

Team JDRF to Cure Diabetes

Basic Strength for Runners

THE PLANK

Lie on your stomach and prop yourself up on your toes, elbows and forearms. Lift your body off the floor into a straight line, stomach pulled in, back lengthened but not arched. Hold this position for at least 15 seconds, working up to being able to hold it for a full minute. Rest and repeat two more times. For a more advanced exercise, add an unstable surface under feet or elbows (like an Airex pad or a Bosu), or try lifting your feet off the ground at one at a time.

BALANCE AND REACH

Balance while standing on your left leg. Bending your left knee, take your right hand and reach down to the floor next to your left foot, as if you were picking something up. Then, keeping your arms straight, bring your arms across your body and up past your right shoulder, as if you were lifting something and placing it up high. Repeat eight times on each side.

ARM-AND-LEG REACH

Lie on your back with your legs and arms extended straight up (so your body is making a "U" shape). Pull your abs in and slowly lower both legs and both arms toward the floor. As soon as you feel your lower back start to lift off the floor, raise your arms and legs back up. Do 12 repetitions.

SUITCASE SQUAT

Stand with your feet apart at a shoulder-width distance and hold a dumbbell (start with five pounds and increase if that feels too easy) in your right hand. Bend your knees, keeping weight on your heels, and lower your buttocks as far as is comfortable, then stand back up. Do 10 repetitions, then switch the dumbbell to your left hand and do 10 more. Holding the weight on only one side forces you to engage the oblique muscles as well as the back.

CORE STRETCH

Get down on your hands and knees. Pull your stomach in, drop your head, and arch your back upward like a cat. Then reverse the position, lifting your head and buttocks and arching your back inward. Move slowly back and forth between the two positions to stretch and loosen the muscles in the back and abs.