

Men's Health

TONS OF
USEFUL STUFF

Push League

The experts agree: There's a good pushup for just about any occasion. Here are 7 you can try today

By: Lou Schuler, Workout Photography by: Beth Bischoff

The Classic



Good for: General upper-body conditioning

Balance your weight on your toes and palms, with your hands a comfortable distance apart, probably just beyond shoulder-width. Straighten your back by tucking your pelvis (described in the main story). Slowly lower yourself to the floor, pause, and push yourself back up. Repeat a few hundred times.

Variations: Three-point pushup (place one foot on top of the other; makes the exercise a little more challenging); decline pushup (set your feet on a bench or chair; makes it even more challenging); triceps pushup (place your hands close together, so your thumbs and forefingers touch; shifts work from chest to arms).

Rotational Pushup

Good for: Athletic performance in sports involving torso rotation, such as tennis, hockey, and baseball

Assume the classic pushup position, but as you come up, rotate your body so your right arm lifts up and extends overhead. Your arms and torso should form a T. Return to the starting position, lower yourself, then push up and rotate till your left hand points toward the ceiling.

Variations: One-dumbbell (grip a dumbbell in one hand; rotate to the dumbbell side for half your repetitions, then switch the dumbbell to the other hand); two-dumbbell (grip dumbbells in both hands, and alternate sides when you come up).



Plank

Good for: Posture; midsection endurance and stability

Lie facedown, rest your weight on your forearms and toes, tuck your hips, and hold your body in a straight line from ankles to shoulders for 5 seconds. Do a total of 10 5-second holds.

Variations: When 5-second holds are easy, progress to longer holds, until you can stay in the position for 30 seconds. Next, try a regular pushup position with your hips tucked (shown here). When you can hold that for 30 seconds, try it on your knuckles.



Barbell Pushup

Good for: Stability of midsection, shoulder; grip strength

Get into the classic pushup position with your hands on a barbell (the kind that can roll away if you don't keep it steady). Knock out the pushups, but not yourself -- keep in mind that one slip can send you crashing teeth-first into the floor.

**Walking Pushup**

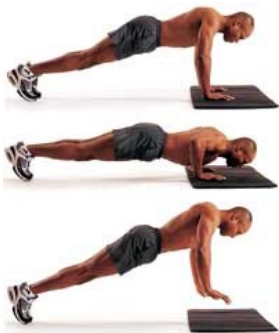
Good for: Abdominal development; shoulder stability

Set up in the classic pushup position on a smooth floor, and place your feet on a towel. Walk with your hands across the room, turn, and walk back. Keep your back flat throughout the movement.

**Plyometric Pushup**

Good for: Developing upper-body power

Set up in the classic position on a well-padded carpet or exercise mat. Push up hard enough for your hands to come off the floor and catch some air. When you hit the floor, go immediately into the next repetition, pushing up again as hard as you can and catching more air.

**Chain Pushup**

Good for: Upper-body strength and stability

Wrap a pair of chains around a chinup bar or the crossbar of a power rack. At the bottom, the chains should be 6 to 8 inches off the floor. Attach either gymnastics-type rings or a straight bar to the ends of the chains. Grab the rings or bar and do pushups, being careful to protect your shoulders.

<http://www.menshealth.com/cda/article.do>

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