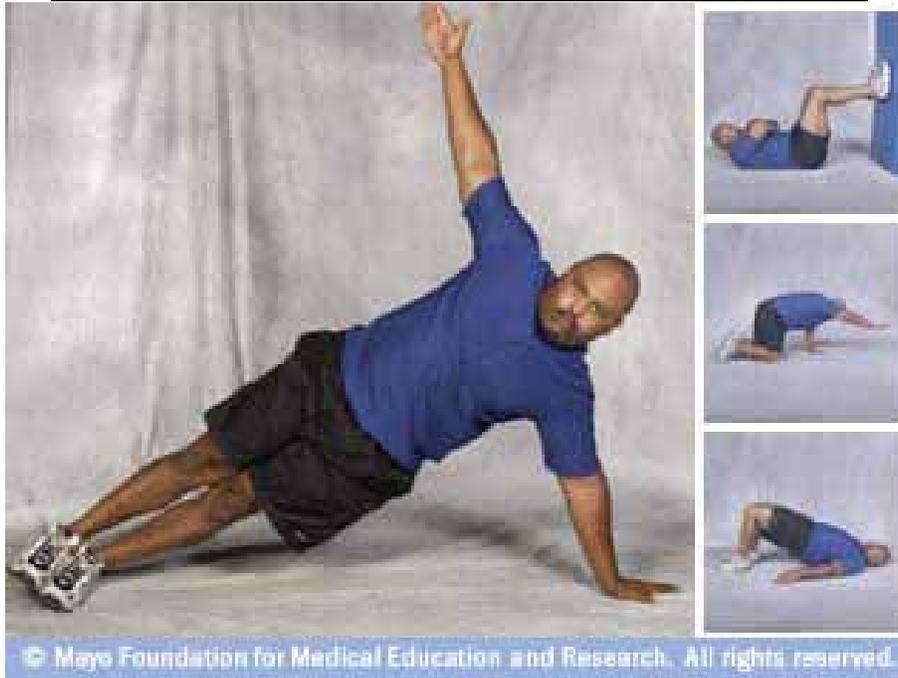


# ***Core Body Exercises***



## **Core exercises build abs and other core muscles**

Core exercises strengthen your core muscles, including abs, back and pelvis. Why bother with core exercises? Strong core muscles make it easier to do most physical activities.

You can do core exercises on a carpeted floor or mat. Breathe freely and deeply during each exercise. Focus on tightening your deepest abdominal muscle — the transversus abdominis — during each exercise. This is the muscle you feel contracting when you cough. Repeat each of the following core exercises three to five times – holding for 15 to 20 seconds. Gradually build up to 10 to 15 repetitions as your strength improves.

## **Push-Up / Hold / Plank**

This core exercise can help you strengthen your shoulders, arms, chest, abs, and lower back:

- Lie on your stomach in the pushup position.
- Start with 2 pushups and hold yourself up for 5 seconds.
- Go down into a plank and hold for 10 seconds.
- Without stopping, go right into 4 pushups, hold for 5 seconds, and plank for 10 seconds.
- Continue until you reach your goal pushup level.
- Break for a minute or two and then go through routine again, but pushups decrease.
- On the way up you are using your arms, chest, and shoulders mostly and on the way down you are mostly using your abs and lower back.

## **SIMPLE AB WORK!**

- While walking around school or the halls tighten your abs. If you do this walking up the steps, down the halls, on the way home or just sitting at your desk during the day you will feel it and notice a difference. It will make a difference in your swimming, look, and feel and NO ONE WILL KNOW YOUR DOING IT!

