

THE MINIMALIST GUIDE TO STRENGTH TRAINING FOR RUNNERS

An easy to follow, highly effective strengthening program for runners. Minimal time - maximal benefits!

Strengthening exercises are vital to a runner's life for a host of reasons, including achieving balanced muscular and joint stability and strength, improving the power of every stride, and reducing injury risk from a repetitive (right-left-right-left) movement.

Whether you are struggling to squeeze in strength training into your running routine or you just don't like it, make the most of your time by following a simple routine that progresses and varies in time. Simply stick to these five exercises and rotate versions of them over time. Start with the basic version and progress to the more intense versions of each. When your body adapts and it gets easy, switch it up. It's easy to remember, highly effective for the time investment, and will keep your strength routine fresh (and maybe even fun).

1 60-second Plank



Feet hip-width apart. Elbows under your shoulders. Body in a straight (neutral) line. Squeeze your gluteals (toosh) and draw your navel into your spine to engage the core. If this is too hard at first (it was for me), start on your knees and elbows to make it to 60 seconds.

Progress it by

Alternating going up on one hand then the other and back down to your elbows, (or) go to your hands and toes posture and alternate bringing your knee into your chest with a slight rotation across toward the opposite shoulder, (or) perform this posture off something unstable: a stability ball, BOSU.

2 60-Second Push Ups



This is different than 12 to 15 reps of full push-ups as you're doing this slowly for one full minute versus 12 to 15 reps. Start on your knees--if that doesn't bring you to fatigue (the point where you can no longer perform it with good form) then go with full push-ups. Focus on lowering twice as slow as pushing up (four counts down, two up).

Progress it by

Go to full push-ups, then progress to alternating lifting one foot two to three inches off the ground (squeezing at the glute) as you lower your body toward the ground (or) performing the push-up off a stability ball.

3 60-Second Leg Curls



Feet are hip-width apart on top of the ball. Squeeze your glutes and lift your hips off the floor until your body forms a straight line. Draw your heels toward your hips and extend back out (two counts in, four counts out).

Progress it by

Putting your hands on your hip,s (then) elbows off the floor, (then) one foot on the ball, one straight up in the air.

4 60-Second Lunges



Stand with your feet hip-width apart and one foot forward, one back. Bend the front knee down (down four counts, up two) until it is parallel with the floor and the knee aligns over the ankle (not in front). Push up through the heel and keep your weight balanced between your two legs.

Progress it by

Adding hand weights, (or) standing on a pillow, disk, or pad (front foot), (or) taking off your shoe on the leading foot, (or) closing your eyes (really hard).

5 60-second Squats

FYI--This image is a progression, not a starting point. To begin, stand on the floor without weight (medicine ball) and with your feet hip-width apart. Bend as if you are going to sit on the toilet, pushing your hips back and down (down four counts, up two). As you lower, raise straight arms in front of your body. Focus on pressing through your heels as you raise back up. This activates the gluteal muscles. Knees should be aligned over your ankles.

Progress it by

Add weight by holding a medicine ball, (or) stand on an unstable object (disks as shown, pads, pillows), (or) lower standing on both feet, then raise one foot off the floor a few inches and extend up on one leg (tricky and challenging).

