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The exercises you selected are all on this page. Just click the Print button to print your collection. Also here are some safety tips to consider when exercising:

- If you are new to exercising, check with your doctor before starting.
- Warm up and stretch prior to exercise, preferably with a low impact exercise (bike, elliptical, rowing machine). Walking as a warmup is the next best option. It's important to warm your body and stretch before exercise to help prevent injury and boost performance.
- Cool down for 5-10 minutes after exercise by slowing down your workout, followed by another stretch. It's important for your heart rate to come down slow, and you'll gain more flexibility because your muscles are already warmed up.
- Make sure to drink water before, during, and after exercising.

You should **stop exercising immediately** and check with your doctor if you:

- Experience chest pain
- Cannot catch your breath
- Develop an irregular or rapid heartbeat
- Feel any other sharp discomfort or pain



Modified Pushups

Starting Position

Begin by getting down on yours hands and knees with your hands just outside shoulder width and slightly forward of your shoulders. Your knees should be directly aligned with your hips. Keep your abdomen tight and your spine in a neutral position.

Action

INHALE: Bend your elbows and lower chest to 90 degrees at the elbows.

EXHALE: Push up so that your arms are straight, making sure your elbows aren't completely locked. Try doing 2 sets of 10-12 repetitions.

Special Instructions

If you can't go to 90 degrees at the elbow, just go to a comfortable position until you can work up to 90 degrees.

Muscles Worked: Chest, Triceps, Shoulders



One-Arm Dumbbell Rows

Starting Position

Grasp a dumbbell with palm facing in. Rest opposite elbow on opposite leg. Try to create a flat back. Keep upper body steady.

Action

INHALE: Pull the dumbbell up as high as possible, keeping your elbow back & ensuring that the upper arm travels away from your torso a little.

EXHALE: Lower dumbbell back down until arm is straight, but elbow does not lock, to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep your spine in a neutral position.

Muscles Worked: *Upper back, Shoulders, Biceps*



One-Arm Dumbbell Rows with Ball

Starting Position

Begin this exercise by placing one hand on Swiss ball, standing with the same side leg behind the Swiss ball. The opposite hand is holding a dumbbell with your palms facing inward. The opposite leg is held off the floor approximately 12 inches. Bend at the hips so that you create a flat back. Your spine should be in a neutral position.



Action

Pull dumbbell straight up to the side of your chest, keeping arm close to your side. Slowly lower to starting position but don't let the dumbbell touch the floor. Try doing 2 sets with 10-12 repetitions for each arm.

Special Instructions

This exercise works on your stabilizers to help create better balance.

Muscles Worked: Upper back, Shoulders, Biceps





Pushups on the Ball

Starting Position

Start behind the ball, place your midsection on the ball and roll forward until your hands reach the floor. Walk out with your hands until the ball is underneath your hips. Place your hands shoulder-width apart and keep your arms and body straight, abs engaged.

Action

INHALE: Lower your upper body toward the floor by bending your elbows to 90 degree at the elbow.

EXHALE: Straighten arms and return to the starting position.

Special Instructions

Keep your abs engaged and maintain a straight line from your shoulders to your hips to your knees and ankles. For a more advanced version, walk your hands out further until the ball is closer to your ankles.

Muscles Worked: Chest, Triceps





Low Mount Reverse Flys with Band

Starting Position

Tie one end of the resistance band to a safe place. Get on all fours and grab the other end of the resistance band with the hand furthest from the tied end. Keep resistance band on the inside of your closest arm.

Action

Take resistance band and extend away from your body out to your side, a little above shoulder level, keeping the arm as straight as possible. Slowly bring back to the starting position. Try to do 2 sets of 10-12 repetitions for each arm.

Special Instructions

Keep spine in a neutral position and head looking forward, not down.

Muscles Worked: Shoulders



Dumbbell Reverse Flys Seated on Ball

Starting Position

Begin by sitting on top of the Swiss ball with your feet flat on the floor and dumbbells to your sides, palms facing inwards. Lean over so your chest is slightly above your knees. This forward lean is what will work the muscles towards the back of your shoulders.

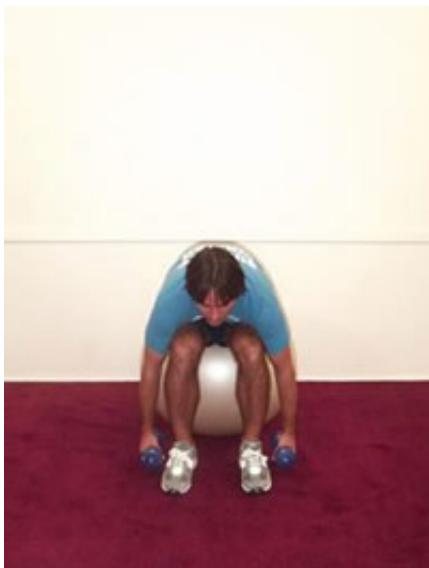
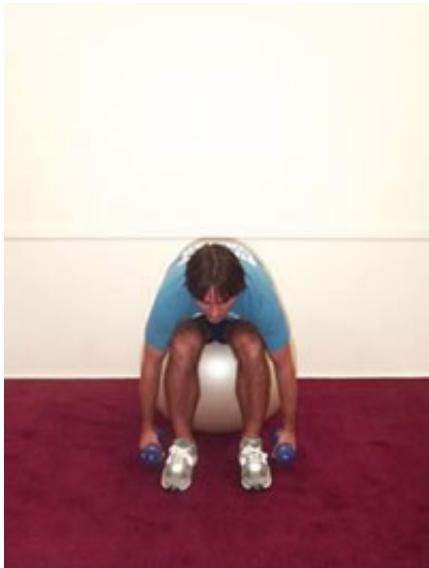
Action

Raise your arms to your side, bringing the dumbbells up to shoulder level height. Keep your arms as straight as possible but do not lock your elbows. Slowly lower the dumbbells back to the starting position. Try doing 2 sets of 10-12 repetitions.

Special Instructions

Keep spine in a neutral position and your head and eyes looking forward, not down.

Muscles Worked: Upper back





Seated Dumbbell Rows

Starting Position

Begin by sitting on the floor, leaning back slightly with knees bent and feet on the ground. Hold the dumbbells out in front of your body with your arms straight and palms facing inward, so the dumbbells are at 90 degrees.

Action

Bring dumbbells in towards your body at chest level as you squeeze your elbows behind your back as far as possible. Return to starting position. Try doing 2 sets with 10-12 repetitions.

Special Instructions

Keep elbows in towards the body, but not completely against the body, as you go through the movement.

Muscles Worked: Upper back, Biceps, Shoulders





Dumbbell Shrugs

Starting Position

Begin by standing with your feet shoulder width apart and your knees slightly bent. Hold the dumbbells to your side with your palms facing inward.

Action

EXHALE: Slowly lift your shoulders straight up, keeping your arms straight. Hold for 1-2 seconds.

INHALE: Slowly lower down to starting position. Try doing 2 sets of 10-12 repetitions.

Special Instructions

Do not roll your shoulders.

Muscles Worked: Upper back, Shoulders, Neck



Pushups

Starting Position

Start with hands shoulder width apart on the floor and up on your toes, so that your body is supported, keeping your body as straight as possible.

Action

INHALE: Bend your elbows and lower chest to 90 degrees at the elbows.

EXHALE: Push up so that your arms are straight, making sure your elbows aren't completely locked.

Try doing 2 sets of 10-12 repetitions.

Special Instructions

Don't lock elbows out completely. Look straight ahead and keep spine in a neutral position.

Muscles Worked: Chest, Triceps, Shoulders





Alternating Dumbbell Biceps Curls

Starting Position

Stand with feet slightly apart, knees slightly bent, abs tight. Grasp a dumbbell in each hand with an underhand grip. Lock elbows into the side of your torso and rest weights in your hand, on the front of the thigh.

Action

INHALE: Curl one dumbbell to your shoulder.

EXHALE: Lower dumbbell to starting position, then curl the dumbbell in your opposite hand.

One curl on each side equals one rep.

Special Instructions

Keeping abs tight will help protect your lower back. If your body leans backward as you curl up the weight, then the weight is too heavy. Keep elbows pressed into your sides for support and to isolate the biceps. This exercise can also be done in a seated position.

Muscles Worked: Biceps





Dumbbell Triceps Kick Backs

Starting Position

Hold a dumbbell in one hand. Kneel on bench with the opposite knee, then lean forward from your waist and support your body weight on your free hand. Keep upper arm of weighted hand fixed to your side, and allow to bend to 90 degrees.

Action

Push weighted hand back until elbow is straight. Slowly lower to starting position and repeat. Complete desired repetitions and alternate.

Special Instructions

Make sure to relax upper body.

Muscles Worked: Triceps



Dumbbell Chest Press

Starting Position

Lie flat on bench with feet on flat on floor , arms extended upward, holding dumbbells with an overhand grip.

Action

INHALE: Lower dumbbells to chest level, bending elbows and rotating forearms to bring your hands into pronation (palms facing legs).

EXHALE:Press dumbbells back up until arms are straight (but elbows do not lock). Do an isometric contraction to isolate the upper pecs.

Lower and repeat for one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep spine in a neutral position. Don't lift head off the bench during exercise. If your lower back comes up from the bench at all during the movement, then raise your legs (bent) into the air to keep the back flat throughout the entire movement.

Muscles Worked: Chest, Triceps



Bench Press with Barbell

Starting Position

Lie back on bench. Your feet should be either flat on the floor, flat on a foot rest, or up in the air to protect your lower back from injury. Hold a weighted barbell with arms straight up toward the ceiling.

Action

INHALE: Allow elbows to bend to 90 degrees, lowering the barbell down toward your chest (but not touching it).

EXHALE: Extend the arms, pushing the weight back up to the starting position. Don't lock elbows completely.

Special Instructions

Keep spine in a neutral position. Don't lift head off the bench during exercise.

Muscles Worked: Chest





Seated Dumbbell Shoulder Press

Starting Position

Sit on the end of a bench or use a bench/chair that supports the back. Hold dumbbells in each hand. Hold weights with palms facing out and elbows at 90 degrees, palms at shoulder level.

Action

EXHALE: Push weights overhead until arms are straight and in line with shoulders. Don't lock elbows completely.

INHALE: Return to starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

If you experience shoulder pain, have palms facing in toward the body. Don't arch your back as you perform exercise.

Muscles Worked: Shoulders



Dumbbell Lateral Raises

Starting Position

Stand with feet slightly apart, back straight, arms hanging at your sides. Hold a dumbbell in each hand, palms facing inward.

Action

EXHALE: Raise the dumbbells at your sides to shoulder level, keeping elbows slightly bent.

INHALE: Lower slowly with control to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Do not let the momentum of your swinging arms do all the work--keep the movement controlled. Be sure you are not leaning back when lifting the weights.

Muscles Worked: Shoulders



Wall Pushups

Starting Position

Start facing wall, arms length away, feet slightly apart, legs straight (but knees not locked). Place hands onto wall, slightly wider than shoulder-width apart.

Action

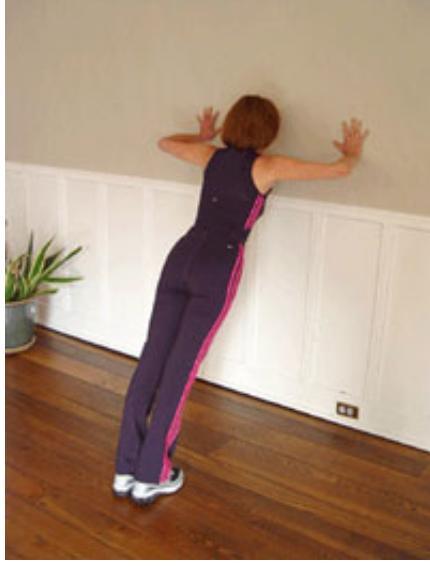
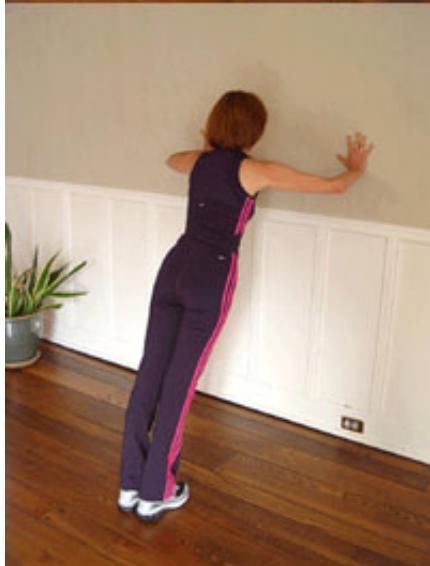
INHALE: Keeping head in neutral position, bend elbows to lower head/chest toward wall, coming as close as you can to it but not touching it.

EXHALE: Straighten arms and return to starting position for one rep.

Special Instructions

The further your feet are away from the wall, the more difficult this exercise will be. Also be sure not to lock knees or elbows.

Muscles Worked: Chest, Triceps, Shoulders





Boxer

Starting Position

Stand with feet hip-width apart, knees bent, torso almost parallel to floor. Hug elbows to sides, hands near chest.

Action

EXHALE: Extend left arm forward (palm down), right arm back (palm up).

INHALE: Hug arms in.

Repeat, switching arms.

Special Instructions

Keep back flat and arms parallel to the floor, head in a neutral position looking at the ground.

Muscles Worked: Upper back, shoulders



Triceps Dips with Bent Knees

Starting Position

Sit tall on the edge of a sturdy chair or step and wrap your fingertips over the front edge. Place feet on the floor in front of you with knees bent. Lift hips and butt up and slightly forward.

Action

Bend elbows about 90 degrees and lower hips toward the floor. (If you feel pain in the shoulders, your elbows are bent too much). Press up until elbows are straight, but not locked.

Special Instructions

None.

Muscles Worked: Triceps



Isometric Biceps Hold with Towel

Starting Position

Twist a large towel so that it is in a long straight line. Step onto one end of the towel with your right foot, grasping the other end of it in your right hand (palm in front of hip facing outward). Keep feet slightly apart, knees slightly bent.

Action

Allow enough tension to feel resistance as you curl your right hand in towards your chest. Hold (with tension) at 90 degrees for 30 seconds. Step further away and hold at 45 degrees for 30 seconds. Switch sides and repeat for one set.

Special Instructions

Adjust resistance by stepping closer (more difficult) or away (easier) from the end of the towel in your hand. You should feel enough resistance during each part of the exercise (may need to adjust it by stepping further away from hand at each different angle mentioned). Be sure not to hold breath.

Muscles Worked: Biceps



Isometric Shoulder Hold with Towel

Starting Position

Twist a large towel so that it is in a long straight line. Step onto one end of the towel with your right foot, grasping the other end of it in your right hand (palm facing down arm at right side). Keep feet slightly apart, knees slightly bent.

Action

Allow enough tension to feel resistance as you raise your right arm up, approaching a parallel line with the floor. Hold at 45 degrees for 30 seconds. Adjust tension (step further away from hand) and hold arm parallel to floor for 30 seconds. Switch sides and repeat for one set.

Special Instructions

Adjust resistance by stepping closer (more difficult) or away (easier) from where the end of the towel is in your hand. You should feel enough resistance during each part of the exercise (may need to adjust it by stepping further away from hand at each different angle mentioned). Be sure not to hold breath.

Muscles Worked: Shoulders





Dumbbell Flys

Starting Position

Lie flat on a bench. Hold dumbbells with arms extended and elbows slightly bent.

Action

INHALE: Lower dumbbells until elbows are at shoulder height.

EXHALE: Raise the dumbbells up until they meet.

Special Instructions

A narrow bench will allow free movement of the shoulders. This is not an exercise for heavy weights. Keeping arms slightly bent will less the stress on the elbow.

Muscles Worked: Chest



Seated Dumbbell Concentration Curls

Starting Position

Begin seated on a bench or chair. Hold a dumbbell with an underhand grip, resting that elbow on the inner side of your thigh.

Action

INHALE: Curl the dumbbell to your shoulder, keeping upper body still.

EXHALE: Lower the weight back down until your arm is straight but the elbow is not locked.

Special Instructions

This is a great exercise if you have trouble keeping proper form on seated or standing curls.

Muscles Worked: Biceps



Dumbbell Wrist Curls

Starting Position

Sit with forearms resting on your thighs or a bench. Take an underhand grip on one dumbbell, passively extending your wrists downward. Place the other hand on top of your wrist (not pictured) to hold the arm in place.

Action

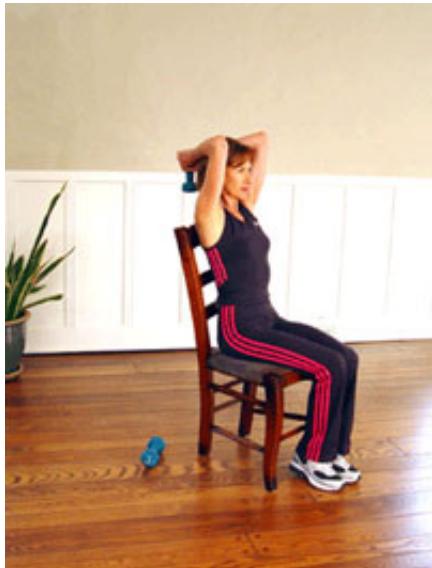
EXHALE: Curl your wrist up, keeping the rest of the arm still by using your free hand.

INHALE: Slowly lower to the starting position to complete one rep. Finish all reps on this side and switch hands.

Special Instructions

Can also be done with both wrists simultaneously.

Muscles Worked: Forearms



Seated Dumbbell Triceps Extensions

Starting Position

Sit holding one dumbbell with both hands behind your neck by grasping the plate and wrapping your thumbs and pointer fingers around the hand grip.

Action

EXHALE: Extend arms straight above your head, keeping elbows next to ears.

INHALE: Lower the weight back down with control to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Contract abs to avoid arching your back. Use a bench with a short back (if available) for support. Keep elbows tight near ears throughout movement and try to keep your upper arms still.

Muscles Worked: Triceps





Lying Dumbbell Triceps Extensions

Starting Position

Lie on a bench with a dumbbell in your right hand. Extend right arm straight up with palm facing away from you. Rest your left hand on your abs.

Action

INHALE: Lower the dumbbell toward the left shoulder, keeping upper arm stationary, until forearm is parallel with the ground.

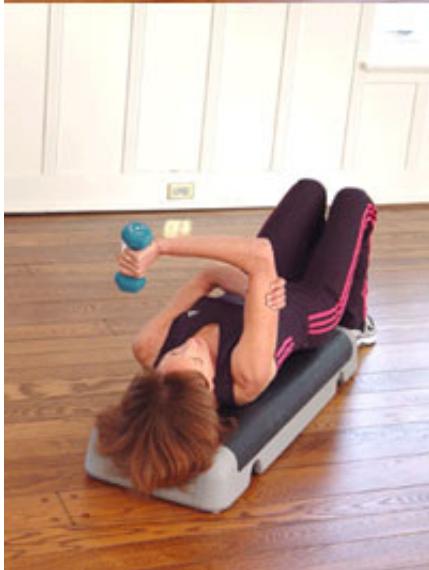
EXHALE: Push weight back up to starting position and to complete one rep.

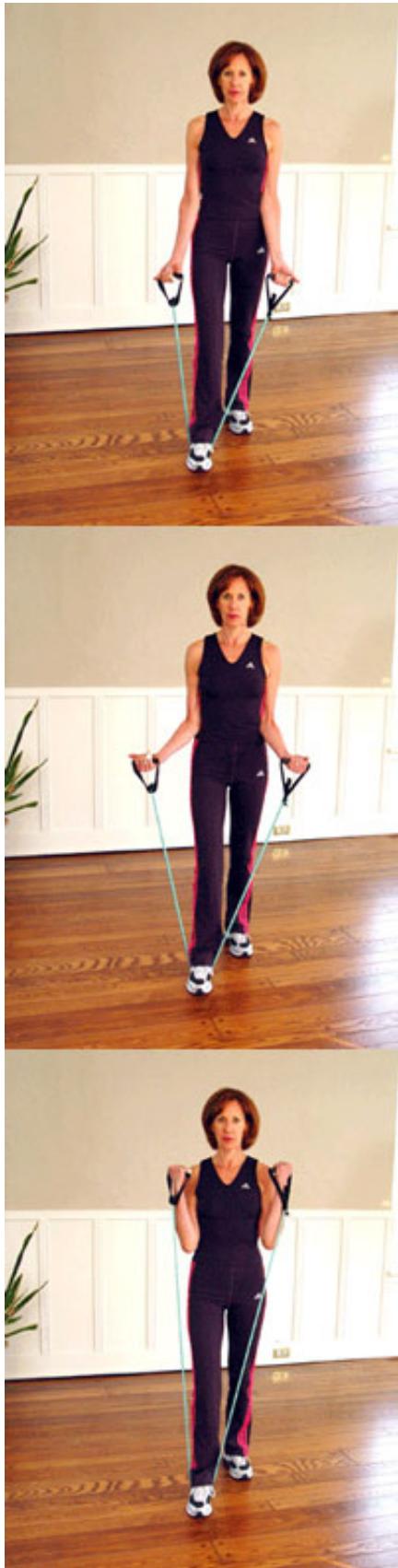
Finish all reps on one side and switch.

Special Instructions

You may want to use your free arm to support the working arm by holding at the elbow to help keep the arm stationary.

Muscles Worked: Triceps





Biceps Curls with Band

Starting Position

Stand on center of band with feet close together, knees slightly bent. Grip handles in front of thighs, palms facing outward. Hug elbows in tight to your torso and contract abs.

Action

EXHALE: Without leaning back, and keeping upper arms stationary, curl hands up to your shoulders.

INHALE: Slowly lower to starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep upper body stationary and elbows tucked into your torso to isolate the biceps. If you have trouble balancing or keeping your torso upright (not leaning backward), stagger your stance as shown.

Make it harder: Step your feet out to the sides, closer to the ends of the band and/or grip closer towards the center as opposed to the very end (handles) of the band.

Make it easier: Step as close as possible to the center and grip the end of the band.

Muscles Worked: Biceps



Chest Press with Band

Starting Position

Wrap a band underneath a tall bench or step. Sit on the bench near the edge, grasping handles in each hand at the side of the bench. Lie back until back is flat on bench, feet are flat on floor, knees are bent. Hold hands on each side of your chest, knuckles up.

Action

EXHALE: Extend your arms straight up into the air without locking elbows.

INHALE: Slowly lower to starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep back flat during entire movement. Make it harder: Wrap long/loose bands around the bench more than once and/or grip the band closer towards the center as opposed to at the handle/ends. Make it easier: Grip band at the very end, lower the height of the bench to decrease the amount of tension.

Muscles Worked: Chest, Triceps



Low Mount Seated Rows with Band

Starting Position

Sit on floor with knees slightly bent, feet hip-width apart. Keep back straight, abs in, heels on the floor. Loop band around the soles of the feet, then cross the ends/handles over shins so right hand holds left handle and left hand holds right handle, palms facing down.

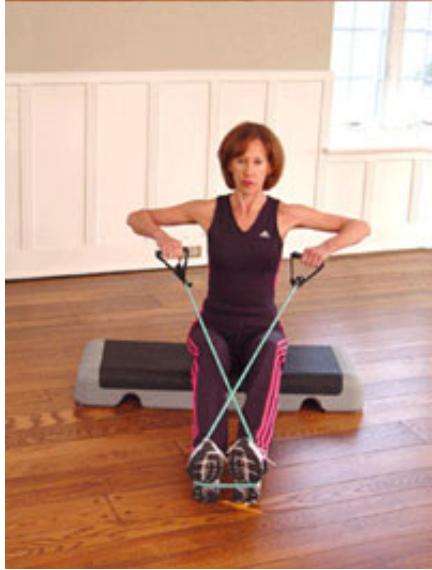
Action

EXHALE: Pull hands toward chest so elbows and fists are at or near shoulder level, pinching shoulder blades together at the end of the movement. **INHALE:** Slowly return to starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Make it harder: Spread feet apart so they lie on the band closer to handles for more resistance. Make it easier: Do not cross handles and keep feet close together at center of band. Make sure the band is secure around your feet.

Muscles Worked: *Upper back, Triceps*





Upright Dumbbell Rows

Starting Position

Stand with feet slightly apart, back straight. Grasp dumbbells with overhand grip in front of body and directly below shoulders, keeping arms straight but not locked.

Action

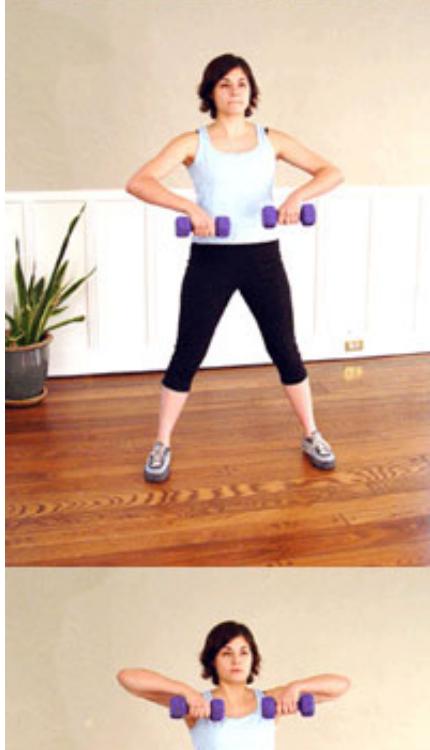
EXHALE: Pull the dumbbells straight upward, lifting elbows as high as possible, keeping dumbbells in a straight line below the shoulders.

INHALE: Slowly lower the weights to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep knees slightly bent and torso upright. Your upper body will want to lean backwards as you lift-- keeping your abs tight and watching yourself from the side in a mirror will help you keep your upper body still.

Muscles Worked: Shoulders, Upper back





Dumbbell Pullovers

Starting Position

Lie on bench with feet flat on floor. Hold one dumbbell with both hands, palms against the underside of the upper set of plates/weight, thumbs and forefingers encircling the handle.

Action

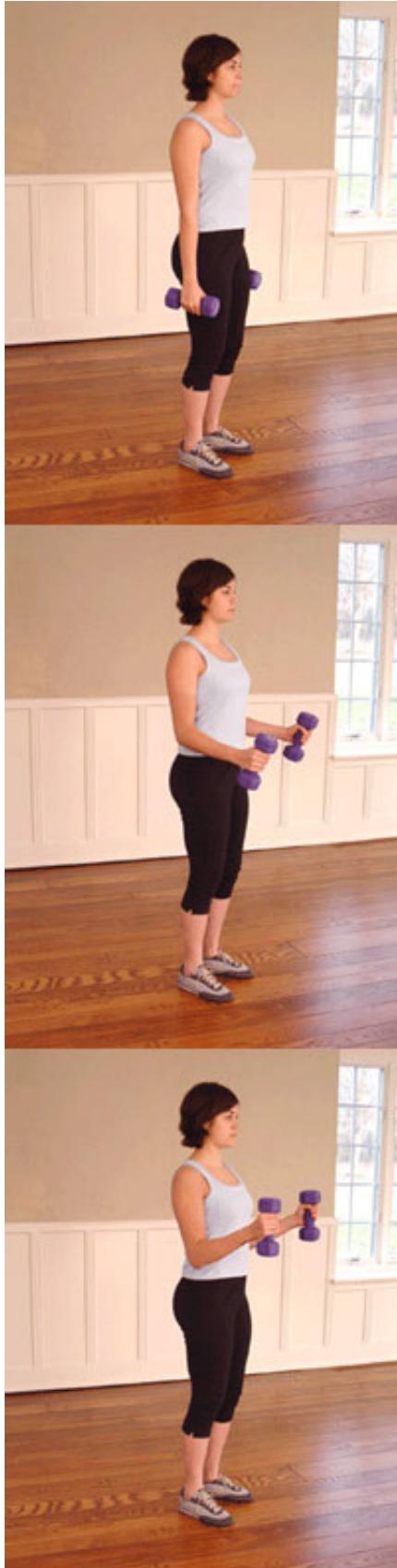
INHALE: Lower the weight behind your head, slightly bending elbows.

EXHALE: Return to starting position, arms extended but not locked to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

If your lower back comes up from the bench at all during the movement, then raise your legs (bent) into the air to keep the back flat throughout the entire movement.

Muscles Worked: Chest, Triceps, Lats



Dumbbell Hammer Curls

Starting Position

Stand or sit, grasping a dumbbell in each hand with your palms facing inward.

Action

EXHALE: Curl the dumbbells to your shoulders (alternating arms or simultaneously).

INHALE: Lower the weight slowly to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Make sure upper body is stable and you are not leaning back with each curl. Unlike a standard biceps curl, your palms are facing inward throughout the movement. Keep elbows in at your sides.

Muscles Worked: Biceps



Lying Triceps Lifts

Starting Position

Begin lying face down on a mat, arms at your sides, palms facing the ceiling. Make sure your neck is in a neutral position.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping body stationary and arms straight (but not locked) lift the palms up toward the ceiling as high as comfortably possible. Hold for 2-3 counts.

INHALE: Lower to starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Make sure your arms stay in line with the shoulder.

Make it harder: Hold and/or do small pulses in the highest position; Don't let the arms rest or touch the floor in between reps.

Muscles Worked: Triceps



Seated Lat Pulldown Machine

Starting Position

Follow machine instructions for set up and select desired weight. Sit so feet are flat on floor, knees are above ankles, back is straight and supported on pad. Grab the handles overhead, palms facing forward. Engage abs and keep spine straight.

Action

EXHALE: Pull the handles down, bending elbows towards the sides of your waist.

INHALE: Slowly release the bar overhead by straightening at the elbows to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

When returning to start position, make sure elbows do not lock. If lifting very heavy weights, secure the belt (not pictured) around your hips to keep your body in good form.

Muscles Worked: Back (*lats*)





Seated Chest Press Machine

Starting Position

Follow machine instructions for set up and select desired weight. Sit so feet are flat on floor, knees are above ankles, back is straight and supported on pad. Grip the handles near your chest, palms facing downward. Engage abs and keep spine straight.

Action

EXHALE: Push the handles forward by straightening at the elbows.

INHALE: Slowly bend the elbows to return to the start position, with hands near the chest, to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

When pushing the handles forward, make sure the elbows do not lock. Aim for a full range of motion, but don't allow the weight stack to slam back down.

Muscles Worked: Chest



Seated Row Machine

Starting Position

Follow machine instructions for set up and select desired weight. Sit so feet are flat on floor, knees are above ankles, abs are engaged, back is straight and front of torso is supported by pad. Grip the handles by reaching in front of you, palms facing each other.

Action

EXHALE: Pull the handles, bending elbows and pointing them behind you as you focus on squeezing your shoulder blades towards each other.

INHALE: Slowly straighten the arms to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep your arms close to the sides of the body. Make sure your wrists don't bend--keep them in line with the forearm. Don't let your chest or torso lift away from the pad in front of you.

Muscles Worked: Back





Preacher Curl Machine

Starting Position

Follow machine instructions for set up and select desired weight. Sit so that feet are flat on the floor, back is straight, and upper arm and elbows are supported by the pad in front of you. Grip the handles with your arms extended, palms facing upward.

Action

EXHALE: Bend at the elbow to curl your hands towards your shoulders.

INHALE: Slowly straighten the elbow to return to start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Make sure your elbows do not lock when you are in the start position. Do not lean back or arch your back when lifting--keep your back straight.

Muscles Worked: Biceps





Seated Pec Deck Machine

Starting Position

Follow machine instructions for set up and select desired weight. Sit so that feet are flat on the floor, back is supported by the back pad, abs are engaged, and knees are above ankles. Grip the handles, palms facing outward, elbows in line with the shoulders.

Action

EXHALE: Squeezing your chest muscles, pull the handles towards each other as if bringing your elbows together in front of you.

INHALE: Slowly return arms out to the sides to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Grip the handles lightly and make sure the handles don't slam together in front of you.

Muscles Worked: Chest





Seated Overhead Press Machine

Starting Position

Follow machine instructions for set up and select desired weight. Sit so that feet are flat on the floor, back is supported by the back pad and you can reach handles comfortably in line with your shoulders. Keep knees above ankles, back straight, abs engaged, and grip the handles, palms facing outward.

Action

EXHALE: Push the handles upward and straighten the elbows.

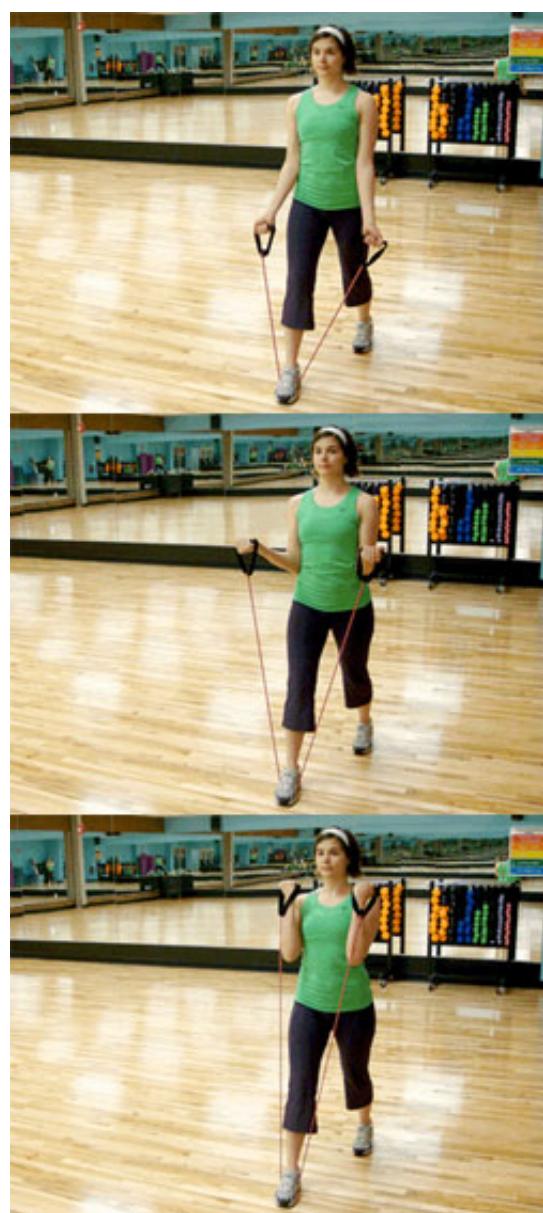
INHALE: Slowly lower back down to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Make sure your elbows do not lock when you push the handles overhead. Do not lean back or arch your back.

Muscles Worked: Shoulders, Upper back





Biceps Curls with Band

Starting Position

Grab each handle and place one foot on the center of the band, staggering the other foot behind you. Stand tall with back straight, abs engaged, knees soft, elbows tucked to your sides, and arms extended down, palms outward.

Action

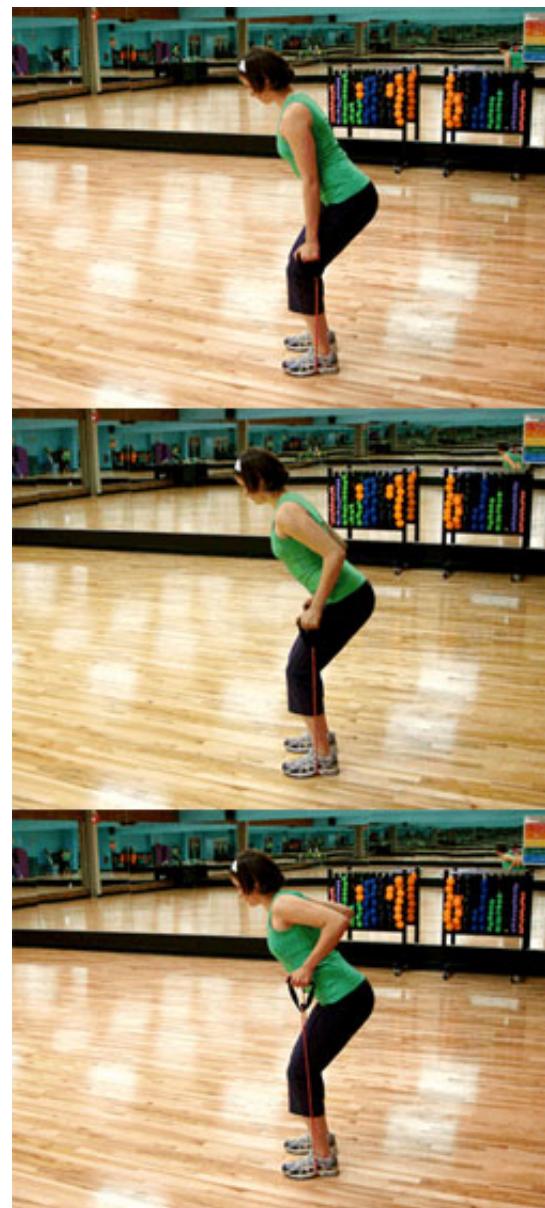
EXHALE: Bend the elbows to curl the your hands towards your shoulders.

