



# EXERCISE GUIDE

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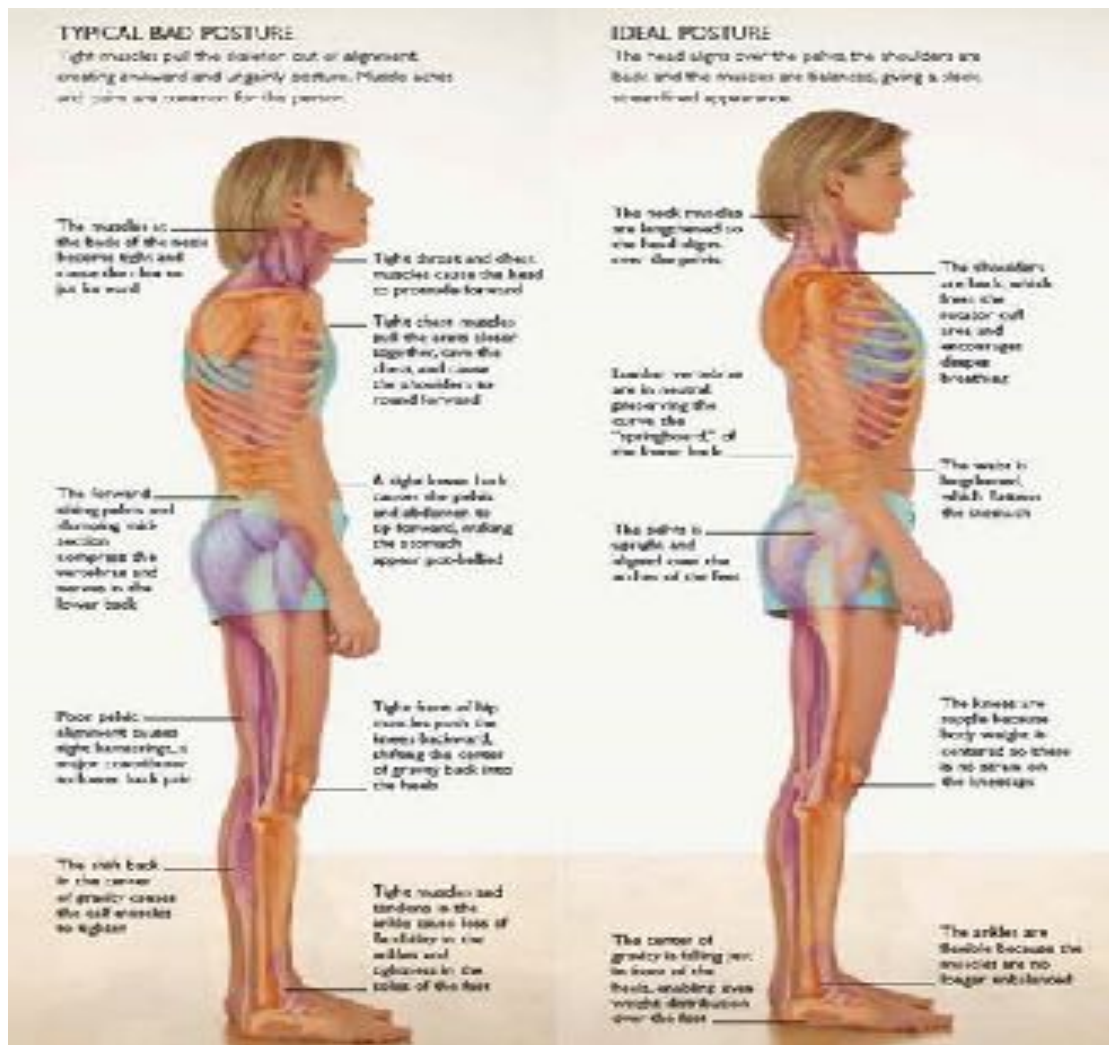
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## Neutral Spine, Activating Abdominals, Pelvic floor and Gluts.

