

Strength Training for Runners

As runners we often neglect the peripherals that can help us improve and keep us running. Whether it's time constraints, lack of knowledge, or heaven forbid...laziness, we have our reasons, but the benefits of strength training are invaluable. From increased flexibility to less susceptibility to injury, strength training is worth the short amount of time it takes to incorporate a program into your daily routine.

Not everyone can make it to a gym, so my goal is to give you some ideas of how you can fit strength training into your daily routine from home. Let me distinguish one item before we begin. When I speak of strength training, I'm not talking about core work (although these exercises will inherently incorporate core work). Core work is an entirely different discussion (perhaps another article).

All exercises can be done without equipment, but if you wish to vary these moves, I've included what can be used. The manner in which I've set this program up is to do one exercise after another without rest. This will turn the strength training workout into a cardiovascular workout as well. Start with my suggested number of repetitions and adjust numbers as you go to maintain proper form. Start with one set, and add sets as you gain strength. It is only necessary to do this program 2-3 times per week.

1. Pushups (vary width of hand positions – narrow & wide) 8-25 reps
2. Squats 10-20 reps – Use exercise ball against a wall to do single leg squats – Don't go too deep, 45 degree leg bend is all you need
3. Dips – Use 2 chairs – feet on one chair, hands on the other – 8-25 reps
4. Lunges – do forward one set & backward another - 8-12 reps each leg (16-24 total) – add dumbbells to increase challenge
5. Body weight rows – place thick/sturdy broom stick between two chairs, lay under middle of stick, keep feet on the ground, hands shoulder width apart on stick, and pull chest up to stick 8-15 reps
6. Calf raises – put balls of feet on edge of a step, push up on toes to left heels – do one foot at a time 10-20 reps
7. Runner curls – swing arms at 90 degree angles straight passed the hips and up to shoulder height – add 2.5 lb dumbbells to increase difficulty – 25 reps each arm
8. Supermans – Lay on stomach – lift both arms and legs up at same time to arch back – 10-20 reps

Form is essential on these exercises, so please ask a personal trainer, physical therapist, or me about how to do these exercises properly before trying to do them. My next article will delve into core strength exercises which can be incorporated into the above workout.

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