INHALE: Slowly straighten the elbows to return to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Do not lean back or arch your back as you perform the curls. Keep your wrists straight and in line with the forearm, not bent. To add intensity (not pictured), step on the band with both feet, placing them wide.

Muscles Worked: Biceps



Triceps Rows with Band

Starting Position

Grab each handle and place feet on band, hip-width apart. Stand tall with back straight, abs engaged, arms at your sides, palms facing each other. Bend knees slightly and with a straight back, bend forward slightly from the hips.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping arms close to the sides of your body and elbows pointed back (not to the sides), pull the handles up towards your shoulders, bending the elbows.

INHALE: Slowly release back down to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Do not arch or round the back. Keep the abs engaged to protect your lower back. Keep arms at your sides throughout movement, as if scraping your hands along the sides of the torso. Make it easier: Bring legs together (closer to center of band) for less resistance. Make it harder: Open legs wider (closer to handles) for more resistance.

Muscles Worked: Triceps, upper back



Triceps Lifts with Band

Starting Position

Grab each handle and place feet on band, hip-width apart. Stand tall with back straight, abs engaged, arms at your sides, palms facing each other. Bend knees slightly and with a straight back, bend forward slightly from the hips.

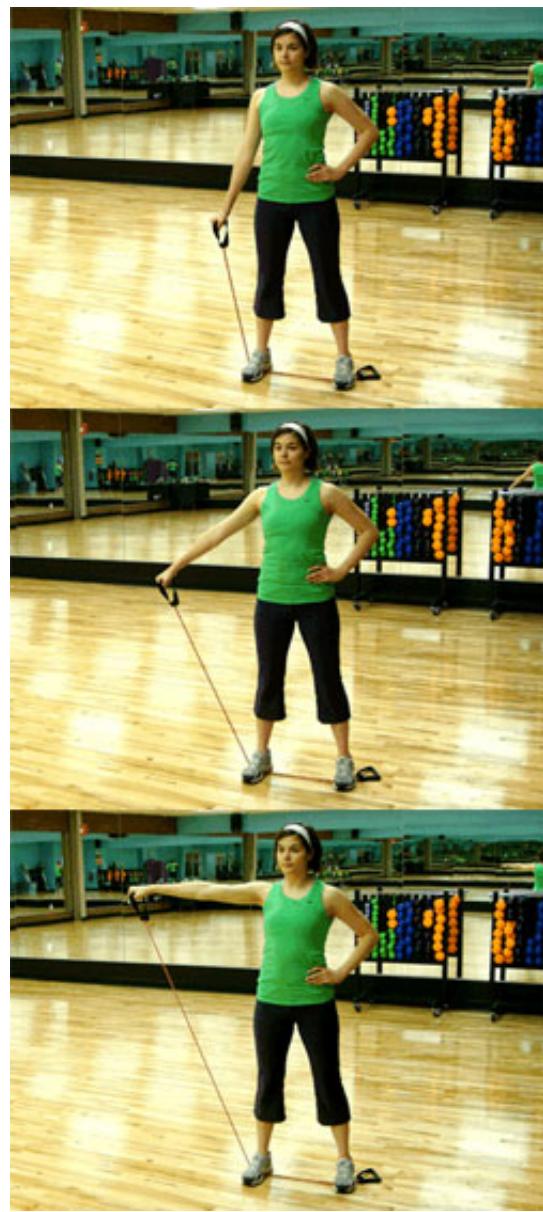
Action

EXHALE: Keeping arms straight and close to the sides of your body, lift your hands up towards the ceiling behind you.

INHALE: Slowly lower arms back down to start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Do not arch or round the back. Keep the abs engaged to protect your lower back. Keep wrists straight and in line with the forearms. Make it easier: Bring legs together (closer to center of band) for less resistance. Make it harder: Open legs wider (closer to handles) for more resistance. *Muscles Worked: Triceps*



Single Arm Lateral Raises with Band

Starting Position

Hold the left handle in your left hand. Place other side of resistance band on the floor and stand on it with feet hip-width apart. Stand tall with back straight, abs engaged, left arm at your side, palm facing inward, and right hand on your hip.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping left arm straight, slowly lift your arm up to shoulder height.

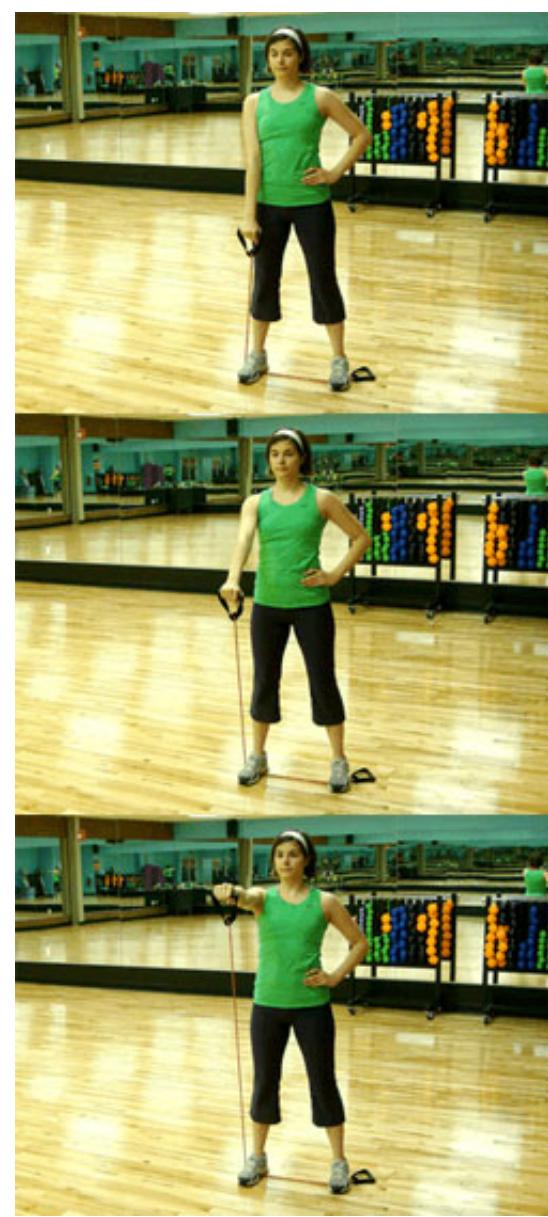
INHALE: Slowly return back down to the start position to complete one rep.

Finish set on this side and then switch sides.

Special Instructions

Do not lean back or to the sides as you lift your arm. Keep arm straight, but not locked. Keep wrist in line with the forearm--not bent up or down. Make it easier: Stand closer to the handle on the floor to decrease resistance. Make it harder: Stand closer to the handle you're holding to increase resistance. Stand with legs closer together for more core challenge.

Muscles Worked: Shoulders



Single Arm Front Raises with Band

Starting Position

Hold the left handle in your left hand. Place other side of resistance band on the floor and stand on it with feet hip-width apart. Stand tall with back straight, abs engaged, left arm in front of the thigh, palm facing inward, and right hand on your hip.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping left arm straight, slowly lift your arm up to shoulder height.

INHALE: Slowly return back down to the start position to complete one rep.

Finish set on this side and then switch sides.

Special Instructions

Do not lean back as you lift. Keep arm straight, but not locked. Keep wrist in line with the forearm--not bent up or down. Make it easier: Stand closer to the handle on the floor to decrease resistance. Make it harder: Stand closer to the handle you're holding to increase resistance. Stand with legs closer together for more core challenge.

Muscles Worked: Shoulders



Assisted Triceps Dip Machine

Starting Position

Follow machine instructions for set up and select desired weight. Grip the handles underneath your shoulders with palms downward and elbows pointing back. Straighten the arms and place knees on the pad, so that your body is upright and abs are engaged.

Action

INHALE: Bend elbows to lower your body until elbows are bent about 90 degrees.

EXHALE: Straighten elbows to push back up to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep arms close to the sides of your body and point the elbows back (not out to the sides). Remember that on this "assisted" machine, when the weight you choose is heavier, you're lifting less of your body weight and the exercise is easier. When the weight you choose is lighter, you're lifting more of your body weight and the exercise is harder.

Muscles Worked: Triceps



Assisted Pull-up Machine

Starting Position

Follow machine instructions for set up and select desired weight. Grip the handles above your shoulders with palms facing outward. Straighten the arms and place knees on the pad, so that your body is upright and abs are engaged.

Action

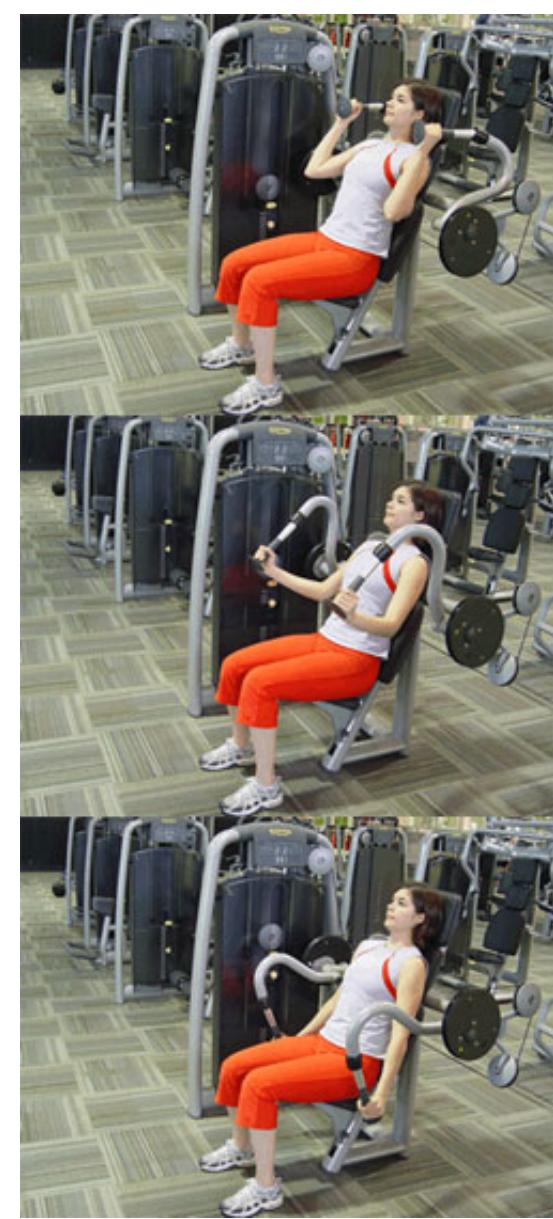
EXHALE: Bend the elbows to lift your body up until chin is above the height of your hands.

INHALE: Slowly straighten the elbows to lower to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Remember that on this "assisted" machine, when the weight you choose is heavier, you're lifting less of your body weight and the exercise is easier. When the weight you choose is lighter, you're lifting more of your body weight and the exercise is harder. You can experiment with different grips (such as palms facing inward, hands closer, hands wider, etc).

Muscles Worked: Shoulders, upper back



Seated Triceps Extension Machine

Starting Position

Follow machine instructions for set up and select desired weight. Sit so that feet are flat on the floor, back is supported by the back pad and you can reach handles comfortably with elbows bent. Keep knees above ankles, back straight, abs engaged, and your palms facing each other.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping the rest of your body still, extend at the elbows to straighten your arms.

INHALE: Slowly return to the starting position by bending at the elbows again to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep upper arms perfectly still, as if glued to the sides of your body or the back pad behind you. The only movement should occur at the elbow as it bends and straightens.

Muscles worked: Triceps



Modified Staggered Pushups on Balance Board

Starting Position

Begin by kneeling on a mat (not pictured) with your legs together, hands about shoulder-width apart and directly beneath your shoulders, and one hand on top of a balance board. Lift your feet off the floor and cross your ankles. Lower your hips down toward the floor until your body forms a straight line from your shoulders to your knees. This is your starting or "up" position.

Action

INHALE: Bend the elbows as you slowly lower your entire body--not just the chest--toward the ground. EXHALE: Straighten the arms and push back up to the start position to complete one rep. After one set, switch the balance board placement to the other side to perform another set.

Special Instructions

Keep your abs engaged and your spine neutral. Look at the floor about a foot in front of you to help maintain a neutral head and neck position. Make sure you are able to maintain a straight line with the body while lowering toward the floor, keeping your abs engaged at all times. Don't lock out the elbows completely at the top. Only lower as far as you can in good form.

Muscles Worked: Chest, shoulders, triceps, abs



Standing Overhead Triceps Extension with Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Hold a medicine ball between both hands and stand tall with your back straight, shoulders relaxed, abs engaged, legs straight, and feet placed hip-width apart. Extend your arms straight overhead, holding the ball above your head.

Action

INHALE: Keeping your upper arms close to the sides of your head, bend your elbows approximately 90 degrees to lower the ball toward your back. **EXHALE:** Slowly straighten the elbows to return to the starting position and complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep your shoulders relaxed away from the ears at all times. Engage your abs and keep your back straight; try not to allow your lower back to arch. Think about stabilizing your upper arms (as if squeezing them to your ears) so that they don't move to better isolate the triceps.

Muscles Worked: Triceps







Modified Pushups on Foam Roller

Starting Position

Kneel on a mat with a foam roller in front of you (not pictured). Place your hands on the roller, shoulder-width apart, arms straight, abs engaged, feet off the floor, ankles crossed and hips lowered toward the floor so that your shoulders, hips and knees form a straight line.

Action

INHALE: Maintaining a straight line with your body, bend the elbows (to point behind you) and lower your body toward the floor.

EXHALE: Straighten the arms to push back up to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Only lower toward the floor as far as you can while maintaining a straight line with the body. Keep your head and neck in a neutral position. Keep the arms close to the sides of the body.

Muscles Worked: Triceps, chest, shoulders



Two-Arm Biceps Curls with Mini Stepper

Starting Position

Stand tall on the mini stepper, holding the handles of the resistance bands in each hand. Keep your back straight, abs engaged, knees soft, elbows tucked to your sides, and arms extended down, palms outward.

Action

EXHALE: Bend the elbows to curl the your hands towards your shoulders. **INHALE:** Slowly straighten the elbows to return to the starting position to complete one rep. Repeat.

Special Instructions

Perform this exercise with or without the lower body stepping motion. Do not lean back or arch your back as you perform the curls. Keep your wrists straight and in line with the forearm, not bent. Move at your own pace, ensuring you are balanced, exercising at your own level, and maintaining good form and control with the arms.

Body Benefit: Biceps (strength training) and cardio

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Alternating Biceps Curls with Mini Stepper

Starting Position

Stand tall on the mini stepper, holding the handles of the resistance bands in each hand. Keep your back straight, abs engaged, knees soft, elbows tucked to your sides, and arms extended down, palms outward.

Action

Breathe steadily and bend one elbow at a time to curl your hand toward your shoulder. As you straighten that arm to return it to the starting position, curl the opposite arm. Repeat.

Special Instructions

Perform this exercise with or without the lower body stepping motion. Do not lean back or arch your back as you perform the curls. Keep your wrists straight and in line with the forearm, not bent. Move at your own pace, ensuring you are balanced, exercising at your own level, and maintaining good form and control with the arms.

Body Benefit: Biceps (strength training) and cardio



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Lateral Shoulder Raises with Mini Stepper

Starting Position

Stand tall on the mini stepper, holding the handles of the resistance bands in each hand. Keep your back straight, abs engaged, knees soft, arms at your sides, and palms facing your body.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping arms straight (but not locked), slowly raise your arms up to the sides until they reach shoulder height. **INHALE:** Slowly lower your straight arms back down to your sides (starting position) to complete one rep. Repeat.

Special Instructions

Perform this exercise with or without the lower body stepping motion. Do not lean back or arch your back as you raise and lower your arms. Keep your wrists straight and in line with the forearm, not bent. Move at your own pace, ensuring you are balanced, exercising at your own level, and maintaining good form and control with the arms.

Body Benefit: Shoulders (strength training) and cardio





Front Shoulder Raises with Mini Stepper

Starting Position

Stand tall on the mini stepper, holding the handles of the resistance bands in each hand. Keep your back straight, abs engaged, knees soft, arms in front of the thighs, and palms facing your body.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping arms straight (but not locked), slowly raise your arms up in front of you until their reach chest or shoulder height.
INHALE: Slowly lower your straight arms back to the front of the thighs (starting position) to complete one rep. Repeat.

Special Instructions

Perform this exercise with or without the lower body stepping motion. Do not lean back or arch your back as you raise and lower your arms. Keep your wrists straight and in line with the forearm, not bent. Move at your own pace, ensuring you are balanced, exercising at your own level, and maintaining good form and control with the arms.

Body Benefit: Shoulders (strength training) and cardio

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Dumbbell Chest Press on Ball

Starting Position

Start from a seated position on the Swiss ball. Slowly walk out until your head and shoulders are supported by the ball (not pictured). Your feet should be slightly further than hip width apart. Start with the dumbbells at a 90 degree angle at your elbow, palms facing away from your body.

Action

EXHALE: Extend both arms up and in slowly above your chest, until the dumbbells touch each other.

INHALE: Slowly lower back to the starting position.

Special Instructions

Make sure to keep your core tight, keeping your hips from sagging.

Muscles Worked: Chest





Lying Row & Rotation on Ball

Starting Position

Begin this exercise by placing your body balanced on the Swiss ball at your core with legs straight and toes on the floor. Hold dumbbells to the left and right side of the Swiss ball underneath your shoulders with arms extended.

Action

Pull your elbows upward until there is a straight line from elbow to elbow across your back. Stabilize this position and externally rotate your upper arms to a 90 degree angle at the elbow. Your arm should be horizontal to the floor. Stabilize this position and lower slowly back to the starting position. Try doing 2 sets 10-12 rotations.

Special Instructions

Make sure you don't raise your elbows past the straight line from elbow to elbow. Keep movement smooth throughout. Do not jerk.

Muscles Worked: Upper back, Shoulders





Dumbbell Shoulder Press on Ball

Starting Position

Begin by sitting on top of the Swiss ball with your feet firmly planted on the ground. Keep your abdominal muscles tight and hold dumbbells to the side of your head, palms facing away from your body, and elbows at 90 degrees.

Action

EXHALE: Raise dumbbells slightly in front of your head and above your head until you touch the ends of each dumbbell together. Your arms should be as straight as possible and you should not lock your elbows.

INHALE: Bring your arms and the dumbbells back down to the starting position.

Special Instructions

If you feel pinching in your shoulders as you raise the dumbbells, bring the dumbbells more out in front of your head. Keep your spine straight and continue to look forward during the exercise. Performing this activity in front of a mirror will help you with your form.

Muscles Worked: Shoulders





Barbell Triceps Extensions on Ball

Starting Position

Start from a seated position on the Swiss ball. Slowly walk out until your head and shoulders are supported by the ball and parallel to the ground. Your feet should be slightly further than hip width apart.

Action

Start with the barbell centered properly with both arms extended, holding the barbell over your head. Allow your arms to bend to approximately a 90 degree angle at your elbows or just before the barbell reaches your forehead. Slowly raise the bar back to starting position. Do not let your elbows shoot out, keep them pointing straight forward. Try doing 2 sets with 10-12 repetitions.

Special Instructions

Make sure to keep your core tight, keeping your hips from sagging.

Muscles Worked: Triceps





Chest Flys on Ball

Starting Position

You will need two Swiss balls. Bring both balls together, side by side. Place one of your lower arms on each ball. Your body should be approximately at a 45 degree angle with normal curvature of your lower back.

Action

Roll the balls outward, allowing your arms to open up. Continue until you feel you have reached a comfortable range of motion. Squeeze your arms back together, bringing the balls back to their original position. Try doing 2 sets with 10-12 repetitions.



Special Instructions

Keep your spine in a neutral position.

Muscles Worked: Chest





Dumbbell Triceps Extensions on Ball

Starting Position

Start from a seated position on the Swiss ball. Slowly walk out until your head and shoulders are supported by the ball. Your feet should be slightly further than hip width apart. Hold dumbbells and extend arms above your head, palms facing inward and elbows in.

Action

Lower dumbbells to 90 degrees at the elbow, so that the dumbbells are at both sides of your head. Return to the starting position. Try doing 2 sets with 10-12 repetitions.

Special Instructions

It's important to keep your elbows in as you lower the dumbbells for optimal isolation of your triceps.

Muscles Worked: Triceps



Wall Sit with Dumbbell Biceps Curls

Starting Position

Lean against a solid wall, with your feet out in front of you approximately 12 inches and shoulder width apart. Hold dumbbells to your side, palms facing forward.

Action

Slowly lower your body from the hips until you reach 90 degrees at the knees. Hold that position. Holding elbows into your body, slowly curl dumbbells upward at the same time. Make sure to keep your shoulders still and just bend at your elbows. Squeeze at the top and return to the starting position. Try doing 2 sets with 10-12 repetitions.

Special Instructions

None.

Muscles Worked: Biceps, Quads, Glutes



Wall Sit with Lateral Dumbbell Raises

Starting Position

Lean against a solid wall, with your feet out in front of you approximately 12 inches and shoulder width apart. Hold dumbbells to your side, palms facing inward.

Action

Slowly lower your body from the hips until you reach 90 degrees at the knees. Hold that position. Slowly raise your fully extended arms to your side. Don't lock your elbows. Raise the dumbbells to shoulder level and return to the starting position. Try raising the dumbbell in the wall sit position 10-12 times. Repeat.

Special Instructions

None.

Muscles Worked: Shoulders, Quads





Close-Arm Wall Pushups

Starting Position

Start facing wall, arms-length away, feet slightly apart, legs straight with weight on toes. Place hands on wall with pointer fingers and thumbs forming a triangle. Keep arms in line with shoulders/chest (not above or below this region).

Action

INHALE: Bend elbows about 90 degrees and lower body toward the wall without touching it.

EXHALE: Straighten arms and return to starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

The further your feet are away from the wall, the more difficult this exercise will be. Also be sure not to lock knees or elbows.

Muscles Worked: Chest, Triceps, Shoulders



Triceps Dips with Straight Legs

Starting Position

Sit on a chair or step. Grasp the front edge of seat near thighs. Walk feet forward until hips are slightly bent, legs straight, arms extended (don't lock elbows). Keep feet hip-width apart.

Action

INHALE: Bend elbows about 90 degrees and lower hips toward the floor. (If you feel pain in the shoulders, your elbows are bent too much).

EXHALE: Press up until elbows are straight, but not locked.

Special Instructions

Keep weight on your heels (toes up toward ceiling).

Muscles Worked: Triceps



Incline Pushups

Starting Position

Begin in a push up position, with hands and toes on the floor in front of a step/stair. Place hands on the step, fingers facing forward.

Action

INHALE: Keeping abs tight, lower upper body & hips until face is about an inch from the step.

EXHALE: Straighten arms to push up to starting position.

Special Instructions

Make it easier: Do the pushups with weight on your knees instead of your toes.

Muscles Worked: Chest, Triceps, Shoulders





Decline Pushups

Starting Position

Get in standard push-up position, hands on floor shoulder-width apart, elbows slightly bent, feet on a stair, step, or chair.

Action

INHALE: Bend elbows to lower chest as close to floor as possible, keeping legs, hips, spine and neck aligned.

EXHALE: Push back to starting position.

Special Instructions

None.

Muscles Worked: *Upper chest, Triceps, Shoulders*



Two-Part Pushups

Starting Position

Get into push up position (toes or knees on floor) with hands slightly wider than shoulder-width apart.

Action

INHALE: Keep body in a straight line as you lower halfway to floor. Hold for 1 count, then lower yourself all the way down.

EXHALE: Push up half way, holding for 1 count, then push yourself all the way up for one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep abs tight to protect your back. Keep breathing steady.

Make it harder: Hold for more than 1 count at each point.

Muscles Worked: Chest, Triceps, Shoulders, Back



One-Arm Side Pushups

Starting Position

Lie on right side with left palm flat on the floor in front of shoulder, elbow bent. Wrap right arm around rib cage and bend knees slightly.

Action

EXHALE: Using left arm, push your torso up until arm is straight.

INHALE: Then lower upper body until shoulder is about an inch from the floor.

Complete all reps and switch sides.

Special Instructions

Be sure to keep hips and feet planted on floor and shoulders away from ears.

Muscles Worked: *Biceps, Triceps, Obliques, Hips*



Reverse Plank

Starting Position

Sit with palms on ground, below shoulders. Squeezing butt and thighs.

Action

Push up into a reverse plank (on either elbows or straight arms). Hold for 30 seconds and work up to 1-3 minutes.

Special Instructions

Keep body in straight line- don't let hips raise or lower. Be sure not to hold breath.

Muscles Worked: Back, Triceps, Shoulders, Core, Quads



Advanced Pushups on the Ball

Starting Position

Start behind the ball, place your midsection on the ball and roll forward until your hands reach the floor. Walk out with your hands until the ball is underneath your knees. Have your hands just outside of shoulder width. Keep your core strong by not dropping your hips. Your body should be as straight as possible.

Action

INHALE: Lower your upper body, bending elbows to 90 degree at the elbow.

EXHALE: Straighten arms and return to the starting position.

Special Instructions

Make it harder: The closer your feet are to the ball.

Make it easier: The closer the ball is to your hips.

Muscles Worked: Chest, Triceps





Dumbbell Chest Flys on Ball

Starting Position

Lie on ball with your legs bent and feet flat. Keep your upper body in a straight line and your hips raised. Hold dumbbells with arms extended upward, elbows slightly bent, palms facing in.

Action

INHALE: Lower dumbbells until elbows are at shoulder height.

EXHALE: Raise the dumbbells up until they meet above chest.

Special Instructions

This is not an exercise for heavy weights. Keeping arms slightly bent will less the stress on the elbow.

Muscles Worked: Chest, Arms





Dumbbell Reverse Flys Lying on Ball

Starting Position

Begin this exercise by placing your body balanced on the Swiss ball at your core with legs straight and toes on the floor. Hold dumbbells to the left and right side of the Swiss ball underneath your shoulders with arms extended.

Action

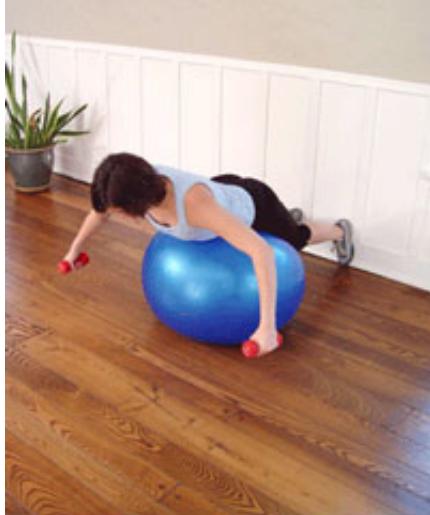
EXHALE: Raise your arms to your side, bringing the dumbbells up to shoulder level height. Keep your arms as straight as possible but do not lock your elbows.

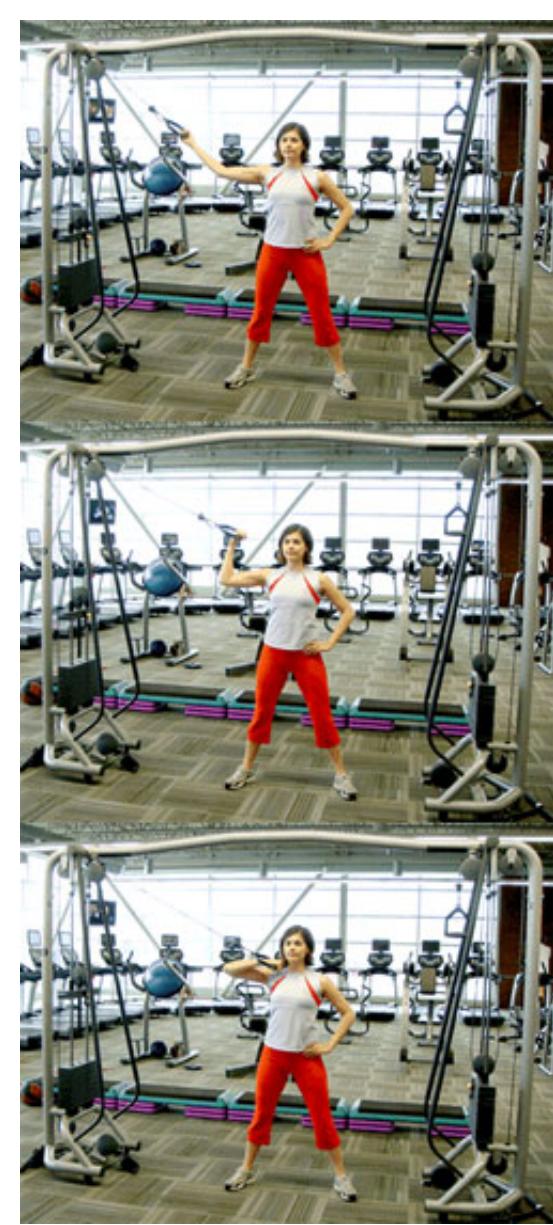
INHALE: Slowly lower the dumbbells back to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

This is not an exercise for heavy weights. Keeping arms slightly bent will less the stress on the elbow.

Muscles Worked: Upper back





Standing Single Arm Biceps Curl on Cable Cross Machine

Starting Position

Select desired weight. Stand near the left side of the cable cross machine and adjust that pulley to the highest position. Place the handle grip attachment onto the pulley's carabiner. Stand with feet wide, back straight, abs engaged, and right hand gripping handle with palm facing upward. Step away from the weight stack until the weight is slightly lifted away from the stack. Bring upper arm parallel to the floor and extend right arm out, placing left hand on hip.

Action

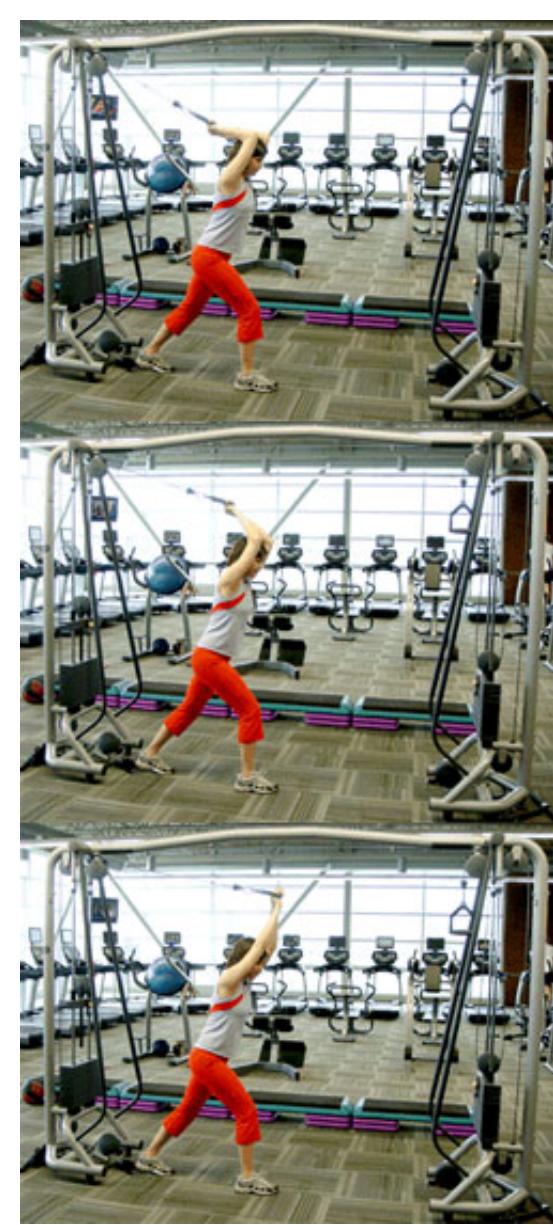
EXHALE: Bend at the elbow to curl the right handle towards your shoulder.

INHALE: Slowly return to the start position to complete one rep. Repeat all reps on this arm and then switch sides.

Special Instructions

Do not lean your body as you lift the weight--keep abs in and stand tall. Keep wrist in line with the forearm and elbow slightly bent when extending to start position.

Muscles Worked: Biceps



Standing Overhead Triceps Pull on Cable Cross Machine

Starting Position

Select desired weight. Stand near the left side of the cable cross machine and adjust that pulley to the highest position. Place the handle grip attachment onto the pulley's carabiner. Stand facing away from the weight stack, with both hands gripping handle, palms facing forward, arms bent (but overhead), feet staggered, back straight and abs engaged. Step forward until the weight is lifted off the stack in this starting position and pitch slightly forward from the waist.

Action

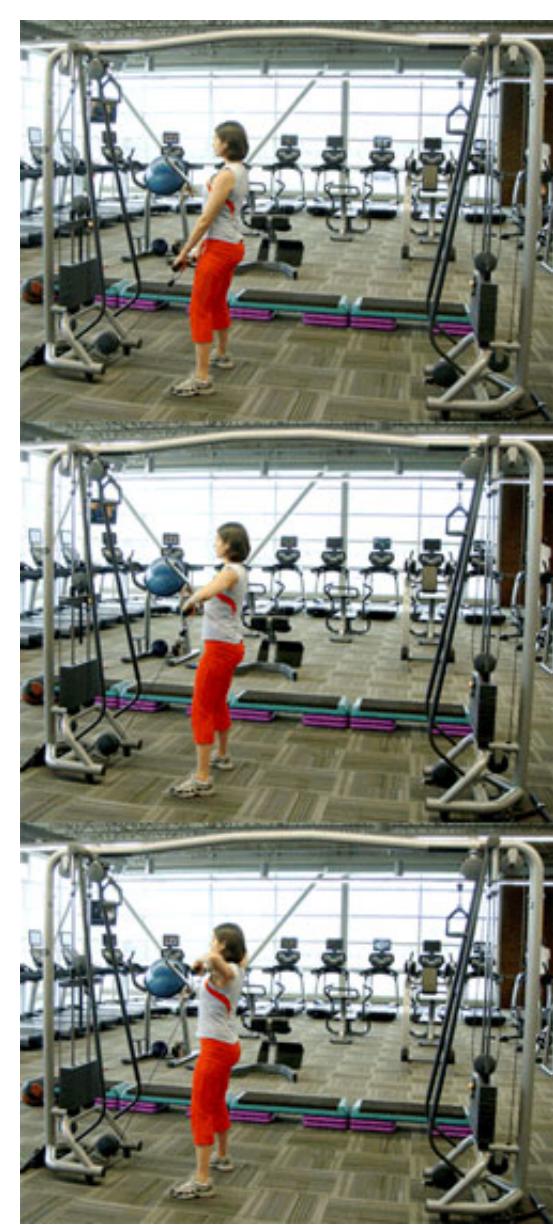
EXHALE: Extend the elbows to lift the weight stack, as if bringing your hands towards the opposite side of the cable cross machine.

INHALE: Slowly bend the elbows to return to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep the upper arms stationary and close to the sides of the head. Keep the elbows pointed forward, not out to the sides.

Muscles Worked: Triceps



Standing Upright Row on Cable Cross Machine

Starting Position

Select desired weight. Stand near left side of cable cross machine and adjust that pulley to the lowest position. Place straight T-bar attachment onto the pulley's carabiner. Stand facing the weight stack with an overhand grip on the bar, arms straight and in front of the thighs, back straight and abs engaged. Step far enough from the weight stack so that the weight is slightly lifted off of the stack in this start position.

Action

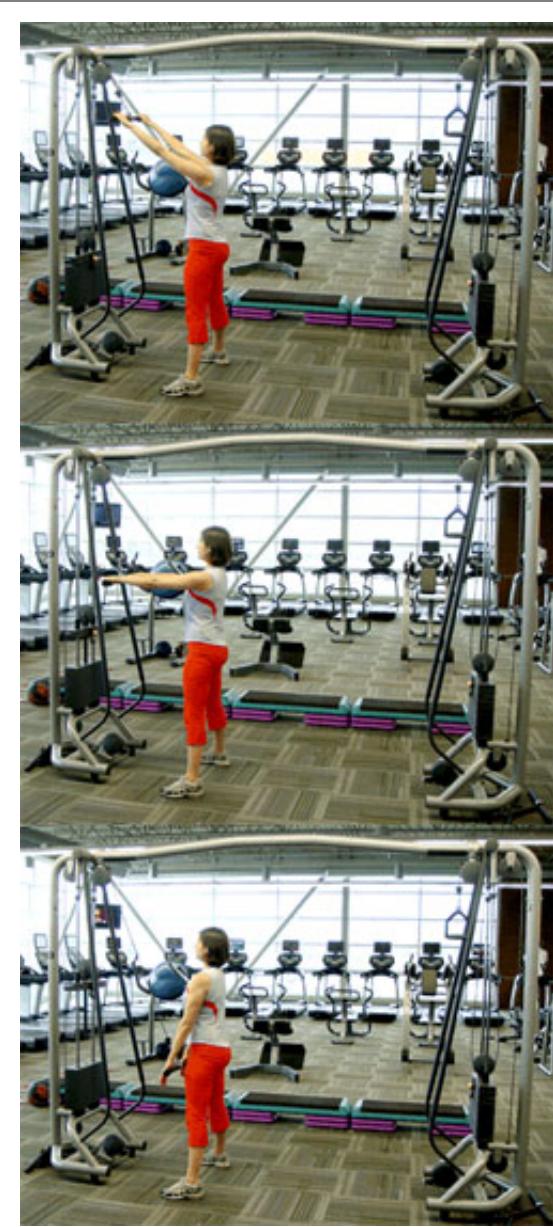
EXHALE: Lift the bar up towards your shoulders, bending the elbows.