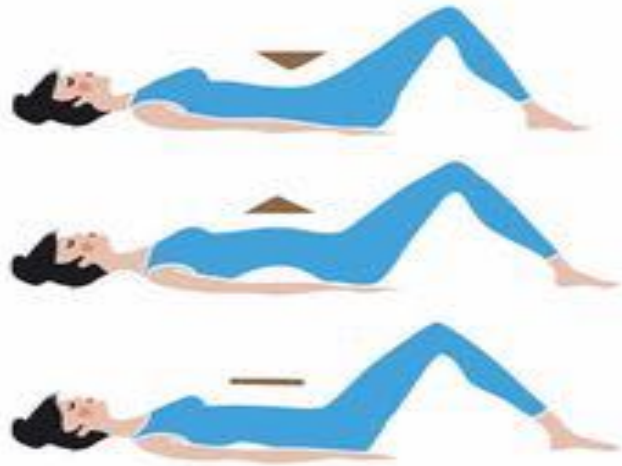
With all exercises it is important the Activate/Brace your Abdominals and Gluts (Gluteus Muscles (for that sweet booty), I will reference **Activate Core** which means activate all of these muscle groups. Activating these muscles protects the surrounding muscles such as back and helps maintain a neutral spine alignment. So it is important to activate the core for every single exercise.

### Neutral Spine

Neutral spine is the natural position of the spine when all 3 curves of the spine — cervical (neck), thoracic (middle) and lumbar (lower) — are present and in good alignment. This is the strongest position for the spine when we are standing or sitting. All exercises should be done with a neutral spine, consider your posture, make sure that your lower back isn't curving in too much. You want shoulders back, chest out. If you do exercises without a neutral spine then you may find that your lower back muscles are doing all the work when in fact your abdominals should be activating. This can easily cause injuries.



When lying ensure that your lumbar curve in your lower back is not over exaggerated, this will cause your lower back muscles to activate when your want your Transverse Abdominal muscles or core to do most of the work . If you feel that your back is arching up during any ground work, reset to neutral spine and continue on, for those with weaker cores, this may take some getting used to but being in tune with your body is important



### Abdominals and Pelvic Floor

**This area is interconnected so it is important do all at once.**

Gently draw in your lower abdominal wall towards your spine – this is slow and controlled activation. Try to slightly draw in the area of your abdomen that sits beneath your briefs. Remember this is a very subtle and gentle contraction; it should not be too strong or forceful. Try to breathe normally during all exercises for the core. As your pull in, pull up at the same time, imagine that you are trying to hold something in from not falling out, sounds terrible but it works. One example that I like to use for pelvic floor is that you are imagining that you have a very bad stomachache, you are racing for the toilet, need to squeeze and lift those pelvic floor muscles to ensure that you are going to make it in time. Pretty much everyone will know this feeling.



If you have any of the following problems it is very important that you do your Pelvic floor exercises, and that you are

### Gluts

Glut activation is very important in any exercise like a squat or lunge, we often just use our quads and hamstrings when in fact we should be firing up the glutes. If the workout you are doing has a lot of leg or bum work warming up with glute kickbacks or hip raises are great ways to get those muscles firing. You really want to be squeezing those gluts during exercises such as a squat.

## Diastasis Recti – What is it?

Diastasis Recti or Abdominal Separation is a condition that is very common after pregnancy. Your Rectus Abdominus (6 pack) muscles are joined together by connective tissue called the Linea Alba, and are pulled apart during pregnancy causing the connective tissue to stretch; this can leave a separation or a gap. Sometimes the gap can be so wide that people can still look pregnant months after having the baby or they can notice a bulge when bending over.

Diastasis Recti can cause you to have lower back pain as well as pelvic floor issues and this does need to be addressed.

They may also suffer from a Post partum Hernia that can be caused by Excessive Intra Abdominal Pressure.

There is a simple check you can do on yourself. By getting in the sit up position (feet on the ground, knees up) place one hand behind your head and the other hand just above or below your belly button, feel across your tummy and dig your fingers in as you slowly raise your shoulders up so you are doing a slight crunch, keep breathing normally. You should feel each side of the Rectus Abdominus muscles close around your fingers, you may only be able to fit one or 2 fingers in once you feel the gap or you maybe able to fit more. If you fit more than two fingers you will need to work on your Transverse Abdominal Muscles as well as your pelvic floor. If you can fit 3 or more fingers across the gap it is recommended you see a doctor and physiotherapist. You should avoid Planks and crunch type exercises or any exercise that pushes your tummy outwards until the gap is less than 2 fingers across

Sometimes people will have a significant gap but the Linea Alba (Connective tissue) is strong, which is great, to test for this perform the exercise that would generally push the Abdominals' outwards such as a crunch or straight leg lifts and check to see if the Linea Alba or Diastasis Domes, or pushes up outwards like a dome or Mountain. If that occurs you should not be performing that exercise.



