

RIGHT WAY TO DO

# PLANKING EXERCISE



Planking is a versatile exercise suitable for all fitness levels, effectively strengthening core muscles, and improving posture, balance, and overall body stability. It engages multiple muscle groups, enhancing muscle tone and endurance. Beyond physical benefits, planking boosts self-confidence, reduces stress, and supports mental well-being.

- 1** **Begin in the plank position**, face down with your forearms and toes on the floor. Your elbows are directly under your shoulders and your forearms are facing forward. Your head is relaxed and you should be looking at the floor.
- 2** **Engage your abdominal muscles**, drawing your navel toward your spine. Keep your torso straight and rigid and your body in a straight line from your ears to your toes with no sagging or bending. This is the neutral spine position. Ensure your shoulders are down, not creeping up toward your ears. Your heels should be over the balls of your feet.
- 3** **Hold this position for desired time**. For The Workout Challenge, you may divide the duration to varying seconds, preferably into sets of 30 seconds or 60 seconds, until you reach the daily target.

## COMMON MISTAKES:

**Arching you back.** You are not engaging your abdominals .  
**Sagging your hips.** Hips start sinking.  
**Tilting your head up.** Neck should be in line with your body.



# MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

There are several variations of the plank that further work the core muscles to build strength and stability. There are also ways to modify it if you are a beginner.



## TABLETOP PLANK

Practice plank from a tabletop position by actively pressing into your hands and pulling your abs in, which will help you learn how to keep your spine neutral, as pictured. You can also tuck your toes under and practice lifting your knees slightly off of the floor. Doing a plank with your knees bent and lifted can help take some of the pressure off of your feet as you build core strength.



## INCLINE PLANK

You can also do an incline plank with your forearms or palms resting on a bench or step. Place your forearms or palms on a flat, elevated surface with your elbows directly under your shoulders. Walk your feet back until your body forms a straight line on a diagonal. Pull your abs in as you tuck your tailbone slightly and actively press into your forearms or palms.



## PLANK WITH LEG LIFT

In order to perform a plank with a leg lift, start in plank position with your forearms and toes on the floor. To make this exercise a bit easier, you can perform the movement on your hands rather than your forearms. Slowly raise one leg 5 to 8 inches off the floor.



## PLANK WITH ARM LIFT

Another way to add variety to the basic plank is to add an arm lift, either by pressing into the opposite forearm or palm. To perform a plank with an arm lift, start in plank position. Carefully shift your weight to your right forearm (or palm). Extend your left arm straight out in front of you. Hold while keeping your core tight.

# SAFETY:

You should not do planks if you have a shoulder injury. If you feel shoulder pain, end the exercise. In pregnancy, planks are considered safe for most people though there may be a concern for placing stress on the abdominal wall. It may be best to modify the plank and do a side plank or an incline plank. Talk to your doctor or physical therapist to see if this is an appropriate exercise.