into a vertical jump. Exhale while in the air.
6. Land on the balls of your feet, inhale and descend again.

7. Hip Hinges

A hip hinge is a motion where you push your buttocks back and lean your torso forward, similar to a Romanian deadlift. The movement pattern is excellent for training the entire posterior chain: calves, hamstrings, glutes, and your entire back.

How to:

1. Stand tall with your shoulders back, feet shoulder-width apart, and your toes pointing slightly out.
2. Take a breath and engage your abs.
3. Push your buttocks back as you lean your torso forward, being careful to maintain a straight back.
4. Lean forward until your torso is almost parallel to the floor. You should feel a stretch at the back of your thighs.
5. Extend your body and drive your hips forward as you exhale.

8. Single-Leg Deadlifts

If a regular hip hinge is too easy, do the single-leg version. Training one side at a time leads to more balanced development and reduces the risk of muscle imbalances.

How to:

1. Stand tall with your feet a few inches apart.
2. Retract your shoulder blades, take a deep breath, and engage your abs.
3. Lift one foot an inch off the floor.
4. Hinge at the hips by pushing your buttocks back and leaning your torso forward. Maintain a straight back.
5. Lean forward until your torso is parallel to the floor and pause briefly.
6. Straighten your body and drive your hips forward as you exhale.
7. Once finished training one side, plant the opposite foot on the floor and do the same number of reps.

*Feel free to hold onto a chair for balance.*

9. Wall Sit

Wall sits are an isometric (static) exercise where you assume a position and hold it for a specific period. Doing so strengthens and develops your back, midsection, and lower body.

How to:

1. Face away from a wall and stand roughly one foot out.
2. Carefully lean back and position your entire back against it.
3. Slowly bend your knees until your thighs are parallel to the floor. Have your knees directly over your ankles.
4. Breathe steadily and maintain the position for 30-60 seconds.

10. Desk Plank/Side Plank

Desk planks and side planks are fantastic isometric (static) movements that develop core strength and have the potential to alleviate lower back pain.

How to (desk plank):

1. Place both hands on the edge of your desk.
2. Extend your body and straighten your arms. Your body should be at an angle similar to an incline push-up.
3. Take a deep breath and squeeze your abs.
4. Hold the position for 30-60 seconds.

11. Step-Ups

Step-ups are a simple but challenging activity you can perform to strengthen your entire body, even if you only have a chair at your disposal.

How to:

1. Stand in front of a sturdy chair with your feet a few inches apart.
2. Take a deep breath and engage your abs.
3. Lift your right leg and plant your foot on the chair.
4. Push through your heel to extend your knee, bringing yourself on top of the chair.
5. Step off carefully as you exhale.
6. Inhale again and lift your opposite leg.
7. Keep alternating between left and right.

12. Assisted Pistol Squat

Assisted pistol squats are an advanced unilateral exercise (training one side at a time). The movement is perfect for everyone who finds classic squats and step-ups too easy.

One advantage of pistol squats is they work both legs evenly, reducing the risk of muscle imbalances.

How to:

1. Stand next to a sturdy object you can hold onto for support––for example, your desk or the door.
2. Face sideways and grab the object with one hand.
3. Lift your left foot off the floor and raise it a few inches forward.
4. Take a deep breath and inhale.
5. Slowly bend your right knee, lifting your left leg forward to keep it in the air.
6. Descend a few inches, pause for a moment, and straighten your leg as you exhale.
7. Do as many reps as you can, switch leg positions, and do the same number of reps.

13. Jumping Jacks

Jumping jacks are a classic cardiovascular activity you can perform almost anywhere, including at your office, to burn calories and strengthen your heart.

How to:

1. Stand tall with your feet together and arms at your sides.
2. Take a breath and engage your abs.
3. Hop and spread your legs as you bring your arms from your sides to an overhead position.
4. Hop again and bring your arms and legs to the starting position as you exhale.
5. Continue hopping rhythmically, bringing your limbs in and out.

