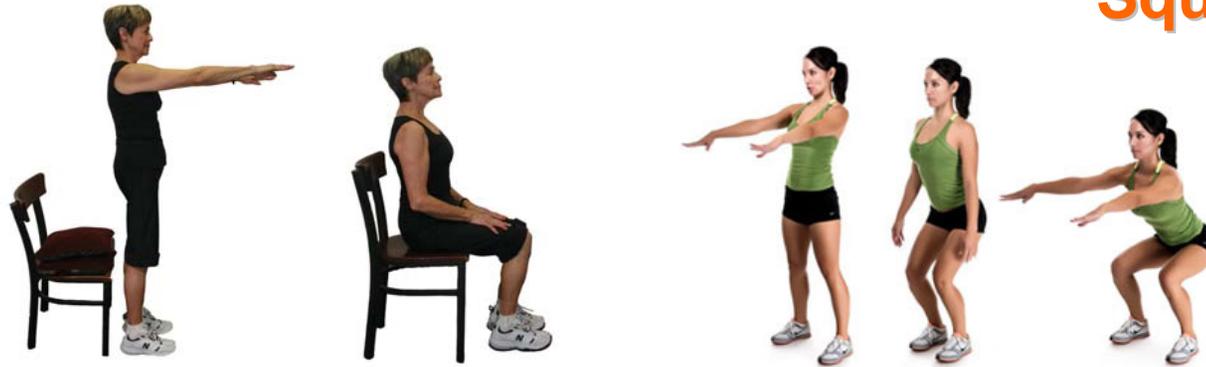


The chair squat is a great way to learn proper form while having some support. The chair forces you to keep your knees behind your toes.



Let There Be Squats!



The squat has been coined as the “queen of exercises” because it targets your gluts, quads, hamstrings, calves and low back. With proper form and activation of abdominal muscles, this exercise allows you to reinforce proper spinal stabilization patterns during lifting movements. This is beneficial while lifting groceries onto the counter top, moving boxes, getting out and into a seated position, picking up dropped items and even lifting up your kiddos.

How To Do A Chair Squat

1. Place a chair just behind you and stand in front of it with feet about hip- or shoulder-width apart.
2. Contract the abs and keep them tight as you bend the knees and slowly squat towards the chair.
3. Keep the knees behind the toes as you sit down on the chair for a few seconds.
4. Contract the glutes and hamstrings to lift up out of the chair and begin extending the legs.
5. Fully extend the legs until you're back to standing position.
6. Repeat this for 1-3 sets of 10-16 repetitions.
7. To progress, squat down until you're just hovering over the chair, but not sitting all the way down.
8. Always keep the knees in line with the toes!

Beginners: 1 set of 8-10 repetitions.
Intermediate: 2 sets of 12- 15 repetitions.
Experienced: 3 sets of 12-15 repetitions

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Push Ups! Get Up Off Of That Floor

Wall Push Up



Bent Knee Push Up

The push up may just be the perfect total body exercise that builds both upper body and core strength. Done properly, it is a compound exercise that uses muscles in the chest, shoulders, triceps, back, abs. They help keep strong areas of the body prone to weakness in aging such as the musculature in the areas of the shoulders, triceps, and the low-back. They can better prepare a person for the unexpected; the sudden bump that may lead to a fall, or catch something which might be falling – including a child, a partner, or a parent.

How To Do A Wall Push Up

- Stand in front of a wall with your feet shoulder width apart and about 12 – 24 inches away from the wall. Hands a little wider than shoulder width apart.
 - Keeping back in neutral and core muscles tight. Bend elbows bringing chest towards wall.
 - Go no closer to the wall than the elbows in line with the shoulders.
 - Press back up to starting position. Focus on your chest the whole time.
- 1 to 2 sets, 8 – 12 reps

How To Do A Bent Knee Push Up

- Start by lying face down on your mat. Place your hands beside or directly below your shoulders.
- Cross your ankles & lift your feet as pictured. Remember to keep your body aligned from head to knees, and tighten your abs.
- (Exhale) Push upward until your arms are fully extended, and then pull your shoulder blades apart to get some more height at the top of the push.
- (Inhale) Lower yourself until your upper torso barely touches the floor.

