

Important Strength Exercises

LOWER BODY

Strength exercises that mimic running will be most beneficial for running. The following exercises will help prevent injuries, but also make a positive difference in the quality of your running.

The muscles on the back of the thigh, the hamstrings, tend to be the muscles that suffer the most strength imbalances. A great majority of distance runners have very weak hamstrings. Due to the many functions of the muscle, a problem here can lead to problems in the knee, hip, Achilles, foot, and back. Do not neglect the hamstrings.

HIP LIFTS

HAMSTRING STRENGTH

2 sets to fatigue

(up to 30)

3-4 days per week

Lie on your back with your heels resting on a firm chair or table. There should be a 90-degree angle at your hips and knees. Your hips, knees, and feet should be the same distance apart.

Relax everything! (calves, abdominals, upper body, gluteals)

Concentrate only on digging your heels into the table. You should feel the backs of your

legs working.

Slowly raise your back off the floor about four inches and then lower yourself down. The whole repetition should take five seconds – two seconds up, hold for a second, two seconds down.

Continue with the exercise until you fatigue or begin cheating by recruiting other muscles.

SINGLE LEG SQUATS

KNEE STABILITY

2 sets to fatigue

(up to 15)

2-3 days per week

Stand with one foot forward and the other back on a step that is 6-8 inches high. Your feet should be about one shin-length apart (they should be hip-width apart from side to side). Most of your weight should be directed through the heel of your foot on the ground.

Bend your knee, lowering your body

until your knee reaches an angle of 90 degrees between the thigh and lower leg.

Return to the starting position, maintaining upright posture with your trunk and holding your hands at your sides. If you feel wobbly, stabilize yourself by holding onto the wall.

Important Strength Exercises

CORE

Your “core” muscles consist of certain abdominal and back muscles. These work together to support and stabilize your spine. When strong, not only do they protect your back, but also improve your running economy

The core routine can be carried out on an almost-daily basis. As with any exercise program, begin gradually and don't exceed your body's limits. If any of these exercises are too difficult to carry out with proper form, the exercise can be modified. These should be challenging, but not painful.

SIDE BRIDGE

Hold up to 90 sec per side
4-5 days per week

Lie on your side and support your whole body with only your forearm and the outside of that same foot. Your body should be a straight line and off the ground. Your left foot should simply be lying on the right foot. Don't let your hips sag.

Hold this position until you fatigue, begin cheating (if your hips sag or rotate forward), or are shaking badly.

Flip over and repeat on the other side.

Hold each side the same amount of time, even if one side is stronger than the other.

Each day try to hold a little longer and progress to 90 seconds per side.

PLANK

Hold up to 60 seconds
4-5 days per week

Lie face down on the floor.

Lift up your body so that you are balanced only on your forearms and toes. Your elbows are on the ground and should be directly below your shoulders. Your forearms and hands are pointed straight ahead, resting on the ground. Your feet are about shoulder-width apart, and your toes are the only part of your lower body that are touching the ground.

Once in this position, "Tuck" your pelvis. This means rotating your pelvic girdle by pushing the lower part of your pelvic area toward the ground while the upper part of the pelvis rotates away from the ground. This motion will flatten your back slightly.

Hold this position up to 60 seconds. Stop as soon as your form is compromised.

PUSH UPS

2 sets of up to 15
3-4 days per week

Lie chest-down with your hands at shoulder level, palms flat on the floor and slightly more than shoulder-width apart. Your feet are together and parallel to each other. The first contact you make with the floor with any part of the face should be your chin, not your nose. Keep your legs straight and your toes tucked under your feet.

Straighten your arms as you push your body up off the floor. Keep your palms fixed at the same position and keep your body straight. Try not to bend or arch your upper or lower back as you push up.

Pause for a moment. Lower your body slowly towards the floor. Bend your arms and keep your palms in fixed position. Keep body straight and feet together.

Lower body until chest touches the floor. Try not to bend your back. Keep your knees off the floor.

Pause for a moment and repeat.