

Facilitator's Guide – ATHENA

An Exercise Training and Healthy Eating Group Program

ATHENA Facilitator's Guide

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1. The ATHENA Facilitator's Guide

The ATHENA Facilitator's Guide is a tool for use by clinicians, to guide implementation and delivery of the ATHENA intervention by appropriately trained Physiotherapists and Dietitians working in Continence and Women's Health.

For each component of the ATHENA intervention, the Facilitator's Guide outlines:

- A checklist of learning outcomes
- Reference to complementing Participant Workbook Topic
- Recommended group activities
- A summary of key messages

It is recommended that each health service utilise appropriate and accessible technology and educational resources to complement ATHENA delivery. These have been purposely excluded from the ATHENA Facilitator's Guide as new resources are constantly emerging and evolving. The Facilitator's Guide is designed to complement the ATHENA Participant Workbook.

2. What is ATHENA?

2.1. Overview

An Exercise Training and Healthy Eating Group Program (ATHENA) was co-developed by the ATHENA research team, which comprised of multidisciplinary clinicians, researchers and a consumer representative. It is informed by evidence-based clinical practice guidelines, which recommend supervised pelvic floor muscle training (PMFT) and weight loss for overweight and obese women with urinary incontinence.

2.2. Components

ATHENA consists of four components delivered over a 12-week period:

- Pelvic floor muscle training (PFMT)^a
- General exercise training^b
- Pelvic health education^c
- Healthy eating education^b

^aPFMT: Strong recommendation; high quality evidence

^bWeight loss through diet and exercise: Strong recommendation; moderate quality evidence

^cPelvic education: Moderate quality evidence (1)

2.3. Program Length

The PFMT and general exercise training run weekly for 12 weeks, while the pelvic health and healthy eating education sessions run weekly for four weeks (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Timeline of the ATHENA participant journey and components

3. Introductory Session (first attendance)

3.1. Overview

At participants' first ATHENA attendance (or prior to), it is recommended to provide a general introduction to the ATHENA intervention, including its purpose/goal, intervention components and how they are delivered to participants, including date, time and location of sessions.

3.2. Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes will be addressed at the introductory session of ATHENA and during each of the four ATHENA components each week. By the end of the ATHENA introductory session, participants will:

- Understand the ATHENA program structure and requirements; and
- Be familiar with the ATHENA participant workbook, in particular an understanding of the guiding principles to ***Let their inner ATHENA shine (page 3)***.

4. General Exercise Training (Week 1-12)

4.1. Overview

The general exercise training advice and practical components of ATHENA will complement the healthy eating education sessions, focusing on lifestyle modification and behaviour change to increase participation in meaningful physical activity to assist weight loss (1).

4.2. Learning Outcomes

By the end of ATHENA, participants will have an increased understanding of:

- The role of increased weight on UI;
- The cyclic relationship between UI, increased weight and physical activity avoidance;
- Recommended weight loss to improve UI, supported by evidence-based guidelines;
- Participants' own current physical activity habits;
- Dosage, intensity and type of exercise recommended to achieve modest weight loss;
- The importance of enjoyment, satisfaction, practicality, accessibility, affordability and variety in movement selection for greater long-term success;
- Individual short and long-term goals for healthier physical activity habits; and
- How to integrate PFMT into their physical activity program.

4.3. Participant Workbook Topic

The 'M' Words: Move More! (page 4) and My General Exercise Training Diary (page 32) will be discussed at the ATHENA introductory session and revisited at the start of each general exercise training session. This aims to aid participants' adherence to their exercise programs, through goal setting and celebration of goal achievements, identification of any non-optimal training doses and motivational interviewing to challenge physical activity behaviours.

4.4. Group Activity

The general exercise training session will include 30 minutes of group-based physical activity in a physiotherapy gym, supervised by a physiotherapist +/- physiotherapy assistant. Prior to each session, the physiotherapist should demonstrate each exercise (including any equipment to be used) and point out emergency call buttons and procedures. Exercises should be modified as required, with an emphasis on integration of PFMT into the general exercise training session. Exercise cards (see Appendix 1) can be used as a visual resource at each exercise station, and be provided as a home-exercise program resource.

The group general exercise training session will include:

- 5-minute warm-up
- 20-minutes of physical activity including high intensity interval training as follows:
 - Three repetitions of 45-second work to a 15-second rest ratio through five stations.
 - Each station targets a different exercise type: 1) Cardio; 2) Upper body; 3) Lower body; 4) Abdominal; and 5) Balance and Jumping; with three options for levels of difficulty for participants to choose from.
 - Change exercises weekly for variety.
- 5-minute cool-down

4.5. Key Messages

'Moving more' strengthens pelvic muscles and helps with weight loss; and this in turn can reduce UI.

The best exercises are the ones you enjoy!

5. Pelvic Floor Muscle Training (Week 1-12)

5.1. Overview

Supervised PFMT is recommended as first line management for UI (1). PFMT advice and practical components will complement pelvic health education topics and should be integrated into the general exercise training program.

5.2. Learning Outcomes

By the end of ATHENA, participants will have an increased understanding of:

- Pelvic floor muscle (PFM) anatomy and function in everyday tasks (sit-stand, walking, cough, sneeze, voiding, defecation, sexual health);
- Common pathophysiology and risk factors for PFM dysfunction (childbirth, pelvic surgery, constipation, change of life, ageing, occupation);
- PFM assessment methods (vaginal examination, external palpation, transabdominal ultrasound);
- Measuring PFMT success, including an individualised intensive supervised 12-week training program, using training principles of specificity, overload, recovery, maintenance and functional integration.

5.3. Participant Workbook

The ***Pelvic Muscle (Trampoline) Training (page 6)*** and ***Training Diary (page 33)*** will be discussed at the ATHENA introductory session and revisited at the start of general exercise training sessions to aid adherence. Motivational interviewing techniques and checking of this diary are important to encourage PFMT adherence, identify any non-optimal training doses, and (in consultation with participants) reflect and negotiate PFMT structure, including timing, frequency, position, repetitions, complexity, functional integration, and daily awareness. Be sure to explore participants' understanding of their diagnosis and symptoms; beliefs about their behaviours and consequences of inaction; beliefs about treatment options (e.g. PFMT, surgery); and common barriers (family, work, finances, other), and link to specific participant goals.

5.4. Group Activity

A group PFMT session will be completed during warm-up and cool-down of general exercise training sessions. This will include:

- Strength (high intensity, short duration): five repetitions of high intensity, short contractions, holding for up to 1-3 seconds
- Endurance (low intensity, long duration): five repetitions of low speed, sub-maximal duration contractions, holding up to 15 seconds (or equivalent breaths);
- Power (speed x strength): ten rapid contractions;
- Functional: contractions with functional movement (e.g. squat, cough, lift).

