How to Perform a Basic Push-Up

Introduction/Background Information

In order to perform a basic push up correctly there are seven steps to complete this task. These steps begin in the starting push-up position and move through the intermediate position before returning to step one. The goal of a push-up is to exercise your upper body to improve muscle strength. The basic push-up uses your pectoralis major, triceps brachii, deltoids, serratus anterior, and coracobrachialis muscles. These muscles are locations are indicated on the diagram below.

![Muscles Targeted By Push-ups](image)

This task will take under five minutes of your time to complete depending upon you abilities. The greater amount of reps you are able to do correctly the amount of time to perform this task increases. Push-ups should be performed preferably on a flat surface.

Caution:
- To prevent injury to not over-exert past your current ability.
- Use a spotter when necessary.

Materials:
- Yourself
- A flat surface

** In some variations a wall, chair, and friend will be needed.
Steps

Step 1:
  • Use correct alignment
    o Your body should be in a diagonal line from head to the heel of the foot.
    o Keep your ankles over your toes.
    o Arms are perpendicular to the floor, and positioned directly under you shoulders.

Step 2:
  • Begin to bend your elbows and lower your body.
  • Maintain alignment described in step 1.

Step 3:
  • Elbows are bent at a 90° Angle
  • Maintain alignment described in step 1.
Step 4:
  • Begin to raise your body back to the starting position.
  • Maintain alignment described in step 1.

Step 5:
  • Return to starting position described in step 1.
  • Maintain alignment described in step 1.

Step 6:
  • Repeat steps 1-5

Step 7:
  • Adjust Difficulty
    • Add to the number of reps performed
    • Simple Variations
      ▪ One foot
      ▪ Triceps
      ▪ Incline
Tips

- Start with five repetitions until they feel easy to complete.
- Tighten your abdominal muscles for stability.

Glossary of Terms and Definitions

Alignment: when the body is in the correct positioning to perform an exercise

Reps (repetitions): to repeat an action

Spotter: a person who watches the exerciser to prevent injuries from occurring

Pectoralis major: Flexes, extends, rotates, and adducts the arm at the shoulder

Tricep brachii: Extends arm at shoulder

Deltoids: abducts, rotates, and extends arm at the shoulder

Serratus anterior: Abducts and upwardly rotates the scapula

Coracobrachialis: flexes and adducts the arm at the shoulder

Citations