

# THE **6** BEST EXERCISES FOR NEW RUNNERS

Your enjoyment of running will go up—and your risk of injury will go down—if you take a few minutes a day to stretch and strengthen key parts of your body. Here are simple exercises that will help you run more smoothly and efficiently. It's important to do these exercises after your run.

Before your run, your time is better spent with dynamic stretches. These moves, which include butt kicks and walking with high knees, improve range of motion and loosen up muscles that you're going to use on the road.



**RUNNER'S WORLD**



## → CALF STRETCH

Sit with your legs in front of you, straight but relaxed. Place your hands or a rope or towel wrapped around the balls of your feet. Contract your shin muscles to pull your toes toward your shins. Keep the tops of your ankles loose so that you feel the stretch in your calf muscles and Achilles tendons. Exhale into the stretch, and hold it for 2 seconds. Lower your feet to the start position, and repeat. Do 10 stretches.



## → HAMSTRING STRETCH

Lie on your back with one foot flat on the floor. Wrap a rope or towel around the ball of the other foot. Straighten that leg. Contract the quad of the leg you're stretching, and bring the sole of that foot toward the ceiling or sky. Use the rope only to guide the motion, not to pull the leg. Raise the leg until you start to feel a comfortable stretch in your hamstring, then lower. The whole movement should take only a few seconds. Do 10 stretches on each leg.



## → SQUATS

Stand with your hands behind your head and your feet pointing straight ahead. Keep your back "set" but relaxed; don't let your upper body slump forward. From your hips, squat toward the ground while keeping your knees positioned over your feet and your chest positioned up. Go down only as far as you can while maintaining good form (long torso, knees aligned over feet). At your bottom position, drive back up using your hips and glutes. Start with two sets of 10, and work up to three sets of 25.



## → DOUBLE-LEG PELVIC TILT

Lie on your back. Begin with both knees bent and feet flat on the surface on which you're lying. Place your hands behind your knees/thighs to prevent pressure on the knees and provide a little assistance toward the end of the movement. Using your abdominals and quadriceps, lift your legs toward your chest until you can go no farther. Gently assist with your hands, but do not pull. Hold the end range of motion for 1.5 to 2 seconds and return to the start position. Perform eight to 10 repetitions.



## → PLANKS

Get in a pushup position, except your body weight should be resting on your forearms instead of your hands. Push your body to the "up" position, tighten your stomach, and keep your shoulders, back, buttocks, and heels in a straight line. Hold for 30 seconds (or less if you start to shake or feel your lower back buckling). Rest briefly by sitting on the ground, then resume the plank position and hold for another 30 seconds. Over time, work up to holding the position twice for one minute each time.



## → DIPS

Place your palms on the edge of a chair or other steady surface of a similar height, facing away from the chair. With your legs straight and your upper heels on the ground, lower yourself until your arms are bent at a 90-degree angle, then raise yourself back up. Maintain as straight of a line as you can from your chest through your feet at the top of the move. Start with 10 dips (or fewer if you can't maintain good form for 10). Work up to two sets of 20.

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