5.5. Key Message

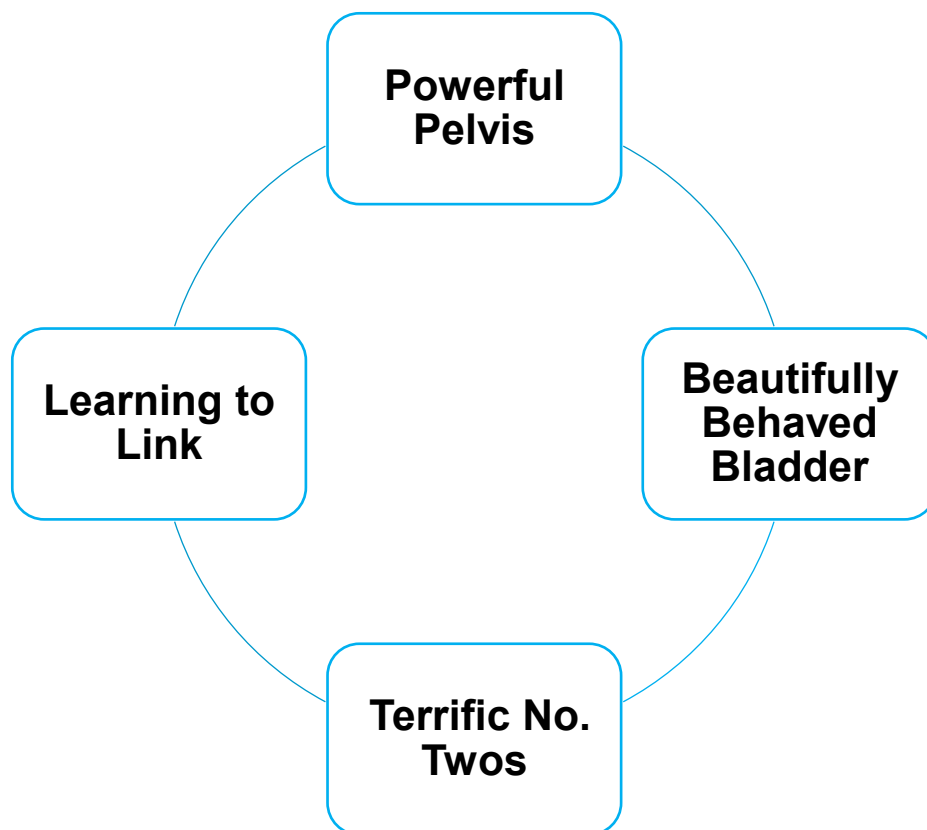
A daily, 12-week PFMT program that is individualised and challenging can increase strength, endurance and function of PFMs, which in turn can reduce UI.

6. Pelvic Health Education (Week 1-4)

6.1. Overview

Knowledge about PFM functionality has been shown to reduce symptoms of PFM dysfunction and improve quality of life (2). Four key topics will be covered in these education sessions:

- Powerful Pelvis (stress urinary incontinence)
- Beautifully Behaved Bladder (urinary frequency, urinary urgency, urge urinary incontinence and nocturia)
- Terrific Number Twos (good bowel habits)
- Learning to Link (reflection, review and linking of key concepts)



7. Powerful Pelvis: keeping you strong

7.1. Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, participants will have an increased understanding of:

- The definition, prevalence, pathophysiology, and modifiable and non-modifiable risk factors for stress urinary incontinence (SUI), with less focus on tissue structure damage and more focus on optimising PFM function;
- PFMT principles for SUI;
- The role of increased weight on SUI;
- The cyclic relationship between SUI, weight gain and physical activity avoidance; and
- Recommended weight loss supported by evidence-based guidelines to improve SUI.

7.2. Participant Workbook Topic

Powerful Pelvis – keeping you strong (page 9) will be discussed during this first pelvic health education session, with reference to: ***Pelvic Muscle (Trampoline) Training (page 6)***, ***Training Diary (page 33)***, ***‘M’ Words: Move More! (page 4)*** and ***My General Exercise Training Diary (page 32)***.

7.3. Group Activity

- Round table discussion and documentation in Participant Workbook on take home messages, something new learnt, sharing stories/personal experiences of SUI (challenges, goal setting, celebration of achievements etc.); and
- Action plan for next week (I plan to...; I did...).

7.4. Key Message

Create a routine of daily exercises (PFMT and general exercise) “lifercise”!

8. Beautifully Behaved Bladder: keeping you in control

8.1. Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session the participants will have an increased understanding of:

- Normal bladder anatomy and function;
- Definition, prevalence, pathophysiology and contributing factors to urinary frequency, urinary urgency, urge urinary incontinence, and nocturia;
- Assessing urinary frequency, urinary urgency, urge urinary incontinence and nocturia (including importance of proof of cure and bladder diary); and
- Conservative management strategies for urinary frequency, urinary urgency, urge UI and nocturia, including good bladder habits, bladder retraining, and fluid advice.

8.2. Participant Work

Beautifully behaved bladder (page 10) will be discussed during this pelvic health education session.

8.3. Group Activity

- Round table discussion and documentation in workbook on take home messages, something new learnt, and sharing stories/personal experiences of urinary frequency, urinary urgency, urge UI, and nocturia (e.g. challenges, goal setting, celebration of achievements etc.);
- Emphasis on motivational interviewing regarding thoughts/actions (not just physical responses) with urinary frequency, urinary urgency, urge UI and nocturia (e.g. what are you *thinking* when you have a bladder urgency? What are your friends/family *response* to you at this time?);
- Identification of triggers and trigger management plan; and
- Action plan for next week (I plan to...; I did...).

8.4. Key Message

Small changes in lifestyle and habits can lead to big results!

9. Terrific No. Two's: keeping you regular

9.1. Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session the participants will have an increased understanding of:

- Normal bowel function and stool types;
- The definition, pathophysiology and risk factors contributing to bowel dysfunction (i.e. constipation, faecal and flatal frequency, urgency and incontinence);
- Assessment of bowel dysfunction (including bowel diary, food diary, fibre count);
- How the bowel affects the bladder; and
- Conservative management strategies for bowel dysfunction, including morning routine, defecation dynamics, stool consistency, fibre and fluid advice, and aperients.

9.2. Participant Workbook

Terrific No. Twos: keeping you regular (page 11) will be discussed during this pelvic health education session.

9.3. Group Activity

- Round table discussion for participants to share their personal experiences of bowel function and dysfunction;
- Practice of defecation dynamics; and
- Action plan for next week using the Participant Workbook (I plan to...; I did...).

9.4. Key Message

The bowel can influence the bladder!

10. Learning to Link: keeping you in tune with your body as a whole

10.1. Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session the participants will have:

- Recalled, reviewed and linked key concepts from the three previous topics: 1) Powerful Pelvis, 2) Beautifully Behaved Bladder, and 3) Terrific No. Twos;
- A better understanding of the relationship between prolapse, urinary and bowel dysfunction;
- A better understanding of the relationship between sleep and the hormones involved in weight control, and of sleep hygiene strategies; and
- Reflected and created a long-term action plan to “stay on track”.

10.2. Workbook Topics

Learning to Link: keeping you in tune with your body as whole (page 13), Healthy Sleep Habits (page 28), Healthy Sleep + Healthy Stress = Happy Hormones (page 29) and Staying on track (page 30) will be discussed during this pelvic health education session.

10.3. Group Activity

- Bladder, bowel and exercise quiz to assess retention of information, share key messages and personal stories; and
- Healthy sleep habits action plan for next week (I plan to...; I did...).

