



A Simple guide to:

## PUSH UPS (PRESS UPS)

Push-ups are one of the best exercises ever invented.

They require zero equipment, build strength in all of the right places, have hundreds of variations to keep things fresh, and are easily quantifiable so keeping track of progression is a breeze.



### How do I do a push up?

- **When down on the ground, set your hands at a distance that is slightly wider than shoulder-width apart.** Depending on your strength and experience, your hands should be angled in a way that feels comfortable to you. You can also turn your hands inwards slightly if it's less stressful on your wrists, or you can do your push ups on your knuckles (as long as you're on a semi-soft surface like grass or carpet)
- **Your feet should be set up in a way that feels right and comfortable to you.** For some, that might be shoulder width apart. For others, it might be that the feet are touching. Generally speaking, the wider apart your feet, the more stable you'll be for your push ups.
- **Think of your body as one giant straight line** from the top of your head down through your heels. Your bum shouldn't be sticking way up in the air or sagging.
- **If you have a problem getting the proper form with your body:** clench your butt, and then tighten your abs. Your core will be engaged, and your body should be in that straight line. If you've been doing push ups incorrectly, this might be a big change for you.

- **Your head should be looking slightly ahead of you, not straight down.** We read somewhere that said “if you’re doing them right, your chin should be the first part of your head to touch the floor, not your nose.” Looking up helps you keep your body in line, but feel free to look down if that helps you concentrate more.
- **At the top of your push up, your arms should be straight and supporting your weight.** You’re now ready to do a push up.
- **With your arms straight, butt clenched, and abs braced,** steadily lower yourself until your elbows are at a 90 degree angle or smaller. Depending on your level of experience, age, and flexibility, 90 degrees might be the lowest you’re able to go.
- **Try not to let your elbows go flying way out with each repetition.** Keep them relatively close to your body, and keep note of when they start to fly out when you get tired.
- **Once your chest touches the floor (or your arms go down to a 90 degree angle),** pause slightly and then explode back up until you’re back in the same position.
- **Congratulations, you just did a proper push up.** Do as many as you can until you start to feel your form slip (even slightly); you are done for that set. Ten good push ups and 5 crappy ones are tough to quantify against eleven good push ups. If you can only do ten of something, write down your results and aim for 11 next time. Perfect form allows you to keep track of your improvements week over week.

## What are the benefits of doing Push Ups?

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### 1. Increase Functional Strength via Full Body Activation

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As you engage in this exercise, literally every major muscle in your body is called upon to execute the movement.

Major muscle groups, such as your biceps, core muscles, triceps, anterior deltoids and lower body muscle groups are activated to support your body while stabilizing your movements.

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### 2. Muscle Stretching for Health and Vitality

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One of the most underrated benefits of doing push ups is the stretch it provides to your biceps and back muscles. As you lower yourself to the floor, your back muscles are effectively stretched, and as you push yourself to the starting position your biceps obtain a full stretch. This not only improves your flexibility, which helps prevent injuries, but a well-stretched muscle feature a solid and attractive appearance.

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### 3. Enhance Your Cardiovascular System

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When you simultaneously engage large muscle groups, your heart must work harder to deliver oxygen-rich blood to muscle tissue. Ultimately, this activity results in an effective cardiovascular exercise, which supports heart health and promotes the reduction of stored body fat.

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### 4. Increase Whole Body Muscle Definition – HGH Promotion

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Throughout the movements of a push up, you recruit a wide array of primary and stabilizing muscles. The more muscle mass that’s utilized in a strength training exercise, the greater the production and release of a specialized hormone known as HGH, or human growth hormone.

As a young man or woman, your body pumped out large concentrations of this specialized hormone to support the natural growth of your entire body. However, as you age the natural release of HGH declines, which makes building muscle a challenging task for older adults. By calling upon such a wide array of muscles, the production of HGH is triggered, which ultimately results in muscle hypertrophy – or muscle growth. To maximize push up benefits, you must incorporate this exercise into your regular strength training program.

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### **5. Protect Your Shoulders from Injury**

One of the most debilitating, and common, injuries for older individuals is a rotator cuff injury. While the severity of this injury is based upon a host of unique circumstances, protecting this delicate part of your body must become a priority. (The rotator cuff protects your shoulders and enables you to lift your arms above your head)

The standard push up has been found to be among the most effective ways to safeguard your shoulder joints from injury; especially in older adults. Because push ups call upon stabilizing muscles, which surround the rotator cuff joint, this area of the body is strengthened and conditioned for dynamic movements.

By supporting the strength and health of primary and secondary shoulder muscles, the likelihood of debilitating injuries significantly lowers.

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### **6. Improve Your Posture**

Whether you sit at a computer all day or simply ignored the nagging recommendations from your mother or teachers, improper posture can destroy your health and comfort as you age. One of the most common reasons for a lack of proper posture is weak core muscles.

In order to properly hold your shoulders and back, your entire core must be strong enough to support its vertical positions. When push ups are properly executed, the muscles responsible for supporting posture are strengthened and fine-tuned. Moreover, as you regularly engage in push ups, your body will naturally lean toward proper posture. This is one of the most influential passive benefits of push ups.

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### **7. Prevent Lower Back Injuries**

There are few injuries as debilitating as a lower back injury. This essential part of your body supports practically every movement, so if it's damaged or injured even the simplest of tasks can become excruciatingly painful. Push ups call upon your entire torso to stabilize its movements. By doing so, you strengthen this vulnerable part of the body. By developing strength in this specific portion of your body, you cultivate muscles responsible for reducing lower back pressure, which is imperative to prevent and treat low back injuries.

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### **8. Save Time While Cultivating a Strong Body**

If you have five minutes you can achieve a full-body workout with push ups. Want to add variation to this swift and potent exercise movement? Delve into the many different hand and feet placements to target muscles from different angles, which supports rapid strength and size development.

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### **9. No Cost for a Full Body Workout**

Although you may have a desire to join a world-class gym, they're monthly dues may not fit in your tight budget. Thankfully, you don't need an expensive gym membership – or even any equipment – to obtain an effective and thorough full body workout.

By engaging in push up exercises, you effectively fatigue major and minor muscle groups, which provide the same benefits as a traditional full body exercise performed at the gym on expensive and cumbersome equipment.

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## 10. Increase Testosterone and Reduce Osteoporosis Development

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As men and women age, the concentration of various hormones begin to dwindle. For men, the most prominent loss is the reduction of circulating testosterone. While preliminary evidence requires further investigation, several studies suggest the simple movements within a standard push up promotes testosterone production, which is essential for a healthy body in both men and women.

Moreover, weight bearing exercises, such as the standard push up, supports stronger, more dense bones. This increase in bone density may ward off debilitating skeletal system disorders, such as osteoporosis.