*Exercises*

## Arms/Chest/Shoulders and Back

### Push ups/Press ups

#### Push up Beginner version

Take a good step back from table or bench top, Hands Shoulder width apart, Activate Core (this helps keep back in neutral position and slowly lower yourself down Hold for a second and raise your self up.



#### Push up intermediate

When you are able to keep good form and back stays in straight alignment, move down to the floor. Same as above, remembering to Activate Core Keep your eyes looking straight down or slightly in front, only slightly, this helps your head and neck stay in neutral.





### Push ups advanced

This is on your toes; Entire body should be in a straight line



### Hand release push up

Activate Core and Gluts, lower yourself to the ground and release activation, raise hands off the ground and then Place back at shoulder width and then activate core and Gluts and Push yourself back to start position. Can also be done on your knees, but not a table.



### T Push Up

Do a normal push up, once back at the start position come off one hand and rotate around with your eyes following your hand, This can definitely be done on your knees, But for safety not table.



### Tricep Push up

For this push up, your arms will be in line with your body.



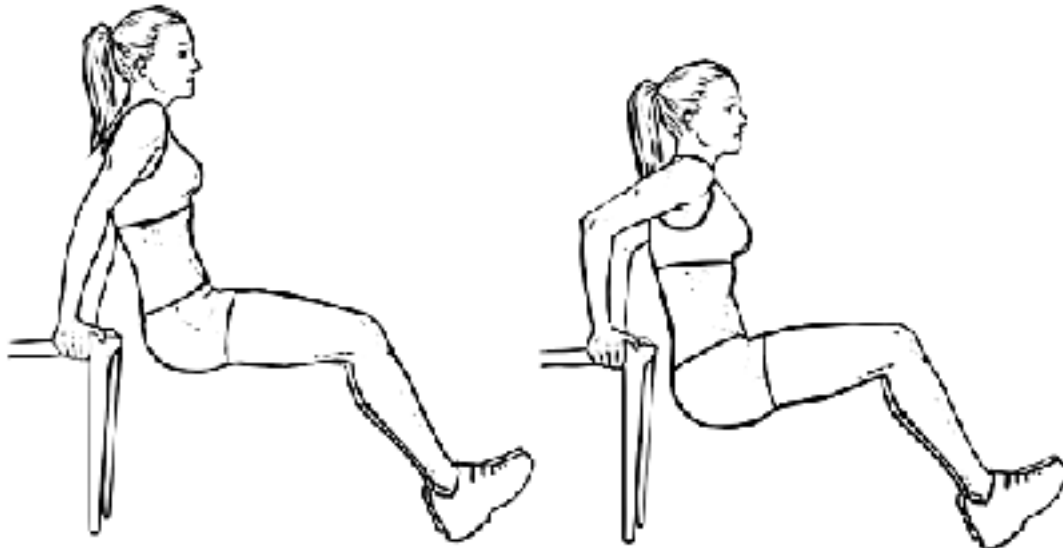
### Thigh taps

In start of push up position, remove one arm and move it towards your thigh, return to start position and switch sides.



### Tricep dips

Using a chair, place hands at hips with knees bent, lower yourself off the chair so that your arms are straight behind you and that your elbows are pointing 90 degrees, raise yourself up. To add more resistance straighten legs, cross ankles, and even more resistance, have a bench or chair to put your feet on.



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### Arm Circles

**Standing With legs shoulder width apart, straight back, Raise arms so that they are parallel to the floor, and rotate arms from the shoulder in small circles. Repeat in the opposite direction. To add resistance hold onto equal weighted objects such as small hand weights, cans of fruit, filled water bottles.**



## Core

### Leg Slides

#### **Abdominal Separation friendly – Great for strengthening TVA or Deep Abdominal muscles**

Lying on the ground, ensure you are in neutral spine, bring your knees up to a sit up position, activate your abdominals and slowly push one leg away from your torso along the floor, exhaling and then bring the foot back towards your torso on the inhale. Release activation and then reactivate when changing legs.



### Knee drops or side lowers

#### **Abdominal Separation friendly – Great for strengthening TVA or Deep Abdominal muscles**

In same position as the Leg slides activate your Abdominals and slowly drop your knee outwards/sideways while exhaling, slowly bringing the knee up for the inhale, fully concentrate on keeping the abdominals activated.

