

Push Ups

Andrew Dixon

The Push Up is the most fundamental upper body pressing exercise that almost anyone can do almost anywhere. They can be beneficial for a 93 year old grandmother looking to gain some strength and stability or a 25 year old football superstar looking to add some muscle and power to his upper body. There are literally hundreds of variations to the push up to meet everyone's fitness needs.

Why Do Push Ups?

I believe everyone with arms should be able to do at least 1 full push up. There are of course exceptions such as obesity and serious shoulder injuries, but the goal should always be to achieve the push up. Being able to handle one's own body weight is a must before handling heavy free weights when exercising.

One of the main reasons I like the push up is that they are great for shoulder health. They work the scapula stabilizers along with the anterior core muscles to stabilize the low back. On a more superficial level they work the triceps and chest.

When To Do Push Ups?

Push ups can be put almost anywhere in a training program depending on your goals and level of proficiency in the movement. Generally you should be doing the more complex and challenging exercises earlier in the program. If you are working on improving your bench pressing or overhead pressing the push up is an excellent movement prep that should be done as a warm up provided you do them at a level that doesn't cause too much fatigue. If you are more advanced at the push up you may put them in the middle or near the end of the program.

How To Do Push Ups?

The key to any exercise is the set up. If you start out with poor alignment and posture then you are surely going to finish with poor alignment. Let me make it very clear that when you do a single repetition incorrectly you program your nervous system with a faulty movement pattern. Faulty movement patterns incorrectly recruit muscles and lead to painful trigger points and the potential for injury. It doesn't take any

Gael's Frittata

Serves 4

Ingredients:

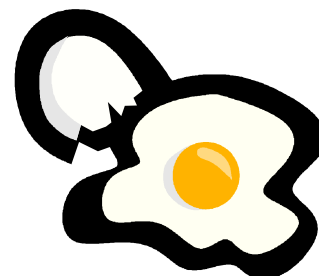
- 6 eggs
- 1 cup of milk
- 2 tablespoons melted butter
- Salt & pepper
- 1/4 spring onion, chopped
- 5 rashers bacon, chopped
- 1 cup cheese, grated

Method:

- Preheat oven to 180°
- Sauté bacon & drain excess oil
- Beat eggs, milk & butter together & season
- Pour into baking dish
- Sprinkle bacon, cheese & spring onion evenly on top of mixture
- Bake in oven 30 mins or until egg is set in the middle

★ This is great served hot or cold with salad or vegies.

★ Best fresh but can be frozen.



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The Push Up Continued.....

longer to do it right, so when you're in the gym training for fat loss, you should also be in there training for improved performance through better movement quality.



The Set Up

The Set Up: Lie face down on the floor with your hands placed at shoulder level. Elbows should be pointed back at about 45 degrees from your body. Take a breath in and activate your abdominals.



The Push

The Push: Keeping your spine and head in good alignment, push away from the floor on a breath out. Gripping the floor with your fingers will give you some added shoulder stability.

The Lower: Breathe in as you lower towards the floor. You should be aiming to just touch your chest to the floor maintaining a neutral spine alignment.

Common Faults:

Dropping head - trying to reach the ground with your chin does nothing for your push up performance and may aggravate your neck.

Saggy lower back - this shows poor lower back stability or poor motor control and needs to be addressed to avoid injury.

Rounded upper back - muscle imbalance between the inner and outer abdominals.

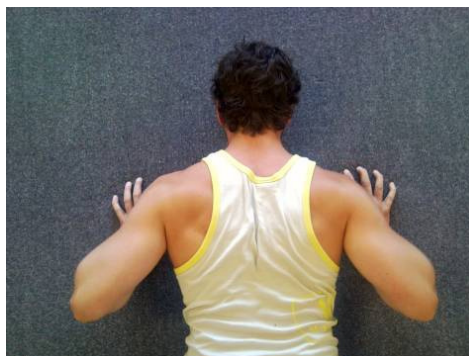
Shrugging shoulder/s - usually one sided caused by lack of shoulder stability, likely caused by over worked upper traps and weak lower traps.

Butt high in the air - at attempt to make the push up easier by pushing your butt away from your arms.

Winging shoulder blade/s - poor stability often caused by weak serratus anterior muscle.

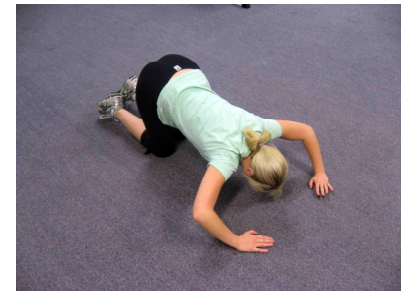
Dropping one hip - poor core control, possible tight hip flexor or same side quadratus lumborum.

Flared elbows - poor technique compromising shoulder health.



Arms at 45 degrees

One thing I hope to never see again is what a client of mine calls Fernwood Push Ups (due to the large amount of clients performing push ups this way). Done on the knees with the elbows super flared out and hands positioned all wrong. These are a fine example of terrible form and achieve absolutely nothing other than motor pattern dysfunction while reinforcing total weakness of the upper body. You can never get better at the push up if you do them like this and you might even do your shoulders some harm.



The Fernwood

Conclusion

Pick the right level of push up for your current strength level. I recommend starting with your hands elevated on some steps or the back of the couch to learn the technique and gradually lower the level until you're on the floor. Keep practicing until you can do 15 to 20 repetitions on the floor then progress to more advanced variations.

The information provided in this newsletter is for general educational purposes only. It is not intended to be relied upon as, nor to be a substitute for, specific professional advice. If you are currently under the care of a medical practitioner, you have any injuries or you are taking prescription medication, it is recommended that you seek professional advice prior to starting any fitness program.