Beginners: 1 set of 8-12 repetitions.
Intermediate: 2 sets of 12 -15 repetitions.
Experienced: 3 sets of 12-15 repetitions

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Superwoman! Lower Back Strength



Superwoman



Alternating Superwoman

Nearly every move your body makes relies on your **core strength**. The swing of an arm, the kick of a leg, your balance—they all come down to how strong your core is. When it comes to building and maintaining that core strength, one of the best exercises you can use is the superwoman exercise

How To Do A Superwoman

- Lie face down on your stomach with arms and legs extended. A towel may be placed under the hips to support your back.
- Keep your neck in a neutral position.
- Keeping your arms and legs straight (but not locked) and torso stationary, simultaneously lift your arms and legs up toward the ceiling to form an elongated "u" shape with your body — back arches and arms and legs several inches off the floor.
- Hold for two to five seconds and lower back down to complete one.

Beginners: 1 set of 8-12 repetitions.
Intermediate: 2 sets of 12 -15 repetitions.
Experienced: 3 sets of 12-15 repetitions

How To Do Alternating Superwoman

- Lie face down on a mat with your arms stretched above your head
- Keep your neck in a neutral position
- Raise your right arm and left leg about 5-6 inches off the ground (or as far as you comfortably can).
- Hold for 3 seconds and relax.
- Repeat with the opposite arm and leg.

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Bird Dog! Lower Back Strength



Bird dog is a core strengthening exercise that works both abdominal muscles and back muscles. It requires a little more coordination than other beginner level back exercises. And to do this exercise well, you'll need to keep your body posture steady as you lift your arm and leg. The bird dog is effective because it's a **whole body** exercise. Your arms and legs come into play throughout. But the focus always remains on your core. The key word is **balance**. The best way to improve your daily life is to have a strong core. But the best way to stay **injury free**, is to have a balanced core. So remember, the bird dog and other core exercises are aimed towards stabilizing your spine and preventing back injuries.

How To Do A Bird Dog

- Get on your hands and knees (hands directly below your shoulders, knees directly below your hips).
- Keep your back straight (flat) throughout the exercise.
- Slowly lift up your right leg backwards, and your left arm forwards (so they are parallel to the floor).
- Hold for 5 seconds and relax.
- Repeat with the opposite arm and leg.
- Progress by holding it for longer each time, aim for 10 seconds.

Tips: You'll feel the pressure mainly in your lower back and bottom. Remember to focus on your core and keep balanced by working your abs too. Don't let your hips tilt to one side while lifting your leg. Keep breathing steadily, never hold your breath

Beginners: 1 set of 8-12 repetitions.
Intermediate: 2 sets of 12 -15 repetitions.
Experienced: 3 sets of 12-15 repetitions

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Ab Crunch Feet Over A Ball

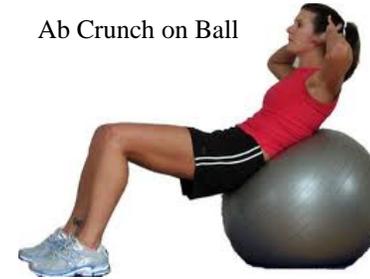


Ab Crunch On The Floor



Good For the Core: Crunch!

Ab Crunch on Ball



Core and why should we worry about it? Well for the main reasons that all of our movements are powered by the torso-the Abs and back work together to support the spine when we sit, stand, bend over, pick things up, and more. The torso is the body's main street for power, so the stronger you are, the easier your life will be. Abdominals tend to get all the credit for protecting the back and being the foundation of strength, but they are only a small part of what makes up the core. In fact, it is weak and unbalanced core muscles that are linked to low back pain. Weak core muscles result in a loss of the appropriate lumbar curve and a swayback posture. Stronger, balanced core muscles help maintain appropriate posture and reduce strain on the spine.