### Leg/knee Floats

**Abdominal Separation friendly – Great for strengthening TVA or Deep Abdominal muscles**

As you exhale, bring one leg up so that the calf is parallel to the ground, pause and then gently lower. Keep the Abdominals activated.



### Planks

**Planks should not be done if you have more than a 2 finger abdominal separation; side planks and side plank dips are fine. You may do a kneeling plank if you do not have any doming of your Diastasis Recti.**

### Hand plank

In the same position as the start of a push up, maintain activation of Core muscles. insure to keep Gluts activated to maintain a neutral spine. Beginner version on knees, Advanced on toes



### Standard Plank

On your forearms rather than straight arms, Activate Core to maintain neutral spine.

**Beginner on Knees \* Abdominal Separation safe, Advanced on toes**



### Shoulder tap Hand plank

In the Hand plank position, holding hips as steady as possible by activating core muscles slowly come off one arm, and cross to touch opposite sides shoulder, slowly move arm back, swap sides. This can be done on the knees as well, insure that the hips are kept as still as possible.



### Toe Tap plank

In standard plank position, can all so be done in hand plank for a more beginner. Slowly move one leg to the side and tap toe on the ground move back and change sides.



### Up down Plank

Starting in the hand plank position, move to the standard plank position and then back to the Hand plank position.



### Side plank Hold

**Beginner** - with knees bent, at 90-degree angle, or top leg straight.

**Intermediate** - straight legs,

**Advanced** - Leg at 45 degree angle from hips (Level 3)

Activating Core, Raise Hips off the ground ensuring Elbow is directly below Shoulder, repeat on other side.



### Side Plank Hold with Leg Raise's

While in the side plank hold position, raise the leg up and down on a 45 Degree angle.





### Side Plank dips – Abdominal separation friendly

In side plank hold position – Dip hips up and down but keeping hips just off the ground. **Beginner** knees bent and 90 Degrees, **Advanced** on side of foot, for an **intermediate** you can have your top leg extended with the bottom knee bent.



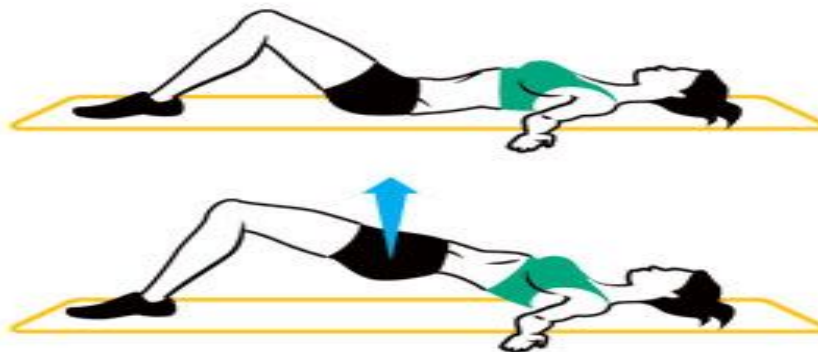
**Clamshell (very good for pelvic floor issues or abdominal separation friendly)**

Lying on your side, Knees slightly bent, Activating your core, and really concentrating on Pelvic floor activation slowly raise your knee upwards and then slowly back down holding your pelvic floor in the whole time and concentrating the on the Glut area.



**Hip Raises (Glute Bridge) (also very good for pelvic floor and abdominal separation)**

On your back, Knees up, Activate Core Lift Hips up so torso is a straight line, slowly lower hips back to start position.



### One legged Hip Raises

Same position as standard hip raises, Point one leg straight in the air, Activate core, raise hips, hold for a second, lower back to start position, swap sides.



### Crossed Legged Hip Raises

Place one Ankle on opposite thigh, Activate Core, Raise up on one leg, hold for one second, lower down.



### Table top hold

Lying on your back with knees up, Slowly lift one leg at a time so that the hips and knees are at 90 degrees, you should feel this deep in your lower abdominal area. Try not to arch your back; it should be flat on the ground. Hold in place for time. You can also slowly lift the lower half of your legs and slowly point them to the sky, maintaining the tabletop position with the other leg, or lowering one leg towards the floor and tapping heel to the ground. This is a great exercise to strengthen the core in support of your lower back.



## **Crunches (should not be done if more than two fingers wide for Abdominal separation)**

### Standard Crunch

Lying on your back, knees up, Fingertips touching Ears, Activate Core, Slowly curl your upper body up until your shoulders are no more than a few inches off the ground, Hold for a second, return to start position. Exhale as you come up; inhale as you go down.