10.4. Key Message

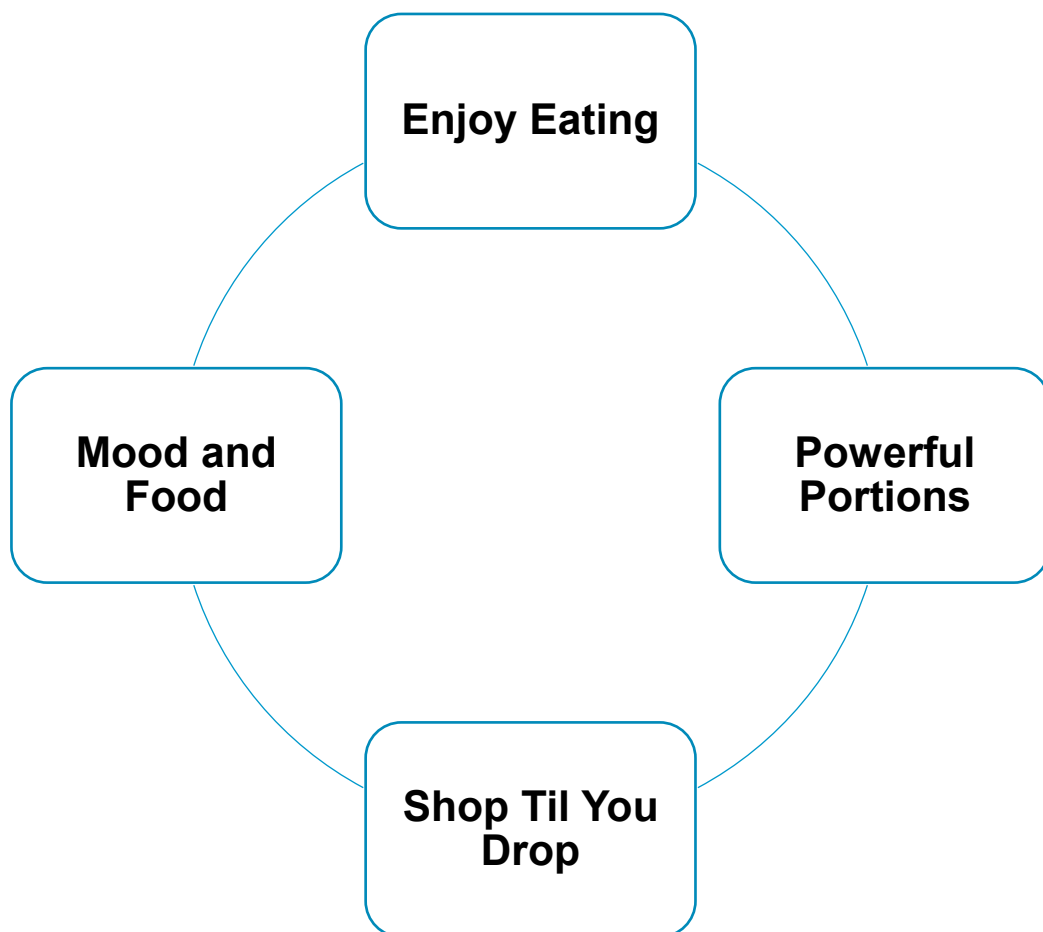
Healthy eating + healthy exercise + healthy sleep = achieving your inner ATHENA!

11. Healthy Eating Education (Week 1-4)

11.1. Overview

The Healthy Eating and Lifestyle Program (HELP) has been shown to support improvements in quality of life, self-efficacy and moderate weight loss (3). Four key topics will be covered in these education sessions:

- Enjoy Eating (healthy eating habits)
- Powerful Portions (meal planning and portion control)
- Shop Til You Drop (informed choices at the supermarket)
- Mood and Food (mindful eating)



12. Enjoy Eating

12.1. Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session the participants will have an increased awareness/understanding of:

- Their current eating habits;
- The importance of enjoyment, satisfaction, variety, balance and moderation in a healthy diet, and how to achieve this;
- The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and how it can be applied to everyday eating;
- How best to plan their daily eating patterns, using the five food groups; and
- Their own short-term goals for healthier eating habits.

12.2. Workbook Topics

Enjoying Healthy Eating (pages 16-19) is based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.

12.3. Group Activity

- Use the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating to discuss: the five food groups, why they are required for good health, serving sizes and recommended serves/day (including example serves) and sometimes foods;
- Group discussion on dieting, including views of good/bad foods, with the aim to seek agreement from the group to talk about food in morally neutral ways (not good or bad);
- Use 'My Current Eating habits' checklist to identify goals and an action plan. Key areas to consider include: regular meals, food groups, portion sizes, 'sometimes' foods, avoid counting calories, healthier drinks, appetite and fullness and preparing meals.

12.4. Key Message

Change lifelong eating habits by getting back in touch with your natural eating style. The way to do this is through: enjoyment, satisfaction, variety and balance.

13. Powerful Portions

13.1. Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session the participants will understand:

- How to plan their meals and daily eating patterns;
- Ideas and tips for quick and healthy meals; and
- Tips for grocery shopping.

13.2. Workbook Topic

Powerful Portions (pages 20-22) outlines the importance of having a meal plan and will inform supermarket shopping. Although the process takes time and effort at first, it reduces decisions required during the week and will lead to better eating practices.

13.3. Group Activity

- Demonstration of: ways to set up an 'eat less' environment: use dinner-ware and food models of different sizes to visually demonstrate concepts; ask participants which glass (short or tall) will hold more and have them pour into a measuring jug to check capacity; and demonstrate re-bagging snacks in smaller portions and putting the rest away.
- Using plate and food models, plan a balanced breakfast and lunch, and from this create a shopping list. Discuss advantages of eating for satisfaction, kJ intake, nutrition and reduced cravings.
- Ask a participant to volunteer their goal for the coming week. Demonstrate to the group how to translate this goal into an Action Plan. Ensure the goal is specific, measurable, achievable and realistic; that barriers and solutions to barriers have been considered; and have participants decide on a non-food reward for when they achieve their goal.
- Discuss with participants if they have noticed an increase in portion sizes over the years. What have they noticed? Why have they increased? If they haven't noticed, they might be eating more without realizing. Discuss common pitfalls for overeating: buying the larger size because it is better value for money; plate clearing; eating quickly, taking larger bites, not chewing thoroughly (satiety increases with the amount of chewing); and eating straight from a packet or container.

13.4. Key Message

Planning ahead and being aware of portion sizes will save time, effort, and stress; and will help turn healthy food options into easy food choices!

14. Shop ‘til You Drop

14.1. Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, participants will have an increased awareness/understanding of:

- The pitfalls of supermarket shopping;
- Food groups, including being able to distinguish a ‘sometimes’ food by assessing the fat, sugar, fibre and salt content listed on the nutrition panel;
- The concept of energy density, including being able to use the energy content of a product to decide on an appropriate portion size and how (if at all) it fits into their daily meal plan; and
- Relying less on nutrition claims on products (and more on the nutrition panel) when making product choices.

14.2. Workbook Topics

Shop Til You Drop (page 23) describes how the way we manage shopping directly influences what we eat, and how some simple preparation and awareness of what we are buying can assist with achieving healthy eating goals.

14.3. Group Activity

- Discuss food shopping within food groups/recommended daily serves; and demonstrate the concept of energy density using energy-dense food (e.g. 100g nuts ~3000kJ vs. 100g apple ~200kJ). Note that: fruit and vegetables are excellent sources of fibre, potassium, folate, vitamins A and C. Meat, chicken, eggs are excellent source of protein, iron, zinc and vitamin B. Legumes are a good source of fibre and protein and can be used as a meat substitute or as a vegetable. Fish is a good source of omega-3 fats, with nutritional benefits for heart health, and is recommended 2-3 times/week. Breads and cereals are good sources of B vitamins and provide energy in the form of carbohydrate. Milk and dairy products are high in calcium, protein and vitamin B. Sometimes foods comparison to fruit and vegetables (i.e. discuss energy vs. nutrient density).
- Label reading, like any new skill, requires practice to get better and quicker at it. You can practice label reading at home when making meals.
- Work through hints for successful shopping: avoid shopping when you are hungry (to reduce impulse buying); keep to your shopping list; stick to the perimeter of the store (this is where you’ll find fresh and less processed items); shop once a week for groceries and more regularly for fresh produce (fruit, vegetables, milk, bread); for better quality and value for money, buy in-season produce (for out-of-season produce compare frozen and canned product prices); beware of supermarket specials (i.e. buying items you don’t really need); beware of multi-buy promotions (especially important for the ‘sometimes’ foods you are trying to eat in smaller amounts).

