

Basic Strength & Conditioning Exercises for Runners (v1)



<http://www.peakrunning.co.uk/>

Regular strength and conditioning exercises have tremendous benefits for runners. They can help you run more efficiently (and therefore faster) and, more importantly, they significantly reduce the risk of overuse injuries.

Below are some simple exercises to get you started. These can be done at home and do not require any special equipment.

Short but regular exercise sessions are recommended, e.g. 30 mins three times per week, or 10-15 mins six times a week.

Build up the number of repetitions and sets of each exercise gradually. Don't overstretch yourself to the extent you can't maintain good form. And don't progress to the more demanding versions until you are comfortable with the basic exercises.

If you find that you are weaker on one side, increase the number of repetitions/sets on that side to even things out – but don't completely neglect the stronger side.







There is lots of information on additional and more challenging exercises on the internet. A particularly useful site is James Dunne's <http://www.kinetic-revolution.com>. It contains lot of free resources and has an associated YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEBjuHm_Z6hz8Q6C_dm8bSg) with video demonstrations.

Sample Exercises

Exercise	Illustration	Variation / Progression
Table top <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lie flat on your back with arms at your side. Bend 90 degrees at hips and knees as shown. Engage core muscles (try to draw your belly button down toward spine). Slowly lower one leg until your heel is almost touching the floor and then bring back to starting position. Repeat with other leg. Keep your back as flat as possible, do not arch it. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower both legs at the same time. Rotate legs out to side as you lower them, in a breast stroke/frog leg motion (this also helps with hip mobility).
Bridge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lie flat on your back with arms at your side. Raise your hips off the ground as shown, engaging your glutes (buttocks) and pushing down through your heels. Hold the position at the highest point for 1-2 seconds and then slowly lower your hips back to the ground. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single leg version – other leg off the ground pointing forwards. Single leg version – hold the other leg to your chest.
Leg Raise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lie flat on your back with arms at your side. Engage core muscles (try to draw your belly button down toward spine). Raise one leg off the ground as shown. Hold the position at the highest point for 1-2 seconds and then slowly lower the leg back down to the ground. Repeat with the other leg. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise both legs at the same time.
Aeroplane <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lie flat on your front with your arms out in front. Raise one leg and the alternate arm a few inches off the ground. Hold the position at the highest point for 1-2 seconds and slowly lower back down. Repeat with the other leg/arm. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise both legs and both arms at the same time.
Superman (or Bird Dog) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kneel on all fours with your knees directly below your hips and arms directly below your shoulders. Straighten one leg out behind you and the opposite arm in front of you as shown. Hold the position for 1-2 seconds and slowly lower leg and arm back down. Repeat with the other leg/arm. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise both legs and both arms at the same time.....only joking.
Plank <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lie flat on your front and raise yourself up onto your elbows, which should be directly under your shoulders. Lift your hips off the floor until your body is in line as shown. Engage core and glute muscles and hold for 30 seconds (less if too hard). 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold for longer or do multiple repetitions of 30 second hold. Lift alternate legs off the ground a few inches, hold for a second and lower slowly back down.

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<p>Side Plank</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lie on your side and then raise yourself up onto one elbow, which should be directly under your shoulder. Lift your hips off the floor until your body is in line as shown, with the top foot on top of the lower one. Engage core and glute muscles and hold for 30 seconds (less if necessary). Repeat on other side. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lift top leg up slowly about 6-12 inches, hold for a second and lower back down. Bring the knee of the top leg forward into a running position and back., keeping the pelvis in line – not tilted.
<p>Reverse Plank</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From a sitting position, support yourself with your arms as shown and raise your hips off the ground until your body is in line. Engage core and glute muscles and hold for 30 seconds (less if too hard). 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lift alternate legs off the ground a few inches, hold for a second and lower slowly back down.
<p>Squat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stand with your legs shoulder width apart (or a bit further if you need to help your balance). Bend at the knees and lower yourself slowly into a sitting position as shown (or as low as you can go). Your knees should remain above and not in front of your feet. Keep your back straight and stretch your arms out in front to help with balance. Engage your glutes and come back up slowly into a standing position. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold the squat position for a number of seconds. Single leg squat.
<p>Split Squat (or Bulgarian Squat)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From a standing position, stride forward with one foot. Lower your pelvis down slowly until the rear knee is almost touching the ground and the front thigh is parallel to the ground – with the knee over the foot – as shown. Raise back up into the stride position and repeat for the desired number of repetitions. Repeat with the opposite leg forward. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position the rear foot on a chair or bench.
<p>Spiderman</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get into a press up position, with your hands directly under your shoulders and your feet shoulder width apart. Keeping your body in line, bring one knee forward and touch your elbow with it (or bring it as close as you can), and return to starting position. Repeat with opposite knee. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase speed.
<p>Single Leg Balance / Deadlift</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stand on one leg to gain your balance. Reach down slowly with your opposite arm to touch the toe of your standing leg. Point your other leg out behind you and use your other arm for balance. Return to starting position and repeat for the desired number of repetitions. Repeat, balancing on the opposite leg. <p>Note: If you are unable to balance through the exercise, start by practicing standing on one leg and progress to going through a running motion with the other leg while standing upright. After a few sessions, attempt the full exercise again.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease speed. Hold a weight in the opposite hand to the leg you're standing on.