### Bicycle Crunches

As you come up twist so that the opposite Elbow touches the opposite knee, and swap, moving knees in and out at the same time.



### Reverse Crunch

Lying in Standard crunch position lift legs up so knees and hips are at 90 degrees, Hands lying parallel to the torso, Lift legs and hips up and back towards the head area, return to start position.



### Double Crunches

In standard crunch position, activate core, Come up into the crunch and bring Legs towards elbows, Hold for a second and then return to floor.



### Sky touch crunch

In crunch position, Legs are straight in the air with soles of feet towards the sky, arms straight up too; Slowly crunch up towards the sky, and you can use a small weight to add resistance.



### Swimmer kicks/Flutter kicks

Check your Abdominal Separation and see if you have doming.

Lying flat on the floor, hands under bum, using the whole leg make small kicks up and down, if you have a weak core the higher you start your kicks the easier it is, the lower your legs are to the floor the harder on your abs it is.



Leg Hold/Ab hold Check your Abdominal Separation and see if you have doming.

Lying flat on the ground, Raise your legs about 6 inches from the floor and hold in place. For a weaker core area, raise legs higher, the lower your legs the harder it is.





## Legs and Butt

### Standard Squat

Feet shoulder width apart, toes on a 45 degree angle, toes facing forward, Activate core, concentrating on Squeezing the gluts, push bum back and lower yourself down lower yourself until your knees are about 90 degrees or if your heels start coming off the ground hold for a second and raise yourself up slowly. Make sure that knees don't go over the toes.



### Narrow Squat (Good for pelvic floor issues)

Same as the standard squat but feet are together



## Wide Legged Squat (Sumo Squat)

**(Avoid if you have pelvic floor issues or abdominal speration)**

Legs start off wider than standard, toes on a 45-degree angle outwards, lower yourself down until knees are 90 degrees Hold for a second and raise yourself up.



## Jump Squats

**(Avoid if you have a pelvic floor issue)**

Perform a standard squat, at the lower part of the squat; explosively jump up returning to start position.



### In and out Jump squat

Start with doing a narrow squat and jump from the lower part of the squat and move legs to a normal squat position, then squat again and jump up returning to a narrow squat position. **For a low impact pelvic floor friendlier version instead of jumping simply step in and out as you come up.**



### Pulsing Squat

Lower yourself into the squat position and gently pulse up and down slightly, staying in the lower part of the squat



### Squat with Leg Raise

Do a standard Squat and as you raise yourself up Lift one leg to the side, repeat on the other side



### Wall Sit

Leaning against the wall lower your self down so that your hips and knees are at 90 degrees, keep hands off the thighs preferably crossed over the chest, hold for as long as possible.



### Standard Forward Lunge

Legs shoulder width apart take a step forward and drop the back knee straight towards the ground so that both knees are bent at 90 degrees, return to start position and repeat on other side, maintaining a straight back.



### Reverse Lunge

Same as standard front lunge, but this time step backwards, dropping knee straight down so that knees are at 90 degrees, return to start position and repeat on the other side.



### Side lunges

Start with feet shoulder width apart, stepping out to the side, lowering leg down so that knee is 90 degrees, return to start position and repeat on other side. Not good for pelvic floor.



### Pulsing Lunges

Do a standard forward lunge and slightly pulse up and down not returning to the start position until reps complete, repeat on other side.



### Glut kickbacks

On hands and knees bring one leg forward and then push leg back raising leg to the sky, bringing back into start position, Legs can also be kicked back and straightened as well as knee at 90 degrees.



### Glut pulses

In the glut kickback position, bring it up and pulse slightly, return to start position and repeat on other side.