INHALE: Slowly return your arms to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

This can be a very dangerous exercise for the shoulder joint. SparkPeople recommends that you practice extreme caution when doing this move, using a light weight, or avoid it entirely.

Muscles Worked: Shoulders



Straight-Arm Lat Pulldown on Cable Cross Machine

Starting Position

Select desired weight. Stand near left side of cable cross machine and adjust that pulley to the highest position. Place straight T-bar attachment onto the pulley's carabiner. Stand facing the weight stack with an overhand grip on the bar, arms reaching straight up to the bar. Keep back straight, feet hip-width apart and abs engaged.

Action

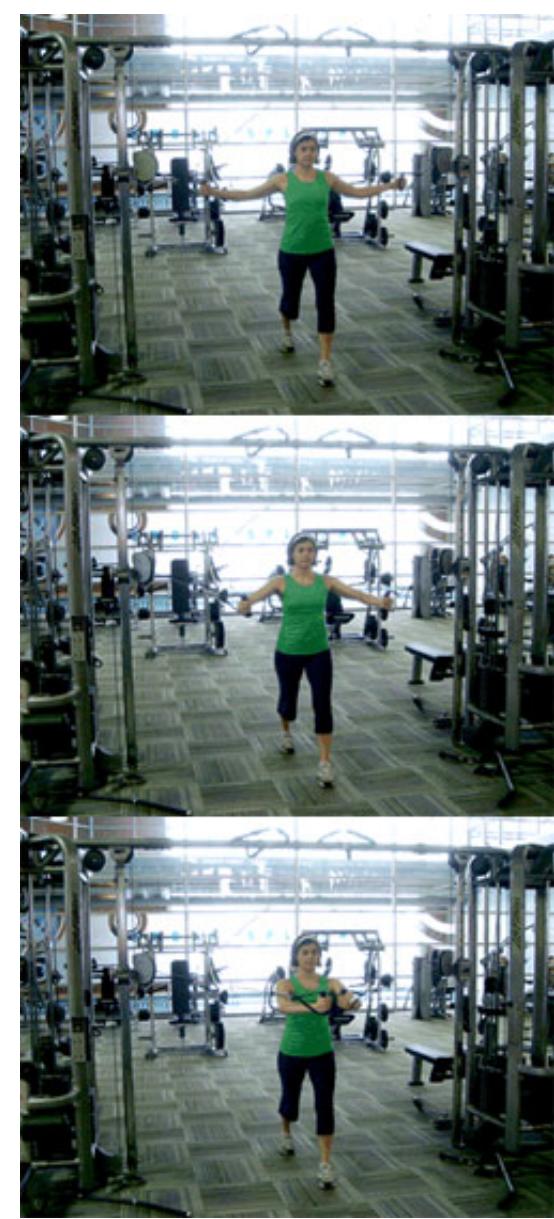
EXHALE: Keep arms straight (but not locked) as you pull the bar down towards the front of the thighs.

INHALE: Slowly return arms back up to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Do not lean back as you lower the bar. For greater balance and stability, stand with feet wider than the hips. Keep elbows just slightly bent throughout movement.

Muscles Worked: Back (*lats*), triceps



Standing Chest Flys on Cable Cross Machine

Starting Position

Select desired weight. Adjust both pulleys to a shoulder-height position. Place the hand grip attachments onto the pulley carabiners. Stand at the center of the cable cross machine, back straight, abs engaged, hand gripping each handle, palms facing outward, arms in line with chest like a "T" and legs staggered one in front of the other.

Action

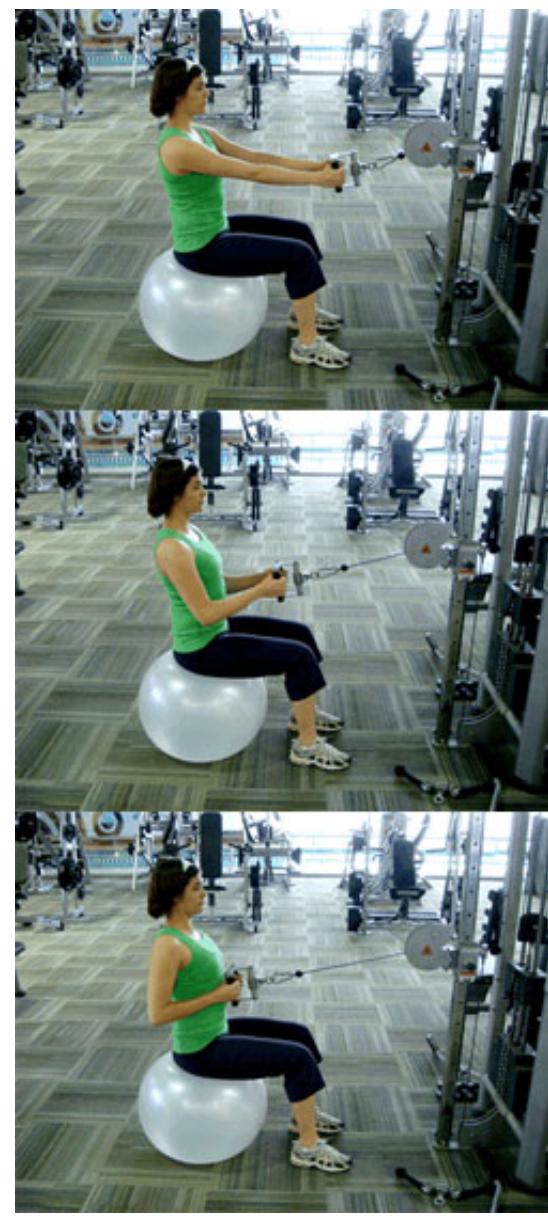
EXHALE: Keeping elbows slightly bent, pull handles in front of chest, as if hugging a large tree in front of you.

INHALE: Slowly return to the start position (without locking elbows) to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep shoulders relaxed away from the ears.

Muscles Worked: Chest



Seated Cable Cross Rows with Stability Ball

Starting Position

Select desired weight. Place close-arm row attachment onto pulley carabiner. Adjust right-side pulley to a middle position (while seated on a ball and arms extended, pulley should be in line with arms). Grip both handles, facing the weight stack, palms facing each other. Sit tall on a stability ball with abs engaged, feet flat on floor, hip-width apart, and knees above ankles. Extend arms in front of body. The weight should be slightly lifted off the stack in this start position.

Action

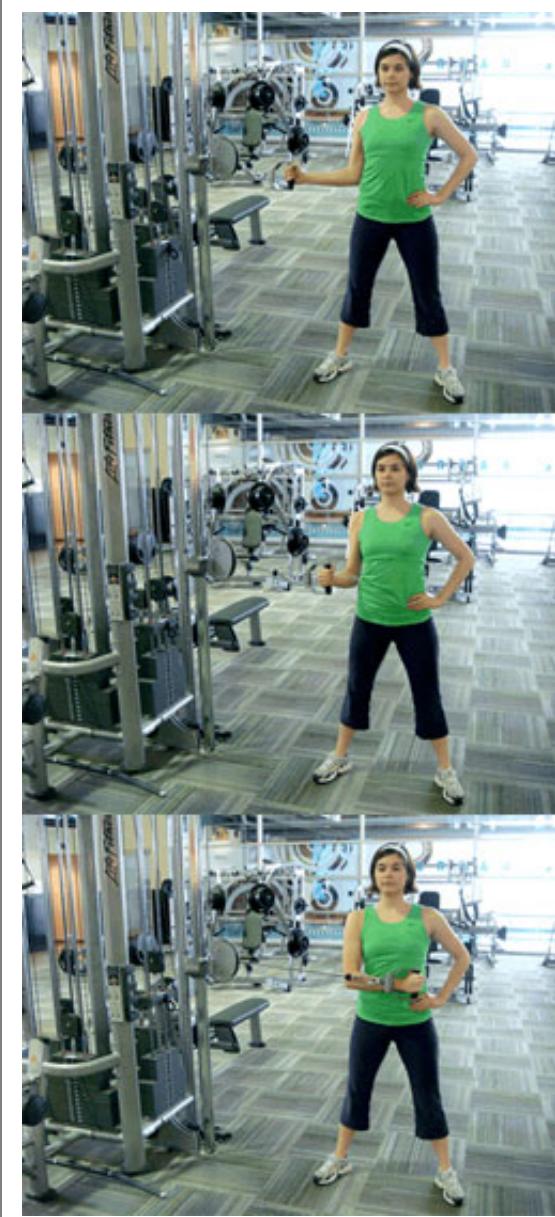
EXHALE: Row the handles towards your ribs, pointing your elbows behind you, keeping your arms close to the sides of the body, and squeezing your shoulder blades together.

INHALE: Slowly return to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Row back with control, not momentum. Keep your balance on the stability ball by engaging your abs and planting your feet. Don't bend at the wrists to row further--keep wrists in line with the forearm.

Muscles Worked: Back



Internal Shoulder Rotation on Cable Cross Machine

Starting Position

Select desired weight. Stand near left side of cable cross machine and adjust that pulley to a middle position (with elbow bent 90 degrees, pulley should be in line with the forearm). Place straight hand grip attachment onto the pulley's carabiner. Grip handle in right hand, palm facing outward, while standing tall, feet wider than hips, abs engaged, and elbow pulled to your side, bent at 90 degrees.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping elbow bent and fixed at the side of the waist, pull the handle across the midline of the body.

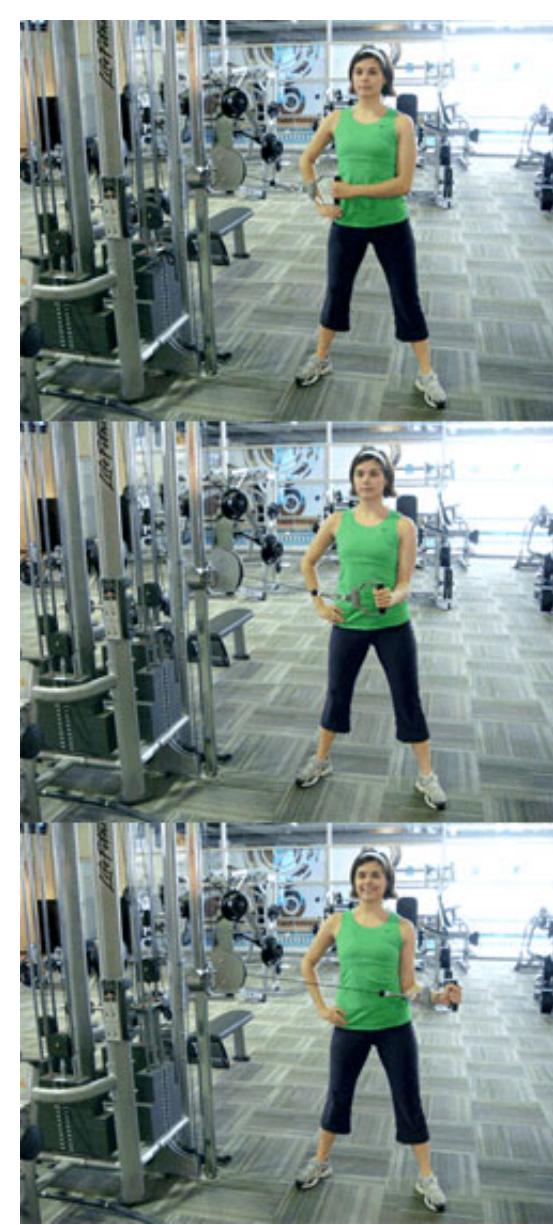
INHALE: Slowly return to the start position to complete one rep.

Finish set on this side and then switch sides.

Special Instructions

Keep shoulders relaxed and body (especially upper arm) still. Start with a very light weight. If you have shoulder problems or former injury, practice extreme caution with this exercise or avoid it entirely.

Muscles Worked: Shoulder (rotator cuff)



External Shoulder Rotation on Cable Cross Machine

Starting Position

Select desired weight. Stand near left side of cable cross machine and adjust that pulley to a middle position (with elbow bent 90 degrees, pulley should be in line with the forearm). Place straight hand grip attachment onto the pulley's carabiner. Grip handle in left hand, palm facing inward, while standing tall, feet wider than hips, abs engaged, and elbow pulled to your side, bent at 90 degrees, left arm across belly.

Action

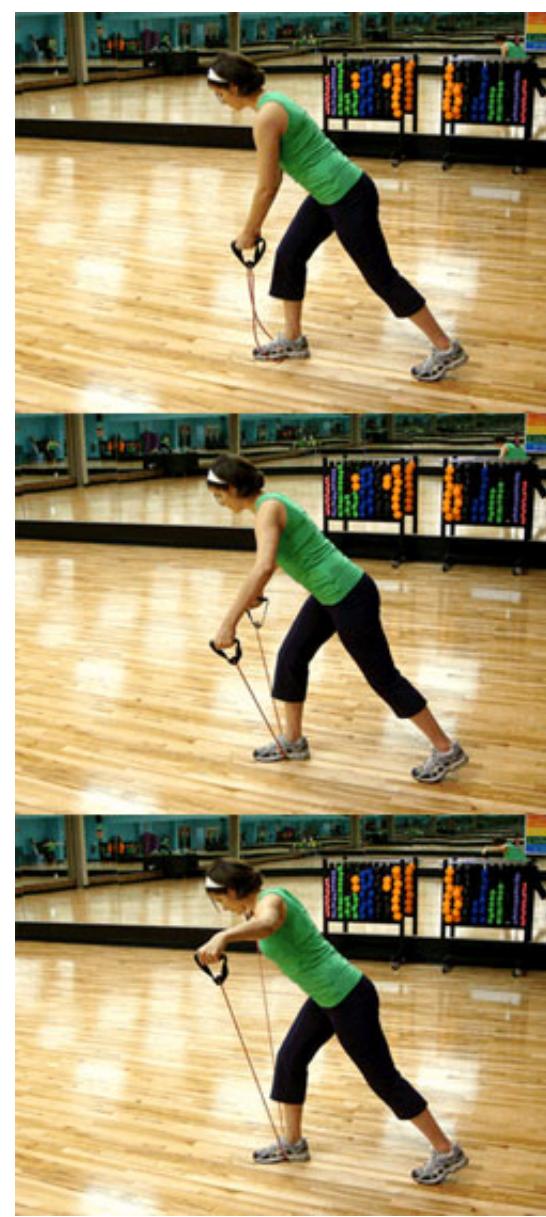
EXHALE: Keeping elbow bent and fixed at the side of the waist, pull the handle out to the left side of the body.

INHALE: Slowly return to the start position to complete one rep. Repeat all reps on this side and then switch sides.

Special Instructions

Keep shoulders relaxed and body (especially upper arm) still. Start with a very light weight. If you have shoulder problems or former injury, practice extreme caution with this exercise or avoid it entirely.

Muscles Worked: Shoulder (rotator cuff)



Reverse Flys with Band

Starting Position

Grab each handle and place one foot on the center of the band, staggering the other foot behind you. Stand tall with back straight, abs engaged, knees soft, and arms extended underneath your shoulders. Bend forward slightly from the waist, bending forward leg and extending back leg.

Action

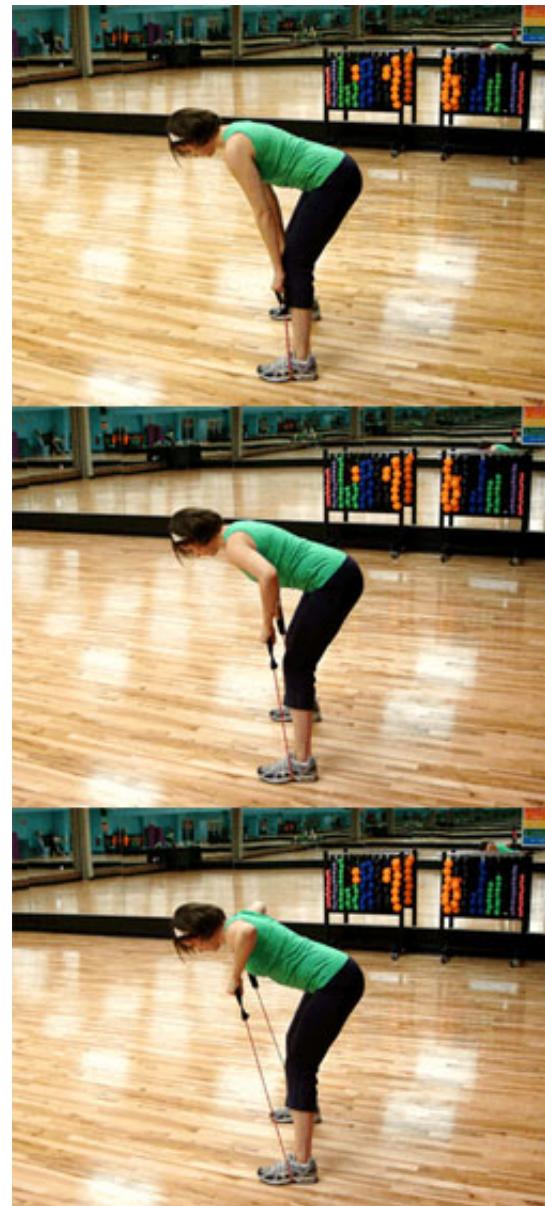
EXHALE: Keeping elbows soft, slowly pull arms out to the sides and up to chest level as you squeeze your shoulder blades together.

INHALE: Slowly return back to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Do not arch or round the back. Keep the abs engaged to protect your lower back. Keep wrists straight and in line with the forearms. Make it harder: Stand on the band with both legs, placing them wider than the hips (closer to handles) for more resistance.

Muscles Worked: Upper back



Bent Over Rows with Band

Starting Position

Grab each handle and place feet on band, hip-width apart, toes forward. Stand tall with back straight, abs engaged, and knees soft. Bend forward from the waist with a flat back, arms extended under the shoulders, palms facing the body.

Action

EXHALE: Row the handles towards your chest, bringing the elbows up towards the ceiling and squeezing your shoulder blades together.

INHALE: Slowly return to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Do not arch or round the back. Keep the abs engaged to protect your lower back. Keep wrists straight and in line with the forearms. If you can't bend parallel to the floor with a flat back, only bend as far forward as you can with a straight back. Make it easier: Bring legs closer together (closer to center of band) for less resistance. Make it harder: Place legs wider (closer to handles) to increase resistance.

Muscles Worked: *Upper back, shoulders*



Biceps Curls on Cable Cross Machine

Starting Position

Select desired weight. Stand near right side of cable cross machine, and adjust that pulley to the lowest position. Place straight T-bar attachment onto the pulley's carabiner. Stand facing the weight stack with an underhand grip on the bar, arms straight and in front of the thighs, back straight and abs engaged and feet staggered one in front of the other. Step far enough from the weight stack so that the weight is slightly lifted off of the stack when in this start position.

Action

EXHALE: Bend at the elbow to curl your hands towards your shoulders.

INHALE: Slowly straighten the elbow to return to start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Do not lean back when lifting the weight--try to stand tall. Keep your wrists in line with the forearm. Keep your upper arms glued to the sides of the body so that they do not move.

Muscles Worked: Biceps



Reverse Grip Triceps Pulldown on Cable Cross Machine

Starting Position

Select desired weight. Stand near right side of cable cross machine, and adjust that pulley to the highest position. Place straight T-bar attachment onto the pulley's carabiner. Stand facing the weight stack with an underhand grip on the bar, arms bent, elbows at your sides, back straight, abs engaged and feet staggered one in front of the other. Step far enough from the weight stack so that the weight is slightly lifted off of the stack when in this start position.

Action

EXHALE: Straighten at the elbows to pull the handlebar down towards the front of the thighs.

INHALE: Slowly return to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep upper arms perfectly still--the only movement should occur at the elbow as it bends and straightens. Make sure the wrists stay in line with the forearm.

Muscles Worked: Triceps, forearms



Traditional Lat Pulldown Machine

Starting Position

Follow machine instructions for set up and select desired weight. Sit so that knees are under pad, feet are flat on floor. Grab the bar, placing hands wider than the shoulders, palms facing forward. Engage abs, keep spine straight, and lean backward just slightly.

Action

EXHALE: Pull the bar down towards your chest by bending the elbows.

INHALE: Slowly release the bar overhead by straightening at the elbows to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Never pull the bar behind your head. When leaning back, make sure spine is straight. When returning to start position, make sure elbows do not lock. Adjust placement on hands on bar if necessary (a closer grip is easier; a wider grip is more challenging).

Muscles Worked: Back (*lats*)





Leaning Pull-ups on Smith Machine

Starting Position

Not pictured: Adjust height of barbell so that it is at or below chest level when standing. Lock the bar in that position on the Smith machine. Face the machine and place hands shoulder-width apart on the bar, with an overhand grip. Place feet on the other side of the bar and lower yourself into the start position (pictured). Straighten arms, legs, and back and engage the abs.

Action

EXHALE: Bend the elbows to bring your chest towards the bar, keeping legs and back straight.

INHALE: Slowly straighten arms to return to start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep head and neck in a neutral position, and avoid locking knee and elbow joints. If you have a weak grip (i.e. weak wrists), do not attempt this exercise.

Muscles Worked: *Upper back*



Balance Board Pushups

Starting Position

Begin by kneeling on a mat with your knees together, hands on top of a balance board, and arms directly beneath your shoulders (not pictured). Extend one leg at a time until you are balanced on the balls of the feet in the start ("up") position of a pushup. Make sure your abs are engaged and your body forms a straight line from the shoulders to the hip, knee and ankles.

Action

INHALE: Bend the elbows as you slowly lower your entire body--not just the chest--toward the ground. **EXHALE:** Straighten the arms and push back up to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep your abs engaged and your spine neutral. Look at the floor about a foot in front of you to help maintain a neutral head and neck position. Make sure you are able to maintain a straight line with the body while lowering toward the floor. Don't lock out the elbows completely at the top. Only lower as far as you can in good form.

Muscles Worked: Chest, shoulders, triceps, abs



Staggered Pushups on Balance Board

Starting Position

Begin by kneeling on a mat (not pictured) with your legs together, hands about shoulder-width apart and directly beneath your shoulders, and one hand on top of a balance board. Extend one leg at a time until you are balanced on the balls of the feet in the start ("up") position of a pushup. Make sure your abs are engaged and your body forms a straight line from the shoulders to the hip, knee and ankles.

Action

INHALE: Bend the elbows as you slowly lower your entire body--not just the chest--toward the ground. **EXHALE:** Straighten the arms and push back up to the start position to complete one rep. After one set, switch the balance board placement to the other side to perform another set.

Special Instructions

Keep your abs engaged and your spine neutral. Look at the floor about a foot in front of you to help maintain a neutral head and neck position. Make sure you are able to maintain a straight line with the body while lowering toward the floor. Don't lock out the elbows completely at the top. Only lower as far as you can in good form.

Muscles Worked: Chest, shoulders, triceps, abs



Staggered Pushups on Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Begin by kneeling on a mat (not pictured) with your legs together, hands about shoulder-width apart and directly beneath your shoulders, and one hand on top of a medicine ball. Extend one leg at a time until you are balanced on the balls of the feet in the start ("up") position of a pushup. Make sure your abs are engaged and your body forms a straight line from the shoulders to the hip, knee and ankles.

Action

INHALE: Bend the elbows as you slowly lower your entire body--not just the chest--toward the ground. **EXHALE:** Straighten the arms and push back up to the starting position to complete one rep. After one set, switch the medicine ball placement to the other side to perform another set.

Special Instructions

Keep your abs engaged and your spine neutral. Look at the floor about a foot in front of you to help maintain a neutral head and neck position. Make sure you are able to maintain a straight line with the body while lowering toward the floor. Don't lock out the elbows completely at the top. Only lower as far as you can in good form.

Muscles Worked: Chest, shoulders, triceps, abs



Triceps Dips on Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Sit on the floor with a medicine ball behind your back, knees bent, feet flat and shoulders relaxed. Place your hands onto the top/sides of the ball and straighten your arms until your hips are off the floor (pictured).

Action

INHALE: Keeping knees bent, feet flat and back straight, bend your elbows to lower your hips toward the floor. EXHALE: Straighten the elbows to push back up to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep your shoulders away from your ears and try to keep the ball as still as possible. Make sure your arms stay close to the sides of your torso and your elbows point behind you as you lower into the dip position.

Make it easier: Position your feet closer to your body.

Muscles Worked: Triceps



Lying Chest Toss with Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Lie on a stability ball (pictured) or bench (not pictured) with your feet flat, knees directly above the ankles, abs tight, and head and neck supported in a neutral position. Grip a medicine ball with both hands and hold it just above your chest, elbows bent and pointed out to the sides.

Action

EXHALE: Like a bench or chest press, push the ball straight up (in line with the chest) and toss it into the air above you. **INHALE:** Catch the ball and lower it back down to your chest to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Practice extreme caution with this exercise, which requires good hand-eye coordination. Try it with a light or unweighted ball first and gradually progress to a heavier ball. Try to toss and catch the ball in line with the chest (not overhead or near your abdomen) as much as possible.

Muscles Worked: Chest



Partner Chest Toss with Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Stand face-to-face with a partner, at least 6 feet apart. Place your feet hip-width apart or stagger one foot in front of the other (for more stability). One person holds the medicine ball (or unweighted ball) in front of the chest, keeping elbows bent.

Action

EXHALE: Keep your body still and push the ball forward and toss it to your partner. **INHALE:** Catch your partner's toss in front of your chest and return to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Practice extreme caution with this exercise, which requires good hand-eye coordination. Try it with a light or unweighted ball first and gradually progress to a heavier ball. Try to toss and catch the ball in line with the chest (not overhead or near your abdomen) as much as possible.

Muscles Worked: Chest



Partner Triceps Toss with Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Stand face-to-face with a partner, at least 6 feet apart. Place your feet hip-width apart or stagger one foot in front of the other (for more stability). One person holds the medicine ball (or unweighted ball) overhead with elbows bent.

Action

EXHALE: Keep your body still and extend your elbows to press the ball overhead and toss it overhead to your partner. **INHALE:** Bring your hands in front of you to catch your partner's toss in front of your chest to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Practice extreme caution with this exercise, which requires good hand-eye coordination. Try it with a light or unweighted ball first and gradually progress to a heavier ball.

Muscles Worked: *Triceps*





Pushups on Foam Roller

Starting Position

Kneel on a mat with a foam roller in front of you (not pictured). Place your hands on the roller, shoulder-width apart, arms straight. Engage your abs and extend one leg at a time to come up to a pushup position so that your shoulders, hips and knees form a straight line.

Action

INHALE: Maintaining a straight line with your body, bend the elbows (to point behind you) and lower your body toward the floor.
EXHALE: Straighten the arms to push back up to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Only lower toward the floor as far as you can while maintaining a straight line with the body. Keep your head and neck in a neutral position. Keep the arms close to the sides of the body. Keep the legs close together or no wider than hip-width apart.

Muscles Worked: Triceps, chest, shoulders



Standing Chest Stretch

Starting Position

Stand tall or sit upright (not pictured). Interlace your fingers behind your back and straighten your arms.

Action

With arms straight, lift arms up behind you while keeping your back straight and your shoulders down. Keep the shoulders relaxed away from the ears.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Straighten but do not lock elbow.

Muscles Stretched: *Chest, shoulders, biceps*



Standing Shoulder Stretch

Starting Position

Stand tall or sit upright (not pictured).

Action

Bring your left arm across your chest, holding it below the elbow with your opposite. Keep the shoulders relaxed away from the ears.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Straighten but do not lock elbow.

Muscles Stretched:Shoulder and arm



Standing Triceps Stretch

Starting Position

Stand tall or sit upright (not pictured). Place your left elbow in your right hand.

Action

Reach your left arm overhead, placing palm on the center of your back and supporting the elbow in your right hand. Reach your fingertips down your spine. Keep the shoulders relaxed away from the ears.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce.

Muscles Stretched: Triceps



Neck Stretch

Starting Position

Begin in a seated position with your legs crossed or in the butterfly position.

Action

Bring your left ear down towards your left shoulder and hold. Roll your head down towards the ground and bring your chin to your chest. Hold and finally, roll your head to the right and bring that ear to your right shoulder. Inhale and exhale in a slow and controlled manner. Repeat twice.

Special Instructions

For a deeper stretch, extend the opposite arm down towards the ground and hold. You should be relaxing your neck muscles and using the weight of your head for this stretch. Do not attempt to force your head lower with your neck muscles or your hands. Stop immediately if you feel any discomfort.



Torso Stretch

Starting Position

This exercise is performed in a seated position with the legs crossed or in the butterfly position.

Action

Clasp hands together and slowly raise them above your head towards the ceiling. Reach as high as you can while inhaling deeply and hold for 20-30 seconds. Bring your hands down slowly while letting out your breath. Repeat this stretch twice.

Special Instructions

Be sure to stay relaxed, being mindful of your breathing.



Standing Wrist/Biceps Stretch

Starting Position

Stand tall or sit upright (not pictured). Extend left arm in front of you, palm facing outward and fingertips pointing downward.

Action

Use your right hand to apply light pressure to the hand, as if pulling your fingertips towards your elbow. Keep the shoulders relaxed away from the ears.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Straighten but do not lock elbow.

Muscles Stretched: *Wrist, forearm, biceps*



Standing Wrist/Forearm Stretch

Starting Position

Stand tall or sit upright (not pictured). Extend left arm in front of you, palm facing outward and fingertips pointing upward.

Action

Use your right hand to apply light pressure to the hand, as if pulling your fingertips towards your shoulder. Keep the shoulders relaxed away from the ears.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Straighten but do not lock elbow.

Muscles Stretched:Wrist, forearm, biceps



Triangle Pose

Starting Position

Stand tall with back straight, feet wider than the hips, and arms in line with the shoulders (like a "T"), palms down. Turn your right toes out to the side and your left toes pointed forward.

Action

Lean to the right as if reaching your right fingertips towards the right wall. From there, bend at the side of the waist, allowing your right hand to fall naturally, resting on your knee, shin, ankle or the floor.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Keep your arms long and open your chest towards the wall in front of you.

Muscles Stretched: Hips, hamstrings, calves, shoulders, chest



Side Mermaid Stretch

Starting Position

Sit on the floor, both knees bent, with your left leg in front and your right leg behind you. Lengthen your spine and place your fingertips on the floor at your sides.

Action

Lift your left arm up in line with the shoulder as you bend laterally towards the right side as if bringing your right shoulder towards your right hip.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Keep your head and neck in line with the spine, your shoulders relaxed, and your arms lengthened.

Muscles Stretched: Obliques, shoulders, inner thighs

Lying Abs Stretch

Starting Position

Lie flat on your back with your legs extended and your arms stretched overhead.

Action

Relax the abs and imagine stretching through the center of your body, reaching your toes and fingertips towards opposite sides of the room.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Don't allow your lower back to arch off of the mat.

Muscles Stretched: Abs, shoulders



Child's pose

Starting Position

Come to hands and knees with your hands shoulder-width apart, knees hip-width apart, abs engaged, and back flat (spine neutral).

Action

Keep your knees and ankles separated and the tops of your feet on the floor as you shift your weight back over your heels, lengthening your spine, relaxing your head and neck, and reaching forward through your fingertips.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Keep the shoulders relaxed away from your ears. This is a good compliment to "Upward Dog" stretch.

Muscles Stretched:Back, quads



Upward dog

Starting Position

Lie flat on your stomach with your legs extended. Place the palms of your hands directly under the shoulders, fingertips pointing forward.

Action

Slowly straighten your arms, pushing your chest and torso away from the floor beneath you. Relax your abdominals and pull the shoulders away from the ears. Look slightly upward towards the ceiling.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Reduce the intensity of this stretch by not straightening the arms as much (or by placing your elbows on the floor instead of your hands). This is a good compliment to "Child's Pose" stretch.

Muscles Stretched: Abs

Cat Stretch

Starting Position

Come to hands and knees with your hands shoulder-width apart, knees hip-width apart, abs engaged, and back flat (spine neutral).

Action

Engage your abdominals as if pulling your navel towards your spine and round your back towards the ceiling. Allow the head and neck to fall naturally between the arms.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Keep the abdominals pulled in tightly and your pelvic bone slightly tucked under. Pull your shoulders away from your ears. This is a good compliment to the "Camel Stretch."

Muscles Stretched: Back

Camel Stretch

Starting Position

Come to hands and knees with your hands shoulder-width apart, knees hip-width apart, abs engaged, and back flat (spine neutral).

Action

Relax the abdominals as if dropping your belly towards the floor beneath you, arching your back, tilting your pelvic bone back and lifting your chest. Look towards the ceiling without straining your neck.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Pull your shoulders away from your ears. This is a good compliment to the "Cat Stretch."

Muscles Stretched: Abs



Myofascial Upper Back Release

Starting Position

Place a foam roller under your shoulder blades and lie on your back with your elbows bent, hands under the head and neck for support, knees bent, feet hip-width apart, hips on the mat (not pictured) and shoulders relaxed. Carefully bridge your hips off the floor to balance your weight between your feet on the floor and your back on the roller. Allow the weight of your body to relax onto the roller.

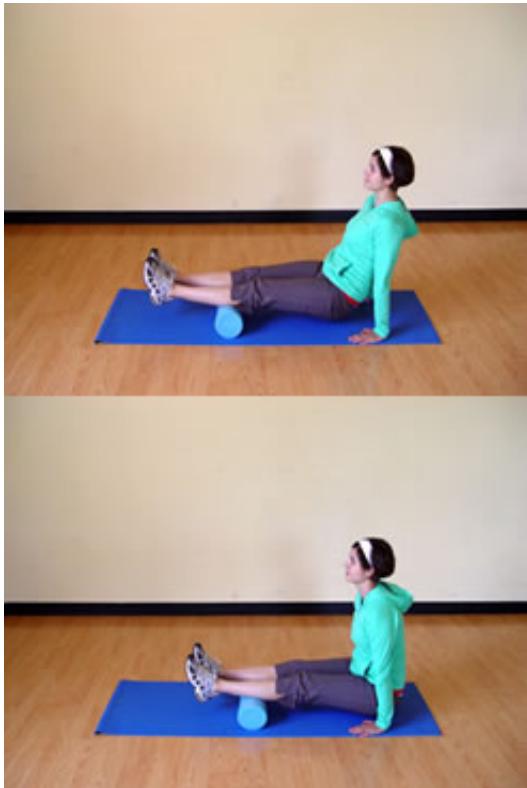
Action

Breathe steadily as you shift your weight forward and back, allowing the foam roller to move up and down your upper back. Repeat several times and notice as tension leaves your back.

Special Instructions

As you move the roller up and down by shifting your weight forward and back, find tight and sore areas of your back and hold those positions to help decrease tension. Keep your head supported in your hands at all times. Keep your belly pulled in tight and your glutes squeezed to help maintain the bridge position.

Muscles Released: Upper back



Myofascial Calf Release

Starting Position

Sit on the floor and place a foam roller under the back of calves; lower your legs onto the roller (not pictured). With your palms flat on the floor beneath your shoulders and fingers pointing forward, straighten your arms and legs, lifting your hips off the floor so that you are balancing your weight on the foam roller (under your calves) and your hands. Keep the shoulders relaxed away from the ears. Allow the weight of your body to relax onto the roller.

Action

Breathe steadily as you shift your weight forward and back, allowing the foam roller to move up and down on the back of your calves from your ankles to your knees. Repeat several times and notice as tension leaves your calves.

Special Instructions

As you move the roller up and down by shifting your weight forward and back, find tight and sore areas of your calves and hold those positions to help decrease tension. Keep your abdominals and glutes engaged. Resist the pull of gravity with strong arms and a long back. Don't roll past your knee.

