

Strength Training Routine

Challenging your muscles with strength training exercises two or three times each week is all that is required to improve endurance, strength, and tone of your muscles while gaining you several long term health benefits (Not to mention Weight Management) - Provided You Keep Up The Routine!

Lunges



Strengthen your hamstrings (back of thigh), quadriceps (front of thigh), gastrocnemius (calf) and gluteus maximus (backside) muscles.

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, hands on hips. (Optional: hold a small hand-weight in each hand, with your hands by your sides).

1 rep = Position your head (your gaze) straight ahead throughout the whole exercise movement. Step one leg a generous stride length forward and bend this knee to make a right angle between your thigh and your shin. Allow the heel of the back foot to lift off the ground as you bend the back knee towards the floor. Hold for a few seconds, and then return to standing upright. Do the same movement, this time moving the opposite leg to the front.

Note: Keep your back straight and head upright throughout (pick a point to stare at in front of you to prevent looking down) - Make sure your front knee is directly above your ankle, not pushed out too far, and make sure your other knee doesn't touch the floor.

Squats



Strengthen your quadriceps (front of thigh), gluteus maximus (backside) and soleus (deep calf) muscles.

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, head facing forward and your chest held up and out. (Optional: hold a small hand-weight in each hand).

1 rep = Extend your hands straight out in front of you to help keep your balance, gripping back of chair for support is also an option. Sit back and down like you are sitting into an imaginary chair. Keep your head facing forward as your upper body bends forward slightly rather than allowing your back to round, let your lower back arch slightly as you descend. Lower yourself down so your thighs are as parallel to the floor as possible with your knees over your ankles. Press your weight back into your heels Keep your body tight and push through your heels to bring yourself back to the starting position.

Note: It's definitely awkward at first, so don't expect to master the squat right away. Focus on your form, and then worry about adding reps.

Standing Calf Raises



Strengthen your gastrocnemius (calf) and soleus (deep calf) muscles.

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, hands on hips. (Optional: hold a small hand-weight in each hand).

1 rep = Press into the ground with the balls of your feet, lifting your heels off the ground. Raise your body up as high as you can so that you're balanced on the balls of your feet, your legs fully extended, and briefly pause. Slowly lower yourself back toward the ground, stopping just before your heels reach the ground.

You can also expand the range of motion of this movement by balancing on your toes on a step or curb, allowing your heels to drop below the level of the step before pressing up into the calf raise.

Note: Strengthening your calves enable you to walk or run further as they increase your muscular endurance and help protect your Achilles tendon from injury.

Push Ups



Strengthen your pectoral (chest), triceps (back of upper arm), deltoids (shoulders), back, abs and even the leg muscles.

Lie on the floor and position your hands slightly wider than your shoulders. Your feet can be close together or wider apart depending upon comfort.

1 rep = Rise up onto your toes so you are balanced on your hands and toes. Keep your body in a straight line from head to toe without sagging in the middle or arching your back. Before you begin any movement, contract your abs and tighten your core by pulling your belly button toward your spine. Keep a tight core throughout the entire push up. Inhale as you slowly bend your elbows and lower yourself until your elbows are at a 90 degree angle, body not touching the ground. Exhale as you begin pushing back up to the start position. Do not lock out the elbows - Keep them slightly bent.

Note: Bent Knee Push Ups are a modified version of the standard push up, performed on the knees rather than on the toes. Be sure to keep the knees, hips and shoulders all in a straight line - Most people have a tendency to bend at the hips as though you are bowing, but this is poor form and incorrect technique.

Biceps Curl



Strengthen your biceps (front of upper arm) muscles.

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, hands with weights by your sides.

1 rep = Lift one weight toward the shoulder, rotating the arm as it moves up so that the palm with weight is now facing upward and the elbow is pointing to the ground with the forearm almost vertical. Do not pull the weight so far back that the forearm moves beyond a vertical position. Pause briefly, then slowly lower the weight, rotating the arm back to the side position and

perform the same movement with the other arm and continue to alternate until the set is complete. One arm at a time is called a unilateral exercise. A variation is to do the exercise bilaterally, that is with both arms at the same time. Refine the unilateral lift first before moving on to this exercise.

Note: Concentrate on good form rather than rapid execution, take things slow and Feel the 'burn' when doing these exercises. Don't recruit the shoulders and torso when doing the dumbbell curl, which can end up as a twisting and heaving movement. Concentrate on the arms. Choose lighter weights or reduce the repetitions if this occurs.

Triceps Overhead Extension



Strengthen your triceps (back of upper arm) muscles.

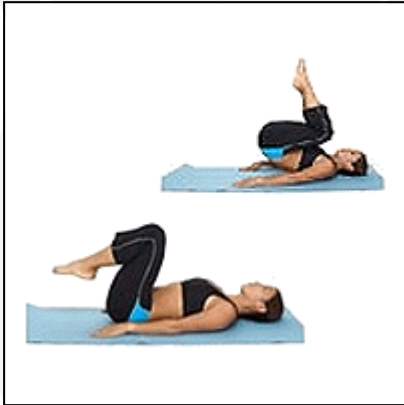
Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, holding a dumbbell or weight with both hands, palms up, above your head. Pull your shoulder blades down and back. Your head and neck should be aligned with your spine. Maintain this pose throughout the exercise.

