



PREVENTION & REHABILITATION: SELF-MANAGEMENT: PATIENT SECTION

Plank to push-up[☆]



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Introduction

Stability of the spine is necessary for preventing pain and enhancing performance (Liebenson, 2006; McGill, 2006). Core muscle endurance is a key quality to train. Many exercises have been developed for the core including traditional ones such as sit-ups which have been recently called into question (McGill, 2006). Training the spine in a neutral posture which reinforces the natural upright curve of the low back has been recommended as a form of functional training (McGill, 2006).

This handout details a movement sequence called The Plank to Push-Up. It is an advanced move requiring control of both the plank and push-up positions individually.

Procedure

Level One

- Start in the plank position. Find your neutral spine position. This position is the same as the slight forward curve you have when standing upright. Avoid the tendency to flatten your back.
- Hold for 10 s.
- Then, attempt to move from the plank to the push-up.
- Hold for 10 s.

Level Two

- If successful with Level One place a sneaker (soft-shoe/trainer) or bottle of water on your back to test your control of the plank position (see Fig. 1). Then, trying to balance it there move from the plank to the push-up position (see Fig. 2). This will help you to keep your spine from twisting or rolling. Ideally, your pelvis and ribs will be locked together while progressing through repetitions of this exercise.
- If successful, then once in the push-up position slowly lower back to the plank.
- Check how many repetitions you can successfully perform up to a maximum of 10 repetitions.
- Hold each repetition for approximately 2–3 s.
- Raise and lower slowly in a controlled manner.

Common mistakes

- The most common error is to allow your low back to collapse down (see Fig. 3). This overarches the lower back and causes unnecessary compression.
- Another typical mistake seen is to pike at your waist (see Fig. 4). This can increase pressure on the disc.



Fig. 1 The Front Plank.

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Fig. 2 The push-up.

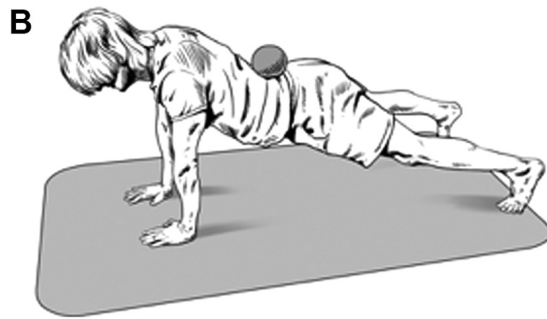
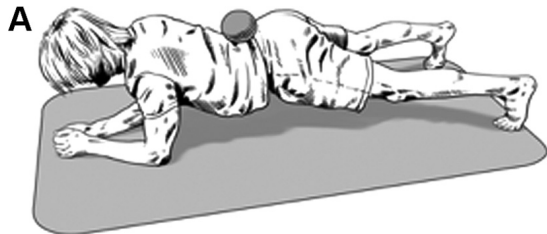


Fig. 3 a, b. Overarching of the lower back.

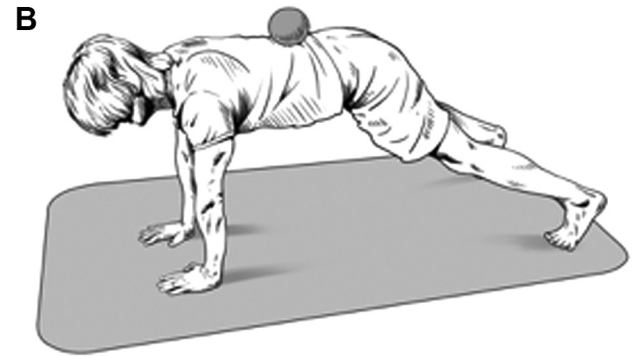
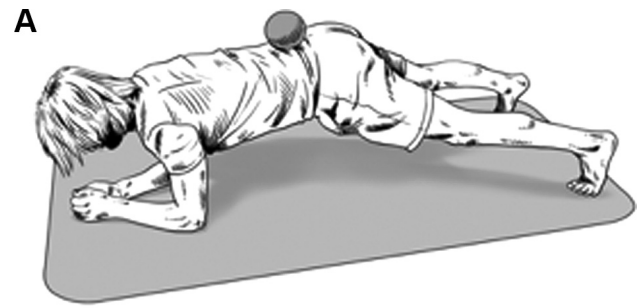


Fig. 4 a, b. Piking the lower back.

References

- Liebenson, C. (Ed.), 2006. *Rehabilitation of the Spine: a Practitioner's Manual*, second ed. Lippincott/Williams & Wilkins.
- McGill, S.M., 2006. *Ultimate Back Fitness and Performance*, second ed. Wabunu.