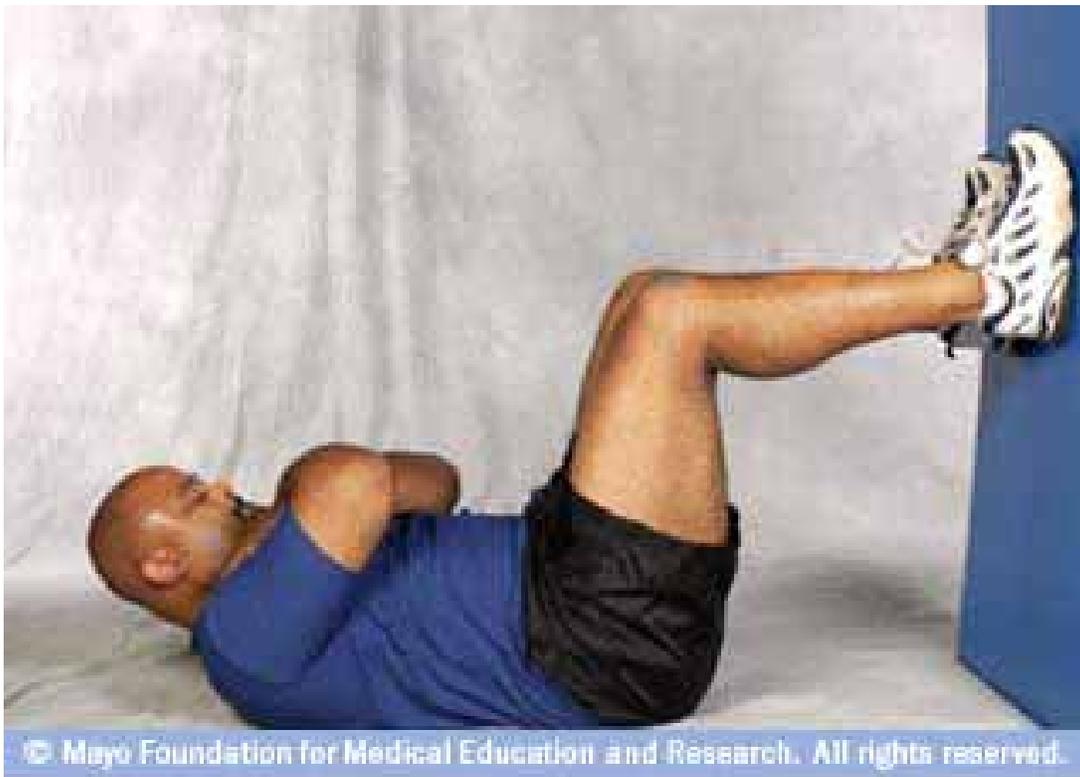
***Have Fun with Working Out!***

***Do different work out constantly, mix it up, keep it real!***

## Abdominal crunch

Abdominal crunches are a classic core exercise:

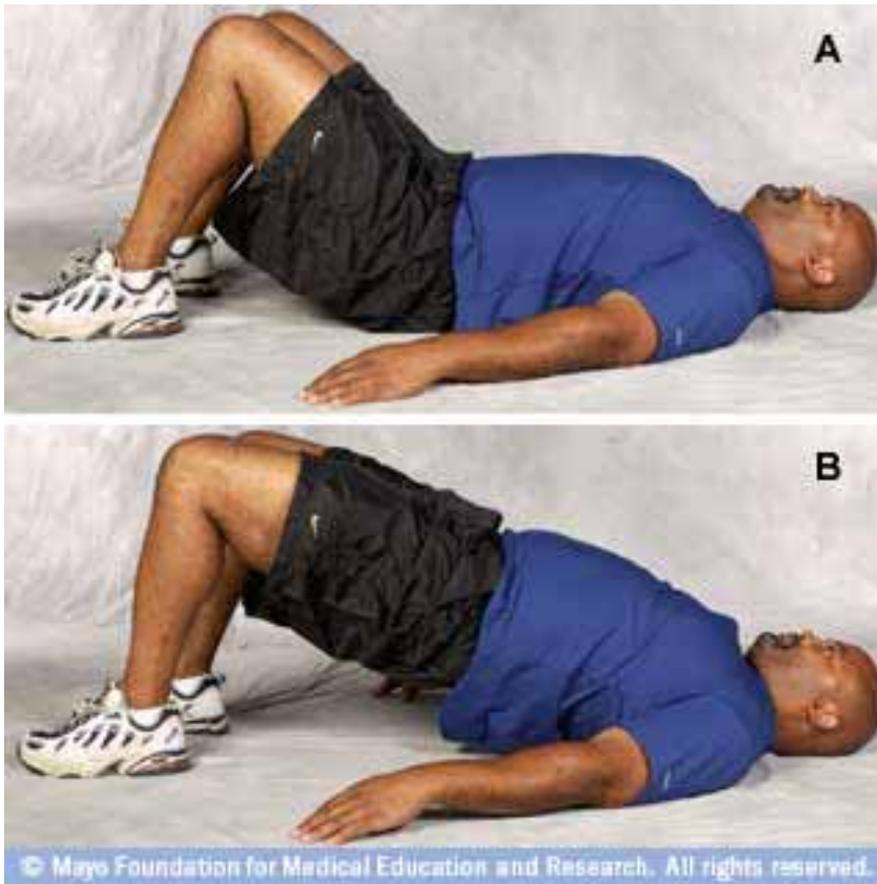
- Lie on your back and place your feet on a wall so that your knees and hips are bent at 90-degree angles. Tighten your abdominal muscles.
- Raise your head and shoulders off the floor. To avoid straining your neck, cross your arms on your chest rather than locking them behind your head. Hold for three deep breaths.
- Return to the start position and repeat.