14.4.Key Message

When you can confidently assess a product by its nutrition panel, you can make an informed choice about whether you want to include it in your eating plan. Enjoy Eating (healthy eating habits).

15. Mood and Food

15.1. Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, participants will have an understanding of:

- The difference between stomach hunger and emotional hunger;
- Ways to recognise and manage cravings and emotional “non-hungry” eating; and
- Practicing the skill of mindfulness and how it can benefit health.

15.2. Workbook Topics

Mood and Food (pages 24-28) outlines how our thoughts and feelings can impact positively and negatively on the many dietary choices we make each day.

15.3. Group Activity

- Discuss hunger: the sensation and what it means, differences (stomach vs. throat), our ability to override our internal sensations, plate clearing (when the serve is more than we need) and eating as a reward or to self-soothe.
- Discuss mindfulness: what it is, health benefits, and that it requires practice to master.
- Discuss non-mindful munching: eating past the point of satisfaction; grazing, bingeing, nibbling, picking; triggers (places, situations, people, thoughts and feelings); the dieting cycle.
- Discuss strategies to manage non-mindful eating (managing cravings and emotions).

15.4. Key Message

You can improve poor eating habits by increasing your awareness of non-mindful eating, caring for yourself through listening to your hunger cues and mindfully enjoying the experience of eating and drinking!

16. Appendix

16.1. Station 1: Upper Body Exercises

16.2. Station 2: Lower Body Exercises

16.3. Station 3: Balance and Jumping Exercises

16.4. Station 4: Aerobic Exercises

16.5. Station 5: Abdominal Exercises

Biceps (level 1) –alternate arms

Start position:

Stand upright with feet apart

Hold dumbbell in each hand at side of body

Face palms forwards

Movement:

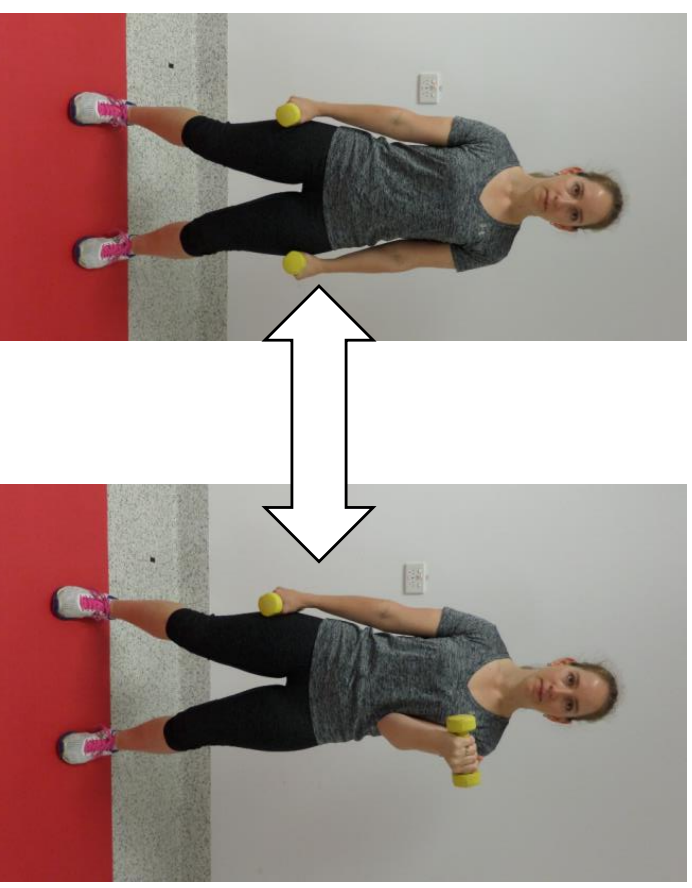
Bend one elbow keeping hand weight straight

Slowly lower hand down again

Repeat with the other arm

Key points:

Keep elbows at side of body



Biceps (level 2) – both arms

Start position:

Stand upright with feet apart

Hold dumbbells in each hand at side of body

Face palms forwards

Movement:

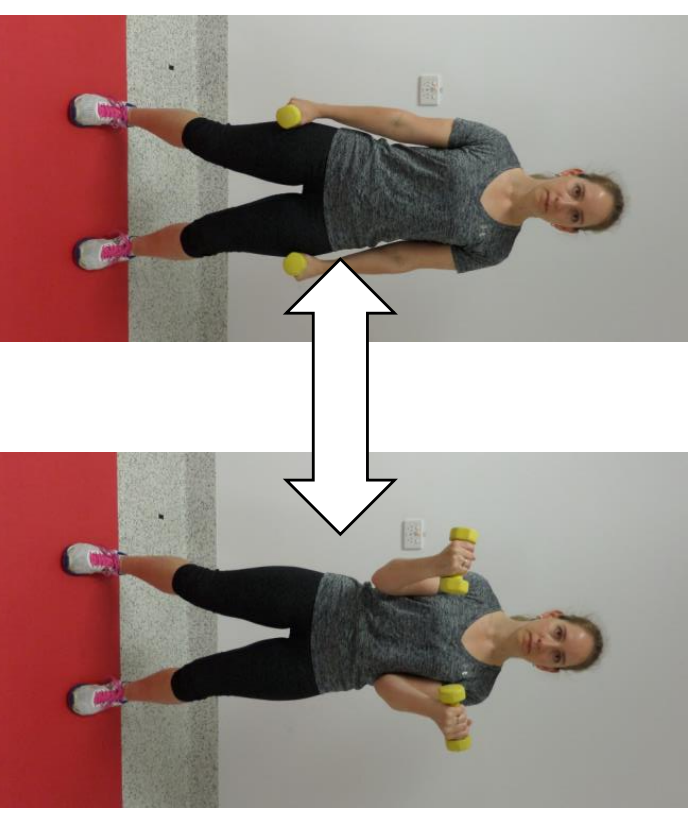
Bend both elbows keeping hand weight straight

Slowly lower down again

Repeat

Key points:

Keep elbows at side of body



Biceps (level 3) – with shoulder press

Start position:

Stand upright with feet apart

Hold dumbbells in each hand at side of body

Face palms backwards

Movement:

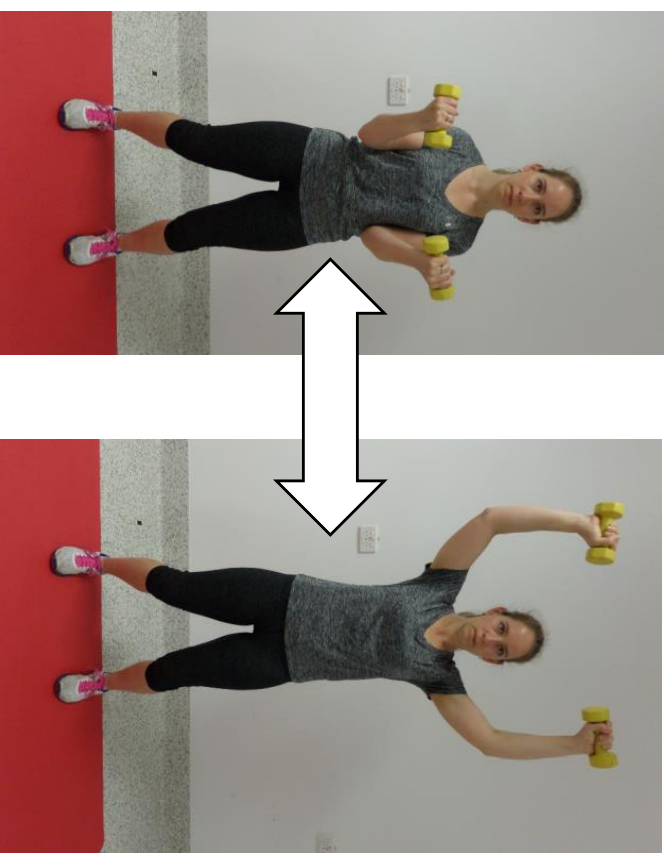
Bend both elbows keeping hand weights straight

