

HOW TO IMPROVE **BASIC** WORKOUTS



OVERVIEW:

Even if you're a dedicated gym junkie, reviewing the basics will help you master your technique when enduring advanced workouts—and even prevent issues like cramps or joint pain.

Check out these steps to correctly perform these common foundational exercises.

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- **Basic Workout Guide**
A list of steps that you can follow to achieve your perfect form.



BENCH PRESSES

This classic weightlifting exercise is a favorite of powerlifters eager to test their limits, but bench presses can be beneficial for just about anyone.

1. Lie on the bench with the weights or rack at eye level.
2. Keep your spine flat, not arched, and your feet on the ground, if possible. Roll your shoulders back to engage your upper back, then reach up to clench the weights with your thumbs facing away from you.
3. Suspend the weights above your body, and pause to ensure you can handle the weight level.
4. Once you're holding the weights above you, slowly lower them to your chest, keeping your elbows straight out to your sides and your upper back engaged.
5. Continue to press up and down, exhaling as you raise the weights and inhaling as you lower them to chest level.



PUSH-UPS

This foundational exercise can develop several muscle groups, including the core and chest.

1. Get into the plank position with your hands next to your chest and your feet together behind you.
2. Squeeze your core muscles and glutes, then pin your shoulder blades back, as if you're trying to make them touch. Make sure your lower back is completely straight.
3. Lower at any speed you'd like, keeping your forearms pointing straight at the floor. Get as low as possible without your stomach or hips touching the ground.
4. Press back up with your arms into the plank position. Recheck your plank form before lowering again.



CRUNCHES

This mainstay core-muscle workout can put unnecessary strain on your neck, back, and hips if you don't use proper form.

1. Lie on your back, bend your knees, and plant your feet flat on the floor hip-distance apart. Place your hands across your chest.
2. Press your lower back into the floor or mat by contracting your abs and tucking your pelvis.
3. Next, lift your head and shoulders up as high as you can by crunching forward toward your thighs. Make sure you are using your abdominals and not pulling on your neck.
4. Exhale, and lower your back to the ground. Don't relax your core until the set is complete.



SQUATS

To protect your knees, back, and other joints, study proper squat form before adding weights.

1. First, plant your feet on the ground hip-distance apart. Line up your knees with your feet. Keep your back straight to protect your spine.
2. Lower your hips until your thighs are just parallel to the floor.
3. Don't let your knees protrude over your toes.
4. Keep your gaze forward and your back as straight as possible.
5. Return to the standing position.



JOGGING

Though one of the most basic yet productive exercises, jogging can take a toll on your body if you don't proceed with good form.

1. Stand up straight with your head, neck, shoulders, and pelvis all in alignment.
2. While you jog, hold your chin level and look straight ahead.
3. Keep your arms bent against your body with your hands at waist level, leaving them relaxed.
4. Maintain an even stride, and try to land softly on your feet.
5. Remember to breathe evenly. Your breath fuels your workout.