## Bridge

To work various core muscles in combination, try a bridge:

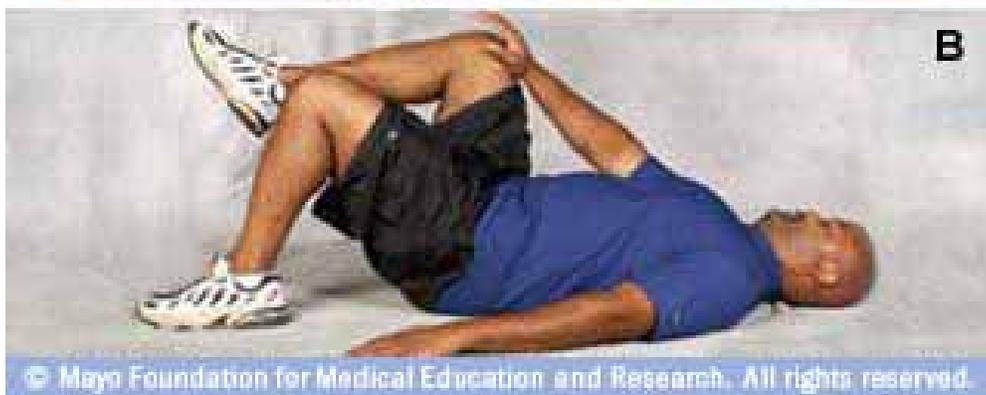
- Lie on your back with your knees bent (A). Keep your back in a neutral position, not arched and not pressed into the floor. Avoid tilting your hips. Tighten your abdominal muscles.
- Raise your hips off the floor until your hips are aligned with your knees and shoulders (B). Hold for 15 to 20 seconds.
- Return to the start position and repeat.



## Single-leg abdominal press

The single-leg abdominal press is another popular core exercise:

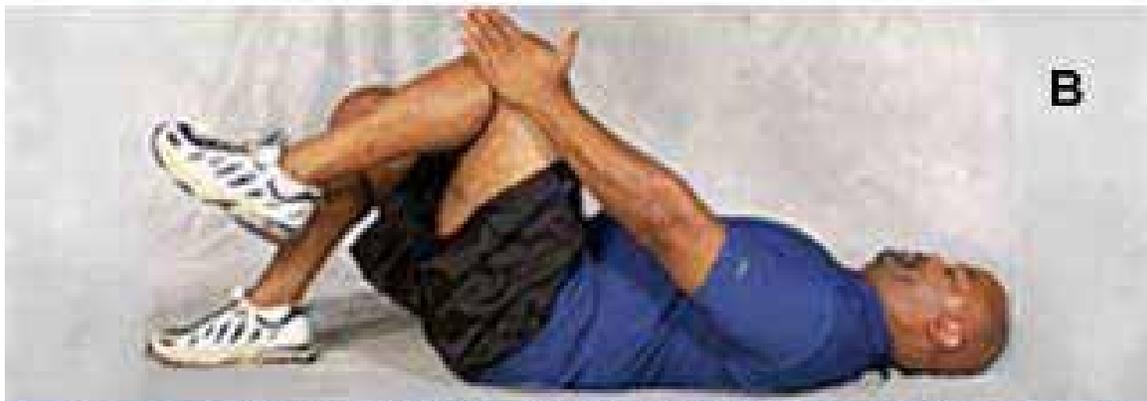
- Lie on your back with your knees bent (A). Keep your back in a neutral position, not arched and not pressed into the floor. Avoid tilting your hips. Tighten your abdominal muscles.
- Raise your right leg off the floor so that your knee and hip are bent at 90-degree angles. Rest your right hand on top of your right knee (B).
- Push your hand against your knee while using your abdominal muscles to pull your knee toward your hand. Keep your arm straight. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds.
- Return to the start position and repeat using your left hand and left knee.