1 rep = Your elbows are pointing forward and straight but not locked. The dumbbell should be positioned directly over your head. Inhale while bending your elbows in a slow and controlled

manner, lowering the weight behind your head. Do not allow the upper arms to move. Continue to bend the elbows to a 90 degree angle or until your upper arms begin to move backward. Do not make contact with the back of your head. Do not change the position of your head, torso, upper arms, wrists or feet. Pause briefly, and then slowly straighten the elbows and return to start position.

Note: Attempt to keep your upper arms vertical to the floor throughout the exercise and your elbows shoulder width apart.

Reverse Crunch



Strengthen your abdominus (front of abdomen) muscles.

Lie flat on your back and reach back over your head to grip some object behind you. Position your feet so that they are kept together or crossed at the ankle, keeping your knees bent at a 90 degree angle. Keep your hands flat down on the ground.

1 rep = Curl your hip upward and off the ground, pushing your legs towards the ceiling. Your feet should remain touching, or crossed, throughout this movement. It is critical that you contract your abdominal muscles as you move your hips off the ground.

To work your lower abdominal muscles effectively, you have to make sure that your abs are providing the lift rather than your hips. Additionally, keeping the abs contracted provides good support for your back. When you move your legs up, you should focus on making sure that your lower back comes up off the ground. Pause briefly, slowly lower your legs back down keeping your knees bent at a 90-degree angle until your feet are touching the ground. If you straighten your legs and begin from that position, your hips will perform most of the work that you want your abs to do.

Note: Concentrate on good form and take your time by making each movement slow and gradual as you concentrate on the abdominal muscle contraction that is so important for this exercise. Keep your knees bent at a 90 degree angle.

Leg Lowering



Strengthen your abdominus (front lower of abdomen) muscles.

Lie flat on your back with your legs stretched out in front of you. If you have back problems, fold a towel and put it under the curve of your back, just above your hips. Keep your hands flat down on the ground.

1 rep = Bend your legs and raise them, keeping your toes pointed. Press the small of your back into the floor to eliminate the arch in your lower back. Your thighs should be perpendicular to your body, while your shins are parallel. Straighten your legs

so that they are pointed at the ceiling. Keep your toes pointed. Pause briefly, slowly lower your legs to the lowest point at which you can still keep your back flat, then bring your legs in to your chest. Don't just let gravity work for you - Make sure you are in control. Try to lower your legs more with each repetition. For a harder workout, slowly raise your legs to the ceiling without bending them, this movement will also engage your hip muscles.

Note: Resist dropping legs to the ground, when you have had enough, pull legs in to the chest. If you have mastered this exercise and are looking for a bit more, try to lower legs more slowly, pause and bounce legs slightly at the lowest point before pulling legs in to the chest.

Dead Lifts



Strengthen your forearms, quads, hamstrings, gluteal (backside), trapezius (upper back), and lower back muscles.

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, place the weights together on the ground between your feet (roughly in line with your toes).

1 rep = Squat down with your back straight, arms straight and between your knees to grip the weights. Position your head (your gaze) parallel to the ground throughout the whole exercise movement. Take a deep breath to tense the core, and exhale as

you slowly stand up to full extension (keeping back straight and gaze parallel throughout the whole movement). As the weights come off the ground, concentrate on pulling your shoulders back so that when reaching the standing position, each weight should be directly in front of each thigh. Pause briefly, and then slowly reverse the motion till the weights are returned to the start position on the ground.

Note: When standing up to full extension the weights will hang from your arms and shoulders causing a tendency to hunch forward – Resist this poor form by pulling your shoulders back during the movement. Head position (gaze parallel) is important to avoid injury to the lower back.

Bent Over Rows



Strengthen your latissimus dorsi (lower and mid back), and deltoids (rear shoulder) muscles.

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart with knees slightly bent (not locked), bend forward from the hips to 45 degree angle keeping back straight and allow arms to swing forward vertical with the ground, hands with weights about shoulder width apart (palms facing together).

1 rep = Position your head (your gaze) at the same 45 degree angle, in alignment with your spine. Inhale and brace your

abdominals, keep your back straight and exhale while slowly lifting the weights straight up in a controlled manner. Your upper arms should go no higher than parallel with the shoulders.

Concentrate on squeezing the shoulder blades together. Pause briefly, and then slowly reverse the motion till the weights are returned to the start position. Remain in this bent over position until all repetitions of the set are complete. Keep your wrists rigid and resist excessive movement. Advanced technique would be one arm resting on support while other arm lifts heavier weight.

Note: Maintain a straight back and a slight bend in the knees whilst bent over throughout the entire movement. Resist looking up, your head position (gaze 45 degrees) is important to avoid injury to the neck.