Muscles Released: Calves



Myofascial Lower Back Release

Starting Position

Sit on the floor with your knees bent, feet flat, legs hip-width apart and a foam roller on the floor behind your back (not pictured). Lean into the roller with your lower back as you place your elbows (bent at 90 degrees) directly underneath your shoulders. Keep the shoulders relaxed away from the ears. Allow the weight of your body to relax onto the roller.

Action

Breathe steadily as you shift your weight forward and back, allowing the foam roller to move up and down on your lower back. Repeat several times and notice as tension leaves your back.

Special Instructions

As you move the roller up and down by shifting your weight forward and back, find tight and sore areas of your back and hold those positions to help decrease tension. Keep your abdominals and glutes engaged and your shoulders away from your ears.

Muscles Released: Lower back



Myofascial Neck Release

Starting Position

Place a foam roller under your neck and lie on your back with your arms relaxed, back flat, knees bent, feet hip-width apart and shoulders relaxed. Allow the weight of your head to relax onto the roller.

Action

Breathe steadily as you turn your head side to side. Repeat several times and enjoy the stretch and massage on your neck.

Special Instructions

You can adjust the position of the roller up or down to find tight or sore areas of the neck and perform this exercise to help release them.

Muscles Released: Neck





Standing IT Band Stretch

Starting Position

Stand tall with your legs together, arms relaxed and back straight. Step your left leg behind your right leg, toes pointing forward and legs straight. Put your right hand on your hip and reach your left arm up in line with the shoulder (not pictured).

Action

Breathe slowly and steadily as you push your hips toward the left and reach your left arm overhead and to the right. Hold the stretch for 10-30 seconds. Switch sides.

Special Instructions

For a deeper stretch, keep your feet farther apart, bend the knee of your front leg and keep the back knee straight. Keep your shoulders relaxed.



Seated Butterfly Stretch

Starting Position

Sit on the floor, back straight, shoulders down, abs engaged, soles of the feet together in front of you, and knees bent to the sides.

Action

Pull your heels towards you while simultaneously relaxing your knees towards the floor.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Do not push your thighs down to the floor with your hands.

Muscles Stretched: *Inner thighs, hips*



Standing Advanced Forward Bend

Starting Position

Stand tall with back straight, abs engaged, shoulders down, and legs together.

Action

Bend forward, reaching your hands towards the floor in front of your toes as if folding your body in half at the waist. Concentrate on lengthening the legs and lifting your hips towards the ceiling.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds.

Special Instructions

Make sure you master the "Standing Modified Forward Bend" before trying this deeper stretch. Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Straighten but do not lock the knee of your forward leg. Keep your abs engaged to protect your lower back. Keep head and neck in line with the spine.

Muscles Stretched: Hamstrings, back



Standing Quad Stretch

Starting Position

Stand tall, holding onto a chair or wall for balance if necessary (not pictured). Keep your feet hip-width apart, your back straight and your feet parallel.

Action

Reach back and grab your left foot in your left hand, keeping your thighs lined up next to each other and left leg in line with the hip (not pulled back behind you).

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Straighten but do not lock the knee of your standing leg. If you are too inflexible to keep your knees next to each other, allow the bent leg to come forward slightly and gradually progress to a position where the thigh of the bent leg is perpendicular to the floor.

Muscles Stretched: Thighs (quads), hips



Gluteal and Outer Thigh Stretch

Starting Position

This stretch is performed in a sitting position with your legs out in front of you.

Action

Cross one leg over the other so that your foot is perpendicular to your quad. Use your elbow for leverage to stretch looking away from the upright knee. Perform this exercise slowly alternating legs. Repeat twice for each leg.

Special Instructions

Do not lean too far back, your torso should be near (but not quite) in a perpendicular position to the floor.



Standing Modified Hamstring Stretch

Starting Position

Stand tall with back straight, abs engaged, shoulders down, and feet hip-width apart. Bring your left leg forward, heel down, toes up and leg straight.

Action

Keeping back straight and abs engaged, bend the right knee as if sitting back, while supporting yourself with both hands on your thighs.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Straighten but do not lock the knee of your forward leg. Keep back straight--do not arch or round the back-- and chest lifted.

Muscles Stretched: Hamstrings, glutes



Standing Advanced Hamstring Stretch

Starting Position

Stand tall with back straight, abs engaged, shoulders down, and feet hip-width apart. Bring your left leg forward, heel down, toes up and leg straight. Keeping back straight and abs engaged, bend the right knee as if sitting back, while supporting yourself with both hands on your thighs.

Action

Slowly reach forward, bringing your hands towards your left foot as your torso collapses over your straight leg.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Make sure you master the "Standing Modified Hamstring Stretch" before trying this deeper stretch. Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Straighten but do not lock the knee of your forward leg. Keep your abs engaged to protect your lower back.

Muscles Stretched: Hamstrings, glutes, back



Standing Modified Forward Bend

Starting Position

Stand tall with back straight, abs engaged, shoulders down, and legs together.

Action

Bend forward, placing your hands on your thighs until back is flat. Concentrate on lengthening the legs and lifting your hips towards the ceiling.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Straighten but do not lock the knee of your forward leg. Keep your abs engaged to protect your lower back. Bend knees if necessary to reduce the intensity of this stretch.

Muscles Stretched: Hamstrings



Wide-Leg Modified Hamstring Stretch

Starting Position

Stand tall with back straight, feet wider than the hips, and arms at your sides. Turn from the waist to face your right leg.

Action

Bend forward from the waist, placing your hands on your right thigh for support, until your back is flat. Think of reaching your chin out towards the floor in front of your right foot.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Keep your abs engaged to protect your back. Bend your knees, if necessary, to decrease the intensity of this stretch.

Muscles Stretched: Hamstrings, hips



Wide-Leg Advanced Hamstring Stretch

Starting Position

Stand tall with back straight, feet wider than the hips, and arms at your sides. Turn from the waist to face your right leg.

Action

Slowly bend forward from the waist, bringing your hands towards your right foot as your torso collapses over your leg.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Make sure you master the "Wide-Leg Modified Hamstring Stretch" before trying this deeper stretch. Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Keep your abs engaged to protect your back.

Muscles Stretched: Hamstrings, hips, back



Inner Thigh Squat Stretch

Starting Position

Stand tall with back straight, feet wider than the hips, toes turned out, abs engaged and arms at your sides.

Action

Slowly bend the knees, squatting straight down, hands supported on your thighs, until you feel a stretch through the inner thighs.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Keep your shoulders relaxed and your back straight. Don't allow your knees to move past your toes (if that happens, take feet out wider).

Muscles Stretched: *Inner thighs, hips*



Wide-Leg Modified Forward Bend

Starting Position

Stand tall with back straight, feet wider than the hips, toes turned out, abs engaged and arms at your sides.

Action

Keeping the legs straight and the abs engaged, slowly bend forward from the waist until you fingertips reach the floor--ideally, with your back in a flat position. Think about reaching your chin out towards the floor in front of you.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Keep your abs in to protect your back. Keep your back straight--don't round or arch.

Muscles Stretched: Hamstrings



Wide-Leg Advanced Forward Bend

Starting Position

Stand tall with back straight, feet wider than the hips, toes turned out, abs engaged and arms at your sides.

Action

Keeping the legs straight and the abs engaged, slowly bend forward from the waist until you fingertips reach the floor--ideally, with your back in a flat position. From there, stretch deeper, as if your body is folding in half at the waist, allowing your elbows to bend and your head to relax towards the floor beneath you.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds.

Special Instructions

Make sure you master the "Wide-Leg Modified Forward Bend" before trying this deeper stretch. Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Keep your abs in to protect your back.

Muscles Stretched: Hamstrings, back



Torso Twist Stretch

Starting Position

Sit on the floor, back straight, shoulders down, abs engaged, and legs extended in front of you. Bend right knee to place foot flat on the floor.

Action

Wrap your left arm around your right leg and twist to your right side, supporting yourself by placing your right hand behind you.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Keep shoulders relaxed and back straight. For a deeper stretch (not pictured) place the right foot on the other side of your left knee.

Muscles Stretched: Glutes, hips, core



Seated Hip & Glute Stretch

Starting Position

Sit on the floor, back straight, shoulders down, abs engaged, palms on the floor behind you, arms straight, and knees bent with feet flat on the floor.

Action

Lean back slightly from the waist, keeping back straight, and cross your right ankle at your left knee.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Keep shoulders relaxed and back straight. For a deeper stretch, place your left heel closer to your body. To reduce intensity of this stretch, place your left foot farther away from your body.

Muscles Stretched: Glutes, hips



Seated Forward Bend

Starting Position

Sit on the floor, back straight, shoulders down, abs engaged, and legs extended in front of you.

Action

Bend forward from the waist, reaching your hands towards your toes. Imaging reaching your chin towards your toes in front of you (not towards your legs).

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Keep shoulders relaxed and back straight. To reduce the intensity of this stretch, bend the knees slightly.

Muscles Stretched: Hamstrings, back



Lying Single Knee Hug

Starting Position

Lie on your back with your legs extended and your back straight. Keep your hips level and your lower back down on the floor.

Action

Bend your right knee and hug your knee towards your chest, placing hands on your right leg.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Try to keep your hips down and your shoulders relaxed.

Muscles Stretched: *Hips, lower back*



Lying Hip & Glute Stretch

Starting Position

Lie on your back with your legs extended and your back straight. Keep your hips level and your lower back down on the floor. Bend your right knee towards your chest, grabbing it with your left hand. Place your right hand out to the side.

Action

Keeping your shoulder blades square (on the mat) use your left hand to guide your right knee across your body and towards the floor on your left side.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Keep your shoulders on the mat. Don't force your knee to the floor if your flexibility does not allow it.

Muscles Stretched: Glutes, hips, lower back



Lying Hamstring Stretch

Starting Position

Lie on your back with your legs extended and your back straight. Keep your hips level and your lower back down on the floor. Bend your right knee towards your chest, keeping your left leg extended on the floor.

Action

Slowly straighten your right knee, grabbing the back of your leg with both hands. Pull your leg towards your gently while keeping both hips on the floor.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Keep your hips down on the mat. Try to keep leg as straight as possible, only pulling closer to you if your flexibility allows. To reduce the intensity of this stretch, bend the knee of the stretching leg.

Muscles Stretched: Hamstrings

Seated Cross-Legged Forward Bend

Starting Position

Sit tall with back straight and legs crossed naturally in front of you. Place your palms on the floor in front of your legs.

Action

Allow the spine to curve naturally as you walk your hands forward, relaxing the head and neck. Relax the shoulders down.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. To reduce the intensity of this stretch, don't walk hands as far forward and/or keep your back straight with your head lifted.

Muscles Stretched: Hips, hamstrings, back



Seated Side Hurdler Stretch

Starting Position

Sit tall with your back straight, shoulders down, abs engaged, and legs extended like a "V" in front of you. Bend your left knee, placing the sole of your foot next to your inner right thigh. Place your left hand on your lower back for support.

Action

Bend laterally from the waist (as if bringing your right underarm towards your right thigh), reaching your right hand towards your right foot.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Keep shoulders relaxed and your head and neck in line with the spine. Never bend your other leg behind the body--always keep it in front of you.

Muscles Stretched: Hamstrings, inner thighs, obliques



Seated Modified Hurdler Stretch

Starting Position

Sit tall with your back straight, shoulders down, abs engaged, and legs extended like a "V" in front of you. Bend your left knee, placing the sole of your foot next to your inner right thigh. Rotate your torso to face your right leg.

Action

Bend forward from the waist, reaching your hands towards your toes. Imagine reaching your chin towards your toes in front of you (not towards your legs).

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Keep shoulders relaxed, back straight, and chest lifted. To reduce the intensity of this stretch, bend the right knee slightly.

Muscles Stretched: Hamstrings, hips, inner thighs



Seated Advanced Hurdler Stretch

Starting Position

Sit tall with your back straight, shoulders down, abs engaged, and legs extended like a "V" in front of you. Bend your left knee, placing the sole of your foot next to your inner right thigh. Rotate your torso to face your right leg.

Action

Bend forward from the waist, reaching your hands towards your toes. Allow your torso to collapse over your leg.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Make sure you master the "Seated Modified Hurdler Stretch" before trying this deeper stretch. Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Keep shoulders relaxed.

Muscles Stretched: Hamstrings, hips, inner thighs, back



Lying Double Knee Hug

Starting Position

Lie on your back with your legs extended and your back straight. Keep your hips level and your lower back down on the floor.

Action

Bend both knees towards your chest, placing hands across your knees or shins.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Try to keep your hips down and your shoulders relaxed.

Muscles Stretched: Hips, lower back



Lying Hip & Glute Hug

Starting Position

Lie on your back with your legs extended and your back straight. Keep your hips level and your lower back down on the floor. Bend your left knee, placing left foot flat on the floor (not pictured). Cross your right ankle at your left knee.

Action

Grab the back of your left thigh and hug your legs towards your chest. Place your right elbow on the inner portion of your right knee and push it slightly to the side.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Keep your hips down on the mat. To reduce the intensity of this stretch, don't bring your legs towards your chest as much.

Muscles Stretched: Glutes, hips, inner thighs, lower back



Myofascial IT Band Release

Starting Position

Stack your legs to lie on your right side and place a foam roller beneath the outer thigh of your right leg, near your hip (not pictured). With both hands on the floor, cross your top (left) leg in front of the bottom leg, foot flat on the floor. Keep your shoulders relaxed, your spine long and your arms straight. Allow the weight of your body to relax onto the roller, using your arms for balance and support.

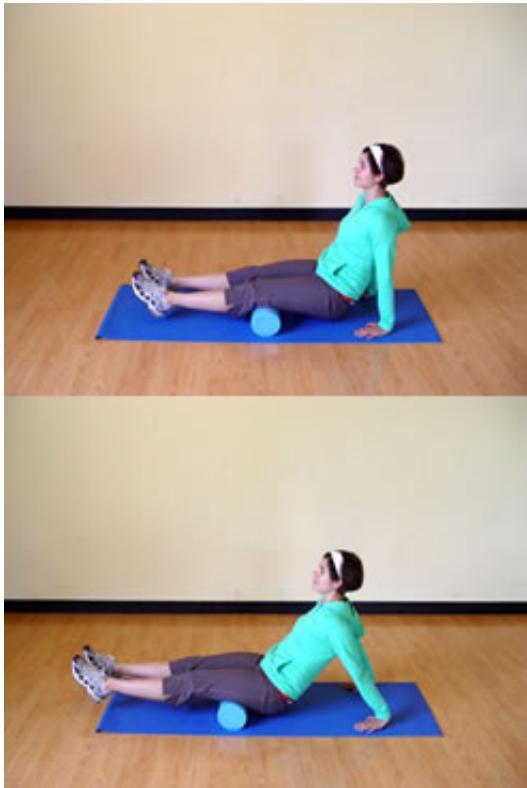
Action

Breathe steadily as you shift your weight, allowing the foam roller to move up and down on your outer thigh (from your hip to your knee). Repeat several times and notice as tension leaves your outer thighs and IT band area. Switch sides.

Special Instructions

Tightness in the IT band can cause knee, hip and back pain, and the more painful this release feels, the more your IT band needs to be worked on (released). As you move the roller up and down by shifting your weight, find tight and sore areas of your IT band and try to hold those positions to help decrease tension. The area near the knee tends to be the tightest (and most painful) region of the IT band. Don't roll past your knee. To decrease the pain of this move, put more weight into your arms; over time, use the arms less and put more weight onto the roller as you can handle it.

Muscles Released: IT band (hips, outer thighs)



Myofascial Hamstring Release

Starting Position

Sit on the floor and place a foam roller under the back of your thighs. Lower your legs onto the roller. With your palms flat on the floor beneath your shoulders and fingers pointing forward, straighten your arms and legs, lifting your hips off the floor so that you are balancing your weight on the foam roller (under your thighs) and your hands. Keep the shoulders relaxed away from the ears. Allow the weight of your body to relax onto the roller.

Action

Breathe steadily as you shift your weight forward and back, allowing the foam roller to move up and down on the back of your thighs (hamstrings) from your hips to your knees. Repeat several times and notice as tension leaves your hamstrings.

Special Instructions

As you move the roller up and down by shifting your weight forward and back, find tight and sore areas of your thighs and hold those positions to help decrease tension. Keep your abdominals and glutes engaged. Resist the pull of gravity with strong arms and a long back. Don't roll past your knee.

Muscles Released: Hamstrings



Myofascial Gluteal Release

Starting Position

Sit on a foam roller with your back straight, knees bent, feet on the floor, palms flat, arms beneath the shoulders, fingers pointed forward (not pictured). Engage your abs, squeeze your thighs together and carefully lift your feet off the floor, keeping your knees bent and finding your balance on the roller, using your arms for support. Allow the weight of your body to relax onto the roller.

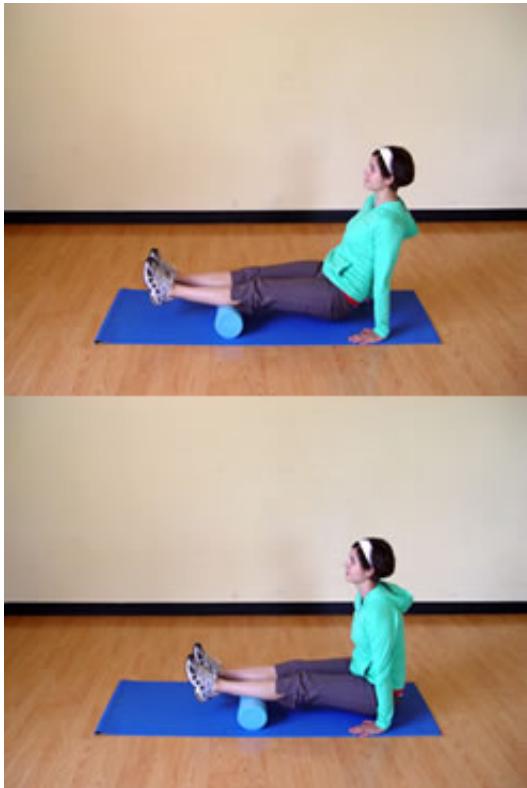
Action

Keep your abs engaged and breathe steadily as you shift your weight forward and back, allowing the foam roller to move up and down your buttocks. Repeat several times and notice as tension leaves your glutes.

Special Instructions

This release requires good core strength and balance, so practice caution before trying it. Keep your abdominals engaged to aid your balance. Resist the pull of gravity with strong arms and a long back. Keep your range of motion small. As you move the roller up and down by shifting your weight forward and back, find tight and sore areas of your glutes and hold those positions to help decrease tension.

Muscles Released: Glutes



Myofascial Calf Release

Starting Position

Sit on the floor and place a foam roller under the back of calves; lower your legs onto the roller (not pictured). With your palms flat on the floor beneath your shoulders and fingers pointing forward, straighten your arms and legs, lifting your hips off the floor so that you are balancing your weight on the foam roller (under your calves) and your hands. Keep the shoulders relaxed away from the ears. Allow the weight of your body to relax onto the roller.

Action

Breathe steadily as you shift your weight forward and back, allowing the foam roller to move up and down on the back of your calves from your ankles to your knees. Repeat several times and notice as tension leaves your calves.

Special Instructions

As you move the roller up and down by shifting your weight forward and back, find tight and sore areas of your calves and hold those positions to help decrease tension. Keep your abdominals and glutes engaged. Resist the pull of gravity with strong arms and a long back. Don't roll past your knee.

Muscles Released: Calves



Myofascial Neck Release

Starting Position

Place a foam roller under your neck and lie on your back with your arms relaxed, back flat, knees bent, feet hip-width apart and shoulders relaxed. Allow the weight of your head to relax onto the roller.

Action

Breathe steadily as you turn your head side to side. Repeat several times and enjoy the stretch and massage on your neck.

Special Instructions

You can adjust the position of the roller up or down to find tight or sore areas of the neck and perform this exercise to help release them.

Muscles Released: Neck





Leaning Single-Leg Calf Stretch at Wall

Starting Position

Stand facing a wall, about 12 inches away from it. Extend your arms in front of your shoulders to place your hands flat on the wall, keeping the elbows bent. Keeping both feet flat, step or slide your left foot (pictured) back, lengthening your left leg and straightening your arms.

Action

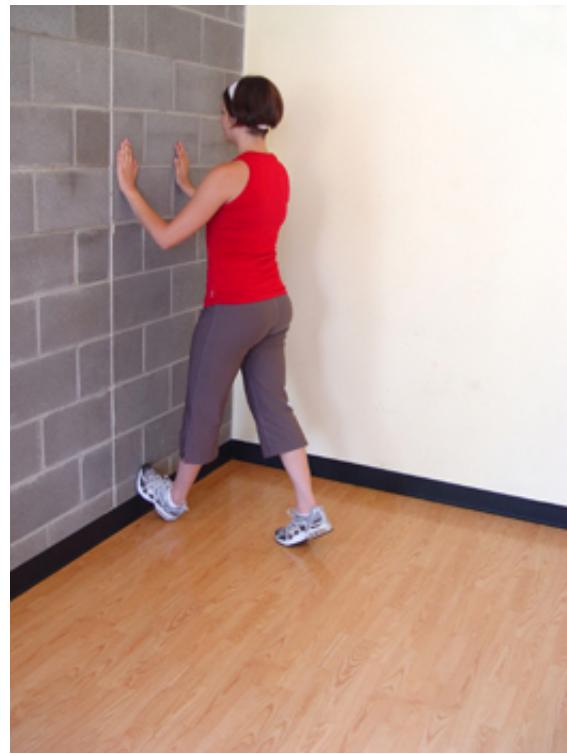
You should feel the stretch in the calf of the back (straight) leg.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Switch sides.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Keep the shoulders relaxed away from your ears. The more you lower your heel to the floor, and the farther you slide your straight leg behind you, the deeper you will feel this stretch.

Muscles Stretched: Calves



Single-Leg Calf Stretch with Wall

Starting Position

Stand facing a wall, about 12 inches away from it. Extend your arms in front of your shoulders to place your hands flat on the wall, keeping the elbows bent. Lift your left foot and flex at the ankle to "pop" your toes up toward the ceiling. Place the sole of your left foot onto the wall and your heel on the floor.

Action

Gently lean forward into the wall to enhance the stretch that you feel in the calf of the front leg.

Breathe deeply and hold for 10-30 seconds. Switch sides.

Special Instructions

Stretch to the point of "mild discomfort," not to the point of pain. Never bounce. Keep the shoulders relaxed away from your ears. The more you flex at the ankle and lean into the wall, the deeper you will feel this stretch.

Muscles Stretched: Calves



Standing IT Band Stretch with Wall

Starting Position

With the left side of your body next to a wall, stand tall with your hand on the wall and your body an arm's length away from the wall. Cross your right leg (leg farthest from the wall) in front of your left leg (leg closest to the wall) and place your opposite hand on your hip, shoulders relaxed, feet flat on the floor.

Action

Breathe slowly and steadily as you push your left hip toward the wall, bending your left elbow. Hold the stretch for 10-30 seconds. Switch sides.

Special Instructions

Keeping the foot closest to the wall flat on the floor and keep both legs straight as you lean your hips toward the wall. Stretch through your own range of motion, keeping the back straight (no leaning forward or back).



Standing IT Band Stretch

Starting Position

Stand tall with your legs together, arms relaxed and back straight. Step your left leg behind your right leg, toes pointing forward and legs straight. Put your right hand on your hip and reach your left arm up in line with the shoulder (not pictured).

Action

Breathe slowly and steadily as you push your hips toward the left and reach your left arm overhead and to the right. Hold the stretch for 10-30 seconds. Switch sides.

Special Instructions

For a deeper stretch, keep your feet farther apart, bend the knee of your front leg and keep the back knee straight. Keep your shoulders relaxed.



Advanced IT Band Stretch

Starting Position

Start in a pushup (plank) position on your hand and toes (not pictured). Lift your right foot off the floor and slide your right knee forward toward your left hand so that your knee and outer ankle rests on the floor. Slide your left leg back as far as comfortable, but keep your hips square to the floor and level.

Action

Breathe slowly and steadily as you hold the stretch, pushing your hips toward the floor, but keeping the back long, shoulders down and chest lifted. Hold for 10-30 seconds. Switch sides.

Special Instructions

This is an advanced stretch. Do not attempt this stretch if you are unable to maintain proper form as indicated in the instructions and photo. For a deeper stretch, fold forward and let your forearms rest on the floor in front of your leg.



Lying Abduction with Band

Starting Position

Begin by lying on your back with a resistance band wrapped around your feet. The band should be snug around your feet, but not too tight. Lift your legs off the ground so they are perpendicular to the floor.

Action

Keep your legs straight (but not locked) and spread your legs apart pushing against the resistance band. Go out (wide) about as far as you can without putting too much strain on your lower back. Slowly release to bring your feet back together. Try doing 2 sets of 10-12 repetitions.



Special Instructions

Make sure to push out just as much with your non-dominant leg as your dominant leg – keep it balanced. You can spread your arms out to your side, palms down or near your buttocks to help with balance and lower back strain.

Muscles Worked: Outer thigh, Hips





Low Mount Adduction with Band

Starting Position

Make a loop at one end of the band and place your left ankle into it. Wrap the other end/handle around a low mount, like a furniture leg. Stand to the side a few feet away from the furniture, parallel to it. Hold onto a chair or wall for balance if necessary. Shift weight into right foot keeping knee soft and left foot flexed. Allow the resistance to pull your left leg out to the left side of your body to start.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping foot flexed, leading with your inner thigh, sweep your left leg across your body towards the right as far as you can. Hold for 1-3 counts.

INHALE: Slowly return to starting position to complete one rep.

Finish set before switching sides.

Special Instructions

Keep abs tight and back straight. Avoid leaning back during movement.

Make it harder: Stand farther away from the mounted end.

Make it easier: Stand closer to the mounted end.

Muscles Worked: *Inner thigh, Quads*



Squats

Starting Position

Begin this exercise by standing with your feet wider than shoulder width apart and your toes pointed forward.

Action

INHALE: Slowly lower your body and remember to bend slightly at your hips. Keep your weight back on your heels and your back as upright as possible. Make sure your knees don't cross the plane of your toes.

EXHALE: Straighten legs and come up to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Do not go past 90 degrees at the bend in your knees because this causes additional stress on your joints. If you feel pain in your knees, just go down to where you don't feel pain and come back up. If you have difficulty performing this exercise you can also use a chair or wall to help with balance and the movement until you build sufficient strength.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes





Forward Lunges

Starting Position

Stand with your feet about 6 inches apart from each other toes pointed forward.

Action

INHALE: Step forward with one leg and lower your body to 90 degrees at both knees. Don't step out too far. There should be 2 to 2.5 feet between your feet at this point. Keep your weight on your heels and don't allow your knees to cross the plane of your toes.

EXHALE: Push up and back to the starting position to complete one rep. Repeat all reps on one leg, then switch to complete one set.

Special Instructions

Keep your back upright. The further you step, the more you work the glutes (buttocks) and hamstrings. The closer you step, the more you work the quadriceps muscles on the top of your thighs. Place your hand on a chair or wall or balance if necessary.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes



Lateral Lunges

Starting Position

Begin by standing with your feet shoulder width apart, hands on hips.

Action

INHALE: Step out to the right and shift your body weight over your right leg, squatting to a 90 degree angle at the right knee. Try to sit down with your butt, keeping your back as upright as possible.

EXHALE: Push off and bring your right leg back to center to complete one rep. Finish all reps on this side, and repeat on left side to complete one set.

Special Instructions

Keep your weight on your heels and make sure your knees don't go over the plane of your toes. Hold your arms out in front of you to help with balance.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes, Inner thigh



Modified Lunges

Starting Position

Begin this exercise by standing with your feet six inches apart and toes pointed forward.

Action

Take a normal step forward with your right leg, making sure to put most of your weight on your front leg. (The step is smaller than one you would make for a forward lunge). Slowly lower your body, bending slightly at the hips, until both knees are at approximately 90 degrees. Make sure to keep your weight on your heels so that your knees don't go over the plane of your toes. Push off with your right foot to return to the starting position. Try doing 2 sets of 10 – 12 repetitions for each leg.

Special Instructions

Keep your back as upright as possible. If you want to modify it even more, don't go down as far. Make sure your knees don't go inward or outward during the movement – keep them facing forward.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes





Step-Ups

Starting Position

Begin by standing in front of the step or riser (8-12 inches tall) facing forward.

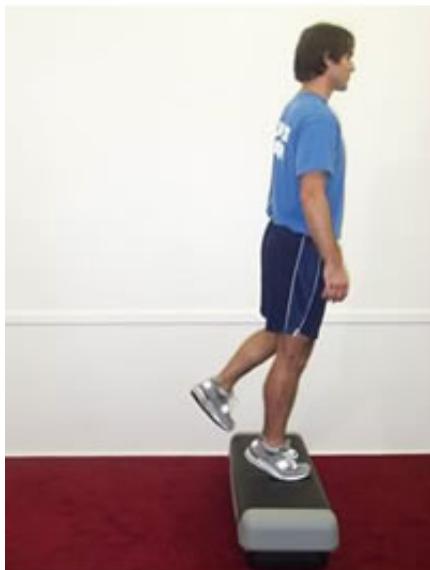
Action

Place right foot in the middle of step and step up as you balance your body for 1-2 seconds on the right leg. Your left leg should be behind your body to help stabilize your weight as it is shifting. Step down with your left leg first and continue on down with your right. Try for 2 sets of 10-12 repetitions for each leg.

Special Instructions

If you don't feel comfortable with a riser or step height between 8-12 inches, start out at a lower height.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes, Calves





Wall Squats with Ball

Starting Position

Place Swiss ball between your lower back and a wall. Lean against the Swiss ball with your feet firmly planted about 12" in front of you.

Action

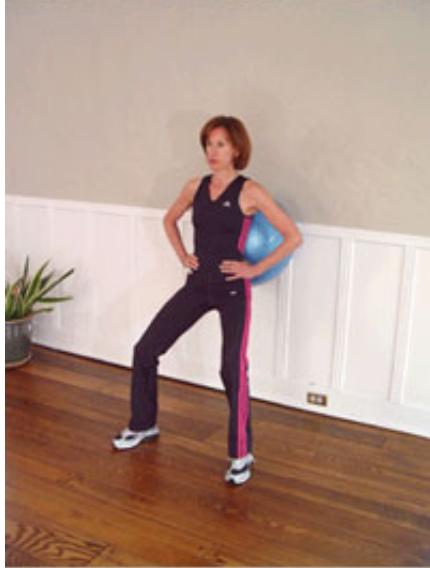
INHALE: Slowly lower your body, bending at the hip and knees. Come down a little bit at first to get use to the motion. Once you feel comfortable, slowly lower yourself to a comfortable position. Don't exceed 90 degrees at the knee.

EXHALE: Straighten legs and return back to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep weight on your heels. Don't let your knees extend over the plane of your toes.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes, Hamstrings



Wall Squats

Starting Position

Stand facing away from a wall, with your back against the wall. Plant your feet 12" in front of your body with a shoulder width stance, toes pointing forward. This exercise can be used with or without dumbbells.

Action

Leaning against the wall, lower your body until your knees are flexed at a 90 degree angle. Hold this position for two seconds. Your weight should be on your heels, not your toes, and your knees should not cross the plane of your toes. Except to check your knee position, keep your head in a neutral position, looking straight ahead. Extend your legs to elevate your body back to the starting position.

Special Instructions

Don't lock your knees when you extend your legs back to the starting position.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes, Hamstrings





Calf Raises with Wall

Starting Position

Stand with feet shoulder width apart, with or without dumbbells.

Action

Raise up on balls of feet, and hold for 2 seconds, Return to start position and repeat.

Special Instructions

As you progress, use one foot at a time.

Muscles Worked: Calves





Lying Single-Leg Raises

Starting Position

Lie on back with right leg straight and left leg bent so foot is flat on the ground. Relax head and neck on mat or ground. Arms should be placed to your side.

Action

Lift right leg to the top of the left knee, keeping the right leg straight. Hold for 2 seconds and return to starting position. Complete number of repetitions and alternate.

Special Instructions

Perform in a slow and smooth motion.

Muscles Worked: Quads



Skater Squats

Starting Position

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, hands on hips or behind back.

Action

Squat down slightly, bending from the knees, keeping abs tight.

EXHALE: Lift left leg to side as you bend right knee to squat. Hold for 1-3 counts.

INHALE: Bring leg back to center (keeping legs bent in the squat position). Straighten legs to come out of the squat.

Repeat on opposite side for one rep.

Special Instructions

Don't let knee of squatting leg go past toes. Lean slightly forward. Hold a chair or wall for balance if necessary.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes, Hips, Outer thigh







Calf Rocking with Chair

Starting Position

Stand with knees slightly bent, feet hip-width apart.

Action

Slowly lift heels, rolling onto toes (but not tiptoes). Lower. Shift weight into heels and lift toes off floor to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Hold onto a chair or wall if you need help balancing. Keep breathing steady.

Muscles Worked: Calves





Standing Abduction

Starting Position

Stand with feet slightly apart, knees slightly bent, hands on hips or one hand on a chair or wall for balance. Shift weight to right leg keeping it slightly bent.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping toes pointed forward, foot flexed, and leg straight, lift the left foot off the ground and out to the side as high as you can. Hold here for 2 counts.

INHALE: Lower slowly with control without letting left foot or leg rest to complete one rep. Complete all reps and switch sides.

Special Instructions

Do not let momentum swing your leg-- keep it slow and controlled. Try to keep upper body straight-- don't lean forward or back. Also try to keep both legs in line with body, not forward or behind.

Muscles Worked: Outer thigh, Hips, Quads





Standing Adduction

Starting Position

Stand with feet slightly apart, knees slightly bent, hands on hips or one hand on a chair or wall for balance. Shift weight to right leg keeping it slightly bent. Lift left leg slightly forward in front of right leg, keeping foot flexed and toes pointing forward.

Action

EXHALE: With a small movement, slowly swing left leg across center line of body, in front of right leg. Lift as high as possible. Hold for 2 counts.

INHALE: Lower slowly with control to start (without letting foot rest on ground) to complete one rep. Complete all reps and switch sides.

Special Instructions

Do not let momentum swing your leg-- keep it slow and controlled. Try to keep upper body straight-- don't lean forward or back.

Muscles Worked: Inner thigh, Quads







Calf Raises with Chair

Starting Position

Stand facing a wall or back of chair and lightly hold onto it with fingertips to aid balance. Legs should be shoulder-width apart and straight. Do not lock knees.

Action

EXHALE: Raise up on balls of feet, and hold for 2 seconds.

INHALE: Return to start position and repeat.

Special Instructions

Try not to let heels touch or rest on ground between repetitions unless necessary. As you progress, use one foot at a time.

Muscles Worked: Calves



Seated Leg Extensions

Starting Position

Begin seated in a chair, feet flat in front of you, palms grasping chair edge at sides or front.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping left foot planted and upper body still, extend the right leg (bending from the knee) until it is parallel with the floor. Hold here for 2 counts and then (optional) pulse up and down for 3 counts (not shown).

INHALE: Bend knee to lower right leg back to floor to complete one rep. Complete all reps on one side and switch.

Special Instructions

Perform exercise very slowly and with control. Concentrate on flexing the leg muscles.

Muscles Worked: Quads



Single Leg Squats with Chair

Starting Position

Stand behind chair; hold back of chair for balance. Lift right leg off ground, keeping left leg slightly bent.

Action

INHALE: Bend left leg to squat. Hold for 1-3 counts.

EXHALE: Straighten leg and return to start.

Complete all reps and switch legs.

Special Instructions

Don't let knee of squatting leg go past toes. Keep upper body straight and avoid leaning forward as you squat down.

Muscles Worked: Quads





Lying Abduction

Starting Position

Lie on left side, legs straight, knees together, resting head on right hand or extended arm. Place right hand flat on the ground in front of you for balance.

Action

EXHALE: Squeeze the right thigh to raise right leg until it forms a 45 degree angle with the ground. Hold for 2 seconds.

INHALE: Return to start.

Complete reps and switch sides.

Special Instructions

Keep foot flexed through entire movement, toes facing forward (not up).

Muscles Worked: Outer thigh, Hips



Lying Adduction

Starting Position

Lie on right side, with right leg straight on ground, left leg bent with foot flat on the ground either in front or behind right leg. Rest your head on right hand or extended arm. Place left hand flat on the ground in front of torso for balance.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping toes pointed forward and foot flexed, lift right leg off the floor toward the ceiling as high as you can (only a few inches). Hold here for a count of 2.

INHALE: Slowly lower toward ground without letting it touch.

Repeat all reps (8-15) and switch sides.

Special Instructions

None.

Muscles Worked: *Inner thigh*



Lying Leg Curls

Starting Position

Lie facedown with legs extended. Place a towel/pillow under hips or use palms to cushion hip bones. Keep hips on ground.

