

Strengthening your core is crucial for injury prevention and becoming a more efficient, stronger runner.

Challenge different muscle groups at the same time with 10 core exercises 3 times a week.

1. Squats

Work your glutes, hamstrings and quads with squats.

1. Stand in front of a chair or bench or an imaginary one.
 2. Slowly lower yourself as if sitting.
 3. Don't go lower than 90 degrees; and be careful not to hyperextend your knees.
 4. Slowly stand up.
- Beginners start with 5 reps for 3 sets and advance do 10 reps for 3 sets.

2. Wall Squat

This is really challenging and works the entire lower body.

1. Stand against a wall; bring your feet a few feet away from the wall.
 2. Slowly slide down the wall as if you're sitting in an imaginary chair.
 3. Make sure your feet are flat, under your knees and square. Knees should not be bent past your toes.
 4. Have your favorite music playing and hold the squat position as long as you can and keep your stomach muscles tight and back flat against the wall.
- Beginners start with 20 seconds, and advance try up to 2 minutes. Do this version once a week and after a month, you will be surprised at your progress and increased strength!

3. Lunges

Another great exercise for your glutes, hamstrings and quads, lunges also help improve balance.

1. Stand with your feet shoulder width apart and hands on your waist.
 2. Take a long step forward with one leg.
 3. Lower your body slowly until your front knee is at a 90 degree angle. Be sure to keep your torso upright.
 4. Return to starting position by pushing up on off your front foot. Repeat with other leg.
- Beginners start with 5 reps/leg for 2 sets and advance do 10 reps/leg for 2-3 sets.

4. Push-ups

There's a reason people are still doing these old-school moves. They work your chest, triceps and core. Be sure to keep your abs tight and focus on the floor as you slowly lower and push your body up and down. Inhale as you lower; exhale as you gently press up. Your hands should be a few inches wider than your shoulders.

➤ Push-ups on knees

It is better to do the exercise correctly and do more reps/sets than to struggle and sacrifice form. So if the traditional version is difficult for you do it on your knees and get the same benefits. Be sure to first place a towel down for your knees.

- Beginners start with 3-5 reps for 2-3 sets and advance do 6-8 reps for 2-3 sets.

5. Bicep/Hammer Curl Rotations

This movement works the entire bicep.

1. Start with your elbows at your sides, palms facing up, and a weight in each hand.
2. With one arm, raise the weight towards your shoulder; rotate palm so it faces inward.
3. Slowly lower (not drop) your arm and rotate the palm up. Be sure not to use the wrists to rotate the weights.

4. Repeat with the other arm.
- Beginners start with 5 reps/arm for 3 sets and advance do 10 reps/arm for 3 sets.

6. Lateral Shoulder Raises

Lateral, or side raises, help tone the shoulders and build the muscles in your back.

1. Stand tall with knees slightly bent and arms at your sides with weights in hands.
 2. Raise your arms straight out to the side bringing the weights up to shoulder height with your palms facing down; be sure to keep your abs tight and your shoulder blades drawn together.
- Beginners start with 3-5 reps for 3 sets and advance do 8-10 reps for 3 sets.

7. Arm Raises-

1. Stand tall with arms raised at 90 degree angle.
 2. Slowly raise arms over your head so they are straight and touch fingers keeping arms at side at all times. Helpful to watch your form in the mirror.
 3. Lower your arms to starting position do not let them drop.
- Beginners do 10 reps for 3 sets and advance do 20 reps for 3 sets.
 - After you can do 100 raises without sacrificing form, do it with your shoes in your hands or weights.

8. Lateral Leg Lifts

This is an amazing way to tone your glutes, target the outer thighs and obliques, and improve balance.

1. Balance on one leg while slowly raising and lowering the opposite leg out to the side.
 2. Be sure both hips and shoulders are facing in the same direction, keep your chest open, and try not to swing your leg. Focus on slow movements.
- Beginners start with 10 reps on each leg for 3 sets and advance with 10 sets for 5 sets.

9. Bicycle Crunches

You should do a variety of sit ups during the week. This one, also known as "criss-cross", works the lower abs, obliques and helps hamstring flexibility. Make sure you keep the legs long, toes pointed, and stomach muscles engaged and do not forget to breathe.

1. Start on your back with knees bent, feet in the air.
 2. Crunch up and hold.
 3. Twist your left shoulder towards your right knee as you extend and straighten your left leg.
 4. Return to a neutral position before switching sides.
- Beginners start with 10-15 on each side for 2-3 sets and advance do 20-30 each side for 2-3 sets.

10. Superman/woman

This works your entire core.

1. Start on the floor on your stomach with your arms reaching out in front of you.
 2. Very slowly, contract the abs and raise your arms, head, and chest off the ground while contracting the glutes and lifting your legs a few inches off the ground. Try to imagine your arms and legs reaching towards opposite walls.
 3. Focus your gaze on the floor, reach your arms and legs long, and hold for 10 seconds.
 4. Rest and repeat.
- Beginners start with 5 reps for 3 sets and advance try 5 reps for 10 sets.