Shoulder press weights to ceiling

Slowly lower down again to starting position

Key points:

Keep elbows at side of body through first phase



Triceps (level 1) - curls

Start position:

Bend over the back of a chair
Hold a weight in your hand with your
elbow bent

Movement:

Straighten elbow by taking the
weight down and behind
Slowly bend elbow again
Repeat

Key points:

Keep shoulder still, only move
hand



Triceps (level 2) – overhead

Start position:

Stand tall holding a dumbbell with both hands over your head

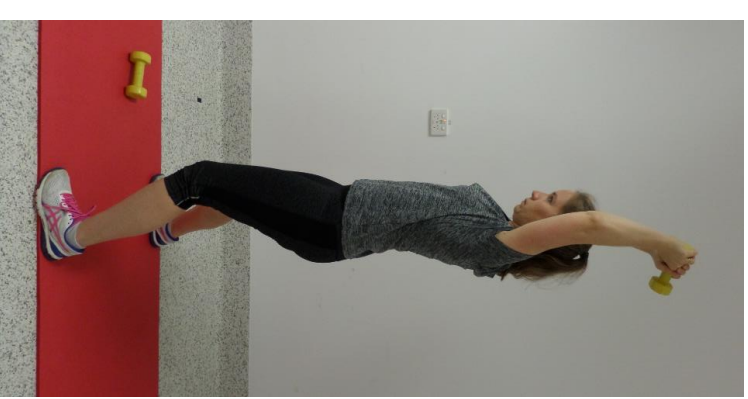
Movement:

Bend your elbows and move the weight behind your head

Return to starting position

Key points:

Keep shoulder still, only move hand



Triceps (level 3) - dips

Start position:

Support your body weight through your hands in front of chair

Feet shoulder width apart

Movement:

Slowly lower your body down past the edge of the chair

by bending your elbows
Slowly lift your body up by

straightening your arms

Repeat

Key points:

Keep your elbows tucked in behind you



Push-ups (level 1) - upright

Start position:

Stand with feet slightly apart
Rest hands on the wall

Movement:

Lean into the wall as you bend
your elbows
Straighten arms slowly back to the
start position

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy
Breathe



Push-ups (level 2) – on knees

Start position:

Position onto hands and knees

Movement:

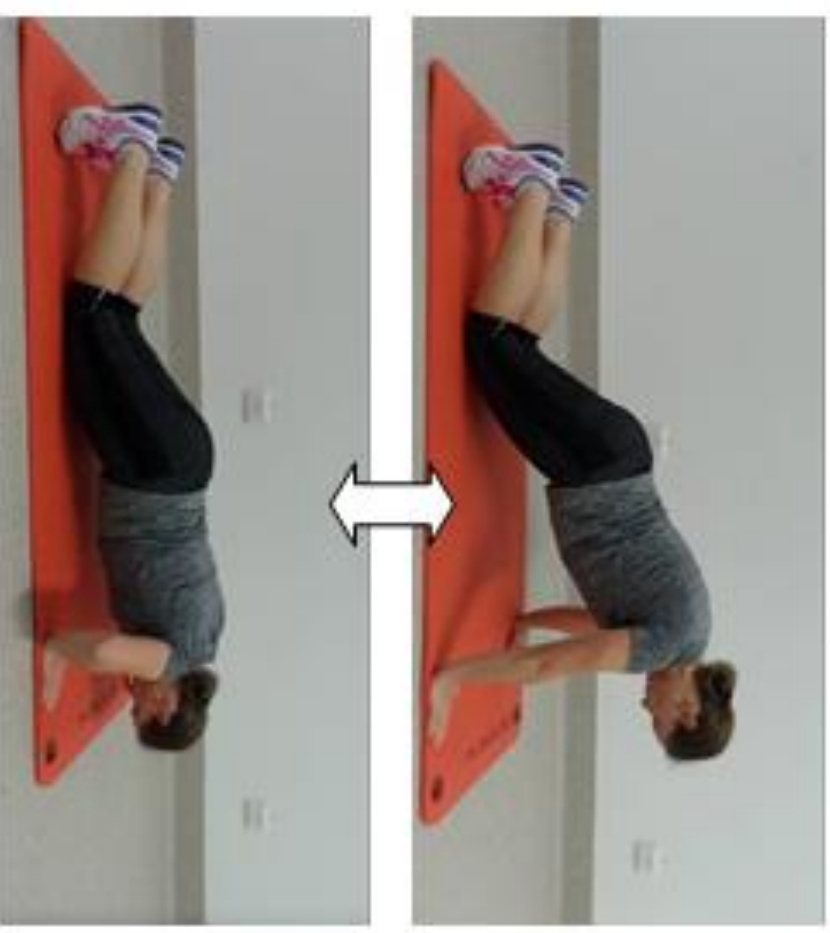
Lower towards the floor as you bend your elbows

Straighten arms slowly back to the start position

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy

Breathe



Push-ups (level 3) – on toes

Start position:

Position onto hands and toes

Maintain a body plank

Movement:

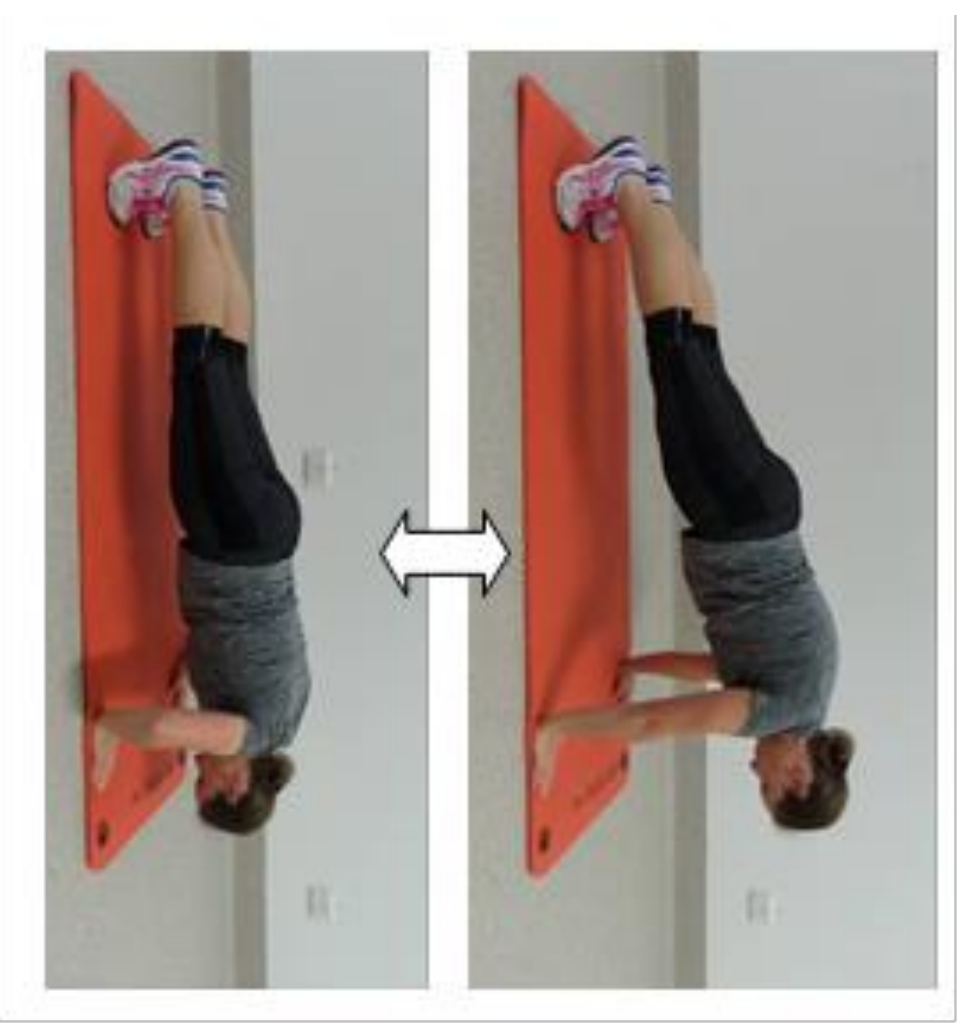
Lower towards the floor as you bend your elbows