Action

EXHALE: Bend knees and curl heels toward butt. Hold for 1-2 counts.

INHALE: Release slowly and with control to start position.

Special Instructions

Keep feet flexed through entire movement, leading with the heels.

Muscles Worked: Hamstrings



Bridges

Starting Position

Lie with arms at sides, feet on floor, knees bent. Press into heels.

Action

EXHALE: Slowly lift hips off of floor toward ceiling, squeezing the glutes.

INHALE: Return to starting position.

Special Instructions

Squeeze glutes through entire rep. Try not to let butt touch ground when lowering between reps.

Muscles Worked: Hamstrings, Glutes, Quads





Dumbbell Squats

Starting Position

Stand with feet slightly apart, grasping a dumbbell in each hand, arms hanging down at sides, palms facing in. Look straight ahead, contract abs.

Action

INHALE: Arch back slightly, squat down as if sitting back into a chair until thighs are parallel to the floor.

EXHALE: Straighten legs to the starting position.

Special Instructions

Make sure knees to not pass the line of the toes. You can also hold the dumbbells resting on your shoulders.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes, Hamstrings





Wide Leg Squats with Dumbbell

Starting Position

Stand with feet wider than shoulders, knees slightly bent, toes turned outward. Hold a dumbbell with both hands in front of body.

Action

INHALE: Squat until thighs are nearly parallel to the floor, sticking butt out as if sitting in a chair.

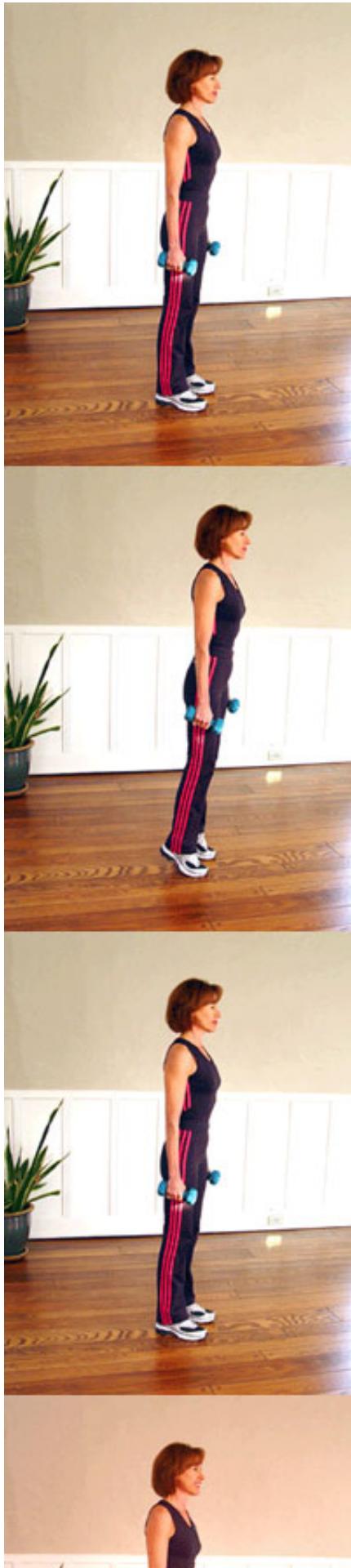
EXHALE: Squeeze glutes as you straighten legs to starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep abs contracted. Make sure knees to not pass the line of the toes.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes, Inner thigh





Calf Rocking with Dumbbells

Starting Position

Stand with knees slightly bent, feet hip-width apart. Hold dumbbells at side with palms facing in.

Action

EXHALE: Slowly lift heels, rolling onto toes (but not tiptoes). Lower.

INHALE: Shift weight into heels and lift toes off floor to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

None.

Muscles Worked: Calves





Low Mount Leg Curls with Band

Starting Position

Make a loop at one end of the band and wrap it around your right ankle. Wrap the opposite end of the band around a low mount like a furniture leg. Lift your right foot off the ground, keeping it flexed with your toes pointing downward.

Action

EXHALE: Curl your right heel up towards your glutes as far as possible. Keep your knees aligned-- and your upper thighs stationary.

INHALE: Slowly return to start without letting your foot rest in between reps. Finish all reps and switch sides to complete one set.

Special Instructions

Make it harder: Stand farther away from the mounted end of the band.

Make it easier: Stand closer to the mounted end of the band.

Muscles Worked: Hamstrings



Low Mount Abduction with Band

Starting Position

Make a loop at one end of the band and place your right ankle into it. Wrap the other end/handle around a low mount, like a furniture leg. Stand to the side a few feet away from the furniture, parallel to it. Hold onto a chair or wall for balance if necessary. Shift weight into left foot keeping knee soft and right foot flexed. Allow the resistance to pull your right leg across the center line of your body to start.

Action

EXHALE: Extend your right leg straight out to the side, leading with your outer thigh towards the ceiling, keeping foot flexed.

INHALE: Slowly lower with control to starting position to complete one rep.

Finish all reps on this side before switching.

Special Instructions

Keep abs tight and upper body stationary. Avoid leaning back or to the sides during the movement. Lower with control-- don't let the band's resistance snap your leg back down to the starting position.

Make it harder: Stand farther from the mounted end of the band.

Make it easier: Stand closer to the mounted end of the band.

Muscles Worked: Outer thigh, Hips, Glutes



Seated Leg Extensions with Band

Starting Position

Sit on a chair or bench, feet flat. Place one end of the resistance band either under your left foot or wrapped around the rear right chair leg (not pictured). Make a loop at the opposite end and place it around your right ankle. Grasp sides of chair with your hands for support. Keep right foot flexed.

Action

EXHALE: Extend right leg until fully extended (parallel to floor), without locking the knee. From here, keeping leg straight, lift top of leg towards the ceiling as high as you can.

INHALE: Lower leg back to parallel level, and return to starting position by bending the knee-- all in a smooth motion to complete one rep.

Finish set on this side and switch sides.

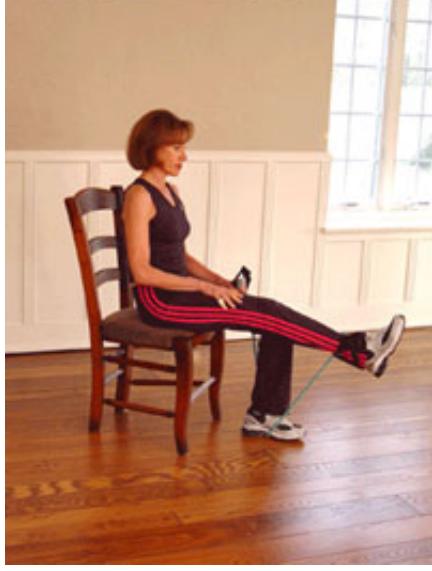
Special Instructions

Keep back straight and supported (if possible) by the back of a chair/bench.

Make it harder: Step left leg closer on the band to right ankle; Do more than one lift at the top of the motion before lowering to start.

Make it easier: Step left foot farther away from right for less resistance.

Muscles Worked: Quads





Lying Hamstring Curls with Ball

Starting Position

Lie on your stomach, squeezing a ball between your legs beneath your knees. Place arms and hands under your head.

Action

EXHALE: Keep feet flexed and ball squeezed tightly. Curl your heels towards your butt as far as possible.

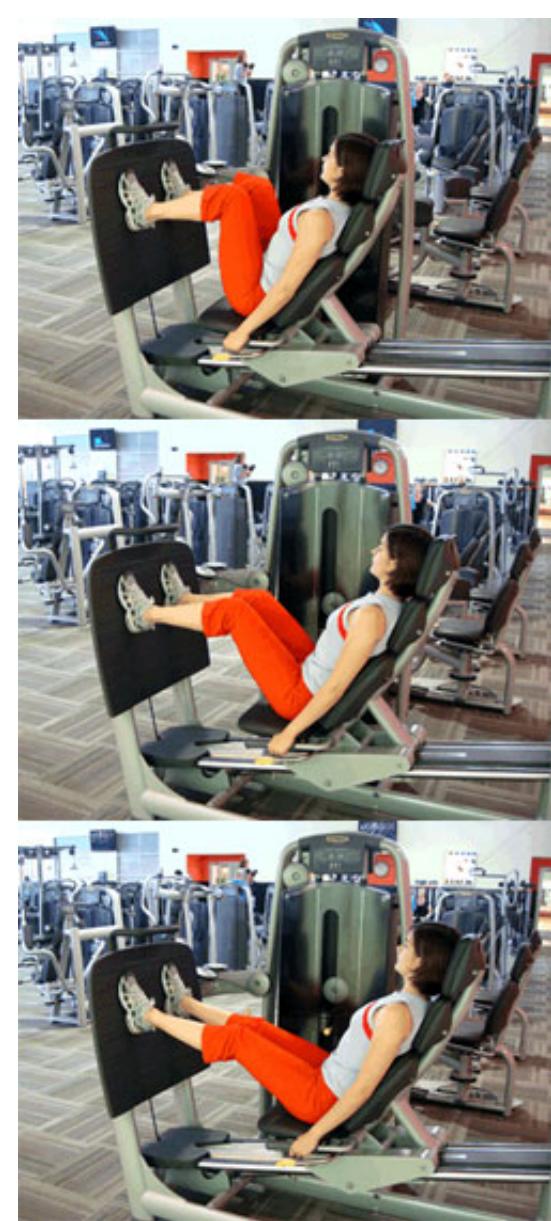
INHALE: Slowly lower to start without resting on the ground between reps.

Special Instructions

None.

Muscles Worked: Hamstrings, Inner thigh





Squats on Leg Press Machine

Starting Position

Follow machine instructions for set up and select desired weight. Position your body so that feet are hip-width apart, toes pointing forward, knees are above the ankles, back is straight and supported by the pad, and abs are engaged. Make sure your knees and hips are both bent at 90 degrees.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping your weight balanced in your heels, extend your knees to push your body away from the foot stand.

INHALE: Slowly bend the knees to return to the start position (a 90-degree bend at the knees) to complete one rep.

Muscles Worked: Legs (*quads, hamstrings, calves*) and Butt (*glutes*)

Special Instructions

To protect your joints, never bend deeper than 90 degrees at the knees or hips and don't lock knees when straightening legs. For variety, feet can be placed in various positions (hip-width, wider than hips, toes turned out, etc.), but make sure knees stay above ankles.



Heel Raises on Leg Press Machine

Starting Position

Follow machine instructions for set up and select desired weight. Position your body so that feet are hip-width apart, toes pointing forward, knees are straight but not locked, back is straight and supported by the pad, and abs are engaged. Place your feet at the bottom of the foot stand, heels off.

Action

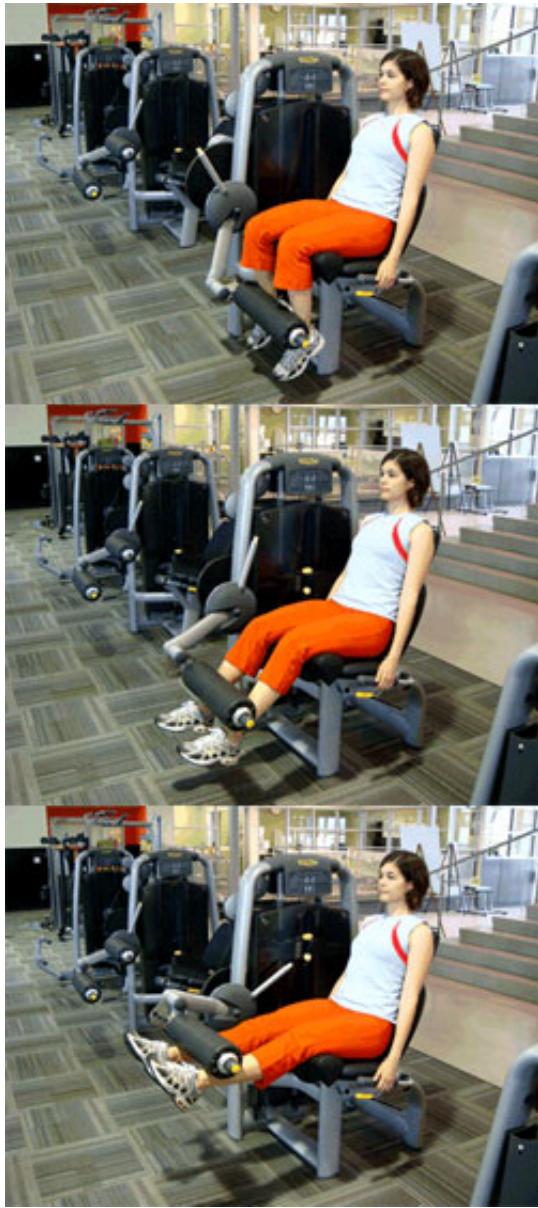
EXHALE: Slowly raise your heels up, shifting your weight into the balls of the feet.

INHALE: Slowly lower your heels back down to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Make sure your knees do not lock. Work through your own range of motion.

Muscles Worked: Calves



Seated Leg Extension Machine

Starting Position

Follow machine instructions for set up and select desired weight. Sit so that foot pad is just above the ankles, thighs are flush with the seat (but backs of knees are off of the seat), and back is straight and supported by pad. Keep knees above ankles, back straight, abs engaged, and hands lightly gripping handles at your sides.

Action

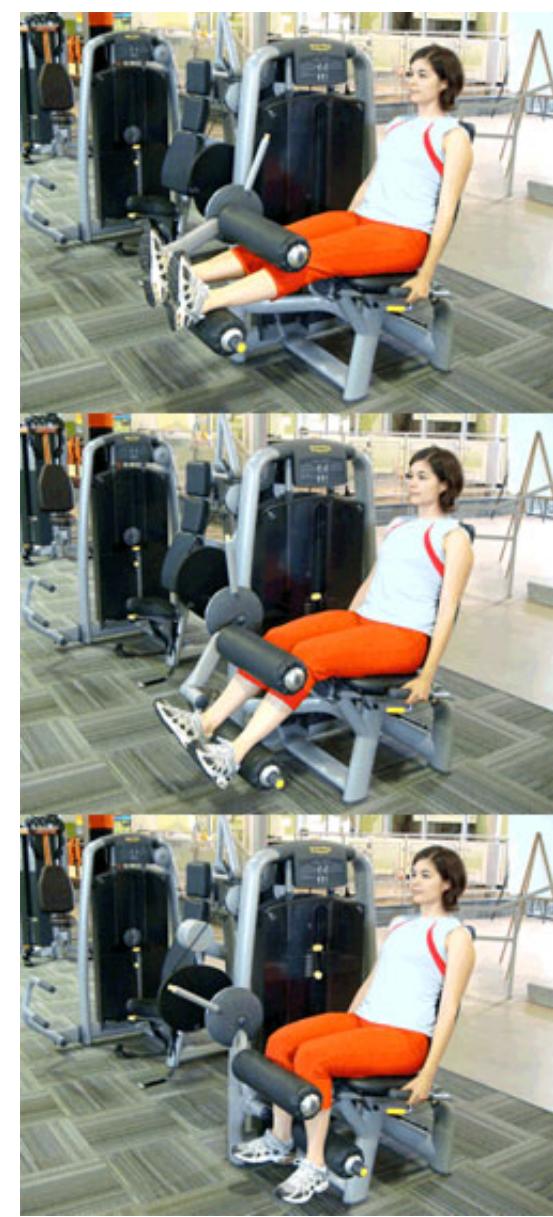
EXHALE: Slowly straighten your knees to push the leg pad upward.

INHALE: Slowly bend at the knees to return to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

This can be a very dangerous exercise for the knee joint. SparkPeople recommends that you practice extreme caution when doing this move, using a light weight, or avoid it entirely.

Muscles Worked: Quads



Seated Leg Curl Machine

Starting Position

Follow machine instructions for set up and select desired weight. Sit so that foot pad is behind the ankles, thighs are flush with the seat (but backs of knees are off of the seat), and thigh pad (if present) is just below the knees. Keep knees above ankles, back straight (and flush against pad behind you), abs engaged, and hands lightly gripping handles at your sides.

Action

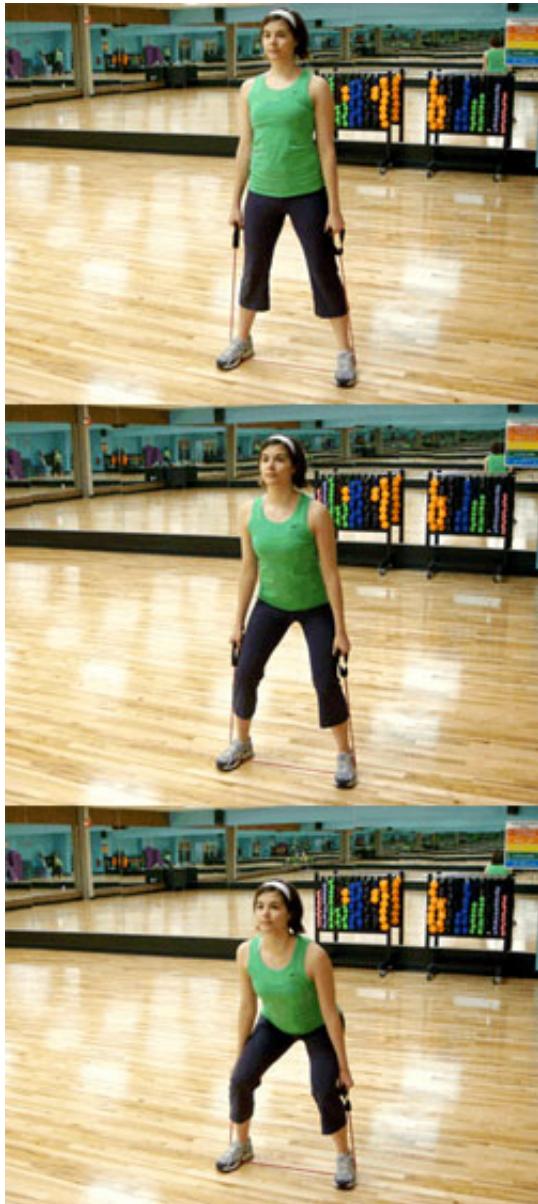
EXHALE: Slowly bend at the knees to "curl" your heels down towards your buttocks.

INHALE: Slowly straighten knees to return to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

This can be a very dangerous exercise for the knee joint. SparkPeople recommends that you practice extreme caution when doing this move, using a light weight, or avoid it entirely.

Muscles Worked: Hamstrings



Modified Squats with Band

Starting Position

Grab each handle and place feet on band, slightly wider than the hips, toes forward. Stand tall with back straight, abs engaged, legs straight and arms at your sides.

Action

INHALE: Slowly bend at both knees to lower down towards the floor, not exceeding 90-degrees at the knees. EXHALE: Slowly straighten the knees to push back up to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Minimize any forward leaning from the waist and keep chest lifted. You should feel resistance only when pushing up to the start position. Make it easier: Bring legs closer together (closer to center of band) for less resistance. Make it harder: Place legs wider (closer to handles) to increase resistance.

Muscles Worked: Legs (quads, hamstrings, calves) and glutes



Seated Hip Abduction Machine

Starting Position

Follow machine instructions for set up and select desired weight. Sit so that feet are on foot rests, knees are bent, pads are on the outside of the knees, legs are together, and back is straight against pad behind you.

Action

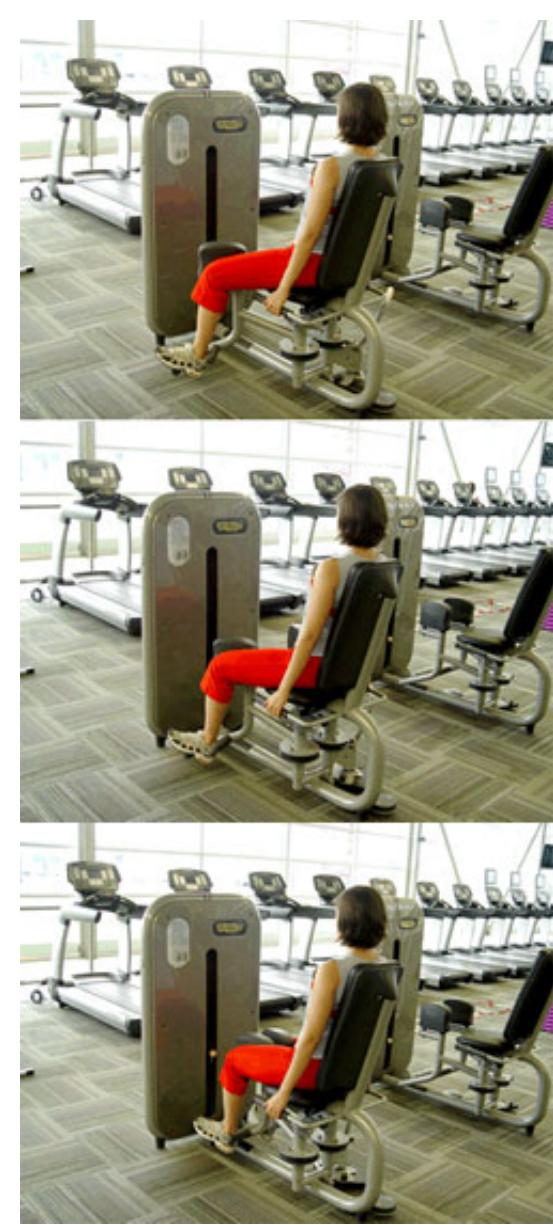
EXHALE: Hinging from the hip, use the outer thighs to push (open) your legs out against the pads.

INHALE: Slowly bring the legs back together, without allowing the weight stack to slam, to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

This can be a dangerous and result in muscular imbalance by overdeveloping the muscles in the outer thigh. SparkPeople recommends that you practice extreme caution when doing this move, using a light weight, or avoid it entirely.

Muscles Worked: Outer thighs



Seated Hip Adduction Machine

Starting Position

Follow machine instructions for set up and select desired weight. Sit so that feet are on foot rests, knees are bent, pads are on the inside of the knees, legs are as apart, and back is straight against pad behind you.

Action

EXHALE: Hinging from the hip, use the inner thighs to push (close) your legs together against the pads.

INHALE: Slowly bring the legs back out, without allowing the weight stack to slam, to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

This can be a dangerous and result in muscular imbalance by overdeveloping the muscles in the inner thigh. SparkPeople recommends that you practice extreme caution when doing this move, using a light weight, or avoid it entirely.

Muscles Worked: Inner thighs



Lying Leg Press on Sled Machine

Starting Position

Follow machine instructions for set up and select desired weight. Position your body so that feet are hip-width apart, toes pointing forward, knees are above the ankles, back is straight, and abs are engaged. Make sure your knees and hips are both bent at 90 degrees.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping your weight balanced in your heels, extend your knees to push the foot stand away from your body.

INHALE: Slowly bend the knees to return to the start position (a 90-degree bend at the knees) to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

To protect your joints, never bend deeper than 90 degrees at the knees or hips and don't lock knees when straightening legs. For variety, feet can be placed in various positions (hip-width, wider than hips, toes turned out, etc.), but make sure knees stay above ankles.

Muscles Worked: Legs (*quads, hamstrings, calves*) and Butt (*glutes*)



Staggered Squat on Balance Board

Starting Position

Begin by standing tall (not pictured) with your legs hip-width apart, arms extended in front of your shoulders, and one foot on top of a balance board. Make sure your abs are engaged and that you're placing an equal amount of weight in both feet.

Action

INHALE: Push your hips back (as if sitting into a chair behind you) and bend your knees to squat down. **EXHALE:** Straighten the legs and push your hips forward to return back to the starting (standing) position to complete one rep. After one set, switch the balance board placement to the other side to perform another set.

Special Instructions

Only squat as far as you can go while maintaining balance and control. Keep your abs engaged and use a focal point in front of you to aid your balance. Try to keep the balance board as stable as possible, and be sure to balance your weight evenly between both feet. Keep chest lifted and minimize any forward leaning.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Hamstrings, Glutes, Abs



Stationary Lunges on Balance Board

Starting Position

Place your balance board a few feet in front of you. Stand tall with your legs together, arms at your sides, toes pointing forward, abs engaged, back straight and shoulders relaxed. Step onto the balance board with your right foot and find your balance, keeping your abs engaged, shoulders relaxed, and back and legs straight.

Action

INHALE: Bend both knees to lower your hips straight down toward the floor without leaning forward. **EXHALE:** Push back up from your lunge to return to the start position and complete one rep. Repeat all reps on one leg then switch sides.

Special Instructions

Make sure your feet are spaced appropriately; you should be able to lunge down without your forward knee coming past your toes, and without leaning forward from the waist. Take your time throughout this exercise so that you can move in a controlled manner. Make sure the balance board is resting on a surface where it will not slip. Try to step onto the very top center of the board to help you balance more easily.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes, Abs



Bridges on Balance Board

Starting Position

Lie on your back with your feet flat on a balance board, knees bent, legs together, arms at your sides, and abs engaged.

Action

EXHALE: Keep your abs engaged as you push your hips straight up toward the ceiling, lifting your glutes and lower back off the floor.
INHALE: Slowly lower your hips back down to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Don't put any pressure in your head or neck; balance your weight between your feet (on the board), your shoulder blades, and your arms. Only bridge your hips up as high as you can go while maintaining balance, control and good form.

Muscles Worked: Glutes, Hamstrings



Wall Sit with Medicine Ball Squeeze

Starting Position

Stand with your back flat against a sturdy wall and place a lightweight medicine ball (or unweighted ball) between your thighs, just above the knees. With straight legs, walk your feet forward until they're approximately 12 inches in front of you (not pictured).

Action

Keep your back flat against the wall and squeeze against the medicine ball with your inner thighs as you bend your knees to squat down (pictured). Hold this squat or "wall sit" for 30-60 seconds, breathing steadily.

Special Instructions

Try to squat low enough that your thighs are parallel to the floor. Make sure your knees do not extend past your toes. If they do, stand back up and scoot your feet further away from you.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Hamstrings, Inner thighs



Bridges on Foam Roller

Starting Position

Lie on your back with a foam roller near your feet. Place your feet (ankles and/or heels) onto the foam roller, knees bent, legs hip-width apart, arms at your sides, and abs engaged.

Action

EXHALE: Keep your abs engaged as you push your hips straight up toward the ceiling, lifting your glutes and lower back off the floor.
INHALE: Slowly lower your hips back down to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Don't put any pressure in your head or neck; balance your weight between your feet (on the roller), your shoulder blades, and your arms. Only bridge your hips up as high as you can go while maintaining balance, control and good form. Keep the roller as still as possible.

Muscles Worked: Glutes, Hamstrings



Lying 45-Degree Abduction with Band

Starting Position

Begin by lying on your back with a resistance band wrapped around your feet. The band should be snug around your feet, but not too tight. Lift your legs so they are at a 45 degree angle to the floor.

Action

Keeping your legs straight, push against the resistance band with your ankles so your legs go out as far as you can take them. Slowly release to bring your feet back together. Try doing 2 sets with 10-12 repetition.

Special Instructions

Make sure to push out just as much with your non-dominant leg as your dominant leg – keep it balanced.

Muscles Worked: Outer thighs, Hips, Abs





Single Leg Squat & Bend

Starting Position

Stand with feet approximately six inches apart and lift one leg off the floor. Hold a tennis ball in the hand on the same side as the planted foot.

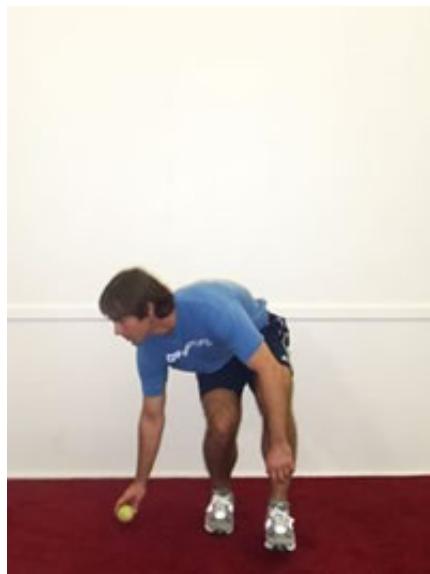
Action

Bend at the hips and squat to a 90 degrees at the knees, making sure to keep your knees behind the plane of your toes. Try to keep your back as upright as possible. Focus on keeping your shoulders as high as possible. Touch the floor in front of you with the tennis ball and come back to the starting position. Repeat squat and touch at different points from 9 o'clock to 3 o'clock (4 points), making sure to come back to the starting position before touching another point. Try doing 2 sets for each arm and leg combination.

Special Instructions

This is a very good balance exercise and works your core stabilizer muscles as well as your leg muscles.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes, Core





No Image Available

Dead Lifts with Dumbbells

Starting Position

Begin this exercise by standing, feet hip-width apart, knees slightly bent, shoulders down and back. Hold one dumbbell in each hand, palms facing the body, weights in front of your thighs. Pull the abs in tight.

Action

INHALE: Keeping knees bent, abs in, and back flat, bend forward from the waist to lower the weights towards the ground. Keep head and neck in a neutral position in line with the spine, which should also be straight (not pictured).

EXHALE: Contract your hamstrings and glutes, and straighten from the hips to return to the starting position. Try doing 1-3 sets with 8-15 repetitions.

Special Instructions

Even though there is lower back involvement, the drive should come from the glutes and hamstrings. Begin with very low weight. Your back should remain straight the entire time, so make sure you only bend forward to a level that you can maintain a straight back. Keeping your abs pulled in will help protect your lower back in this exercise.

Muscles Worked: Lower back, Glutes



Squats with Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, toes pointed forward. Hold medicine ball out in front of your body, slightly above your chest, with arms straight. Do not lock your elbows.

Action

Lower your body, bending at the hips, keeping your weight back on your heels. Keep your back as upright as possible. Make sure your knees don't cross the plane of your toes. Don't go past 90 degrees at your knees.

Special Instructions

You can progress by raising the weight of the medicine ball. If you do not have a medicine ball you can also hold a compact object of similar weight (2-10 lbs depending on strength) out in front of you.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes





Single Leg Calf Raises on Step

Starting Position

Begin by standing in front of a step or riser with feet shoulder width apart, facing forward.

Action

Step up onto the step with one foot, rising up onto your toes as high as possible in one smooth motion. Hold for a couple seconds and lower. Step back off the riser to the original starting position. Try doing 2 sets of 10-12 repetitions for each leg.

Special Instructions

You can extend your arms out to your sides to help with balance.

Muscles Worked: Calves





Hamstring Flexion with Ball

Starting Position

Begin this exercise by lying flat on your back with a Swiss ball under your heels. Place your arms straight out to your side for support. Keep your feet flexed, digging your heels into the ball.

Action

Do not use your arms at any point, and keep your hips/glutes flat on the ground.

EXHALE: Roll the ball in towards your body using your heels.

INHALE: Slowly return to start to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

When rolling the ball in towards your body, make sure not to lift your pelvis towards the ceiling. Your hips should stay in the same position – this will force you to use your hamstrings. Concentrate on pressing the ball into the floor with your heels.

Muscles Worked: Hamstrings, Glutes



Lateral Lunges with Overhead Dumbbell Press

Starting Position

Stand with feet six inches apart from each other, holding dumbbells at a 90 degree angle at the elbow, above your shoulders.

Action

Step to the side with one leg and lower your body to 90 degrees at the far knee you stepped out with. Don't step out too far. Keep your weight on your heels and don't allow your knees to cross the plane of your toes. At the same time, lower the dumbbells down to the sides of the front foot, creating a flat back and keeping your core strong. Push off with the far foot and return to the starting position. Try doing 2 sets with 10-12 repetitions.

Special Instructions

Don't let your knees go in or out during the movement – keep them facing forward. If they do, you should stop the exercise and build more leg strength before repeating exercise.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes, Shoulders





Lunge & Twist with Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Begin this exercise by standing upright while holding the medicine ball out in front of you just below chest level. Your elbows should not be locked.

Action

Step forward with one leg and lower your body to 90 degrees at both knees. Don't let your knees go past the plane of your toes. Your thigh should be parallel to the floor at this point in the exercise. As you step forward, rotate your torso to the same side you step to (right leg forward then twist to the right) with the ball, keeping arms straight out in front of you. Push back to an upright position with your forward leg and bring arms back to the center of your body. Try doing 2 sets of 10-12 repetitions for each leg.

Special Instructions

Progress with a heavier medicine ball.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes, Shoulders, Obliques





Forward Lunge with Dumbbell Press

Starting Position

Stand with your feet six inches apart from each other, holding dumbbells at a 90 degree angle at the elbow, above your shoulders.

Action

Step forward with one leg and lower your body to 90 degrees at both knees. Don't step out too far. There should be 2 to 2.5 feet between your feet. Keep your weight on your heels. Don't allow your knees to cross the plane of your toes. At the same time, lower the dumbbells down to the sides of the front foot, creating a flat back and keeping your core strong. Push off with the front foot and return to the starting position. Try doing 2 sets with 10-12 repetitions.



Special Instructions

Don't let your knees go in or out during the movement – keep them facing forward. If they do, you should stop the exercise and build more leg strength before repeating exercise.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes, Shoulders





Single Leg Dumbbell Squats with Ball

Starting Position

Place Swiss ball between your lower back and a wall. Lean against the Swiss ball with your feet firmly planted about 12" in front of you. Hold dumbbells in both hands with palms facing inward.

Action

Lift one leg out in front of you. Slowly lower your body on one leg, bending at the hip. Come down a little bit at first to get use to the motion. Once you feel comfortable, slowly lower yourself to a comfortable position. Don't exceed 90 degrees at the knee. Return back to the starting position without bringing your raised leg down to the floor. Keep your back as upright as possible. Start out with only 1 set but work your way up to 2 sets, 10-12 repetitions for each leg.

Special Instructions

Keep weight on your heels. Don't let your knees extend over the plane of your toes. This is an intermediate exercise, but you have to be very careful when you're lowering your body. Because you're lowering your body weight onto one leg, it's important to lower yourself slowly. When first learning this exercise you can try going part way down or using your other foot as an aid when necessary.

Muscles Worked: Quads





Single Leg Squats with Ball

Starting Position

Place Swiss ball between your lower back and a wall. Lean against the Swiss ball with your feet firmly planted about 12" in front of you.

Action

Lift one leg out in front of you. Slowly lower your body on one leg, bending at the hip. Come down a little bit at first to get used to the motion. Once you feel comfortable, slowly lower yourself to a comfortable position. Don't exceed 90 degrees at the knee. Return back to the starting position without bringing your raised leg down to the floor. Keep your back as upright as possible. Start out with only 1 set but work your way up to 2 sets, 10-12 repetitions for each leg.

Special Instructions

Keep weight on your heels. Don't let your knees extend over the plane of your toes. This is an intermediate exercise, but you have to be very careful when you're lowering your body. Because you're lowering your body weight onto one leg, it's important to lower yourself slowly. When first learning this exercise you can try going part way down, using a second wall (near a corner), or using your other foot as an aid when necessary.

Muscles Worked: Quads





Single Leg Lateral Squat with Ball

Starting Position

Place Swiss ball between your side and the wall at the level of your hip and lower back. Lean against the Swiss ball with your outside leg firmly planted and the inside leg an inch or two off the ground.

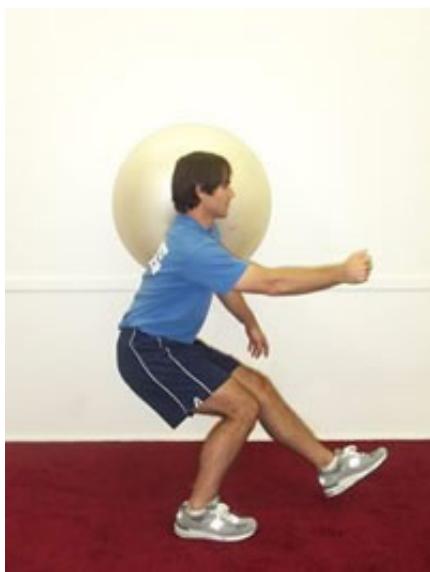
Action

Slowly lower your body on one leg bending slightly forward at the hip. Come down a little bit at first to get use to the motion. Once you feel comfortable, slowly lower yourself to a comfortable position. Don't exceed 90 degrees at the knee. Return back to the starting position without bringing your raised leg down to the floor. Keep your back as upright as possible. Start out with only 1 set but work your way up to 2 sets, 10-12 repetitions for each leg.

Special Instructions

Keep weight on your heels. This is an intermediate exercise, but you have to be very careful when you're lowering your body. Because you're lowering your body weight onto one leg, it's important to lower yourself slowly. When first learning this exercise you can try going part way down, using a second wall (near a corner), or using your other foot as an aid when necessary.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes



Dumbbell Squat with Calf Raise and Overhead Press

Starting Position

Squat to 90 degree at the knee, making sure to keep your knees behind the plane of your toes, bend and hips and try to create a flat back. Hold dumbbells on the outside of each of your legs by your feet, palms facing backwards.