Standing Rows



Strengthen your trapezius (upper back), and deltoids (shoulders) muscles.

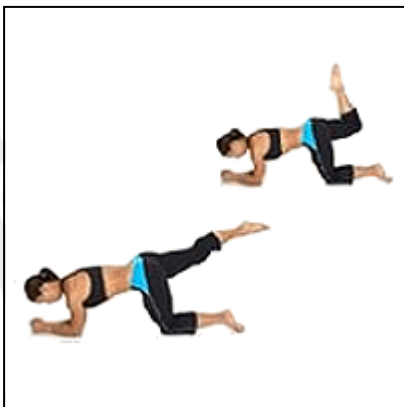
Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, holding a dumbbell or weight with both hands directly in front of your pelvis, palms down.

1 rep = Position your head (your gaze) straight ahead throughout the whole exercise movement. Slowly lift the weight in a steady and deliberate manner straight up making sure the weight is parallel and as close as possible to your body. Allow your elbows

to rise in a straight line with the weight, stopping when the backs of your hands are level with your chin. At this time the backs of your hands and your elbows should be level. Now squeeze your shoulder blades together and roll your shoulders back. Pause briefly, and then very slowly reverse the motion in a steady and deliberate manner till the weights are returned to the start position. Focus on your form, and then worry about adding separate weights for each hand.

Note: Make sure you are raising and lowering the weight at a steady pace. Do not jerk the weight up or use your body for momentum. The more deliberate and steady you are, the better the results with this particular exercise. Try lowering the weight even more slowly than you raise it.

Reverse Kicks



Strengthen your gluteus medius (backside) and the gluteus maximus (backside) hamstrings, and lower back muscles.

The gluteal muscles, or glutes, are one of the largest muscle groups in the body and an area that most people want to tone. Start by getting down on all fours (hands under shoulders, knees under hips). Support the majority of your bodyweight on your forearms.

1 rep = Position your head (your gaze) straight at the ground throughout the whole exercise movement. Keeping your right

knee bent at the 90-degree angle, slowly lift that leg behind you so your foot rises up toward the ceiling retaining the bent knee position, and until the bottom of your foot is parallel with the ceiling. Squeeze your glutes as you raise your leg. Hold this pose for 5 seconds, now slowly straighten your leg to a 45 degree angle out behind you (leg now fully extended with toe pointed), pause bring leg back to the previous bent knee position, squaring ankle (foot parallel with the ceiling), before slowly returning your leg to the start position. Continue the required reps to complete the set before moving on to the other leg.

Note: Maintain a straight back, avoid arching your back. Use your muscles to create a steady and deliberate controlled movement, avoid the temptation to swing your leg in to the upright position.

Terminology

Set: a group of successive repetitions of an exercise performed without resting, e.g. 2 sets of abdominal crunches with 15 reps would mean you do 15 crunches then rest or stretch the abdominal muscles before doing another 15 crunches.

Repetitions or 'reps': the number of times you repeat each exercise in a set. For exercises that work your arms or legs, you will need to count reps for one limb (say the right arm) then repeat these for the opposite side (the left arm), before moving on to the next exercise. The upper body is usually exercised for fewer reps than the lower body, e.g. 8 to 12 reps of a biceps curl compared with 15 to 20 reps of a lunge.

Once you can comfortably do 12 reps of an exercise, you should look at progressing further. Options include increasing the size of your hand or leg weights (thus increasing the intensity of muscular effort) or increasing the number of sets of each exercise to 2 or 3. The health benefits of strength training can be attained safely by most people if they do 1 set of 8 to 12 reps of each exercise every second or third day.

There are almost infinite routine combinations for a workout program. Your experience level will dictate how often to train your body parts. However, certain training criteria can be applied to the training program regardless of being at the beginner or advanced level. No strength training program would be complete without implementing a solid nutrition plan, an essential component in realising your full strength training potential.

After a muscle is overloaded it must adapt to the training demands and compensate for future workouts. Muscle growth occurs when you rest and sleep. Delayed onset muscle soreness is an indication that your muscle has not fully recovered. Do expect some soreness, especially if you are just starting out or you have not trained in a while, but do not use this as an excuse to forfeit training. Keeping this in mind, avoid heading in the other direction and going full-on to get results overnight. Design a training and nutrition program that will facilitate recovery.

This general fitness advice and exercise routine is not tailored to individual needs. The exercise routine included above is specifically targeting major muscle groups and is for the intention of achieving core strength, complete body tone for a great physical appearance, and a guide for acquiring a healthy level of fitness. If you have an existing injury or any health problems, or you do not already exercise regularly, first check with your doctor about your suitability regarding a Resistance Training Programme.

COSMICSOLUTIONS hope that you will find this strength training routine useful in your ongoing quest to live the best possible life you can. Stay positive and focused on your vision for a healthier you!

Good health makes life more enjoyable: [more information](#)

Strength training to improve overall health and fitness levels: [more information](#)

Protein powders for high quality supplements to facilitate muscle recovery: [more information](#)