## Single-leg abdominal press variations

To work your core muscles more completely, try variations of the single-leg abdominal press:

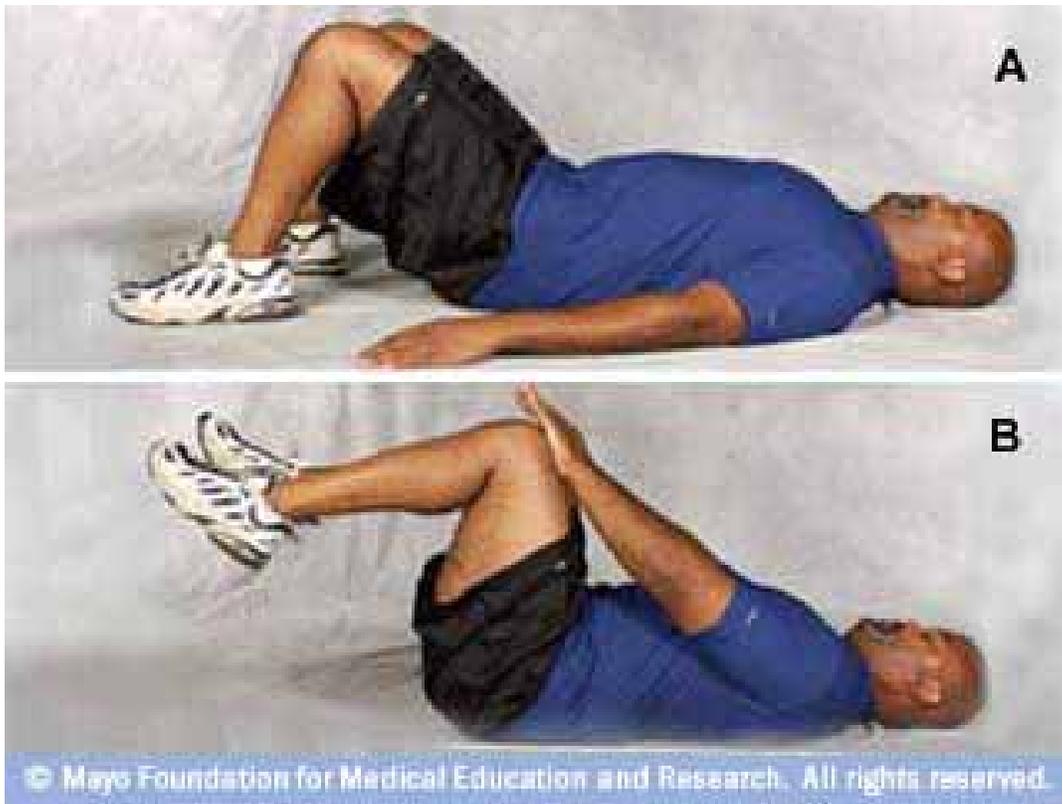
- **Opposite hand on opposite knee.** Push your right hand against your left knee while pulling your knee toward your hand (A). You'll be pushing and pulling across the center of your body. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat using your other hand and leg.
- **Hand on outside of knee.** Place your left hand along the side of your left knee (B). Use your hand to push your leg inward. At the same time, create resistance by pushing your knee away from the center. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat using your other hand and leg.