Action

Stand up and raise the dumbbells up toward the knees, all the way until your arms are parallel to the ground. Once your arms are at or slightly above the knee, externally rotate at the elbow so that the dumbbells are at a 90 degree angle at the angle, palms facing forward. Stabilize this position, making sure to keep the knees slightly bent. Simultaneously, come up on your toes and extend the dumbbells above your head, slightly in front of your head. Stabilize this position. Slowly lower to the starting position. Try doing 2 sets with 10-12 repetitions.

Special Instructions

The motion from the starting position to the first stabilizing position should be smooth through the ankle, knee and hip.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes, Calves, Core, Shoulders





Single Leg Hamstring Flexion with Ball

Starting Position

Begin this exercise by lying on your back with a Swiss ball under your right or left heel. Your opposite foot should be off to the side of the Swiss ball and off the ground at approximately the same height as the foot on the Swiss ball. Place your arms straight out to your side for support.

Action

Lift your hips so that you create a straight line with your body. Do not use your arms at any point. Take the leg on the ball and bring the ball in towards your body using your heels. Keep your opposite leg straight, slightly higher than the ball. Reverse the movement and lower your hips back to the ground. Try doing 2 sets with 10-12 repetitions for each leg.

Special Instructions

When rolling the ball in towards your body, make sure not to lift your pelvis towards the ceiling. Your hips should stay in the same position – this will force you to use your hamstrings.

Muscles Worked: Hamstrings, Glutes





Wide Leg Wall Sit with Calf Raises

Starting Position

Stand with back against wall, feet twice shoulder-width apart, toes turned out. Slowly slide butt down wall until thighs are parallel to floor. Stay in this wall squat while you perform the exercise.

Action

EXHALE: Rise on toes for two counts.

INHALE: Lower for two counts to complete one rep.

After one set is complete, straighten legs to come out of the squat.

Special Instructions

None.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes, Inner thigh, Calves





Runner's Lunges

Starting Position

Standing with feet hip-width apart, step forward with right foot into a lunge, right knee bent, left heel lifted. Bend arms at 90 degrees in opposition to your legs so right arm pumps forward and left arm pumps back as if running (not pictured).

Action

EXHALE: Pushing off ball of left foot, straighten right knee as you lift left knee up to hip height. Simultaneously pump arms in opposition to legs (not pictured). Hold for 2 seconds.

INHALE: Bring left leg down and back so that you are lunging again with the right leg forward and bent to complete one rep.

Complete all reps and switch sides.

Special Instructions

Be sure to keep forward (lunging) knee in line with ankle, toes pointing forward, hips square, and torso centered.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes, Hips, Hamstrings



Walking Lunges

Starting Position

Stand with your feet about 6 inches apart from each other toes pointed forward. Make sure you have plenty of room to move forward several feet.

Action

INHALE: Step forward with right leg and lower your body to 90 degrees at both knees. Don't step out too far. There should be 2 to 2.5 feet between your feet at this point. Keep your weight on your heels and don't allow your knees to cross the plane of your toes.

EXHALE: From here, push up, bringing the rear leg forward until you are standing straight again.

Step forward with opposite leg and repeat, walking forward for all reps.

Special Instructions

Make sure knee of forward leg stays in line with the ankle.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes, Hamstrings, Core





Single Leg Squats with Toe Touch

Starting Position

Lift right foot a few inches off the floor and soften left knee. Place left hand on hip.

Action

INHALE: Squat down as far as possible, reaching left hand toward the floor. When you've squatted as far as you can comfortably, then bend from the hips to touch the ground with the left hand.

EXHALE: Squeezing glutes, and keeping back straight, rise up and straighten leg to complete one rep.

Complete all reps and switch sides.

Special Instructions

When reaching toward toe, concentrate on bending knee into a lunge rather than bending over from the waist/hips.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes, Hamstrings, Core



Calf Raises on Step

Starting Position

Begin by standing in front of a step or riser with feet shoulder width apart, facing forward. Step up onto the step with both feet, holding on a rail or chair, and letting heels hang off the edge.

Action

EXHALE: Rising up onto your toes as high as possible in one smooth motion. Hold for a couple seconds.

INHALE: Slowly lower heels as far as possible, below the level of the step to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

You can extend your arms out to your sides or lightly rest your fingertips on a wall or chair to help with balance.

Make it harder: One-Leg Calf Raises following the same instructions. Alternate feet after completing one set on each side.

Muscles Worked: Calves



Lunges with Step

Starting Position

Stand a couple feet behind a stair or step with your feet about 6 inches apart from each other toes pointed forward.

Action

INHALE: Step forward onto step with one leg and lower your body to 90 degrees at both knees.

EXHALE: Push up and back to the starting position and repeat with opposite leg to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep your weight on your heels and don't allow your knees to cross the plane of your toes. Step far enough that your foot is not hanging off the edge.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes



Genie Sit

Starting Position

Kneel on a mat or rolled-up towel with feet together, knees slightly apart. Cross arms over chest.

Action

INHALE: Keep abs tight and back straight as you lean backward. Pause.

EXHALE: Lean forward to return to start.

Special Instructions

Very small movement. If your back hurts, do not lean back as far. You can also have a partner hold your feet for support.

Muscles Worked: Hamstrings, Glutes, Quads, Outer thigh, Abs



Lying Double Leg Raises

Starting Position

Lie on left side, legs straight, knees together, resting head on left hand or extended arm. Place right hand flat on the ground in front of you for balance.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping legs squeezed together, lift both legs simultaneously up into the air. Hold for 1-2 counts here. Be sure that feet are flexed and toes point forward.

INHALE: Lower to start without letting bottom leg touch ground to rest to complete one rep.

Switch sides and repeat to complete one set.

Special Instructions

This is a very small movement- you should only be lifting legs a few inches off the ground.

Make it harder: Try holding in highest position for 30+ seconds instead of (or in addition to) doing repetitions.

Muscles Worked: *Inner thigh, Outer thigh, Hips, Obliques*



Single Leg Bridge-Ups

Starting Position

Lie on back, knees bent, feet flat, arms at sides. Lift left leg off the ground, let straight but knee soft.

Action

EXHALE: Squeeze glutes and lift hips, keeping them level.

INHALE: Slowly lower to starting position to complete one rep.

Complete all reps and switch sides.

Special Instructions

Try to keep body from knee to chest in a straight line in the highest position.

Muscles Worked: Hamstrings, Glutes, Calves, Lower back, Quads





Forward Lunges with Dumbbells

Starting Position

Stand with legs slightly apart and a dumbbell in each hand, palms facing in, arms to your sides.

Action

INHALE: Take a big step forward, keeping upper body as straight as possible. Lunge until the front thigh is parallel to the floor and the back knee approaches the floor.

EXHALE: Push off and return back to the starting position to complete one rep.

Complete all reps on this side and then switch.

Special Instructions

Make sure forward knee does not cross past the line of the toes.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes





Bridges on Ball

Starting Position

Begin seated on the ball. Walk your feet out while lying back until your mid-upper back is on the ball while your feet are flat, knees bent. Without moving legs, roll the ball forward so that your hips and butt drop toward the floor.

Action

EXHALE: Using your glutes to pull you, roll the ball back as your hips rise up until your torso is in a straight line, parallel to the floor.

INHALE: Slowly lower down to start to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Make sure legs and feet stay stationary.

Muscles Worked: Glutes, Hamstrings





Single Leg Calf Raises at Wall

Starting Position

Place Swiss ball between your lower back and a wall. Lean against the Swiss ball with your feet firmly planted about 12" in front of you. Lift one leg off the ground, keeping the other knee soft and leg straight.

Action

EXHALE: Raise your heel off the ground as high as possible. Hold for 1-2 counts.

INHALE: Slowly lower to the starting position (without letting heel touch the ground) to complete one rep.

Finish all reps and switch sides.

Special Instructions

Keep knee only slightly bent or else you will be placing too much emphasis on your quads.

Make it easier: Two-leg calf raises following the same instructions.

Muscles Worked: Calves





Wall Squats with Dumbbells & Ball

Starting Position

Place ball between lower to mid back and wall. Keep your spine in a neutral position. Spread feet shoulder width apart and make sure toes are pointed forward. Grasp dumbbells, palms facing in, at your sides.

Action

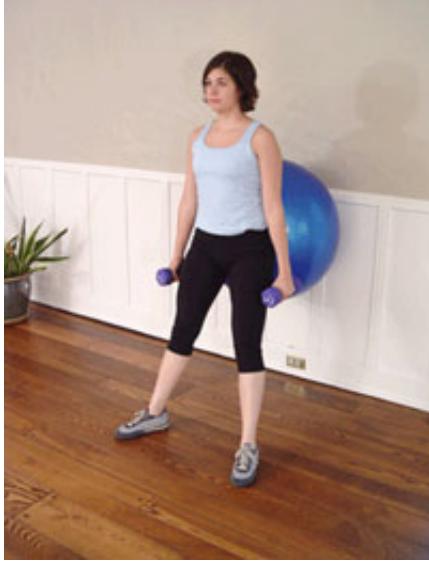
INHALE: Slowly (about 3 seconds) bend knees to 90 degrees. Hold for 1-3 counts here.

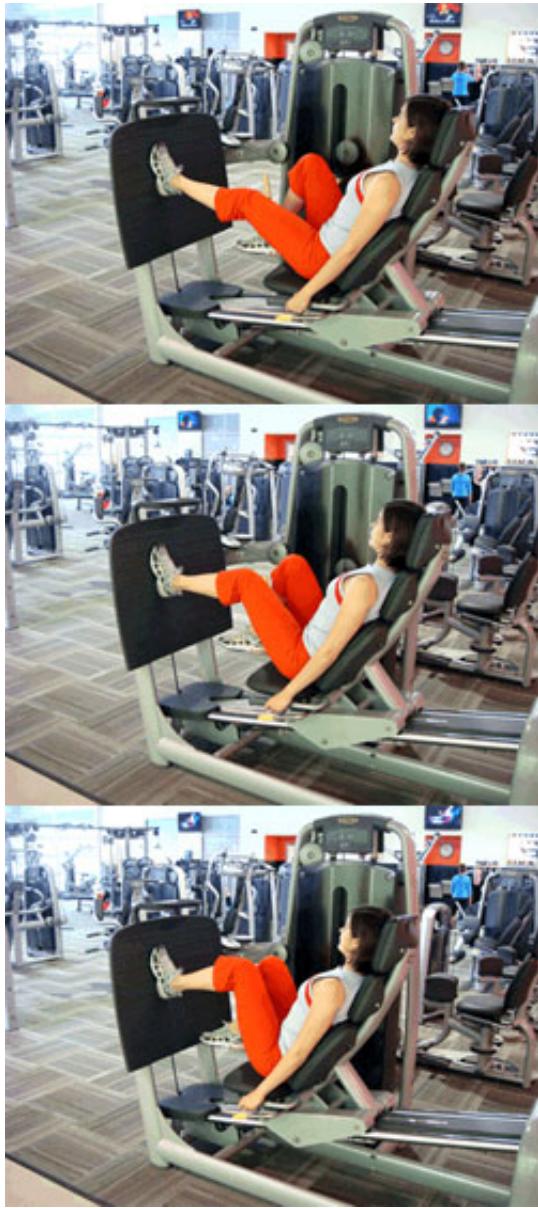
EXHALE: Slowly straighten legs and return to starting position, making sure to keep knees bent slightly, to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Make sure to place feet far enough in front so when you bend to 90 degrees, your knees don't go past the plane of your toes.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes, Hamstrings





Single Leg Squats on Leg Press Machine

Starting Position

Follow machine instructions for set up and select desired weight. Position your body so that feet are hip-width apart, toes pointing forward, knees are above the ankles, back is straight and supported by the pad, and abs are engaged. Make sure your knees and hips are both bent at 90 degrees. Lift right leg off of the foot stand and hold, keeping it clear of any moving parts.

Action

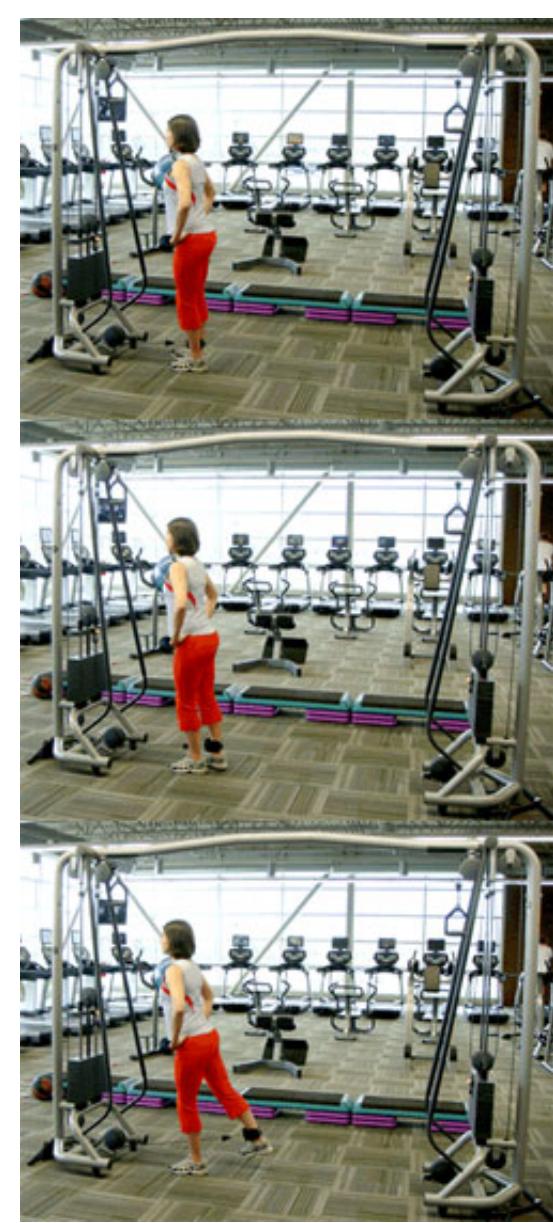
EXHALE: Keeping your weight balanced in your heel, extend your left knee to push your body away from the foot stand.

INHALE: Slowly bend the knee to return to the start position (a 90-degree bend at the knees) to complete one rep. Repeat all reps on one leg and then switch sides.

Special Instructions

To protect your joints, never bend deeper than 90 degrees at the knees or hips and don't lock the knee when straightening legs. Make sure you have mastered Squats on the Leg Press Machine before trying this more challenging exercise.

Muscles Worked: Legs (*quads, hamstrings, calves*) and Butt (*glutes*)



Standing Hip Extension on Cable Cross Machine

Starting Position

Select desired weight. Stand near left side of cable cross machine, and adjust that pulley to the lowest position. Place ankle strap attachment securely around right ankle. Stand tall, facing the weight stack, with abs engaged, feet hip-width apart, hands on hips, and weight balanced on your left foot. Lift your right foot off the ground, foot flexed.

Action

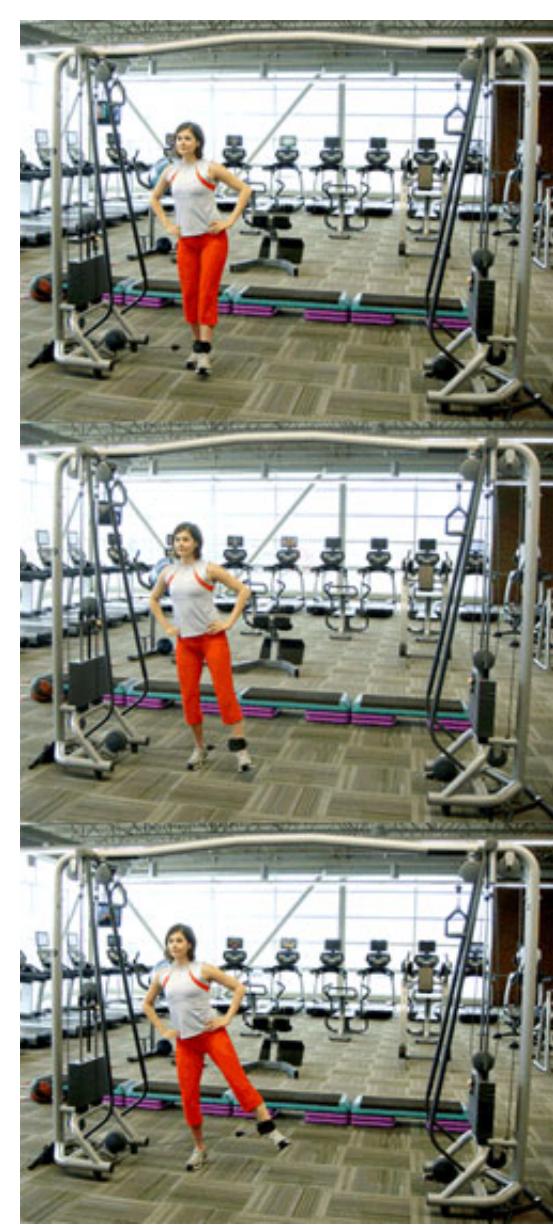
EXHALE: Keeping both legs straight, extend your right leg behind you, as if bringing your heel towards the wall behind you.

INHALE: Slowly return right leg to the start position to complete one rep. Finish set on this leg and then switch sides.

Special Instructions

Hold onto a pole (or similar) for balance if necessary. Keep knees soft, abs engaged, and eyes fixed on a focal point to enhance balance. Only use a weight that you can lift smoothly, without momentum, and make sure the weight stack does not slam between reps. Do not lean forward or backward as you move your leg.

Muscles Worked: Glutes, hamstrings<./>



Standing Hip Abduction on Cable Cross Machine

Starting Position

Select desired weight. Stand near right side of cable cross machine, and adjust that pulley to the lowest position. Place ankle strap attachment securely around left ankle. Stand tall with abs engaged, feet together, hands on hips, and weight balanced on your right foot. Lift your left foot off the ground, foot flexed.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping both legs straight, use the outer thigh to pull the left leg away from the midline of your body.

INHALE: Slowly return left leg to the midline, returning to the start position to complete one rep.

Finish set on this leg and then switch sides.

Special Instructions

Hold onto a pole (or similar) for balance if necessary. Keep knees soft, abs engaged, and eyes fixed on a focal point to enhance balance. Only use a weight that you can lift smoothly, without momentum, and make sure the weight stack does not slam between reps. Do not lean to the side as you move.

Muscles Worked: Outer thigh*<./i>*



Standing Leg Curls on Cable Cross Machine

Starting Position

Select desired weight. Stand near left side of cable cross machine, and adjust that pulley to the lowest position. Place ankle strap attachment securely around left ankle. Stand tall with abs engaged, feet and knees together, hands lightly gripping the bars for support (or on hips), and weight balanced on your right foot. Lift your left foot off the ground, foot flexed.

Action

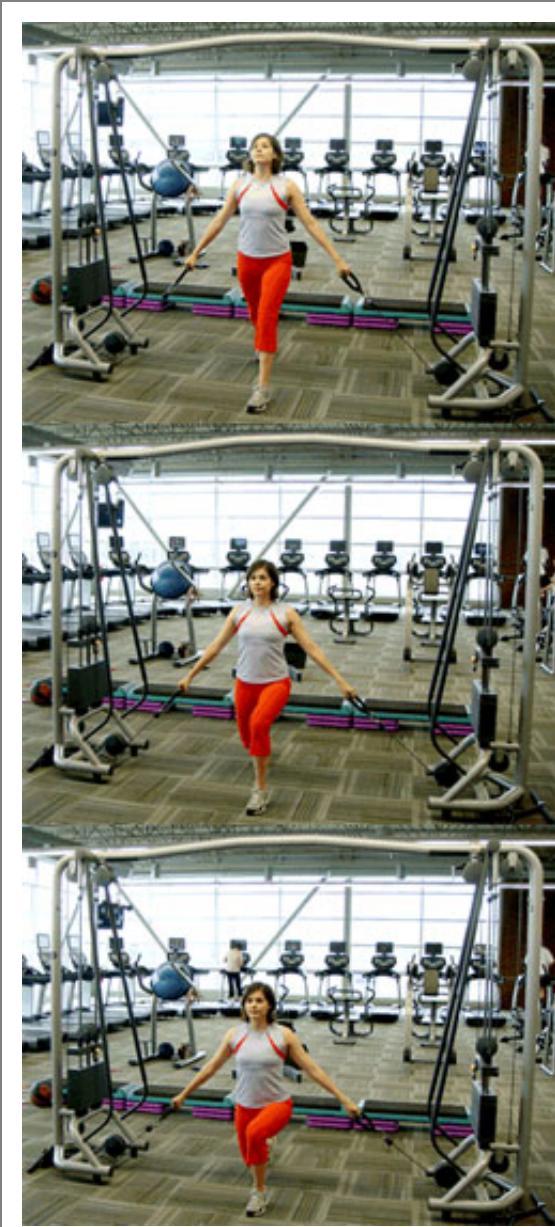
EXHALE: Keeping thighs and knees squeezed together, bend the left knee to curl your heel towards your buttocks.

INHALE: Slowly return to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Balance on your own as much as possible, only holding onto a pole (or similar) for balance if necessary. Only use a weight that you can lift smoothly, without momentum, and make sure the weight stack does not slam between reps. Do not lean forward or backward as you move your leg.

Muscles Worked: Hamstrings



Lunges with Cable Cross Machine

Starting Position

Select desired weight. Adjust both pulleys to the lowest position. Place the hand grip attachments onto the pulley carabiners. Stand at the center of the cable cross machine, gripping each handle, with your legs staggered (left leg in front, right leg behind), abs engaged, and back and arms straight.

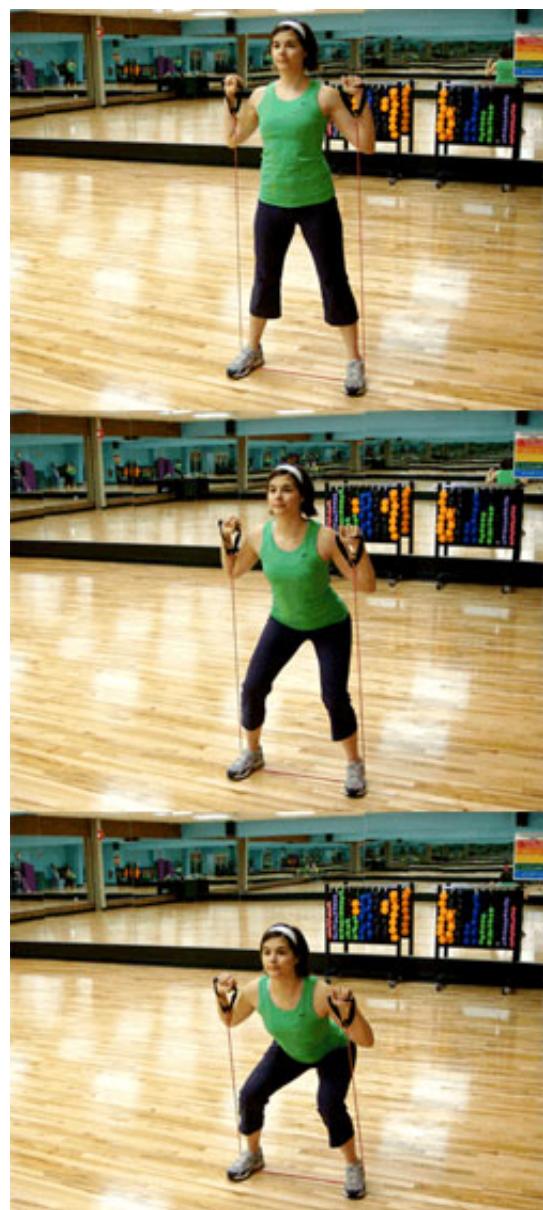
Action

INHALE: Slowly bend at both knees to lower down towards the floor, not exceeding 90-degrees at the knees. EXHALE: Slowly straighten the knees to push back up to the start position to complete one rep. Repeat all reps on this side and then switch sides.

Special Instructions

Keep a wide stance between your feet so you can lunge straight down without leaning forward over your front leg.

Muscles worked: Legs (*quads, hamstrings, calves*) and glutes



Squats with Band

Starting Position

Grab each handle and place feet on band, slightly wider than the hips, toes forward. Stand tall with back straight, abs engaged, legs straight and hands next to the shoulders, palms forward.

Action

INHALE: Slowly bend at both knees to lower down towards the floor, not exceeding 90-degrees at the knees. **EXHALE:** Slowly straighten the knees to push back up to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Minimize any forward leaning from the waist and keep chest lifted.

Muscles Worked: Legs (*quads, hamstrings, calves*) and glutes



Standing Hip Abduction with Band

Starting Position

Grab each handle and place feet on band, hip-width apart, toes forward. Stand tall with back straight, abs engaged, legs straight and arms at your sides. Shift your weight onto left leg, keeping knee soft.

Action

EXHALE: Push right leg out against the resistance band using the other thigh.

INHALE: Slowly return leg towards the midline of the body to complete one rep.

Stay balanced and finish set on this side before switching sides.

Special Instructions

Keep abs in, knee on balancing leg soft, and eyes fixed on a focal point to help maintain balance. Keep toes pointed forward, not out to the sides. Make it easier: Bring working leg back down to the floor for balance after each repetition, if necessary; hold onto a wall or chair for balance.

Muscles Worked: Outer thigh



Single Leg Hip Flexion with Band

Starting Position

Make a loop at one end of the band and place it around your left ankle. Hold the other handle in your right hand. Stand with your right foot on the band with back straight, abs engaged and right, hands on hips and knees soft. Lift your left leg off the floor just slightly, foot flexed.

Action

EXHALE: Drive your left knee up, bringing thigh parallel to the floor.

INHALE: Slowly return to the start position, continuing to balance on your right leg, to complete one rep. Complete all reps on this leg and then switch sides.

Special Instructions

Keep abs in, knee on balancing leg soft, and eyes fixed on a focal point to help maintain balance. Make it easier: Bring balancing leg closer to the handle you're holding to decrease resistance. Make it harder: Bring balancing leg closer to the working leg (the "loop" end of the band) to increase resistance.

Muscles Worked: Hip flexor



Single Leg Hamstring Curls with Band

Starting Position

Make a loop at one end of the band and place it around your right ankle. Hold the other handle in your left hand. Stand with your left foot on the band with back straight, abs engaged, hands on hips and legs together.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping thighs and knees squeezed together, bend the right knee to curl your heel towards your buttocks.

INHALE: Slowly return to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep abs in, knee on balancing leg soft, and eyes fixed on a focal point to help maintain balance. Make it easier: Bring balancing leg closer to the handle you're holding to decrease resistance. Make it harder: Bring balancing leg closer to the working leg (the "loop" end of the band) to increase resistance.

Muscles Worked: Hamstrings



Leg Extensions with Band

Starting Position

Make a loop at one end of the band and place it around your right ankle. Hold the other handle in your left hand. Stand with your left foot on the band with back straight, abs engaged, hands on hips and legs together. Lift right knee slightly towards the ceiling until the band is taught.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping your thigh in a fixed position, straighten your right knee as if kicking your toes up towards the ceiling.

INHALE: Bend at the knee to return to the start position to complete one rep.

Stay balanced and finish set on this leg and then switch sides.

Special Instructions

Keep abs in, knee on balancing leg soft, and eyes fixed on a focal point to help maintain balance. Make it easier: Bring balancing leg closer to the handle you're holding to decrease resistance. Make it harder: Bring balancing leg closer to the working leg (the "loop" end of the band) to increase resistance.

Muscles Worked: Quads



Standing Hip Adduction with Band

Starting Position

Make a loop at one end of the band and place it around your left ankle. Hold the other handle in your right hand. Stand with your right foot on the band with back straight, abs engaged, right hand on hips and knees soft. Lift your left leg off the floor just slightly, foot flexed.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping both legs straight, use the inner thigh to pull the left leg towards the midline of your body.

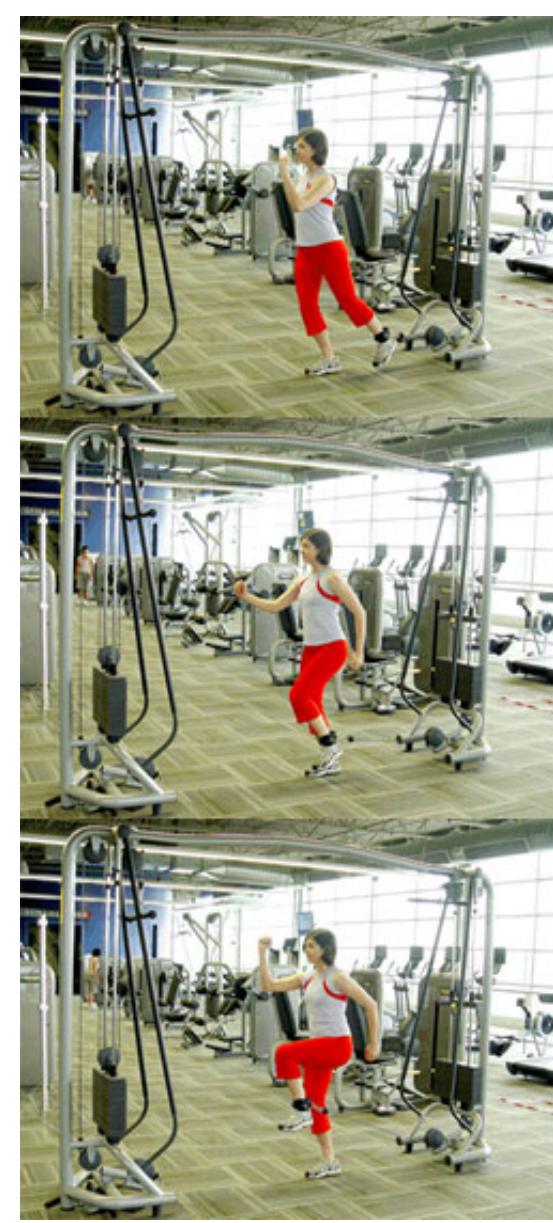
INHALE: Slowly return left leg to the side, returning to the start position to complete one rep.

Finish set on this leg and then switch sides.

Special Instructions

Keep abs in, knee on balancing leg soft, and eyes fixed on a focal point to help maintain balance. Do not lean to the side as you move. Make it easier: Bring balancing leg closer to the handle you're holding to decrease resistance. Make it harder: Bring balancing leg closer to the working leg (the "loop" end of the band) to increase resistance.

Muscles Worked: Inner thighs



Standing Hip Flexion on Cable Cross Machine

Starting Position

Select desired weight. Stand near right side of cable cross machine, and adjust that pulley to the lowest position. Place ankle strap attachment onto the pulley's carabiner. Place strap securely around left ankle. Face away from the weight stack, and step away from it so that the weight is lifted off the stack when your left leg is extended behind you. Stand tall with abs engaged and weight balanced on your right foot. Lift your left foot off the ground, foot flexed.

Action

EXHALE: Drive your left knee up, bringing thigh parallel to the floor as arms move in a "running" motion.

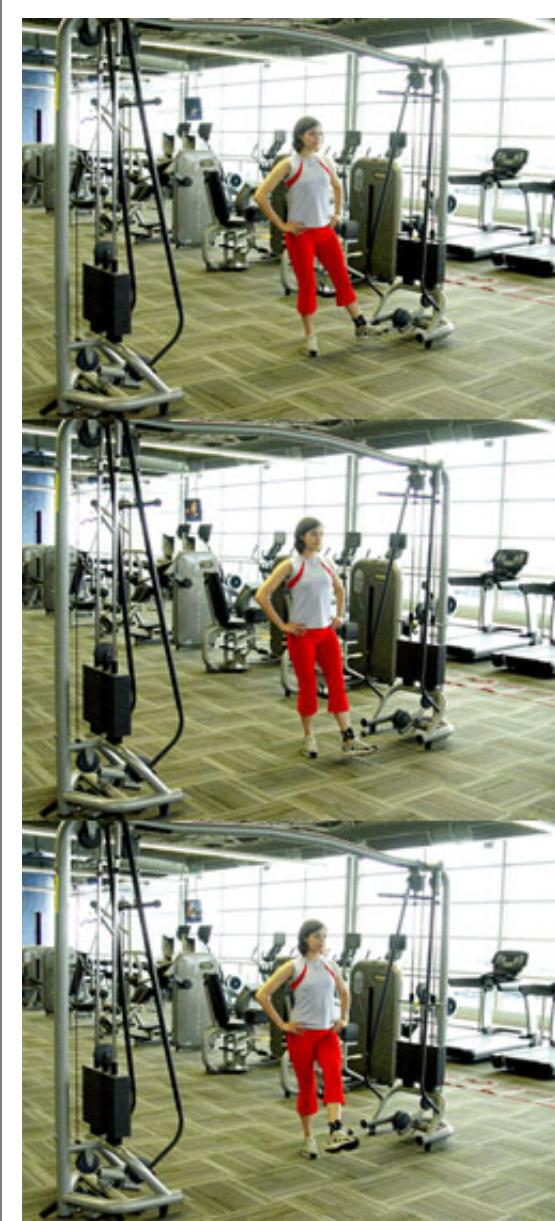
INHALE: Slowly return to the start position (with leg extended behind you), switching the swing of the arms to complete one rep.

Finish set on this leg and then switch sides.

Special Instructions

Keep your lower back flat--make sure it does not arch. Keep your head and neck relaxed into the support. Focus on using the abs, not just the upper body, to lift.

Muscles Worked: Hip flexor



Standing Hip Adduction on Cable Cross Machine

Starting Position

Select desired weight. Stand near left side of cable cross machine, and adjust that pulley to the lowest position. Place ankle strap attachment securely around left ankle. Stand tall with abs engaged, feet hip-width apart, hands on hips, and weight balanced on your right foot. Lift your left foot off the ground, foot flexed.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping both legs straight, use the inner thigh to pull the left leg towards the midline of your body.

INHALE: Slowly return left leg to the side, returning to the start position to complete one rep.

Finish set on this leg and then switch sides.

Special Instructions

Keep your lower back flat--make sure it does not arch. Keep your head and neck relaxed into the support. Focus on using the abs, not just the upper body, to lift.

Muscles Worked: *Inner thigh*



Squats with Barbell

Starting Position

(Not pictured: Place barbell on the rack so that it's just below your shoulder height when standing next to it. Add desired weight plates and safety clips to each end. With your back to the squat rack, place shoulders underneath barbell and hands on barbell, then straighten legs to lift barbell off rack. Take a small step forward so barbell is away from squat rack.) Place feet hip-width apart, toes slightly turned outward, abs engaged, and back straight.

Action

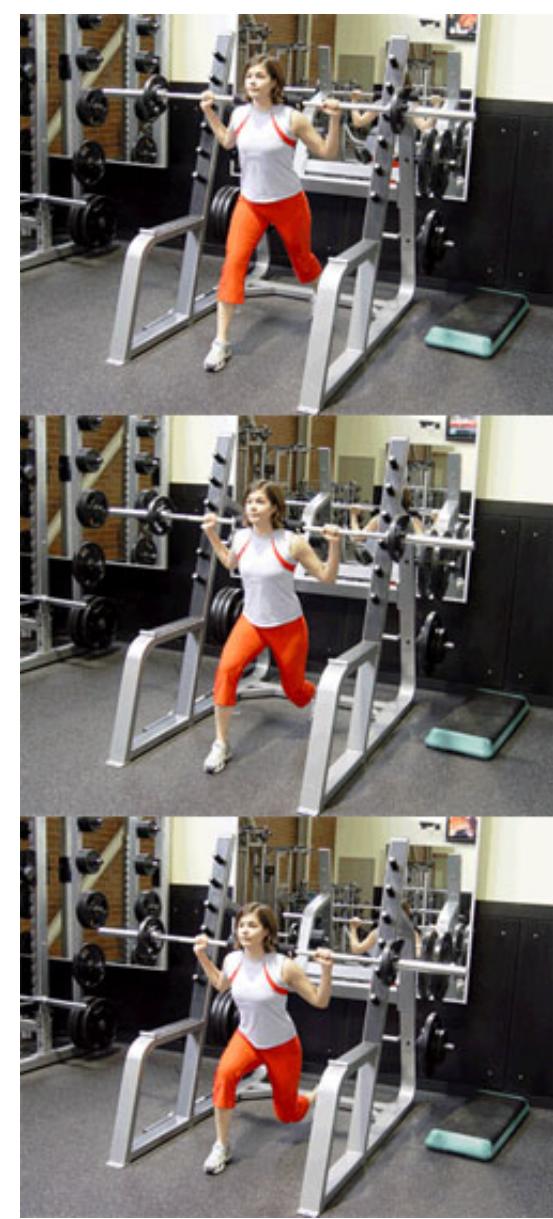
INHALE: Bend at the knees (and slightly at the hips) to slowly lower your body towards as if sitting back into a chair. Don't bend deeper than 90 degrees at the knees.