How To Do A Proper Ab Crunch Floor/Ball

- Lie down on the floor on your back and bend your knees, placing your hands behind your head or across your chest.
- Pull your belly button towards your spine, and flatten your lower back against the floor.
- Slowly contract your abdominals, bringing your shoulder blades about one or two inches off the floor.
- Exhale as you come up and keep your neck straight, chin up. Hold at the top of the movement for a few seconds, breathing continuously.
- Slowly lower back down, but don't relax all the way and repeat for 1-3 sets of 12-16 reps.

How To Do A Proper Ab Crunch On A Ball

- Lie on the ball, positioning it under the lower back.
- Cross your arms over the chest or place them behind your head.
- Contract your abs to lift your torso off the ball, pulling the bottom of your ribcage down toward your hips.
- As you curl up, keep the ball stable (i.e., the ball shouldn't roll).
- Lower back down, getting a stretch in the abs, and repeat for 1-3 sets of 12-16 reps.

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Backward Lunge



I Love
Lunges!



Backward Lunge Chair Assist

In my book, squats and lunges don't fall into the category of being called *exercises*. I perform squats and lunges as I teach them, as *life-skills*. The ability to perform a squat or a lunge translates directly into one's ability to do just about anything else physical. Being able to perform proper squats and lunges enables one to properly perform everyday activities like; lifting, carrying, climbing stairs, getting in and out of the car, retrieving items from low places, being active and playing with the kids.

How To Do A Backward Lunge

- Step backward with one leg and lower your upper body down, bending your leg. You should have about two to two and a half feet between your feet.
- Do not allow your knee to go forward beyond your toes as you come down, keeping your front shin perpendicular to the ground.
- Push up and back and repeat with the other leg. As you get stronger you can do all repetitions on one leg then switch to the other

The farther you step, the more glutes and hamstrings you will use.

It is very important to keep your upper body vertical

Go down until your bottom knee almost touches the ground (90 degrees). If you have knee issues, you may need to skip this exercise or do not go down as far.

Think about sitting back when doing these. This will prevent you from leaning too far forward.

Beginners: 1 set of 8-10 repetitions.

Intermediate: 2 sets of 12-15 repetitions.

Experienced: 3 sets of 1-15 repetitions

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Seated Hamstring Stretch



Variations Lying Hamstring Stretch

Stretch For The Health Of It!



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Very important but often neglected part of an exercise program is stretching. Being limber gives you the freedom to move and not feel restricted in your movement, whether it is putting on your socks or reaching for something on a shelf. Realize that your hamstrings are very strong muscles. They often need a long time to stretch out to their fullest. It can take months of stretching to get to a reasonably flexible level. So don't expect any super-quick results.

How To Do A Hamstring Stretch

Your hamstring muscle runs along the back of your upper leg. To stretch your hamstring muscles:

- Lie on the floor near the outer corner of a wall or a door frame.
- Raise your left leg and rest your left heel against the wall. Keep your left knee slightly bent.
- Gently straighten your left leg until you feel a stretch along the back of your left thigh.
- Hold for about 20-30 seconds.
- Switch legs and repeat.

As your flexibility increases, maximize the stretch by gradually scooting yourself closer to the wall or door frame.



Standing Hamstring Stretch

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Variations of Calf Stretch



Stretch For The Health Of It!



Very important but often neglected part of an exercise program is stretching. Being limber gives you the freedom to move and not feel restricted in your movement, whether it is putting on your socks or reaching for something on a shelf. A short calf muscle can compromise gait function by reducing the range of motion around the ankle joint. This can force your foot to compensate by pronating, twisting or lifting the heel too early in the natural gait cycle. This puts stress on the structures in your feet, ankle and right up to your knees and back! Therefore it is important to perform calf stretching regularly.

How To Do A Calf Stretch

Your calf muscle runs along the back of your lower leg. To stretch your calf muscles: Stand at arm's length from a wall or a piece of sturdy exercise equipment.

- Place your right foot behind your left foot.
- Slowly bend your left leg forward, keeping your right knee straight and your right heel on the floor.
- Hold your back straight and your hips forward. Don't rotate your feet inward or outward.
- Hold for about 20-30 seconds.
- Switch legs and repeat.