14. Seated Oblique Twists

Seated oblique twists are a simple beginner-friendly activity you can do to develop rotational strength, which promotes athleticism.

The movement doesn’t require any equipment, and you can perform it standing or seated.

How to:

1. Sit on a chair, bring your legs together, and bend your knees at a 90-degree angle.
2. Lift your arms and place your hands at the back of your head.
3. Straighten your torso, take a breath, and engage your abs.
4. Twist your upper body to the right, hold for a moment, and bring your torso to the starting position.
5. Take another breath and twist to the left.
6. Alternate twist to the left and right until you feel a deep burn in your midsection.

15. Seated Leg Lifts

Looking for a simple exercise to hit your abs at the office? Seated leg lifts are the perfect option because they are challenging, and you only need a chair.

How to:

1. Take your chair away from your desk to clear some space.
2. Sit down, bring your legs together, and bend your knees slightly.
3. Maintain an upright torso and resist the urge to sit back on the chair.
4. Engage your abs and lift your feet an inch or two off the ground.
5. Inhale and lift your legs in one fluid motion, pausing briefly at the top.
6. Slowly lower your feet without resting them on the floor and exhale.
7. Inhale again and repeat.

16. Stomach Vacuums

Stomach vacuums are probably the simplest activity on this list, and here’s the kicker:

You can do these pretty much anywhere: at home, at work, or even while waiting in line somewhere. (Well, you might get a weird look here and there, but who cares, right?)

Despite their simplicity, stomach vacuums strengthen your core (including the diaphragm) and contribute to a slimmer waistline.

How to:

1. Sit on your chair.
2. Maintain an upright torso but avoid arching your lower back.
3. Take a breath as you forcefully suck your stomach in as much as possible.
4. Hold for a few moments and exhale through your mouth, expanding your stomach.
5. Repeat for up to 15 repetitions.

17. Seated Flutter Kicks

Seated flutter kicks are a fun, dynamic, and engaging exercise you can do while sitting in your chair to strengthen your midsection and burn some calories.

How to:

1. Sit on your chair and push your buttocks forward, getting them close to the edge. Doing so will position your upper back against the back support.
2. Grab the seat of your chair with both hands.
3. Take a deep breath, engage your abs, and lift your feet off the floor.
4. Rhythmically move your feet up and down alternatingly, several inches at a time, while breathing steadily.

18. Seated Leg Extensions

Seated leg extensions are an effective exercise that isolates and strengthens the quadriceps muscle group. You can make the exercise more challenging by wrapping ankle weights around your lower legs.

How to:

1. Sit on your chair, bend your knees, and plant your feet on the ground.
2. Lift your right foot an inch off the floor and engage your abs.
3. Take a breath and slowly extend your right knee until your leg is straight.
4. Pause for a moment and bend your knee.
5. Inhale again and repeat.
6. Do up to 20 slow and controlled reps, then switch to your other leg.

19. Inverted Rows

Inverted rows are perhaps the most challenging exercise on our list and one you should approach with caution. Specifically, ensure that your desk is sturdy enough and can support your body weight before relaxing fully.

How to:

1. Sit on the floor against your desk and extend your body underneath.
2. Grab onto the desk right at the edge.
3. With your grip secure, straighten your body to position yourself under the desk. Your chest should be directly underneath the edge you’re holding.
4. Retract your shoulder blades and engage your abs.
5. Take a breath and pull up, bringing your chest to the edge of the desk.
6. Squeeze your back muscles and slowly extend your arms as you exhale.

Conclusion

People often see fitness as this complex or confusing concept, believing they need to stumble upon the perfect workout or use commercial-grade gym equipment to see results.

Fortunately, that doesn’t have to be the case. You can do many effective movements for all major muscle groups, even if you’re at your office and don’t have access to any equipment.

Which exercises are you ready to try?