

30-Day Plank Challenge

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For Active.com

The 30-Day Plank Challenge

Every day for 30 days you will time yourself as you hold a plank and side plank. You will progress through various levels of intensity to challenge your body as it develops strength and muscular endurance. Here are your options:

Regular Plank Tiers:

- Level 1: Static Knee Forearm Plank
- Level 2: Static Forearm Plank
- Level 3: Static Single-Leg Forearm Plank
- Level 4: Dynamic Elbow to Wrist Plank

Side Plank Tiers:

- Level 1: Static Knee Side Forearm Plank
- Level 2: Static Low Side Forearm Plank
- Level 3: Static Single-Leg Side Forearm Plank
- Level 4: Dynamic Side Forearm Plank With Hip Dip

Regular Plank Tiers

Level 1 - Knee Plank

Start with your knees together and on the ground. Place your elbows directly under your shoulders and rest your weight on your forearms. Flatten your spine, and press through your elbows to keep your chest from falling forward. Suck your navel into your spine and tighten your abdominals. Look straight down, allowing your neck to stay aligned with your spine.



Level 2 - Low Plank

Start with your toes together and on the ground. Place your elbows directly under your shoulders and rest your weight on your forearms. Flatten your spine, and press through your elbows to keep your chest from falling forward. Suck your navel into your spine and tighten your abdominals. Look straight down, allowing your neck to stay aligned with your spine.



Level 3 - Single-Leg Low Plank

Start with your toes together and on the ground. Place your elbows directly under your shoulders and rest your weight on your forearms. Flatten your spine, and press through your elbows to keep your chest from falling forward. Suck your navel into your spine and tighten your abdominals. Look straight down, allowing your neck to stay aligned with your spine. Lift one leg off the ground to challenge your stability. Be sure to alternate legs. Once you reach one minute on each leg with little struggle, then progress to level four.



Level 4 - Dynamic Elbow to Wrist Plank

Start in a high plank and move into low plank. Repeat for as long as you can.



Side Plank Tiers

Level 1 - Modified Side Plank

Start with your knees together and on the ground. Place your right elbow on the ground directly under your shoulder. Straighten your spine, tighten your abdominals, and look straight ahead. Hold. Repeat on the left side. Once you reach one minute on each side with little struggle, then progress to the next level.



Level 2 - Low Side Plank

Start with your feet together and on the ground, keep your knees lifted and the body in one straight line. Place your right elbow on the ground directly under your shoulder. Straighten your spine, tighten your abdominals, and look straight ahead. Hold. Repeat on the left side. Once you reach one minute on each side with little struggle, then progress to the next level.



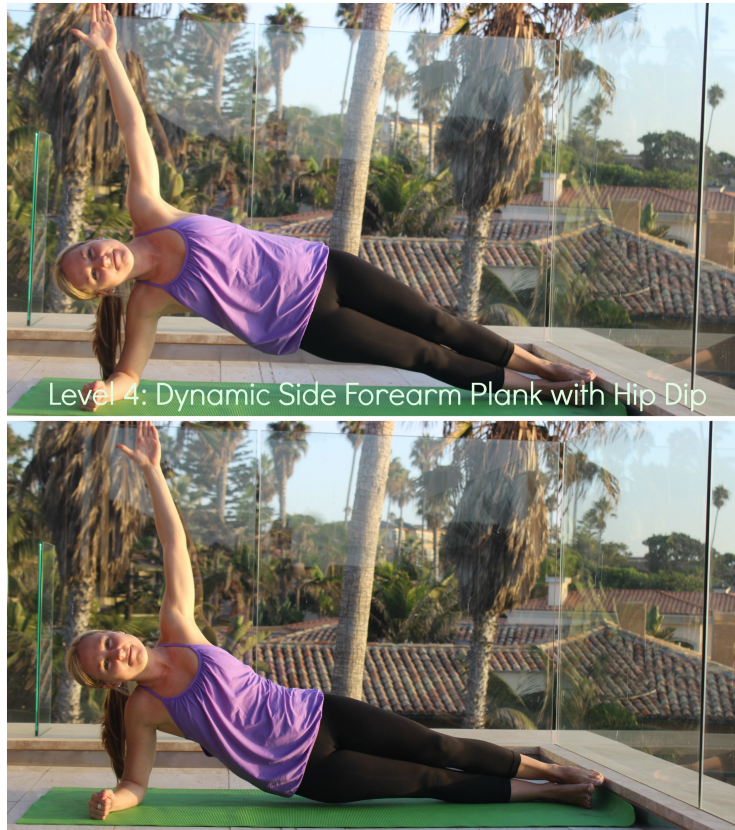
Level 3 - Static Single-Leg Side Plank

Start with your feet together and on the ground, keep your knees lifted and the body in one straight line. Place your right elbow on the ground directly under your shoulder. Lift your left leg 6 inches off the other leg. Straighten your spine, tighten your abdominals, and look straight ahead. Hold. Repeat on the left side. Once you reach one minute on each side with little struggle, then progress to the next level.



Level 4 - Dynamic Side Forearm Plank With Hip Dip

Start in a low side plank (Level 2). Once you're in the right form, begin to dip your right hip toward the ground, and then return to the starting position. Repeat on the left side.



Injury Prevention Tips

1. It's recommended to start at level one and progress daily to ensure proper strength and form.
2. It's essential that your spine stays level and that you activate your lower abs to protect your low back. If your back starts to arch, or your butt starts to dip, it's time to call it a day.
3. Always make sure your wrists or elbows are directly under your shoulders to relieve any shoulder pressure.
4. You should not feel any joint, back or shoulder pain during your planks. If you are, it's probably related to your form. Have someone take a picture of you, or ask a personal trainer to review your form. Make sure everything is in a straight line.
5. Remember to breath. Holding your breath makes the exercise harder and can cause an increase in your blood pressure. Focusing on your breath can actually improve your concentration and duration.