To deepen the stretch, slightly bend your right knee as you bend your left leg forward



Prepared by: Suzie Eades, NSCA-CPT ~ Big Sky State Games

Variations of Quad Stretch



Stretch For The Health Of It!



Very important but often neglected part of an exercise program is stretching. Being limber gives you the freedom to move and not feel restricted in your movement, whether it is putting on your socks or reaching for something on a shelf. Focus on your quad stretches for longer in the cool down. You should hold all stretches for at least 10 seconds, with no bouncing at all. Don't overstretch. Go to where you feel some mild discomfort and no pain. Come slowly out of each stretch.

How To Do A Quad Stretch

- Your quadriceps muscle runs along the front of your thigh. To stretch your quadriceps muscles:
 - Stand near a wall or a piece of sturdy exercise equipment for support.
 - Grasp your ankle and gently pull your heel up and back until you feel a stretch in the front of your thigh.
 - Tighten your stomach muscles to prevent your stomach from sagging outward, and keep your knees close together.
 - Hold for about 20-30 seconds.
- Switch legs and repeat.



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Upper Back/Shoulder Stretch Variations



Stretch For The Health Of It!



Very important but often neglected part of an exercise program is stretching. Being limber gives you the freedom to move and not feel restricted in your movement, whether it is putting on your socks or reaching for something on a shelf. Healthy shoulders are truly one of the keys to upper body strength,

How To Do An Upper Back/Shoulder Stretch

If the back of your shoulder is tight, you may be more likely to develop rotator cuff problems — especially if you golf or participate in overhead racket or throwing sports, such as tennis or baseball. To keep your shoulders flexible:

- Keep the arm straight and bring it across your body parallel to the ground.
- Help the movement by pulling in with the other hand and pressing just above the elbow joint.
- Hold for 20-30 seconds and change to the other side.



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Stretch For The Health Of It!

Chest Stretch Variations



Very important but often neglected part of an exercise program is stretching. Being limber gives you the freedom to move and not feel restricted in your movement, whether it is putting on your socks or reaching for something on a shelf. Sitting in front of a desk every day can wreak havoc on your body, especially since most of us don't have the best posture. Hunching the shoulders and slumping in your seat can cause back pain, headaches, tension and tightness in your back, neck and shoulders.

How To Do A Bent Arm Chest Stretch

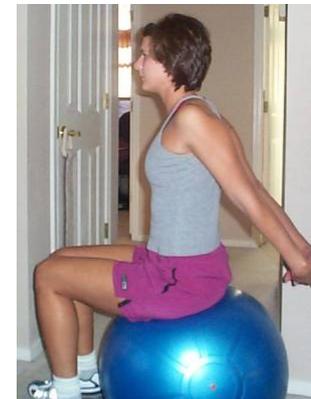
Stand with your arm extended and your forearm at right angles to the ground. Rest your forearm against an immovable object and then turn your shoulders and body away from your extended arm.



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How To Do A Straight Arm Chest Stretch

Stand tall or sit upright (not pictured). Interlace your fingers behind your back and straighten your arms. With arms straight, lift arms behind you while keeping your back straight and your shoulders down. Keep the shoulders relaxed away from the ears .



"This project is supported by a grant from HHS/Office on Women's Health. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Office on Women's Health or HHS."

Stretch For The Health Of It!



Very important but often neglected part of an exercise program is stretching. Being limber gives you the freedom to move and not feel restricted in your movement, whether it is putting on your socks or reaching for something on a shelf. Sitting in front of a desk every day can wreak havoc on your body, especially since most of us don't have the best posture. Hunching the shoulders and slumping in your seat can cause back pain, headaches, tension and tightness in your back, neck and shoulders.

How To Do A Bent Arm Chest Stretch

- Slowly bend the neck taking left ear to the left shoulder.
- Extend right arm toward the floor. As you inhale, feel the breath filling the right side of the neck
- As you exhale, stretch the right fingertips toward the floor. Hold 10-20 seconds
- Repeat on the right side



How To Do A Forward Neck Flexion

- Sit in a firm chair, or stand up straight.
- Bend your head forward.
- Hold for 15 to 30 seconds.
- Repeat 2 to 4 times.



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