## Double-leg abdominal press

When you're comfortable with the single-leg abdominal press, try the double-leg abdominal press:

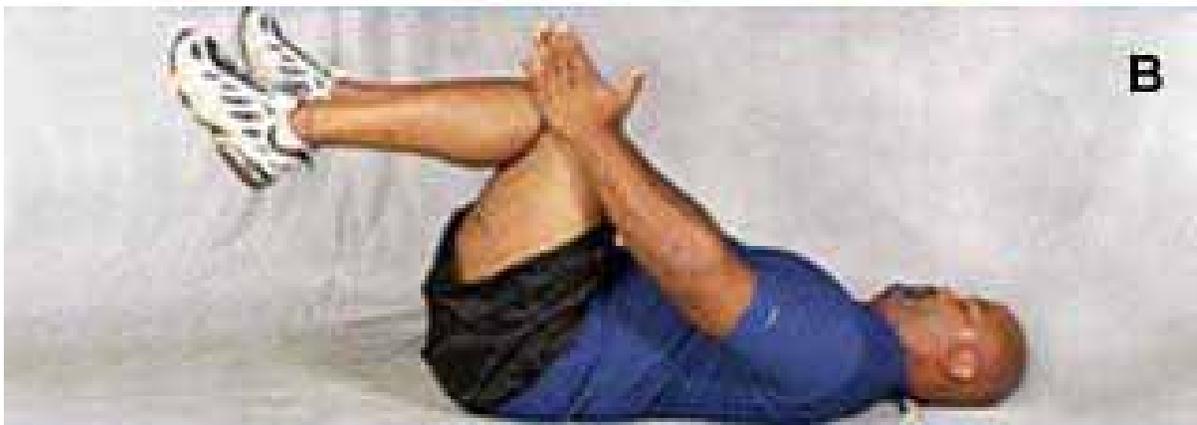
- Lie on your back with your knees bent (A). Keep your back in a neutral position, not arched and not pressed into the floor. Avoid tilting your hips. Tighten your abdominal muscles.
- Raise your legs off the floor one at a time so that your knees and hips are bent at 90-degree angles. Rest your hands on top of your knees (B).
- Push your hands against your knees while using your abdominal muscles to pull your knees toward your hands. Keep your arms straight. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds.
- Return to the start position and repeat.



## Double-leg abdominal press variations

To work your core muscles more completely, try variations of the double-leg abdominal press:

- **Opposite hands on opposite knees.** Place each hand on the opposite knee, toward the inside of the knee (A). Your arms will cross over each other. Push your hands against your knees while pulling your knees toward your hands. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat.
- **Hands on outside of knees.** Place your hands along the sides of your knees (B). Use your hands to push your knees inward. At the same time, create resistance by pushing your knees away from the center. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat.



## Segmental rotation

Segmental rotation is another way to exercise your core muscles:

- Lie on your back with your knees bent and your back in a neutral position. Tighten your abdominal muscles.
- Keeping your shoulders on the floor, let your knees fall slowly to the left (A). Go only as far as is comfortable. You should feel a stretch, but no pain. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds.
- Return to the start position. Repeat the exercise to the right (B).



## Quadruped

This core exercise is called the quadruped:

