

Plankers Away!

The plank is one of the best exercises you can do for your core. It builds isometric strength and helps to sculpt your waistline and improve your posture. There are many different types of planks to try, each engaging different sets of muscles. Hold each as long as you're comfortable, and go up from there:

Straight-Arm Plank



Kneel on all fours with hands directly under shoulders. Come onto toes, contract abs, and straighten legs; keep body in line from head to heels.

Side Plank



From plank position, press your right hand into a mat and turn your body so your weight is on the outer edge of your right foot; stack your left foot on top. Extend your left arm with fingers pointed toward the sky. Tighten your lower-ab muscles and brace your entire core. Hold for 60 seconds, then return to plank position and repeat on the left side; that's 1 rep. Do 3 reps.

Ready? Go!

Knee to Elbow



Get into a straight-arm plank. Twist your lower body to the left, then to the right; return to center. Bring your left knee forward to touch your left elbow; hold for 1 second, then return to center and repeat on the right side. That's 1 rep; do 20 reps.

Plank Jacks



Begin in plank position, with shoulders over wrists, your body in a straight line, and your feet together. Like the motion of a jumping jack, jump your legs wide and then back together. Keep your pelvis steady and don't let your butt rise up. Do a total of 30 jumping jacks, which counts as one set. Then complete two more sets.