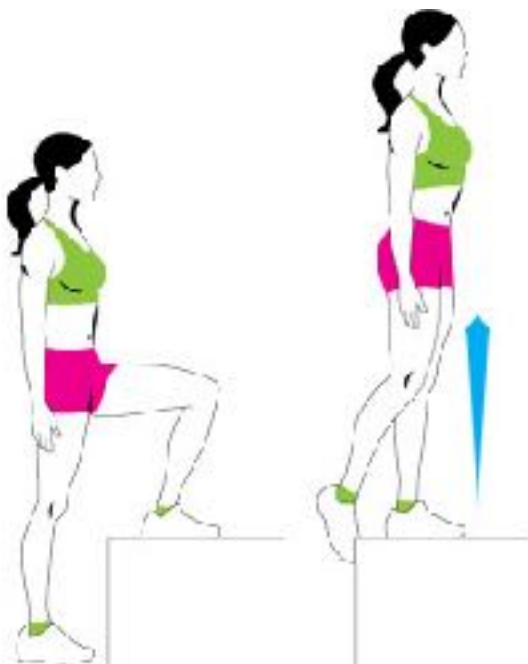
### Fire Hydrants/Fire Hydrant Crunch

With a name like this you will be reminded of a dog cocking its leg, and that's pretty much exactly what you will be doing. Squeeze the gluts and slowly lift the leg so that that hip is at 90 degrees. You can add a crunch into this by bringing your knee towards your shoulder once in the 90 Degree position. You can also make this so much harder by coming up off your knees, on your toes, but with knees bent, raising the leg and crunching.



### Step up's

Using a step or solid platform step up and down, do one side before switching to the other.





### Step up kicks

Stepping up and kicking opposite knee up, bring leg back down and repeat



### Prisoner Get ups

Start in kneeling position, hands behind heads and bring one knee directly out in front and stand up without using arms to assist you, drop same knee that was last on the ground down and then bring other leg back to starting position. Swap legs once all reps done on that side. Very important to brace those abdominals as that will help with standing up and keeping balance.



### Calf pumps/Calf Raises

Standing shoulder widths apart go from normal standing to toes and back down repeat.



### Side Adduction exercise Or Leg Lifts/Leg Raises

Lying on your side, Body in straight line, Lifting leg slowly in a straight line until 45-degree angle and then returning to start position

These can also be done standing on one leg, raise leg out to the side at a 45 degree angle. These can be done standing as well, using a wall for support or standing on one leg.



### Leg Circles

Lying on your side, Legs straight out, Raise the top leg and do slow circles in one direction and then move in the opposite direction before rolling over and changing sides.



### Mountain climbers

In hand plank position, move knees towards elbow, return to start position and repeat on other side.



### Standing Knee Kicks/Knee ups

These can be done holding onto a bench or wall for extra support or are a great way to activate muscle groups in stationary leg to aid in building support in weak ankles

Stand feet shoulder width apart, if using a wall or bench for support lean into this now, other wise bring one knee up into a knee kick as if you were doing a high knee and then lower lightly tapping toe on the floor. Activate those Abdominals during each kick , this helps balance.



### Genie Sit

Sitting on your knees, with your arms folded in front of your chest, lower yourself back towards your heels slightly, hold for time. This exercise you will feel primarily in your quads and Hamstrings, and your gluts, you should be bracing your abdominals to maintain a neutral spine.



## Back Exercises

### Superman's

**Beginner version** is lying on the floor, Lift opposite Arm and leg, then lower and swap sides, **Advanced** is in the Knee hand plank position.



### Back Extensions

Lying on your tummy bringing your finger tips top your ears gently activate your abdominals and raise your chest off the ground. For a more intense exercise raise your legs slightly off the ground.



### Scapular Back Extension

Bring arms back behind the and brace abdominals and raise chest off the ground



## Whole Body

### Burpee Jumps or half Burpee

In hand plank position, Jump both knees towards elbows, and then jumping back out to start position. For a low intensity version, step legs out until in the hand plank position and then step back in.



## Burpees

Standing legs shoulder width apart, drop down, jump legs out into Hand plank position, and jump legs back in and jump up to start position. These can also include Push-ups, jacks or toe taps while in the hand plank position. For a low intensity version, step legs out until in the hand plank position and then step back in. and don't jump.



## Walkouts

Standing feet shoulder width apart, lean forward with hands on the ground, walk hands out away from legs until body is fully extended, walk hands back in and stand up to start position, you may bend legs if flexibility is poor. If you suffer from blood pressure problems refrain from standing up between walking your legs in and out.



## Stretching

Stretching is very important after a workout, especially the older we get, hold each stretch for about 20 seconds.

ab stretch



20sec:

cat cow stretch



20sec: + 20sec

hip flexor stretch



20sec + 20sec

lower back stretch



20sec

standing forward bend



20sec:

quad stretch



20sec: + 20sec

calf stretch



20sec + 20sec

shoulder stretch



20sec + 20 sec

biceps stretch



20sec:

child's pose



20sec