EXHALE: Straighten back up to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Make sure your knees do not lock or move in front of the toes. Minimize the amount of forward leaning from the waist and keep chest up. When lifting heavy weights, use a spotter for safety.

Muscles Worked: Legs (*quads, hamstrings, calves*) and glutes



Stationary Lunges with Barbell

Starting Position

(Not pictured: Place barbell on the rack so that it's just below your shoulder height when standing next to it. Add desired weight plates and safety clips to each end. With your back to the squat rack, place shoulders underneath barbell and hands on barbell, then straighten legs to lift barbell off rack. Take a small step forward so barbell is away from squat rack.) Place one foot forward and the other foot back so that you have a wide stance between your feet, with toes pointing forward, abs engaged, and back straight.

Action

INHALE: Bend at both knees to lower your body straight down towards the ground, but without exceeding 90-degree bends at the knees.

EXHALE: Straighten the legs to push back up to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Make sure your knees do not lock or move in front of the toes. Do not lean forward over your front leg--keep body upright. When lifting heavy weights, use a spotter for safety. Do not perform this exercise on a "Smith machine," because it can compromise your normal movement pattern, increasing injury risk.

Muscles Worked: Legs (*quads, hamstrings, calves*) and glutes



Squats on Balance Board

Starting Position

Slowly and cautiously step onto the balance board, one foot at a time, holding on to a wall or sturdy object for balance if necessary. With both feet on, take your time adjusting your balance until you can stand upright with legs together, back straight, abs engaged, and arms extended in front of your shoulders.

Action

INHALE: Push your hips back (as if sitting into a chair behind you) and bend the knees to squat down. **EXHALE:** Straighten the legs and push your hips forward to return back to the starting (standing) position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Only squat as far as you can go while maintaining balance and control. Keep your abs engaged and use a focal point in front of you to aid your balance. Try to keep the balance board as stable as possible, and be sure to balance your weight evenly between both feet. Keep chest lifted and minimize any forward leaning.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Hamstrings, Glutes, Abs



Single Leg Squat on Balance Board

Starting Position

Slowly and cautiously step onto the balance board with one foot, holding on to a wall or sturdy object for balance if necessary. Take your time adjusting your balance until you can stand upright with your opposite leg lifted (knee bent), back straight, abs engaged, and arms extended in front of your shoulders (pictured).

Action

INHALE: Keep your lifted leg still as you push your hips back and bend the knee on your balancing leg to squat down. **EXHALE:** Straighten your balancing leg, pushing your hips forward to push up to the starting position to complete one rep. Finish several repetitions on the this same leg (pictured) to complete one set. Switch sides and repeat on the opposite leg (not pictured).

Special Instructions

Only squat as far as you can go while maintaining balance and control. Keep your abs engaged and use a focal point in front of you to aid your balance. Try to keep the balance board as stable as possible. Keep chest lifted and minimize any forward leaning. It's OK to lower your lifted foot to the floor to adjust your balance throughout this exercise, if necessary.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Hamstrings, Glutes, Abs



Forward Lunges onto Balance Board

Starting Position

Place your balance board a few feet in front of you. Stand tall with your legs together, arms at your sides, abs engaged, back straight and shoulders relaxed.

Action

INHALE: Step forward onto the balance board with your right foot, then bend both knees to lower your hips straight down toward the ground without leaning forward. EXHALE: Push back up from your lunge, then push off the balance board to return to the start position and complete one rep. Repeat all reps on one leg then switch sides.

Special Instructions

Make sure the balance board is an appropriate distance in front of you; you should be able step onto it and lower into your lunge without your forward knee coming past your toes, and without leaning forward from the waist. Practice caution when stepping on and off the board for each lunge. Take your time. Make sure the balance board is resting on a surface where it will not slip. Try to step onto the very top center of the board to help you balance more easily.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes, Abs



Single Leg Bridges on Board

Starting Position

Lie on your back with your left foot flat on the top center of a balance board and your right leg extended straight up in line with the hip. Keep feet and knees hip-width apart, arms at your sides, and abs engaged.

Action

EXHALE: Keep your abs engaged and your right (extended) leg still as you push your hips straight up toward the ceiling, lifting your glutes and lower back off the floor. **INHALE:** Slowly lower your hips back down to the start position to complete one rep. After one set, switch the balance board placement to the other side to perform another set.

Special Instructions

Don't put any pressure in your head or neck; balance your weight between your foot (on the board), your shoulder blades, and your arms. Only bridge your hips up as high as you can go while maintaining balance, control and good form.

Make it easier: Instead of extending one leg toward the ceiling, keep that knee bent in a table top position (knee in line with hip, shin parallel to the floor).

Muscles Worked: Glutes, Hamstrings



Staggered Squat on Balance Board with Single Leg Abduction

Starting Position

Begin by standing tall (not pictured) with your legs hip-width apart, arms extended in front of your shoulders, and one foot on top of a balance board. Make sure your knees and toes are pointed in the same directly (either forward, not pictured, or slightly turned out, as pictured). Engage your abs and place an equal amount of weight in both feet.

Action

INHALE: Push your hips back (as if sitting into a chair behind you) and bend your knees to squat down. EXHALE: Straighten the legs and push your hips forward to return back to the starting and shift your weight into the balance board while abducting your opposite leg out to the side. INHALE: Place lifted foot back onto the floor and lower back into your squat (both knees bent). EXHALE: Push back up out of your squat to return to the start position and complete one rep. After one set, switch the balance board placement to the other side to perform another set.

Special Instructions

Master the "Staggered Squat on Balance Board" and "Single Leg Standing Balance with Abduction" before trying this exercise. Only squat as far as you can while maintaining balance and control. Keep your abs engaged and use a focal point in front of you to aid your balance. Try to keep the balance board as stable as possible. Keep chest lifted and minimize any forward leaning (while squatting) or lateral leaning (while abducting your leg).

Muscles Worked: Quads, Hamstrings, Glutes, Outer Thighs, Abs



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Bridges on Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Lie on your back with your feet on a medicine ball, knees bent, legs together, arms at your sides, and abs engaged.

Action

EXHALE: Keep your abs engaged as you push your hips straight up toward the ceiling to lift your glutes and lower back off the floor.

INHALE: Slowly lower your hips back down to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Don't put any pressure in your head or neck; balance your weight between your feet (on the ball), your shoulder blades, and your arms. Only bridge your hips up as high as you can go while maintaining balance, control and good form.

Muscles Worked: Glutes, Hamstrings





Squat with front shoulder raises

Starting Position

Hold a medicine ball in front of your thighs and stand tall with your feet hip-width apart, toes pointed directly forward, legs straight, abs engaged, shoulders relaxed, and back straight.

Action

EXHALE: Bend your knees and hips to squat down as you lift the medicine ball (with straight arms) overhead. **INHALE:** Slowly lower the medicine ball back down as you push up out of your squat to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

When squatting, push your hips back (as if sitting into a chair behind you) and do not let your knees come past your toes. When lifting and lowering the ball, keep your arms as straight as possible (without locking the elbows) and your shoulders relaxed.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Glutes, Hamstrings, Shoulders



Wall Squats with Medicine and Stability Balls

Starting Position

Place stability ball between your lower back and a sturdy wall behind you and a lightweight medicine ball (or unweighted ball) between your thighs, just above the knees. Keep your spine in a neutral position, abs engaged, arms relaxed at your sides, and feet flat on the floor. With straight legs, walk your feet forward until they're approximately 12 inches in front of you (not pictured).

Action

INHALE: With your back flat and abs engaged, squat straight down by bending the knees until the thighs come approximately parallel to the floor. **EXHALE:** Straighten your legs to push back up to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Make sure your knees do not extend past your toes. If they do, stand back up and scoot your feet farther away from you. Push your back into the ball behind you and keep your back as straight as possible.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Hamstrings, Inner thighs





Lying Double Leg Raises with Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Hold a medicine ball (or unweighted ball) between your legs, just above your ankles. Lie down on your right side with your body in a straight line, head supported in your hand, top hand on the floor for support, and abs engaged.

Action

EXHALE: Squeezing the ball and keeping your toes and knees pointed directly forward, slowly lift both legs off the floor. **INHALE:** With control, slowly lower your legs back down to the floor to complete one rep. Finish all reps on this side and then switch sides.

Special Instructions

Keep your abs engaged and think about using your obliques at the side of the waist to help you lift and lower your legs. Only lift your legs as high up as you can while maintaining good form and control. Do not use momentum.

Make it harder: Instead of relying on your top hand for support on the floor in front of you, progress by using that hand less and less and eventually take it off the floor completely for a greater challenge.

Muscles Worked: *Inner thighs, outer thighs, abs, obliques*



Single-Leg Bridges on Foam Roller (Knee Bent)

Starting Position

Lie on your back with a foam roller near your feet. Place your feet (ankles and/or heels) onto the foam roller, knees bent, legs hip-width apart, arms at your sides, and abs engaged. Lift your left foot off of the roller and into a table-top position (knee bent, knee in line with the hip and shin parallel to the floor).

Action

EXHALE: Keep your abs engaged and your left leg in the table-top position as you push your hips straight up toward the ceiling, lifting your glutes and lower back off the floor. **INHALE:** Slowly lower your hips back down to the starting position to complete one rep. After one set, switch sides to perform another set.

Special Instructions

Master the Bridges on Foam Roller exercise before trying this single-leg variation. Don't put any pressure in your head or neck; balance your weight between your foot (on the roller), your shoulder blades, and your arms. Only bridge your hips up as high as you can go while maintaining balance, control and good form.

Muscles Worked: Glutes, Hamstrings



Single-Leg Bridges on Foam Roller (Straight Leg)

Starting Position

Lie on your back with a foam roller near your feet. Place your feet (ankles and/or heels) onto the foam roller, knees bent, legs hip-width apart, arms at your sides, and abs engaged. Lift your left foot off of the roller and extend your leg up as straight as possible and in line with the hip.

Action

EXHALE: Keep your abs engaged and your left leg extended as you push your hips straight up toward the ceiling, lifting your glutes and lower back off the floor. **INHALE:** Slowly lower your hips back down to the starting position to complete one rep. After one set, switch sides to perform another set.

Special Instructions

Master the Bridges on Foam Roller exercise before trying this single-leg variation. Don't put any pressure in your head or neck; balance your weight between your foot (on the roller), your shoulder blades, and your arms. Only bridge your hips up as high as you can go while maintaining balance, control and good form.

Muscles Worked: Glutes, Hamstrings



Single-Leg Bridge Hold on Foam Roller with Toe Taps

Starting Position

Lie on your back with a foam roller near your feet. Place your feet (ankles and/or heels) onto the foam roller, knees bent, legs hip-width apart, arms at your sides, and abs engaged. Lift your left foot off of the roller and into a table-top position (knee bent, knee in line with the hip and shin parallel to the floor). Keep your abs engaged and your left leg in the table-top position as you push your hips straight up toward the ceiling, lifting your glutes and lower back off the floor.

Action

INHALE: Hold your hips up in the bridge position as you hinge from the hip to lower your left toes toward the floor. EXHALE: Slowly pull the leg back up to the table-top position to complete one rep. After one set, switch sides to perform another set.

Special Instructions

Master the Single-Leg Bridges on Foam Roller exercises before trying this variation. Don't put any pressure in your head or neck; balance your weight between your foot (on the roller), your shoulder blades, and your arms. Keep your hips level and the knee of the moving leg bent at 90 degrees at all times. Only lower your toes toward the floor as far as you can go while holding your bridge still and keeping your hips level.

Muscles Worked: Glutes, Hamstrings, Hip Flexors



Single-Leg Bridge Hold on Foam Roller with Leg Lowers

Starting Position

Lie on your back with a foam roller near your feet. Place your feet (ankles and/or heels) onto the foam roller, knees bent, legs hip-width apart, arms at your sides, and abs engaged. Lift your right foot off of the roller and extend it straight up in line with your hip. Keep your abs engaged and your right leg extended as you push your hips straight up toward the ceiling, lifting your glutes and lower back off the floor.

Action

INHALE: Hold your hips up in the bridge position as keep your right leg straight as you lower your right leg toward the floor. EXHALE: Slowly pull the leg back up to your hip to complete one rep. After one set, switch sides to perform another set.

Special Instructions

Master the Single-Leg Bridges on Foam Roller exercises before trying this variation. Don't put any pressure in your head or neck; balance your weight between your foot (on the roller), your shoulder blades, and your arms. Keep your extended leg as straight as possible, but bend at the knee slightly if necessary. Only lower your leg toward the floor as far as you can go while holding your bridge still and keeping your hips level.

Muscles Worked: Glutes, Hamstrings, Quads



Crunches

Starting Position

Lie on the floor or a mat on your back, with knees bent and hands behind head. Feet should be flat on the ground. Keep a space between your chin and chest (looking diagonal towards the ceiling).

Action

EXHALE: Raise your chest until your shoulder blades lift off the floor.

INHALE: Slowly lower back to floor.

Special Instructions

Don't use your hands and arms to help lift you up - use abdominals and hips.

Muscles Worked: Abs





Crunches with Ball

Starting Position

Begin by sitting on top of the Swiss ball. Roll in the direction your head is pointed until your lower back is supported by the curve of the ball. You can either cross your arms over your chest or place your hands behind your ears. Do not put them behind the head or clasp them together behind your head.

Action

EXHALE: Crunch forward, using your abdominals, until you are at approximately a 45 degree angle to the ball. Keep your neck in a neutral position.

INHALE: Lower yourself back to the starting position, where your head wraps back around the ball. Try doing 2 sets of 15 crunches.

Special Instructions

Keep space in-between your chin and chest, so your spine stays in a neutral position. Balance yourself on the ball with as much upper body weight off the ball as possible without falling over backwards.

Muscles Worked: Abs





Crunches with Twist

Starting Position

Lie on the floor or a mat on your back, with knees bent and hands behind head. Feet should be flat on the ground. Keep a space between your chin and chest (looking diagonal towards the ceiling).

Action

EXHALE: As you lift up, rotate upper body toward one side, then rotate back to center.

INHALE: Lower your back to the floor. Alternate sides.

Special Instructions

Don't use your hands and arms to help lift you up - use abdominals and hips.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques





Modified Pendulum with Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Begin by lying on the floor with your arms out to your side. Place a medicine ball in-between your knees and hold it there by clenching your legs together. Lift your legs off the ground and bend your knees to a 90 degree angle. Make sure your lower back is flat on the ground.

Action

Slowly lower your knees to the right, making sure to keep your shoulders and back flat on the floor. Slowly move knees back across your body and down to your left side. Try doing 2 sets of 10-12 repetitions.



Special Instructions

You don't want to touch the floor with the medicine ball or your knees. Remember to keep the lower back flat on the floor.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques





Swimming

Starting Position

Lie facedown, arms and legs outstretched a few inches above floor, head in line with spine.

Action

Raise left arm and right leg off floor. Lower and repeat with right arm/left leg. Return to start and repeat the series.

Special Instructions

Don't lower arms or legs completely until the end of the set. Don't hold your breath.

Muscles Worked: Lower back





Modified Plank

Starting Position

Begin this exercise by lying on your stomach with your forearms on the floor pointing straight forward, your feet together and your spine in a neutral position. Your feet should be touching or no more than an inch apart.

Action

Lift your body up on your forearms and toes, keeping your body as straight as possible. Maintain this position for as long as possible and challenge yourself to longer periods in the plank position. Try to hold the position for 60 seconds in the beginning, working your way up in 30 second jumps until you can hold the position for 3 minutes or longer.

Special Instructions

Don't let your hips/knees drop, your butt raise, or shift weight to one forearm.

Muscles Worked: Abs



Reverse Crunch

Starting Position

Lie on the floor or a mat on your back, with knees bent and hands behind head. Lift legs and bend knees to 90 degrees. Keep a space between your chin and chest (looking diagonal towards the ceiling).

Action

EXHALE: Pull knees in toward chest and hold for 2 seconds.

INHALE: Slowly lower legs back to starting position.

Special Instructions

Don't use your momentum to swing your legs up. Try to keep the motion controlled by your abs.

Muscles Worked: Abs



Seated Twist with Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Sit on the floor with feet firmly planted, knees bent, back straight, and hands gripping a medicine ball or dumbbell (not pictured). Extend your arms in front of you, keeping them in line with the shoulders. Keeping your back straight, lean back (hinging from the hips) until you feel your abs engage.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping a perfectly straight back with your abs pulled in tight, rotate your torso to the right as far as you can while maintaining good form (back straight, feet on floor).

INHALE. Return to the center (start position).

Repeat on the opposite side to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Do not round or arch your back. Try to keep your feet planted. Focus on the movement coming from the waist, allowing your upper body and arms to follow.

Make it harder: Use a heavier weight or lean back farther.

Make it easier: Instead of extending your arms in front of you, keep the elbows bent with the medicine ball or weight hugged in close to your torso, and/or don't lean back as far.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques





Dumbbell Side Bends

Starting Position

Stand with feet shoulder width apart, holding dumbbells. Knees should be slightly bent.

Action

EXHALE: Bend trunk to the left to a comfortable position and hold for 2-3 seconds.

INHALE: Return to starting position and repeat to right side.

Special Instructions

Don't let your weight take you forward or backwards.

Muscles Worked: Obliques





Dolphin Pose

Starting Position

Start in an inverted V: forearms on floor, elbows wide, hands clasped, butt lifted, legs straight. Tip head between arms to look at feet.

Action

Looking up, press body forward until chin is above hands. Return to start to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

None.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Shoulders, Upper back



Balancing Hip Flexion

Starting Position

Stand with feet slightly apart, toes forward, hands on hips or one hand on a wall/chair for support. Shift weight to right leg, keeping knee slightly bent and spine straight.

Action

EXHALE: Gradually lift the left leg, keeping it bent at 90 degrees. Lift knee as high as possible, trying to get thigh parallel to floor or higher. Hold here for 2 counts.

INHALE: Slowly lower leg to ground without letting foot rest on the floor. Complete all reps and switch sides.

Special Instructions

Make sure you aren't leaning back when lifting leg. Also, try to make the entire movement very slow and controlled.

Muscles Worked: Hips, Upper Thigh, Glute





Standing Side Bend with Towel

Starting Position

Stand with legs hip-width apart, knees slightly bent. Holding ends of a rolled-up towel, extend arms overhead in a V formation.

Action

Lift up and out of your rib cage and reach about 10 degrees to the left without moving your lower body. Return to start. Bend to opposite side to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Concentrate on bending from the waist, and letting your upper body/arms follow.

Muscles Worked: Obliques



Bridge-Ups

Starting Position

Begin seated on floor, knees bent, feet flat, arms bent with hands on floor below shoulders.

Action

EXHALE: Straighten arms (don't lock elbows), allowing butt/hips to rise off of ground until your body from your head to your knees is in a straight line parallel to the floor. Hold for 2 counts.

INHALE: Return to starting position for one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep glutes squeezed and tailbone tucked in. Tighten abs to help straighten body. At highest position, knees should be bent at 90 degrees.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Lower back, Shoulders





Banana

Starting Position

Lie on floor with legs together, arms extended overhead, belly button pulled in toward spine.

Action

Keeping head between arms, slowly raise upper body and legs off floor to form a gentle bananalike curve. Hold for a slow 30 counts.

Special Instructions

Don't hold your breath! Try to keep breathing steady and even. Concentrate on holding abs in.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Shoulders





Modified Side Plank

Starting Position

Lie on left side, legs together, feet stacked. Wrap right arm around waist. Keep head and neck aligned with spine.

Action

Prop upper body on bent left forearm (be sure elbow is directly below shoulder). Press hips toward ceiling, using abs to stabilize torso. Hold for 30 seconds and work up to 1-3 minutes.

Special Instructions

Be sure not to hold breath. Exercise will be easier if feet are staggered instead of stacked.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques



Back Extension

Starting Position

Lie facedown, legs together and extended straight, arms bent with hands behind neck, head and neck in a neutral position.

Action

EXHALE: Lift the upper body (chest, shoulders) off of the ground, "crunching" towards the hips. Hold for 1-2 counts at highest position.

INHALE: Slowly lower with control to start to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

This is a very small movement-- don't move further than you can naturally and easily. Keep legs squeezed together, hips on floor. There should be no movement from your hips to your toes.

Muscles Worked: Lower back



Low Mount Hip Flexor with Band

Starting Position

Make a loop at one end of a band. Attach the other end to a low mount (bench, bedpost, or wall mount) and place your right leg into the loop you made at the other end. Stand with the mount behind you, weight on the left leg, knee slightly bent. Place hands on hips or on a chair back or wall for balance if necessary. Flex right foot.

Action

EXHALE: Lift right knee up to at least hip level, keeping knee bent at 90 degrees.

INHALE: Slowly lower to starting position to complete one rep. Gently rest right foot on ground between reps if necessary. Complete all reps and switch sides.

Special Instructions

Make it harder: Step farther away from the mount; do not let leg rest on ground in between reps; do not hold onto a wall, etc. for balance; Swing arms forward and back as if running to challenge your balance.

Make it easier: Stand closer to the wall; allow leg to touch floor in between reps.

Muscles Worked: Hips, Upper Thigh, Glute





Side Plank on Ball

Starting Position

Begin with the right side of your torso lying on a ball, your feet on the ground next to you, stacked. Straighten your legs and place your right hand on the ground, arm straight.

Action

Hold this position, making sure you are not holding your breath. Try 15-30 seconds and work your way up to 1-3 minutes.

Special Instructions

The ball assists you in this pose if regular Side Plank is too difficult for you.

Muscles Worked: Obliques, Abs



Superman

Starting Position

Lie facedown on the floor, legs together and straight, arms straight and extended above your head. Keep your head/neck in a neutral position.

Action

Keeping limbs straight (but not locked) and torso stationary, simultaneously lift your arms and legs up toward the ceiling to form a gentle curve with your body. Hold for a slow 30 counts.

Special Instructions

Don't hold your breath! Try to keep breathing steady and even. Make it easier: Hold for fewer counts and don't raise legs/arms quite as high. Change it up: Lower to the ground to complete one rep and do a 2-3 sets.

Muscles Worked: Lower back



Seated Back Extension Machine

Starting Position

Follow machine instructions for set up and select desired weight. Sit so that feet are on (or behind) foot rest, and back pad is on your upper back (shoulder blades) while your torso is slightly pitched forward. Keep knees above ankles, back straight, abs engaged, and arms crossed at your chest.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping abs engaged and spine perfectly straight, slowly hinge back from the hips to lean back.

INHALE to slowly return to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Only lean back as far as you can in good form (back straight and abs engaged). If you experience lower back pain, decrease your range of motion or avoid this exercise altogether.

Muscles worked: Lower back



Abdominal Crunch Machine

Starting Position

Lie on your back with your head on the head rest, knees bent and feet on the foot rest. Keep your lower back flat against the pad under you, and place elbows on pads, gripping handlebar lightly.

Action

EXHALE: Use the abdominals to lift your shoulder blades upward, while keeping the head and neck against the pad for support.

INHALE: Slowly return back down to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep your lower back flat--make sure it does not arch. Keep your head and neck relaxed into the support. Focus on using the abs, not just the upper body, to lift.

Muscles Worked: Abs



Knee Raises on Captain's Chair

Starting Position

Stand on the captain's chair (not pictured) to place your back flat on the pad, your forearms and elbows on the pads, and your hands lightly around the gripping handles. Once in position, lift your feet off of the stand and squeeze your legs together, keeping abs engaged.

Action

EXHALE: Focus on engaging the abs as you bring your knees up towards your chest.

INHALE: Slowly lower the legs back down to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep your lower back flat--make sure it does not arch. Keep your head and neck relaxed into the support. Focus on using the abs, not just the upper body, to lift.

Muscles Worked: Abs





Plank with Ab Wheel

Starting Position

Begin by kneeling on a mat with your knees together, hands grasping the ab wheel handles, arms directly beneath your shoulders (not pictured). Extend one leg at a time until you are balanced on the balls of the feet while holding the ab wheel still. Make sure your abs are engaged and your body forms a straight line from the shoulders to the hip, knee and ankles.

Action

Breathe steadily as you hold this plank position for 15-30 seconds. Gradually work your way up to holding the plank for 1-3 minutes for an isometric core challenge.

Special Instructions

Don't let your hips drop or rise, and be sure not to shift weight to one arm. Hold your body as still as possible and try to keep the ab wheel steady, too. Remember to breathe. **Muscles Worked:** Abs, Lower back



Straight-Arm Plank on Balance Board

Starting Position

Begin by kneeling on a mat with your knees together, hands on top of a balance board, and arms directly beneath your shoulders (not pictured). Extend one leg at a time until you are balanced on the balls of the feet (pictured). Make sure your abs are engaged and your body forms a straight line from the shoulders to the hip, knee and ankles.

Action

Breathe steadily as you hold this plank position for 15-30 seconds. Gradually work your way up to holding the plank for 1-3 minutes for an isometric core challenge.

Special Instructions

Don't let your hips drop or rise, and be sure not to shift weight to one arm. Hold your body as still as possible and try to keep the balance board steady, too. Remember to breathe. **Muscles Worked:** Abs, Lower back



Straight-Arm Side Plank on Balance Board

Starting Position

Begin by sitting on your right hip with your legs stacked to your left, your right arm straight, and your right hand on a balance board, placed directly underneath your right shoulder (not pictured). With legs and feet stacked, slowly lift your right hip away from the floor, keeping the right arm straight and extending both legs to balance in a side plank position (pictured).

Action

Breathe steadily as you hold the side plank position for 15-30 seconds, keeping your abs engaged and the right side of your waist pulled away from the floor at all times. For added intensity, extend your left arm up toward the ceiling (pictured). Gradually work your way up to holding the plank for 1-3 minutes for an isometric core challenge. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Hold your body as still as possible and try to keep the balance board steady, too. Remember to breathe. Try to square your chest and shoulders with the front of the room, keeping your body in one plane. To decrease intensity, place left hand on the hip instead of extending it (not pictured).

Make it easier: Instead of stacking your legs and feet, stagger one leg in front of the other.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques



Modified Seated Balance on Board

Starting Position

Sit on top of your balance board, feet flat on the floor, knees bent, hands grasping the back of your thighs, abs engaged, and back as straight as possible. While maintaining a flat back, lean back slightly while lifting your feet off the floor to balance on the board.

Action

Breathe steadily as you balance in this seated position for 15-30 seconds. Gradually work your way up to holding this exercise for 1-3 minutes for an isometric core challenge.

Special Instructions

Try to keep your legs together and your back flat at all times. Engage your abs and stare at a focal point in front of you to help with balance.

Muscles Worked: Abs



Abdominal Crunches on Balance Board

Starting Position

Lie on your back with an inflated balance board/disc underneath your lower to mid back, your feet flat on the floor, legs together, and arms crossed in front of your chest. Engage your abs and push your lower back into the disc beneath you.

Action

EXHALE: Using the abdominals, "crunch" up by lifting your head, neck and tops of your shoulder blades away from the floor.

INHALE: With control, slowly lower to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep your shoulders relaxed and your neck tucked in toward your chest while crunching up to help reduce neck strain. Do not attempt this exercise on a wooden or hard-surface balance board.

Make it easier: Instead of crossing your arms at your chest, place your hands behind your head/neck for support.

Muscles Worked: Abs



Two-Leg Standing Balance on Board

Starting Position

Slowly and cautiously step onto the balance board, one foot at a time, holding on to a wall or sturdy object for balance if necessary. With both feet on, take your time adjusting your balance until you can stand upright with legs together, back straight, abs engaged, and arms extended at your sides (pictured).

Action

Breathe steadily as you balance in this standing position for 15-30 seconds. Gradually work your way up to holding this exercise for 1-3 minutes for an isometric core challenge.

Special Instructions

Try to keep your legs together and your spine lengthened at all times. Engage your abs and stare at a focal point in front of you to help with balance.

Make it harder: As you get better, try to lift your arms higher instead of extending them at your sides. The higher your arms are lifted (such as next to your ears), the more challenge you'll add to this exercise.

Muscles Worked: Abs



Single Leg Standing Balance on Board

Starting Position

Slowly and cautiously step onto the balance board with one foot, holding on to a wall or sturdy object for balance if necessary. Take your time adjusting your balance until you can stand upright with your other foot lifted off the floor, abs engaged, and arms extended at your sides (pictured).

Action

Breathe steadily as you balance in this standing position for 15-30 seconds. Gradually work your way up to holding this exercise for 1-3 minutes for an isometric core challenge. Switch sides.

Special Instructions

Try to keep your legs straight and your back flat at all times. Do not lock out your knees. Engage your abs and stare at a focal point in front of you to help with balance.

Make it harder: As you get better, try to lift your arms higher instead of extending them at your sides. The higher your arms are lifted (such as next to your ears), the more challenge you'll add to this exercise.

Muscles Worked: Abs



Single Leg Standing Balance with Isometric Knee Lift

Starting Position

Slowly and cautiously step onto the balance board with one foot, holding on to a wall or sturdy object for balance if necessary. Take your time adjusting your balance until you can stand upright with your other leg foot lifted off the floor, abs engaged, and arms extended at your sides. From there, slowly lift your knee up in front of you until the thigh is approximately parallel to the floor and the knee is bent at about 90 degrees (pictured).

Action

Breathe steadily as you balance in this standing position for 15-30 seconds. Gradually work your way up to holding this exercise for 1-3 minutes for an isometric core challenge. Switch sides.

Special Instructions

Master the "Single Leg Standing Balance on Board" exercise before trying this. Try to keep your standing leg straight and your back flat at all times. Do not lock out your knee. Engage your abs and stare at a focal point in front of you to help with balance.

Make it harder: As you get better, try to lift your arms higher instead of extending them at your sides. The higher your arms are lifted (such as next to your ears), the more challenge you'll add to this exercise.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Hips



Single Leg Standing Balance with Isometric Leg Abduction

Starting Position

Slowly and cautiously step onto the balance board with one foot, holding on to a wall or sturdy object for balance if necessary. Take your time adjusting your balance until you can stand upright with your other foot lifted off the floor, abs engaged, and arms extended at your sides. From there, slowly lift your leg out to the side (pictured).

Action

Breathe steadily as you balance in this standing position for 15-30 seconds. Gradually work your way up to holding this exercise for 1-3 minutes for an isometric core challenge. Switch sides.

Special Instructions

Master the "Single Leg Standing Balance on Board" exercise before trying this. Try to keep your standing leg straight and your back flat at all times. Do not lock out your knee. Engage your abs and stare at a focal point in front of you to help with balance.

Make it harder: As you get better, try to lift your arms higher instead of extending them at your sides. The higher your arms are lifted (such as next to your ears), the more challenge you'll add to this exercise.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Outer Thighs



Seated Torso Twists with Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Sit on the floor while holding a medicine ball (or dumbbell) in both hands with shoulders relaxed, elbows bent, and arms pulled close to the sides of the body. Place your knees and feet about hip-width apart, heels on the floor, knees bent and back straight. Pull your abs in tight and with a straight back, lean back from the hips until you feel your abs engage (pictured).

Action

INHALE: Keeping heels on the floor, abs engaged, and arms close to your body, twist from the waist to the left side. EXHALE: Twist back to the center (starting position). INHALE: Twist to the opposite (right) side. EXHALE: Return to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep your abs pulled in, shoulders relaxed, and feet down at all times. Focus on twisting from the waist, allowing your upper torso and arms to turn with you. Keep your back long and flat at all times.

Make it easier: Don't lean back as far. Use a lighter weight or no weight. Limit your range of motion.

Make it harder: Lean back and/or twist further. Lift one foot off the floor to increase the intensity and balance challenge.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques



Seated Torso Twists with Arms Extended

Starting Position

Hold a medicine ball (or dumbbell) and sit on the floor with shoulders relaxed, arms extended, legs hip-width apart, heels on the floor, knees bent and back straight. Pull your abs in tight, and with a straight back, lean back from the hips until you feel your abs engage (pictured).

Action

INHALE: Keeping feet off the floor, abs engaged, and arms extended, twist from the waist to the left side. EXHALE: Twist back to the center (starting position). INHALE: Twist to the right side. EXHALE: Return to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep your abs pulled in, shoulders relaxed, and feet off the floor. Focus on twisting from the waist, allowing your upper torso and arms to turn with you. Keep the lower body as still as possible. Keep your back long and flat at all times.

Make it easier: Don't lean back as far. Use a lighter weight or no weight. Hold the weight closer to your torso.

Make it harder: Lean back and/or twist farther. Lift one foot off the floor to increase the intensity and balance challenge.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques



Medicine Ball Crunches

Starting Position

Hold a medicine ball (or dumbbell) and lie flat on your back with knees bent, legs hip-width apart, abs engaged, and arms extended straight up toward the ceiling.

Action

EXHALE: Use your abs to "crunch" up by lifting your head, neck and shoulder blades off the mat. **INHALE:** Slowly return to the mat to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep your shoulders relaxed and your arms extended. Make sure your lower back doesn't arch up from the mat. Only crunch up as high as you can in good form while keeping legs still and feet flat on the floor.

Muscles Worked: Abs





Classic Wood Chop with Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Hold a medicine ball and stand tall with your legs straight, feet hip-width apart, hips centered and abs engaged. Keeping your lower body planted, twist from the waist toward the left and extend your arms overhead and toward the left side of your head (pictured).

Action

EXHALE: Keep your arms straight and your Feet planted as you twist your torso toward the right and lower your straight arms on a diagonal across the body and down toward your right foot, slightly bending both knees and pivoting on your left foot. **INHALE:** Reverse the movement, twisting your torso toward the left, straightening your legs and lifting your arms back up toward the left side of your head to complete one rep. Perform all reps on this side and then switch sides to complete on set.

Special Instructions

Keep your arms as straight as possible at all times and relax your shoulders away from your ears. Pull your abs in tight to protect your back while you twist side to side.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques, Shoulders



Twisting Medicine Ball Pass with Partner

Starting Position

Stand back-to-back with a partner. Place your feet hip-width apart, pull your abs in tight, and keep your back straight. One person holds the medicine ball (or unweighted ball), keeping elbows bent and the ball close to the body.

Action

EXHALE: Keep your feet planted and twist (from the waist) toward each other. Pass the ball to your partner. INHALE: Both people return to the starting position, facing forward. EXHALE: Twist to the opposite side and receive the ball from your partner. INHALE: Return to the starting position, facing forward, to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

When twisting, rotate from the waist and keep your back straight and abs engaged. Hold the ball close to your body.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques





Partner Seated Torso Twist with Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Sit back-to-back with a partner, approximately 12 inches apart. One person holds a medicine ball (or unweighted ball) in both hands with shoulders relaxed, elbows bent, and arms pulled close to the sides of the body. Place your knees and feet about hip-width apart, heels on the floor, knees bent and back straight. Pull your abs in tight and with a straight back, lean back from the hips until you feel your abs engage, but make sure you are not leaning on your partner's back (pictured).

Action

EXHALE: Keep your heels on the floor, abs engaged and back straight as you twist (from the waist) toward each other. Pass the ball to your partner. INHALE: Both people return to the starting position, facing forward. EXHALE: Twist to the opposite side and receive the ball from your partner. INHALE: Return to the starting position, facing forward, to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep your abs pulled in, shoulders relaxed, and feet down at all times. Focus on twisting from the waist, allowing your upper torso and arms to turn with you. Keep your back long and flat at all times. Do not lean on your partner. If your backs touch, scoot farther apart.

Make it easier: Don't lean back as far. Use a lighter weight or no weight. Limit your range of motion.

Make it harder: Lean back and/or twist farther. Lift one foot off the floor to increase the intensity and balance challenge.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques





Straight-Arm Plank on Foam Roller

Starting Position

Begin by kneeling on a mat and placing a foam roller behind you (not pictured). While balancing on your knees, lift your feet off the floor and turn to adjust the foam roller until it is place under your shins. Face front and lower your shins on top of the foam roller, legs together, as you place your hands directly under your shoulders. Lift your hips off the floor until you are in a plank position with your shoulders, hips, knees and ankles in one long straight line with the abs engaged and the legs together.

Action

Breathe steadily as you hold this plank position for 15-30 seconds. Gradually work your way up to holding the plank for 1-3 minutes for an isometric core challenge.

