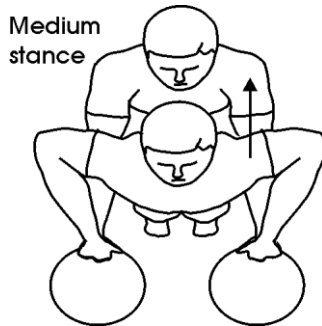


PUSHUP POWER

Sometimes the best exercises are tried-and-true old school with a new twist. Pushups are great exercises that are multi-joint and virtually work the upper half and the core of the body. They work the chest, abdominals, obliques, back, and the hip flexors. They can be done by all levels of fitness from using your own body weight to objects showing instability such as yoga, block, a medicine ball, a stability ball, and various weighted items like dumbbells, or kettle balls.

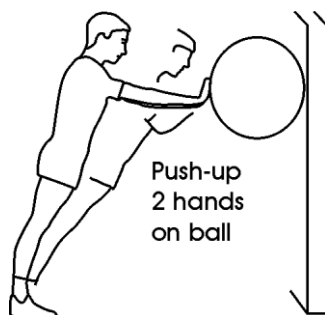


Standard Pushups

To perform a pushup, support yourself face down on the floor with your arms extended, hands shoulder-width apart, and your feet touching or slightly apart. Inhale and bend your elbows to bring your chest to the ground while keeping your body in a straight line. Push back up to extend your arms, exhaling at the end of the movement.

Staggered Pushups

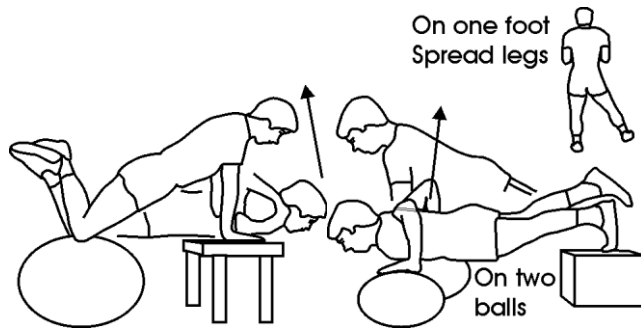
For a staggered pushup start in the standard pushup position and add one hand six inches in front of the other, and push down with your arms to a 90 degree position. Then repeat the exercise with the opposite hand.



Wall Pushups

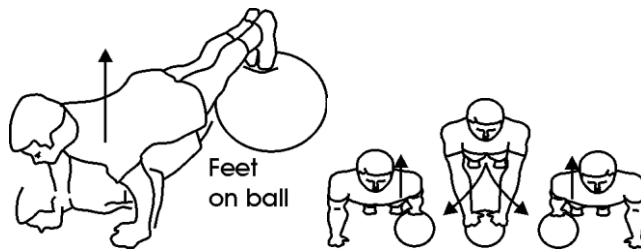
Face the wall with arms at shoulder height. Spread fingers and palms wide apart and bend from your elbows as you lean on into the wall. Repeat for at least 1-20 reps.

For a bit more challenge, put a stability ball and have them bend from the elbows to the wall. Be sure to keep your back straight and be just a few feet from the wall.



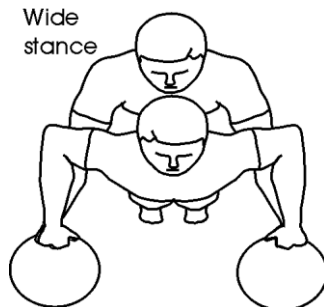
Incline Pushup

Incline pushups work the same muscle groups as the standard pushup, but by elevating your chest. Perform an incline pushup by placing your hands on a sturdy object that is 6 to 18 inches off the ground and then complete the pushup movement. You can make the move easier by going farther up the ball and hard by having only your legs on the ball or bench.



Decline Pushup

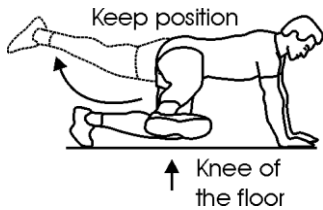
The decline pushup is accomplished by elevating your feet on a bench or stability ball. This type of pushup focuses more on the chest, shoulders, and biceps. For an advanced exercise make the move more intense by making an unstable environment, using a medicine ball balancing on both hands or one hands, or a yoga block for an intense move.



Wide-Stance Pushup

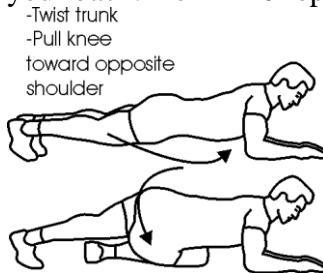
To work the outer portions of your chest muscle, utilize the wide-stance pushup. Simply place your hands wider than your shoulders when performing a pushup. To make the move easier do it on your knees, and for a more advanced move, hold one leg up for increased instability.

These two exercises not only work the upper body but also help the lower body of the legs, hips, and calves.



Donkey Kicks

Kneel on the floor with your knee, hips, shoulders, and wrist aligned, and exhale as you lift your leg bent at 90 degrees. Add a pushup with your elbows going down to 90 degrees. Press your bent leg to an easy extension, inhale, and lower the leg back to the original position. Don't arch your back. Do 12–20 reps for each side.



Fire Hydrant

Kneel on the floor with your knees under your hips and your hands. Add a pushup with your elbows going down to 90 degrees. Stay facing forward and lift up your hip to waist level. At the conclusion, lower your back to the starting position. Remember to do both sides for reps of 12–20 and to hold this position for at least 3 seconds each.

Downward Dog Pushup

Get down on the floor on your hands and knees. Stretch the elbows and relax the upper back between the shoulder blades. Exhale, lift your knees, and draw your back from the pelvis so that your arms and back form one line. Let your head hang, and make sure your legs and hips hang in a relaxed way from the top of your torso. Slowly put your legs back and assume a pushup position for one rep and come back into the downward dog position. Repeat.

Knee-to-Opposite-Elbow Pushup

How to do it: Assume a pushup position, but form fists with your hands so your knuckles are flat against the floor. Bring your right knee to your left elbow, and pause before returning your leg to the starting position. Now lower your body as you would for a standard pushup. Push back to the starting position and repeat, this time bringing your left knee to your right elbow.

Side-Step Pushups

Pushups are body weight exercises so the only thing you'll need is a flat horizontal surface with enough area to move around in. Extend your legs behind you; you'll support part of your weight on the balls of your feet (keep your feet close together). Place both palms face down on the floor, making sure that they are shoulder-width apart. Tighten your abs and keep your back straight; you must not arch your back at anytime during this exercise. Now, lower your chest to within one inch of the floor then press yourself back up to your starting position. Now comes the challenging part of the exercise: While holding in this position (upper body supporting most of your weight), move your left palm arm until it is directly next to the right palm. Now move your right palm one space to the right. Next, move your right leg one space to the right. Then move your left leg one space to the right until there is little space between both feet. That completes one full repetition of the pushup side-step exercise.

Moving Pushups

In plank position, try shifting your weight on to your left arm and leg, move your right arm and leg to the right, do a push up, shift the weight on to your right arm and leg, and move your left arm and leg to the right back to plank position. Repeat.

Around the World Pushup

Assume a standard pushup position except do a pushup in all four positions in a circle or like a clock, starting in the 12 position and moving to the 3 then 6 and 9 and back to the 12. Repeat until fatigued. Be sure in all positions to maintain good posture.

Tricep or Diamond Pushup

Do a standard pushup but put hands close together so the two hands form a diamond. This focuses on the triceps and the caps of the shoulders.

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