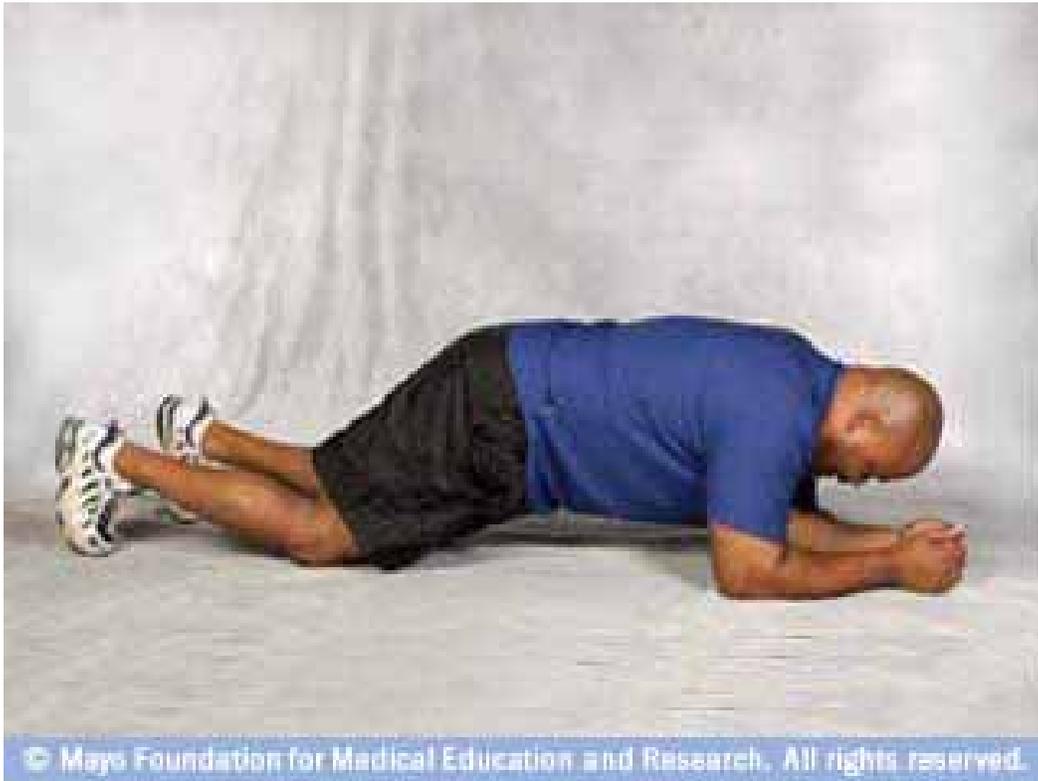
- Start on your hands and knees. Place your hands directly below your shoulders, and align your head and neck with your back (A). Tighten your abdominal muscles.
- Raise your right arm off the floor and reach ahead (B). Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Lower your right arm and repeat with your left arm.
- Raise your right leg off the floor (C). Tighten your trunk muscles for balance. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Lower your right leg and repeat with your left leg.
- For added challenge, raise your left arm and your right leg at the same time (D). Repeat with your right arm and left leg.



## Modified plank

This core exercise is called the modified plank:

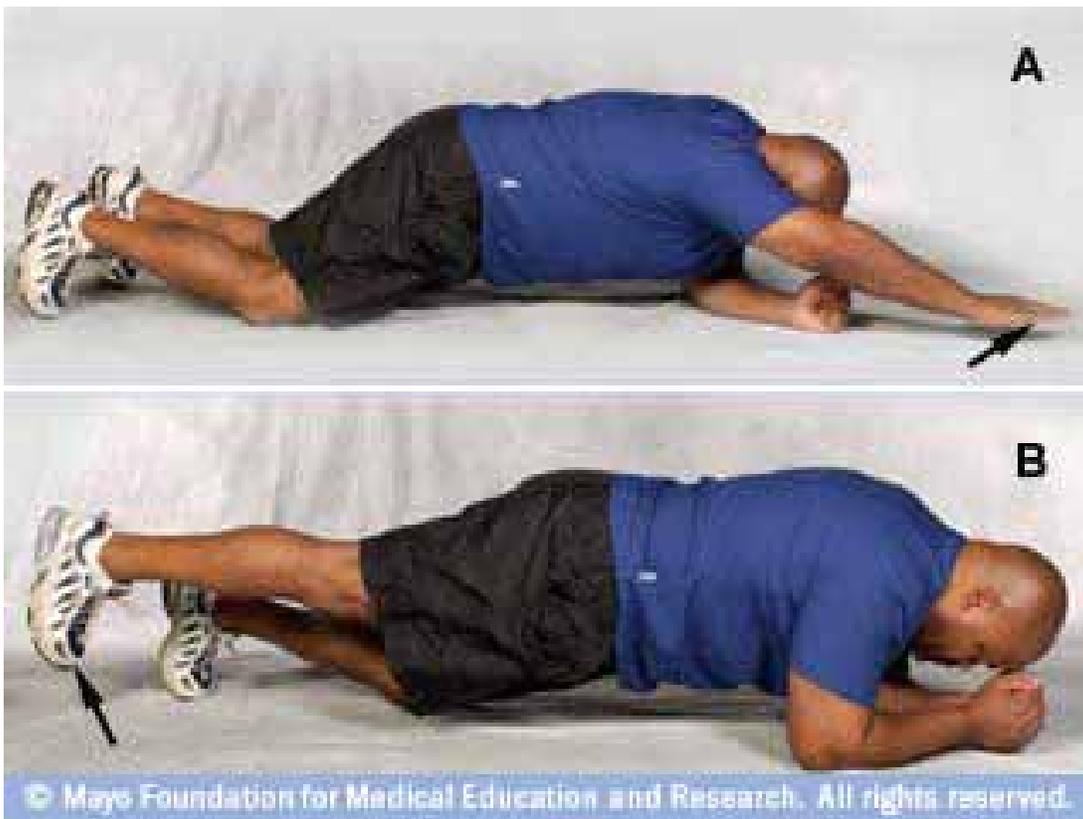
- Lie on your stomach. Raise yourself up so that you're resting on your forearms and your knees. Align your head and neck with your back, and place your shoulders directly above your elbows. Tighten your abdominal muscles.
- Create resistance by pressing your elbows and your knees toward one another. Neither should move from their positions on the floor. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds.
- Return to the start position and repeat.