Special Instructions

Don't let your hips drop or rise, and be sure not to shift weight to one arm. Hold your body as still as possible and try to keep the foam roller steady, too. Remember to breathe. **Muscles Worked:** Abs, Lower back



Kneeling Roll-ins with Foam Roller

Starting Position

Begin by kneeling on a mat and placing a foam roller behind you (not pictured). While balancing on your knees, lift your feet and shins off the floor and turn to place the foam roller until it is place under your shins and as close to the knees as possible. Face front and lower your shins on top of the foam roller, legs together, as you place you hands directly under your shoulders. Lift your hips off the floor and engage your abs until you achieve a straight line from the shoulders to the knees.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping your arms and shoulders still, use the abs to roll the foam roller toward your hands, pulling your knees in toward the hips. **INHALE:** Slowly roll back to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Make sure your arms and shoulders do not move. Do not lean forward. As you pull the foam roller in toward you, it should roll toward your feet; this is why it's important to start with the roller as close to the knees as possible (so it has room to move as you do). Only pull the roller in as far as you can while maintaining good form and a completely stationary upper body.

Muscles Worked: Abs



Back Extensions (Swan) on Foam Roller

Starting Position

Lie on your stomach with a foam roller in front of you, legs extended hip-width apart (not pictured). Place the roller underneath your forearms, arms extended, palms facing each other, head and neck neutral, shoulders pulled back, and abs engaged.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping your legs on the mat, push your arms into the roller as you use your lower back muscles to lift your chest away from the floor. **INHALE:** Slowly return to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep your abs engaged and your shoulders relaxed at all times. While you should feel the lower back and the muscles supporting the spine working during this exercise, you should not feel back pain; stop this exercise if you experience back pain. The roller should move slightly as you lift and lower during the exercise. Over time, gradually increase your range of motion as you develop greater strength.

Muscles Worked: Lower back



Bicycle Crunches

Starting Position

Begin by lying on your back, placing your hands behind your ears. Do not put your hands clasped behind your head. Lift your legs in the air and bend your knees so that your legs form a 90 degree angle.

Action

Move your legs in a bicycle motion. When your left knee is closer to your body, reach your right elbow to it. When your right knee is closer to your body, reach your left elbow to it. Try performing the exercise for 60 seconds in 2 sets.

Special Instructions

None.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques





Elbow to Knee Crunch

Starting Position

Begin by lying on your back. Place hands behind your ears and stretch legs out so that they are parallel to the floor.

Action

EXHALE: Crunch your left knee, while bending it, and right elbow so that they meet at the center of your body.

INHALE: Return to starting position and crunch your right knee to your left elbow. Try to do 2 sets with 10-12 repetitions for each knee.

Special Instructions

Keep space in-between your chin and your chest.

Make it harder: Try to keep your heels from touching the floor.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques





Jackknife with Ball

Starting Position

Start behind the Swiss ball, place your midsection on the ball and roll forward until your hands reach the floor. Walk out with your hands until the ball is underneath your ankles. Have your hands just outside of shoulder width.

Action

Hold the push-up position and retain a strong core.

EXHALE: Bend at the knees and pull the ball up towards your torso, bringing your knees to your chest. Keep the movement smooth and don't drop your hips or raise your lower back.

INHALE: Extend your legs back to the starting position. Try doing 2 sets with 10-12 repetitions.

Special Instructions

Keep your spine in a neutral position.

Muscles Worked: Abs





Kneeling Rollout with Ball

Starting Position

Kneel in front of the ball. Place your hands atop the Swiss ball and bring your feet off the ground. Bring your navel in toward your spine. Walk your hands out on the ball, moving both the ball and your arms away from your body. Once you feel your abdominal muscles working, you are in the starting position.

Action

Your hands should stay stationary on the ball. Pivot from your knees, bringing your torso and hips forward as the ball rolls away from your knees. Keep moving until your chest drops down, keeping your chest as upright as possible, without hyper extending your lower back. Keep your spine in a neutral position. Hold the furthest position comfortably for a couple seconds and roll back to starting position. Try doing 2 sets with 10-12 repetitions.

Special Instructions

If you feel any strain in your lower back, return to the starting position and check your form. If you continue to feel any strain, stop the exercise.

Muscles Worked: Abs





Leg Lifts with Ball

Starting Position

You will need a bench to perform this exercise. Begin this exercise by lying forward with a Swiss ball between your abdomen and the bench. Firmly grasp the bench with both hands reaching over the Swiss ball.

Action

EXHALE: Raise your legs off the ground and arch your back to a comfortable position so that your legs are slightly bent and your heels cross a plane higher than your head.

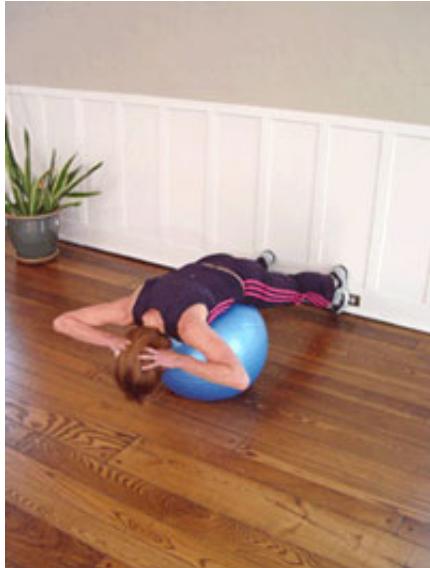
INHALE: Lower your back down to the starting position and repeat. Try to do 2 sets of 10-12 repetitions.

Special Instructions

This is a very difficult balancing exercise. Use extreme caution and start slowly. Keep a very firm grasp of the bench with your hands, using your upper body and abdomen as a brace against the ball for leverage to raise your heels.

Muscles Worked: Lower back, glutes





Back Extension with Ball

Starting Position

Begin very close to a wall, facing away from it. Pull the ball into your legs as close to your body as possible. Keep your toes firmly on the ground and the soles of your feet flat on the wall behind you. Straighten legs so that weight is evenly distributed between your feet (at the wall) and the ball. Adjust the ball if necessary so that it is under your hips. Place your hands behind your ears or across your chest.

Action

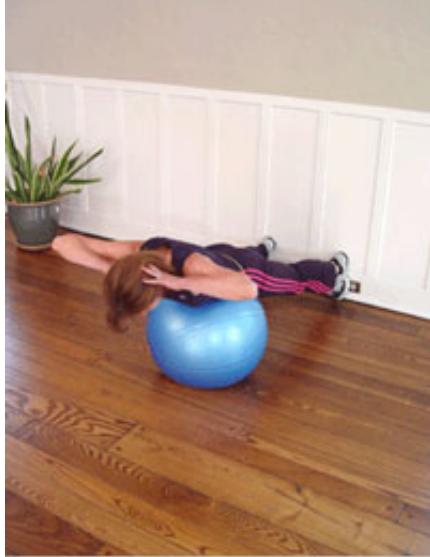
EXHALE: Extend from your hips- Bringing your torso upward toward the wall as high as possible. Hold for 1-3 counts.

INHALE: Slowly return to starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Make sure your feet are flat on the wall and that your weight is pressed into them for stability.

Muscles Worked: Lower back





Balancing Seated Twist with Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Sit on the floor with feet firmly planted, knees bent, back straight, and hands gripping a medicine ball or dumbbell (not pictured). Bend your elbows and tuck them in at your sides, holding the ball or dumbbell in front of your torso. Keeping your back straight, lean back (hinging from the hips) until you feel your abs engage. From there, carefully lift your feet off of the floor to balance.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping a perfectly straight back with your abs pulled in tight, rotate your torso to the right as far as you can while maintaining good form (back straight, maintaining balance).

INHALE. Return to the center (start position).

Repeat on the opposite side to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Do not round or arch your back. Focus on the movement coming from the waist, allowing your upper body and arms to follow the twisting motion of the waist.

Make it harder: Use a heavier weight and/or extend your arms straight out in front of you.

Make it easier: Perform this exercise without holding any weight.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques, Hips





Wheelbarrow Walk with Ball

Starting Position

Start behind the ball, place your midsection on the ball and roll forward until your hands reach the floor just below your shoulders.

Action

Slowly walk out with your hands until the ball moves towards your toes. Only walk out as far as you are comfortable (either to your hips, knees, or ankles). Once you've reached your point of comfort, slowly walk back to the starting position, breathing steadily throughout.

Special Instructions

Keep your core strong by not dropping your hips. Your body should be as straight as possible.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Shoulders





Hip Flexion & Extension

Starting Position

Stand with feet slightly apart, toes forward, hands on hips or one hand on a wall/chair for support. Shift weight to right leg, keeping knee slightly bent and spine straight.

Action

EXHALE: Slowly lift the left leg, keeping it bent until thigh is parallel with floor. From here, extend leg straight out from the knee until entire leg is parallel to floor and straight.

INHALE: Slowly and with control, lower entire leg down to the ground, keeping it straight. Repeat for all reps and switch sides.

Special Instructions

If you can't lift leg parallel to floor, lift as high as you can and complete exercises at this level.

Muscles Worked: Hips, Quads





Airplane Pose

Starting Position

Stand with feet together, arms at sides, and gaze at a spot on the ground about 5 feet ahead for balance.

Action

Lift left foot back, bending forward until left leg and chest are parallel to ground. Extend arms out as shown. Hold for 3 counts. Repeat for all repetitions and switch sides.

Special Instructions

Be sure to keep a flat back (parallel to floor) and concentrate on keeping abs tight.

Muscles Worked: Back, Glutes, Hamstrings



T Stand

Starting Position

Stand with feet together. Slowly bend from hips to lower torso, touching fingertips to ground.

Action

EXHALE: Lift right leg behind you to hip height, keeping hips level. Bend left knee slightly if needed. Hold for 5 counts.

INHALE: Return to start and repeat on other side for one rep.

Special Instructions

Try to keep weight on left leg and only slightly on hands (fingertips). Keep abs tight.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Lower back, Hamstrings





Seated Knee Lifts with Chair

Starting Position

Sit on edge of chair, knees bent, feet flat. Grasp sides of chair, lean back slightly.

Action

EXHALE: Pull knees toward chest as you crunch upper body forward using abs, not arms.

INHALE: Lower feet almost to floor, but don't let them touch until the end of the set.

Special Instructions

This movement should be slow and controlled. Don't let the momentum of your legs do the work for you, and don't let gravity snap your legs down as you return to the starting position.

Muscles Worked: Abs





Plank

Starting Position

Begin by lying on your stomach with palms on the floor next to your shoulders, feet and legs together, toes down.

Action

Lift your body up so that your arms are straight (palms below shoulders) and weight is balanced evenly between hands and toes, keeping body as straight as possible. Hold for 30 seconds and work up to 1-3 minutes.

Special Instructions

Don't let your hips drop or rise, and be sure not to shift weight to one arm. Remember to breathe.

Muscles Worked: Abs



Lying Straight Leg Raises

Starting Position

Lie on the floor/mat on your back. Keep lower back in contact with the floor, feet and legs straight and together. Place hands to sides or under lower back for support.

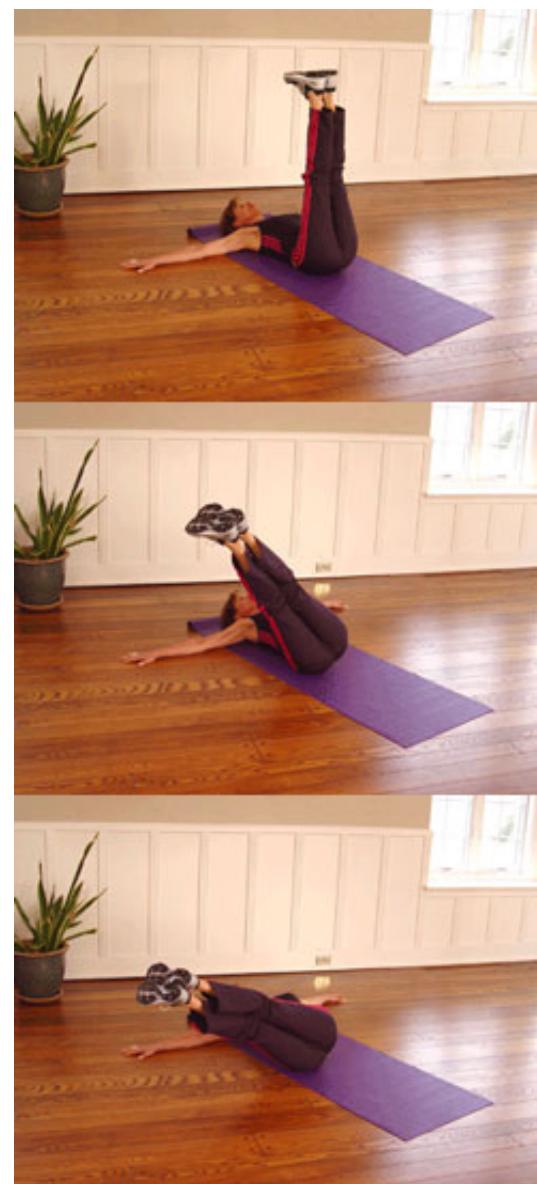
Action

Keeping legs straight and together, back flat, lift legs upward until they are straight above hips. Lower down to starting position slowly and with control (but do not allow feet to touch the ground between reps) to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Make sure back stays flat on floor and abs are tight (pull navel in towards spine).

Muscles Worked: Abs, hips



Pendulum

Starting Position

Lie on back, arms in a T, legs straight up, feet together, toes pointed or flexed.

Action

EXHALE: Slowly lower legs several inches to the left without touching the floor.

INHALE: Return to start.

Repeat to right for one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep lower back on floor.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques, Hips



Side Plank

Starting Position

Start by lying on your side, legs straight, feet stacked. Straighten bottom arm, keeping it in line below shoulder, and place free hand on your hip. Flex feet and balance on sides of feet (feet are stacked).

Action

Use abs to keep hips lifted. Hold for 30 seconds. Work up to 1-3 minutes.

Special Instructions

Don't allow hips to drop to the ground. Keep breathing steady.

Muscles Worked: Obliques, Abs



Dumbbell Crunches

Starting Position

Lie on the floor or a mat on your back, with knees bent. Grasp a lightweight dumbbell in two hands, palms facing out, arms extended straight into the air above your shoulders. Feet should be flat on the ground. Keep a space between your chin and chest (looking diagonal towards the ceiling)

Action

EXHALE: Slowly curl head, shoulders, and upper body off the ground, reaching the dumbbell towards the ceiling. Try to reach higher than your feet.

INHALE: Slowly return to start to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Use abdominals and hips (not your shoulders) to lift the weight. Keep abs contracted (pull navel towards spine) throughout entire movement.

Muscles Worked: Abs





Low Mount Crunches with Band

Starting Position

Loop band around a low wall mount or a bench no more than 1 foot off the floor. Lie with fixed point behind you, knees bent, feet flat. Bend arms to hold the end of the band above your shoulders.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping hands above shoulders, curl torso off the floor into a crunch.

INHALE: Slowly lower to start without resting to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Make it harder: Scoot farther away from your mount and/or extend arms straight back near your ears.

Make it easier: Stay close to the mount.

Muscles Worked: Abs





Low Mount Reverse Crunches with Band

Starting Position

Attach a resistance band to a low wall mount or wrap the center of a band around a bench or furniture leg. Either put both of your feet through the handles tightly, or tie the two ends of the band together and place the band over your toes. Lie on your back facing the fixed point. Keep your back flat, abs tight, and place your hands on the floor or under your hips. Scoot away from the wall, until legs are only slightly bent when raised up off the floor.

Action

EXHALE: keeping back flat and abs tight, bend knees in toward your shoulders. **INHALE:** Slowly lower to starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Make it harder: Scoot farther away from the wall for more resistance.

Make it easier: Stay closer to the wall and decrease range of motion.

Muscles Worked: Abs



Low Mount Double Crunches with Band

Starting Position

Attach a resistance band to a low wall mount or wrap the center of a band around a bench or furniture leg. Either put both of your feet through the handles tightly, or tie the two ends of the band together and place the band over your toes. Lie on your back facing the fixed point. Keep your back flat, abs tight, and place across your chest or behind your ears. Scoot away from the wall, until legs are only slightly bent when raised up off the floor.

Action

EXHALE: Simultaneously lift your head, shoulders, and upper body into a crunch position while bending your knees in towards your shoulders. **INHALE:** Lower upper body back to the ground and extend your legs back to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Make it harder: Scoot farther away from the wall for more resistance.

Make it easier: Stay closer to the wall and decrease range of motion.

Muscles Worked: Abs, hips



Reverse Crunch with Ball

Starting Position

Sit on a mat and place a stability ball between your legs (at your calves/ankles). Squeezing the ball in place, lie back onto the floor, keeping feet just off the ground, knees bent. Make sure lower back stays planted and your abs are tight.

Action

EXHALE: Slowly pull your knees in toward your chest without letting your hips come off the ground or momentum swing you.

INHALE: Slowly lower to start without letting your feet rest in between reps.

Special Instructions

You may want to place your arms flat on the ground or underneath your lower back for support.

Muscles Worked: *Abs, Inner thigh*





Clamshell Crunch with Ball

Starting Position

Sit on a mat and place a stability ball between your legs (at your calves/ankles). Squeezing the ball in place, lie back onto the floor, keeping your feet just off the ground, knees bent. Make sure your lower back stays planted and your abs are tight. Place your hands lightly behind your ears in a crunch position.

Action

EXHALE: Simultaneously lift your shoulders off the ground and your knees into your chest to perform a double crunch.

INHALE: Slowly return to start to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Don't let momentum swing your knees up for you. Be sure your hands are not lifting your upper body-- concentrate on using abs.

Muscles Worked: Abs



Slow Swimming on Ball

Starting Position

Begin in a kneeling position with the ball under your abdomen. Walk your hands out until they touch the ground right under your shoulders and your toes are also touching the ground. Allow your weight to press into the ball.

Action

Slowly raise your right arm and left leg up into the air, balancing on the other hand and leg that are touching the ground. Lift as high as you can, until both leg and arm are parallel to the floor. Hold for 1-3 seconds. Slowly return to start. Repeat with the opposite sides to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep your head and neck in a neutral position. Make it easier: Work your way up to this exercise by practicing in the same position but lifting only one limb at a time.

Muscles Worked: Lower back





Pendulum with Ball

Starting Position

Sit on a mat and place a stability ball between your legs (at your calves/ankles). Squeezing the ball in place, lie back onto the floor, and extend legs straight up into the air. Keep knees slightly bent and arms out to the sides for support.

Action

Keeping upper body and glutes stationary, lower your legs down to the right, as close to the ground as possible. Return to start and repeat to the left side to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Make sure your back stays firmly planted and that your legs swing in line with your hips (not above or below them).

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques, Hips





Leg Raises on Captain's Chair

Starting Position

Stand on the captain's chair (not pictured) to place your back flat on the pad, your forearms and elbows on the pads, and your hands lightly around the gripping handles. Once in position, lift your feet off of the stand and bring your legs together in front of you, keeping abs engaged.

Action

EXHALE: Focus on engaging the abs as you bring your straight legs up in line with the hips.

INHALE: Slowly lower both legs back down to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep your lower back flat--make sure it does not arch. Keep your head and neck relaxed into the support. Focus on using the abs, not just the upper body, to lift.

Muscles Worked: Abs



Back Extensions on Roman Chair

Starting Position

Follow machine instructions for set up. Place feet on foot stand and thighs on the pad so that your body is free to hinge at the hips. Cross arms at your chest, keep back as straight as possible, with your head and neck in line with the spine, and engage your abs.

Action

INHALE: Bend forward from the hips, lowering chest towards the floor, while keeping back straight.

EXHALE: Straighten your body to return to the start position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep your lower back flat--make sure it does not arch. Keep your head and neck relaxed into the support. Focus on using the abs, not just the upper body, to lift.

Muscles Worked: Lower back, glutes





Abs Roll Out with Wheel

Starting Position

Kneel on a mat with your knees hip-width apart, hands grasping the ab wheel handles, arms directly beneath your shoulders. Keep your back flat and your abs engaged (belly button pulled up and in away from the floor).

Action

INHALE: Roll the wheel straight in front of you as you lower your hips toward the ground so that your body forms a straight line from your shoulders to your knees. **EXHALE:** Using your abdominals, slowly roll the wheel back in until you reach the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep your arms straight and your shoulders away from your ears at all times. Only roll as far forward as you can while still maintaining good form. Do not allow the hips to drop toward the floor or the lower back to arch.

Muscles Worked: Abs



Oblique Roll Out with Wheel

Starting Position

Kneel on a mat with your knees hip-width apart, hands grasping the ab wheel handles, arms directly beneath your shoulders. Angle the wheel so that it points toward the left corner of the mat in front of you. Keep your back flat and your abs engaged (belly button pulled up and in away from the floor).

Action

INHALE: Roll the wheel toward the left corner of the mat as you lower your hips toward the ground so that your body forms a straight line from your shoulders to your knees. EXHALE: Using your abdominals and obliques, slowly roll the wheel back in until you reach the starting position to complete one rep. Finish several repetitions on the left side (pictured) to complete one set. Switch sides and repeat on the right side (not pictured).

Special Instructions

Keep your arms straight and your shoulders away from your ears at all times. Only roll as far forward as you can while still maintaining good form. Do not allow the hips to drop toward the floor or the lower back to arch.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques



Modified Plank on Balance Board

Starting Position

Begin by kneeling on a mat with your knees together, hands clasped together, forearms on the balance board in front of you, and elbows placed directly underneath the shoulders (not pictured). Extend one leg at a time until you are balanced on the balls of the feet (pictured) in a plank position. Make sure your abs are engaged and your body forms a straight line from the shoulders to the hip, knee and ankles.

Action

Breathe steadily as you hold this plank position for 15-30 seconds. Gradually work your way up to holding the plank for 1-3 minutes for an isometric core challenge.

Special Instructions

Don't let your hips drop or rise, and be sure not to shift weight to one arm. Hold your body as still as possible and try to keep the balance board steady, too. Remember to breathe.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Lower back



Modified Side Plank on Balance Board

Starting Position

Begin by lying on your right side, legs extended and stacked, elbow directly underneath the shoulder, and forearm/elbow placed on top of a balance board (not pictured). Make sure your body is in a nice straight line from your feet to your head. With legs stacked, use your abs and obliques to lift your right hip away from the floor into a side plank position (pictured).

Action

Breathe steadily as you hold the side plank position for 15-30 seconds, keeping your abs engaged and the right side of your waist pulled away from the floor at all times. For added intensity, extend your left arm up toward the ceiling (pictured). Gradually work your way up to holding the plank for 1-3 minutes for an isometric core challenge. Repeat on opposite side.

Special Instructions

Hold your body as still as possible and try to keep the balance board steady, too. Remember to breathe. Try to square your chest and shoulders with the front of the room, keeping your body in one plane and your shoulders pulled back.

Make it easier: Instead of stacking your legs and feet, stagger one leg in front of the other; place left hand on the hip instead of extending it (not pictured).

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques



Seated Lean Backs on Balance Board

Starting Position

Sit on top of your balance board, feet flat on the floor, knees bent, legs together, arms crossed at your chest, abs engaged, and back as straight as possible.

Action

INHALE: While maintaining a perfectly flat back, hinge from the hips to lean backward, only leaning as far back as you can while still maintaining a straight spine. EXHALE: Use the abdominals to lean forward to the start position, sitting upright to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Try to keep your legs together and your feet on the floor at all times. Lengthen through your back (spine), and engage your abs (pull your belly button toward your spine) at all times. Keep your shoulders relaxed.

Make it harder: Instead of crossing your arms at your chest, extend them up next to your ears.

Muscles Worked: Abs



Seated Balance on Board

Starting Position

Sit on top of your balance board, feet flat on the floor, knees bent, hands grasping the back of your thighs, abs engaged, and back as straight as possible. While maintaining a flat back, lean back slightly while lifting your feet off the floor to balance on the board. Let go of your legs and extend your arms in front of you.

Action

Breathe steadily as you balance in this seated position for 15-30 seconds. Gradually work your way up to holding this exercise for 1-3 minutes for an isometric core challenge.

Special Instructions

Try to keep your legs together and your back flat at all times. Engage your abs and stare at a focal point in front of you to help with balance.

Make it harder: As you get better, try to lift your arms higher instead of extending them in front of you. The higher your arms are lifted (such as next to your ears), the more challenge you'll add to this exercise.

Muscles Worked: Abs



Single Leg Standing Balance with Isometric Leg Lift

Starting Position

Slowly and cautiously step onto the balance board with one foot, holding on to a wall or sturdy object for balance if necessary. Take your time adjusting your balance until you can stand upright with your other foot lifted off the floor, abs engaged, and arms extended at your sides. From there, slowly lift your straight up in front of you (pictured).

Action

Breathe steadily as you balance in this standing position for 15-30 seconds. Gradually work your way up to holding this exercise for 1-3 minutes for an isometric core challenge. Switch sides.

Special Instructions

Master the "Single Leg Standing Balance on Board" exercise before trying this. Try to keep your standing leg straight and your back flat at all times. Do not lock out your knee. Engage your abs and stare at a focal point in front of you to help with balance.

Make it harder: As you get better, try to lift your arms higher instead of extending them at your sides. The higher your arms are lifted (such as next to your ears), the more challenge you'll add to this exercise.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Hips



Single Leg Standing Balance with Abduction

Starting Position

Slowly and cautiously step onto the balance board with one foot, holding on to a wall or sturdy object for balance if necessary. Take your time adjusting your balance until you can stand upright with your other foot lifted off the floor, abs engaged, and arms extended at your sides.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping your balancing leg still, abduct your other leg out to the side. INHALE: Slowly return the leg toward the midline of the body to complete one rep. After one set, switch the balance board placement to the other side to perform another set.

Special Instructions

Master the "Single Leg Standing Balance with Isometric Abduction" exercise before trying this. Only lift your leg as high as you can while maintaining balance and control. Try to keep your standing leg straight and your back flat at all times. Do not lock out your knees. Engage your abs and stare at a focal point in front of you to help with balance.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Outer thighs





Single Leg Standing Balance with Hip Flexion

Starting Position

Slowly and cautiously step onto the balance board with one foot, holding on to a wall or sturdy object for balance if necessary. Take your time adjusting your balance until you can stand upright with your other foot lifted off the floor, abs engaged, and arms extended at your sides.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping your balancing leg still, bend your opposite knee as you lift your thigh parallel to the floor while bending the knee approximately 90 degrees. **INHALE:** Slowly return to the start position to complete one rep. After one set, switch the balance board placement to the other side to perform another set.

Special Instructions

Master the "Single Leg Standing Balance with Knee Lift" exercise before trying this. Only lift your leg as high as you can while maintaining balance and control. Try to keep your standing leg straight and your back flat at all times. Do not lock out your knees. Engage your abs and stare at a focal point in front of you to help with balance.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Hips





Balancing Seated Torso Twists with Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Sit on the floor while holding a medicine ball (or dumbbell) in both hands with shoulders relaxed, elbows bent, and arms pulled close to the sides of the body. Place your knees and feet about hip-width apart, heels on the floor, knees bent and back straight. Pull your abs in tight and with a straight back, lean back from the hips until you feel your abs engage. Maintain your balance and lift both feet off the floor (pictured).

Action

INHALE: Keeping feet off the floor, abs engaged, and arms close to your body, twist from the waist to the left side. EXHALE: Twist back to the center (starting position). INHALE: Twist to the right side. EXHALE: Return to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

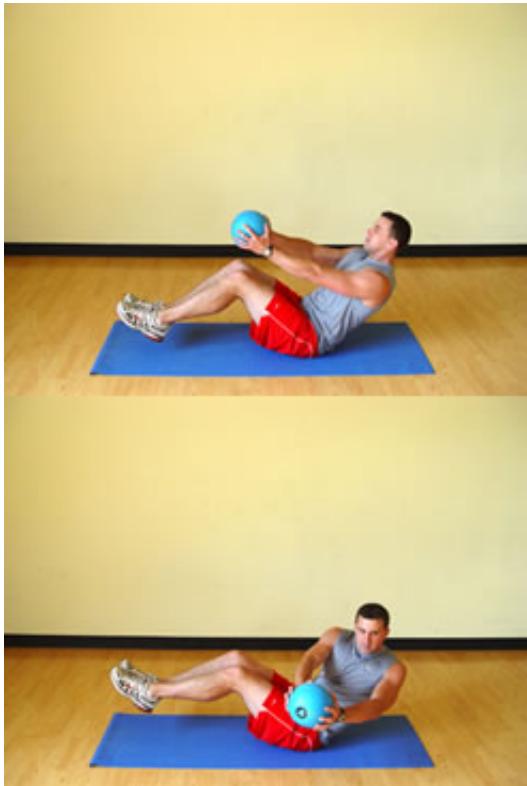
Keep your abs pulled in, shoulders relaxed, and feet off the floor. Focus on twisting from the waist, allowing your upper torso and arms to turn with you. Keep the lower body as still as possible. Keep your back long and flat at all times.

Make it easier: Don't lean back as far. Use a lighter weight or no weight. Limit your range of motion.

Make it harder: Lean back and/or twist farther.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques





Balancing Seated Torso Twists with Arms Extended

Starting Position

Hold a medicine ball (or dumbbell) and sit on the floor with shoulders relaxed, arms extended, legs hip-width apart, heels on the floor, knees bent and back straight. Pull your abs in tight, and with a straight back, lean back from the hips until you feel your abs engage. Hold that position and lift both feet off the floor (pictured).

Action

INHALE: Keeping feet off the floor, abs engaged, and arms extended, twist from the waist to the left side. EXHALE: Twist back to the center (starting position). INHALE: Twist to the right side. EXHALE: Return to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep your abs pulled in, shoulders relaxed, and feet off the floor. Focus on twisting from the waist, allowing your upper torso and arms to turn with you. Keep the lower body as still as possible. Keep your back long and flat at all times.

Make it easier: Don't lean back as far. Use a lighter weight or no weight. Hold the weight closer to your torso.

Make it harder: Lean back and/or twist farther.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques



Lying Straight-Leg Raises with Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Place a lightweight medicine ball between your ankles and lie flat on your back, arms at your sides, abs engaged, lower back flat on the floor, and legs extended straight up in line with the hips.

Action

INHALE: While maintaining a perfectly flat back, hinge from the hips to slowly lower your straight legs toward the floor while squeezing the medicine ball tightly. **EXHALE:** Use the abs to slowly lift your legs back up to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

This exercise should be mastered without a medicine ball first. Only lower your legs toward the floor as far as you can while maintaining a neutral or flat lower back. If your back arches from the floor, you have lowered too far and are increasing your risk of injury. For greater support and comfort, you can place your hands underneath the lower back instead of at the sides.

Make it easier: Instead of keeping your legs straight, bend at the knees to decrease the challenge.

Muscles Worked: Abs



Pendulum with Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Place a lightweight medicine ball between your ankles and lie flat on your back, arms at your sides, abs engaged, lower back flat on the floor, and legs extended straight up in line with the hips.

Action

INHALE: Keep your abs engaged, legs in the line of the hips and your shoulder blades on the mat as you lower your legs to the left side of the body while squeezing the medicine ball tightly. EXHALE: Use your core to slowly lift your legs back up to the starting position to complete one rep. Switch sides.

Special Instructions

Do not let your shoulders lift off of the mat; keep them squared and flat on the floor at all times. Your opposite hip will rise off the mat during this exercise. Work through your own range of motion and keep the legs in line with the hips at all times. Do not use momentum to swing the legs.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques



Reverse Crunch with Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Place a lightweight medicine ball between your knees and lie flat on your back, arms at your sides, abs engaged, lower back flat on the floor, and legs lifted into a table-top position (knees bent, knees in line with hips and shins parallel to the floor).

Action

EXHALE: Keeping abs engaged, knees bent and upper body relaxed, use your abs to pull your knees toward your chest.
INHALE: Slowly return your legs to the starting (table-top) position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

You may want to place your hands underneath your lower back for support. Don't use momentum to swing your legs in; practice control.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Inner thighs



Double Crunches with Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Place a lightweight medicine ball between your knees and lie flat on your back, abs engaged, lower back flat on the floor, and legs lifted into a tabletop position (knees bent, knees in line with hips and shins parallel to the floor). Bend your elbows and place your hands behind your head and neck for light support.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping abs engaged and knees bent, use your abs to pull your knees toward your chest as you simultaneously lift your head, neck and shoulder blades. **INHALE:** Slowly return your legs to the starting (tabletop) position and release your upper body back down to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

You may want to place your hands underneath your lower back for support. Don't use momentum to swing your legs in; practice control. Keep your elbows out to the sides to ensure that your arms aren't helping you lift your shoulder blades.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Inner thighs



Advanced Wood Chop with Medicine Ball

Starting Position

Hold a medicine ball and stand tall with your legs straight, feet hip-width apart, hips centered and abs engaged. Keeping your lower body planted and torso square, extend your arms overhead and toward the right side of your head (pictured).

Action

EXHALE: Without twisting from the waist or moving your hips or feet, slice the medicine down on a diagonal toward your opposite (left) hip. **INHALE:** Without twist or bending, return your arms back up to the starting position to complete one rep. Repeat on this side and then switch sides to complete first set.

Special Instructions

You should master the Classic Wood Chop exercise before trying this version, which requires greater core strength and stabilization. The idea behind this exercise is to keep your body, torso and core strong and stable as you swing your arms across the diagonal. Don't let your body twist, bend or pivot while the arms move. Keep the arms as straight as possible and your shoulders relaxed at all times.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques, Shoulders



Standing Russian Twist

Starting Position

Hold a medicine ball between both hands and stand tall with your back straight, shoulders relaxed, abs engaged, legs straight, and feet placed slightly wider than your hips. Extend your arms straight in front of you, holding the ball at chest or shoulder level.

Action

EXHALE: Without dropping your arms, pivot on your left foot and rotate the ball and your torso as far as you can to the right.
INHALE: Return to the starting position. **EXHALE:** Reverse direction; pivot on your right foot and rotate all the way to the left (not pictured). **INHALE:** Return to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Keep your abs engaged, back straight, and shoulders relaxed away from your ears.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques, Shoulders





Partner Sit-Ups with Medicine Ball Toss

Starting Position

Hold a medicine ball (or unweighted ball) and lie flat on your back with knees bent, legs hip-width apart, abs engaged, and ball next to your chest, elbows bent. Have a partner kneel in front of you, placing pressure on your feet (optional) to help stabilize your legs.

Action

EXHALE: Keep your back straight and use your abs to sit up, bringing your chest toward your thighs and your back off the floor as you simultaneously toss the ball to your partner. **INHALE:** Slowly lower back down toward the floor (as your partner tosses the ball back to you) and catch the ball before you return to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Practice extreme caution with this exercise, which requires good hand-eye coordination. Try it with a light or unweighted ball first and gradually progress to a heavier ball. Try to toss and catch the ball in line with the chest (not overhead or near your abdomen) as much as possible. Keep your shoulders relaxed and your spine neutral. Make sure your spine doesn't arch or round during the exercise. Do not let your feet come off the floor.

Muscles Worked: Abs



Elbow Plank on Foam Roller

Starting Position

Begin by kneeling on a mat and placing a foam roller behind you (not pictured). While balancing on your knees, lift your feet off the floor and turn to adjust the foam roller until it is place under your shins. Face front and lower your shins on top of the foam roller, legs together, as you place your elbows directly under your shoulders, clasping the hands together. Lift your hips off the floor until you are in a plank position with your shoulders, hips, knees and ankles in one long straight line with the abs engaged and the legs together.

Action

Breathe steadily as you hold this plank position for 15-30 seconds. Gradually work your way up to holding the plank for 1-3 minutes for an isometric core challenge.

Special Instructions

Don't let your hips drop or rise, and be sure not to shift weight to one arm. Hold your body as still as possible and try to keep the foam roller steady, too. Remember to breathe. **Muscles Worked:** Abs, Lower back



Jackknife with Foam Roller

Starting Position

Begin by kneeling on a mat and placing a foam roller behind you (not pictured). While balancing on your knees, lift your feet and shins off the floor and turn to place the foam roller until it is place under your shins and as close to the knees as possible. Face front and lower your shins on top of the foam roller, legs together, as you place you hands directly under your shoulders. Lift your hips off the floor and engage your abs until you achieve a straight line from the shoulders to the knees.

Action

EXHALE: Keeping your arms and shoulders still and your legs straight, use your abs to roll the foam roller toward your hands as you pike your hips as high as possible toward the ceiling. **INHALE:** Slowly lower the hips and roll back to the starting position to complete one rep.

Special Instructions

Master the Kneeling Roll-ins with Foam Roller before trying this advanced exercise. Make sure your arms and shoulders do not move. Do not lean forward. As you pull the foam roller in toward you, it should roll toward your feet; this is why it's important to start with the roller as close to the knees as possible (so it has room to move as you do). Only pull the roller in as far as you can while maintaining good form and a completely stationary upper body. Keep your abs pulled in tight at all times.

Muscles Worked: Abs