## Modified plank variations

Try these variations on the modified plank:

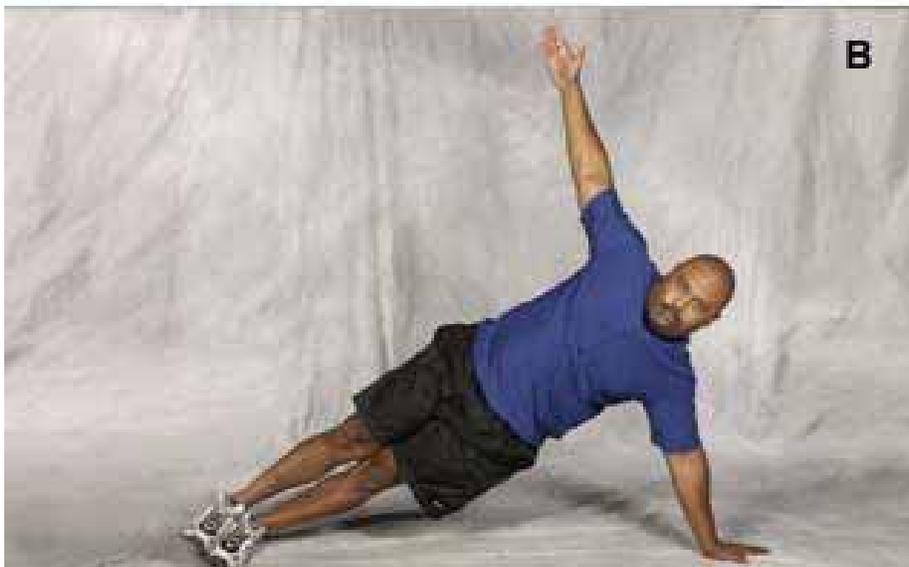
- Lie on your stomach. Raise yourself up so that you're resting on your forearms and your knees. Align your head and neck with your back, and place your shoulders directly above your elbows. Tighten your abdominal muscles.
- Raise your right arm off the floor (A). Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat with your left arm.
- Raise your right leg off the floor (B). Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat with your left leg.
- For added challenge, raise your left arm and your right leg at the same time. Repeat with your right arm and left leg.



## Side plank

The side plank challenges your stability and works the muscles along the side of your body:

- Lie on your left side, raising yourself onto your left forearm (A). Place your left shoulder directly above your left elbow, keeping your shoulders, hips and knees in alignment. Rest your right arm along the side of your body.
- Tighten your abdominal muscles. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat on your right side.
- For added challenge, balance on your left hand. Raise your hips off the floor and extend your right hand toward the ceiling (B). Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat on your right side.



## Superman

This core exercise, called the superman, can help you strengthen your lower back:

- Lie on your stomach with a rolled towel or a small pillow under your hips to support your back. You might also use a folded towel to support your head. Tighten your abdominal muscles.
- Raise your right arm off the floor (A). Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Lower your right arm and repeat with your left arm.
- Raise your right leg off the floor (B). Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Lower your right leg and repeat with your left leg.