Straighten arms slowly back to the start position

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy

Breathe



Shoulder draw-back (level 1) – theraband row

Start position:

Secure theraband

Hold theraband out in front with straight arms

Movement:

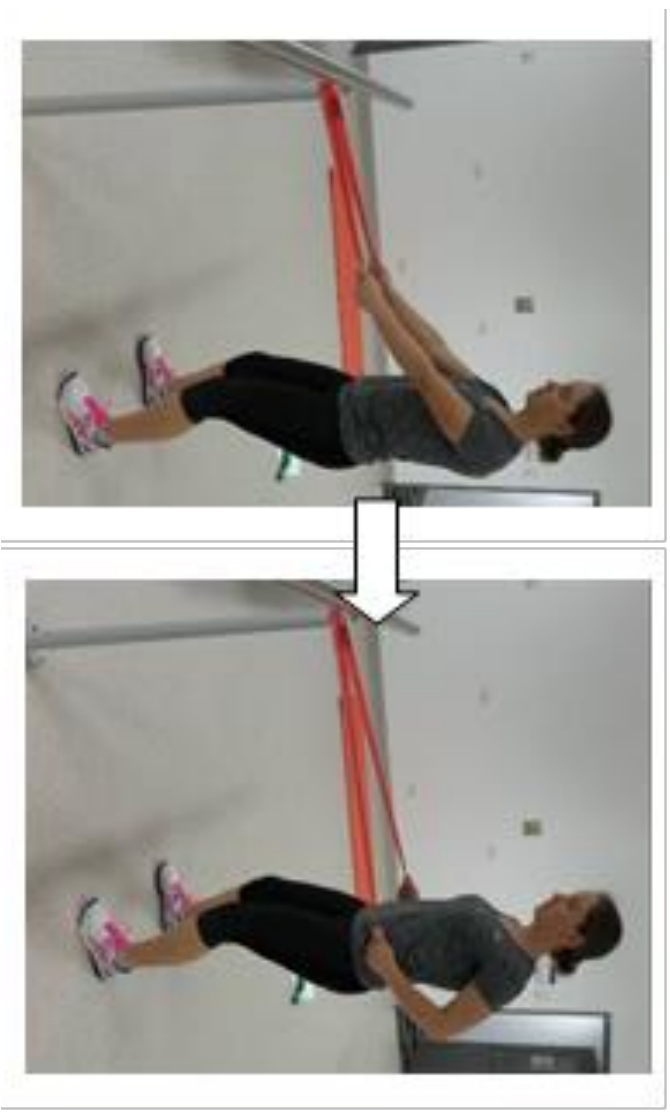
Stretch the theraband by bringing your elbows to your sides

Pull your shoulder blades together

Return to the start position

Key points:

Stand tall



Shoulder draw-back (level 2) – single bench row

Stars position:

Bend over the back of a chair

Hold a dumbbell in your hand with your elbow straight

Movement:

Bend elbow and lift dumbbell

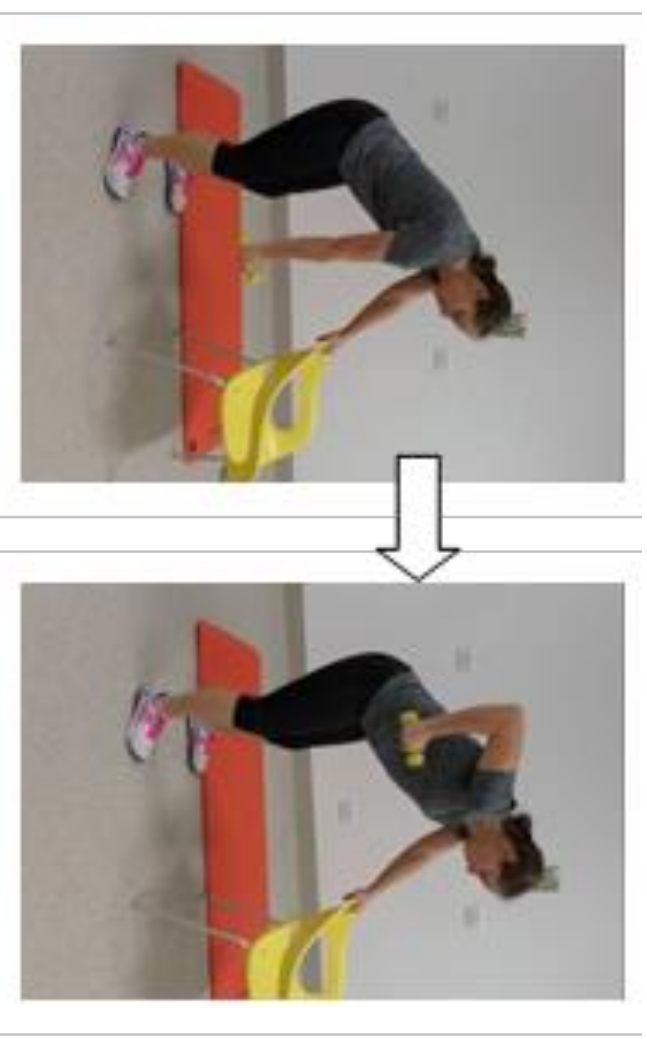
upwards towards your shoulder

Slowly lower the weight down to start position

Repeat

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy, squeeze shoulder blades together



Shoulder draw-back (level 3) – double bench row

Start position:

Bend forwards slightly with a straight back

Hold dumbbells in hands

Movement:

Bend elbows and lift dumbbell upwards towards your shoulders

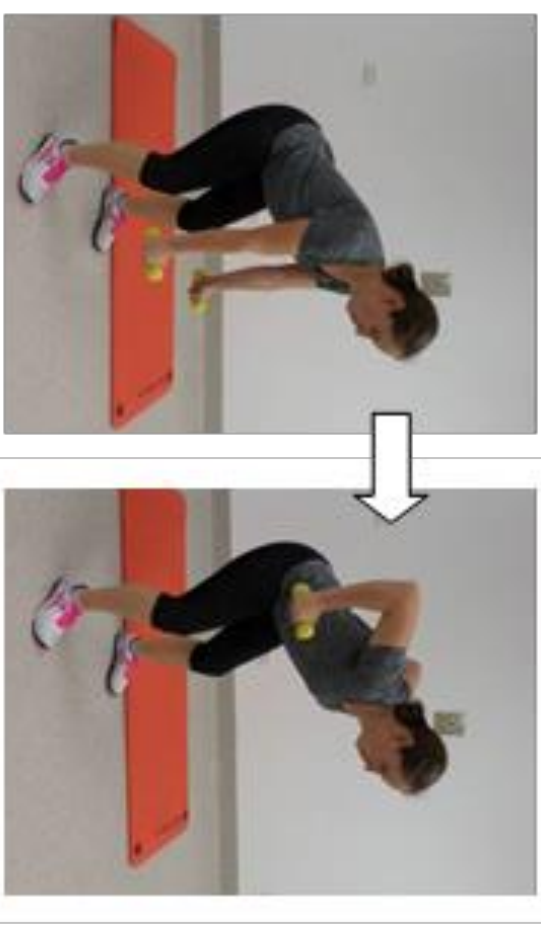
Draw shoulder blades together

Slowly lower the weights down to the start position

Repeat

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy



Chest flies (level 1) – theraband bench press

Start position:

Stand with feet apart

Secure theraband behind your back
and shoulders

Position your bent arms with hands
in front of your shoulders

Movement:

Straighten both arms out in front

Return to the start position

Repeat

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy and stand
strong



Chest flies (level 2) – dumbbell

Start position:

Lie on your back with legs bent up
Hold weights with bent arms and
hands in front of shoulders

Movement:

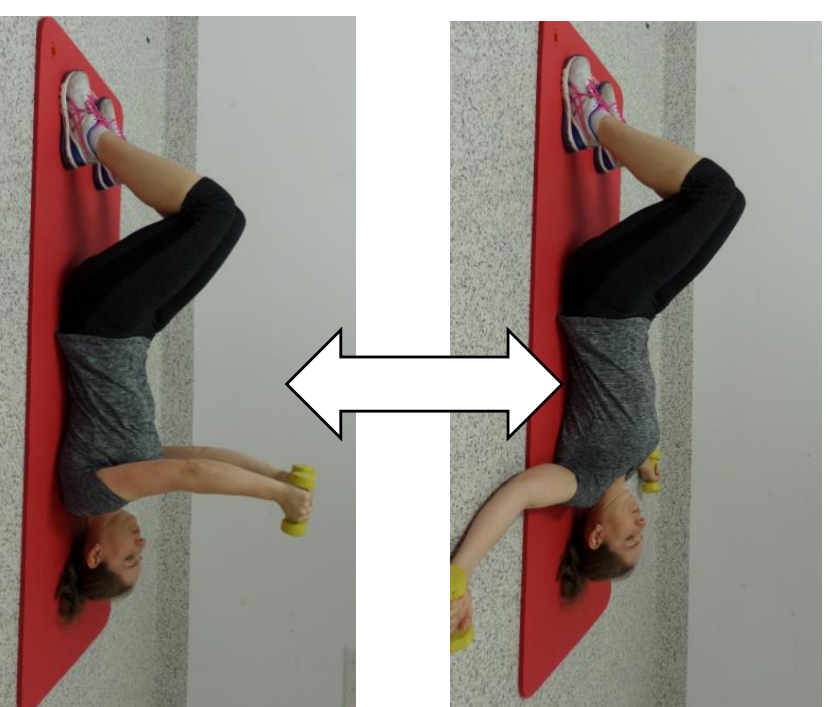
Lift weights by straightening arms
upwards

Slowly lower weights down to start
position

Repeat

Key points:

Brace body through activating
tummy



Chest flies (level 3) – reverse flies

Start position:

Bend forwards slightly with a straight back

Hold dumbbells in hands

Movement:

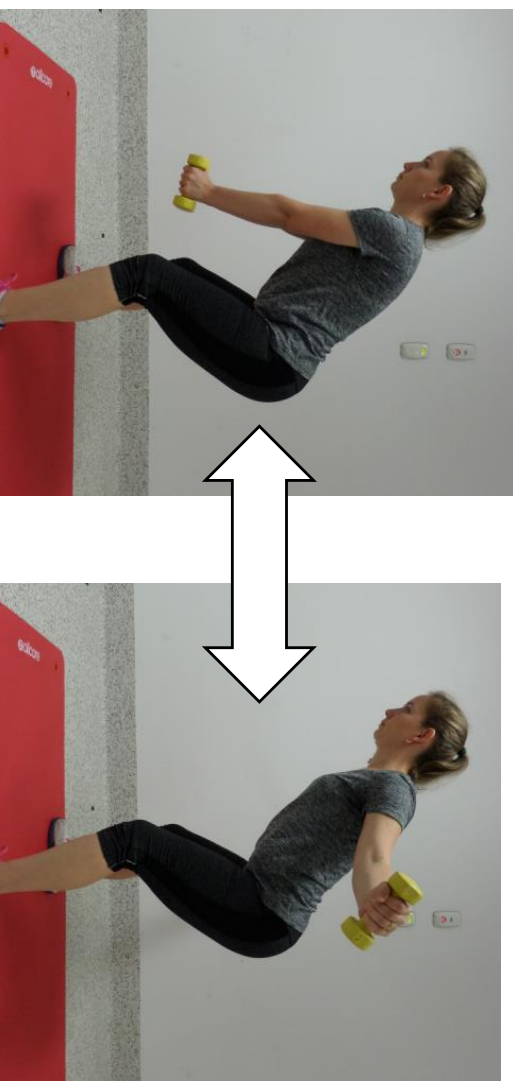
Keep arms straight and lift

weights upwards and outwards

Slowly lower weights down to start position

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy



Bridging (level 1) – double leg

Start position:

Lie on your back with legs bent up

Feet close to your pelvis

Hands on floor by your side

Movement:

Lift bottom up off the floor

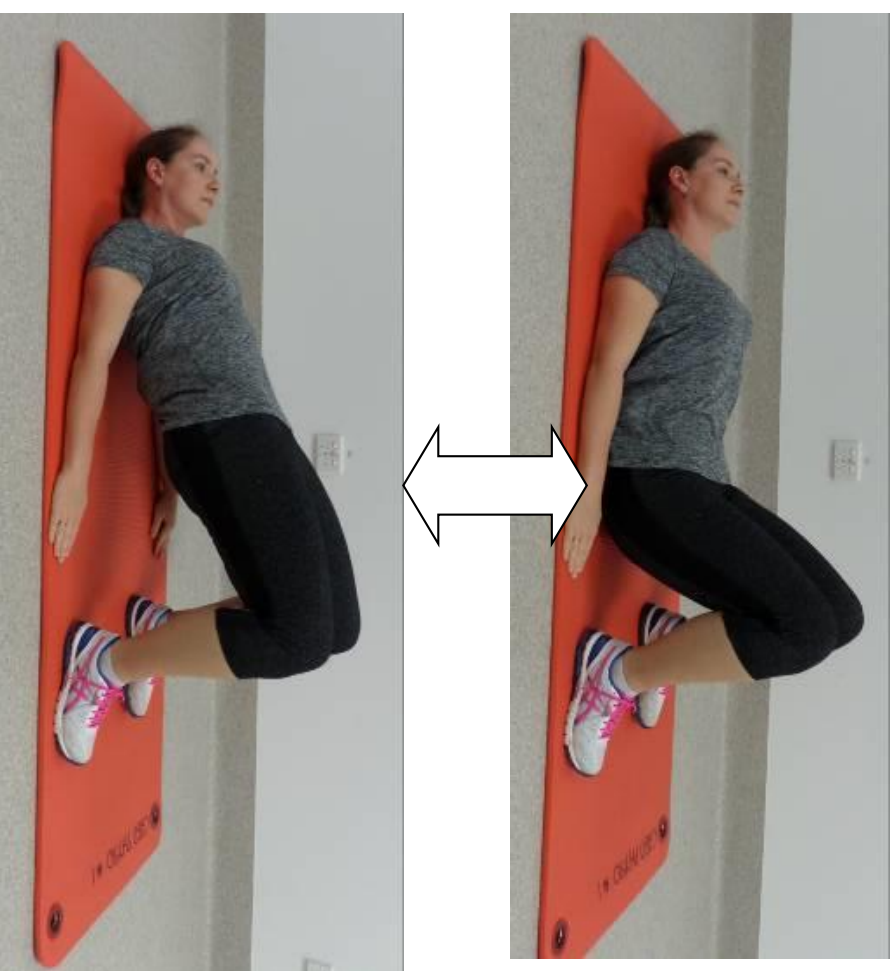
Hold for 3-5 sec

Return bottom to the floor

Repeat

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy, squeeze bottom muscles



Bridging (level 2) - march

Start position:

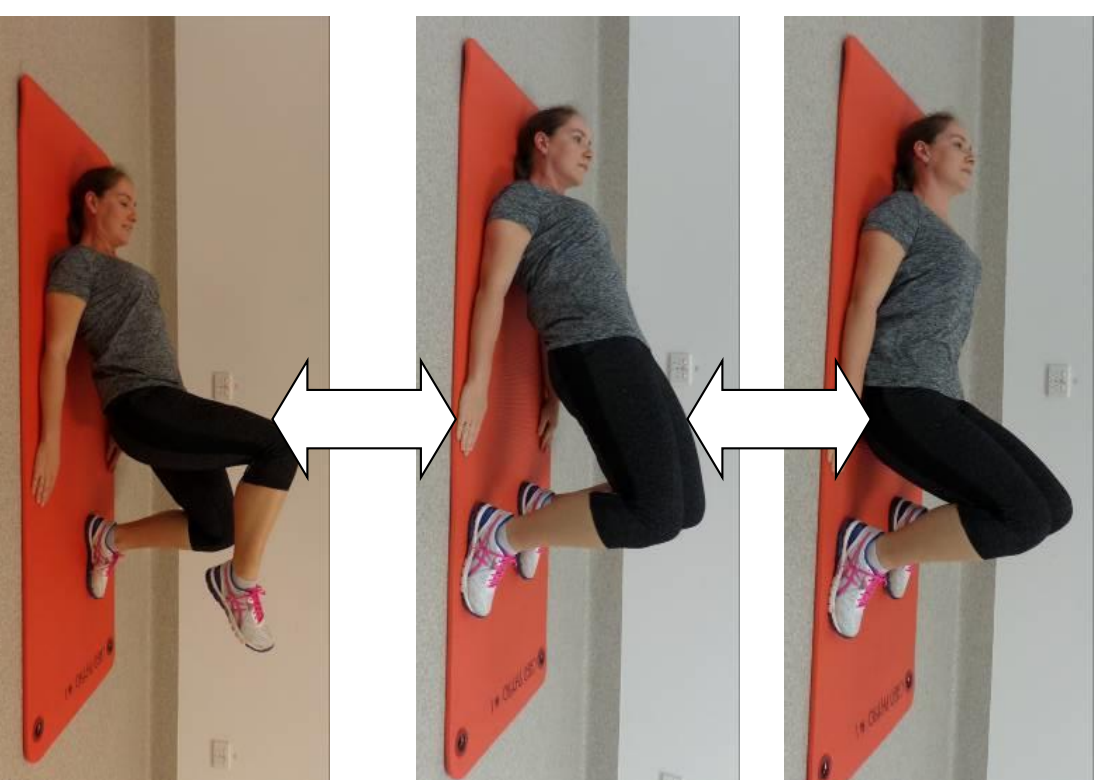
Lie on your back with legs bent
Feet close to your pelvis
Hands on floor by your side

Movement:

Lift bottom up off the floor
March alternate feet slowly
Return bottom to the floor
Repeat

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy,
squeeze bottom muscles



Bridging (level 3) - on a ball

Start position:

Lie on your back with your feet on ball

Hands on floor by your side

Movement:

Push through the ball to lift bottom up off the floor

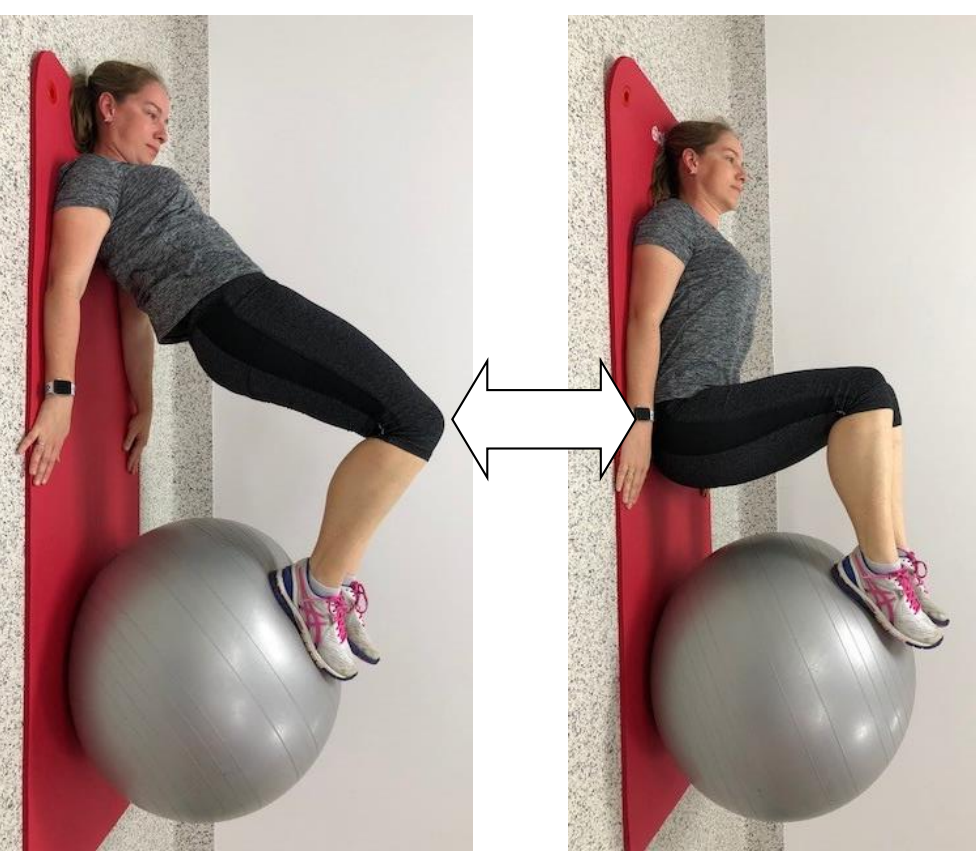
Hold for 3-5 sec

Return pelvis to the floor

Repeat

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy, squeeze bottom muscles



Step Ups (level 1) – low step

Start position:

Stand upright with step in front of you

Movement:

Step one foot up on step

Step opposite foot onto step

Step both feet back down to floor to start position

Repeat

Key points:

Increase speed as able



Step Ups (level 2) – high step

Start position:

Stand upright with step in front of you

Movement:

Step one foot up on step

Step opposite foot onto step

Step both feet back down to floor to start position

Repeat

Key points:

Increase speed as able



Step Ups (level 3) – high step with dumbbell

Start position:

Stand upright with step in front of you and dumbbell in each hand

Movement:

Step one foot up on step

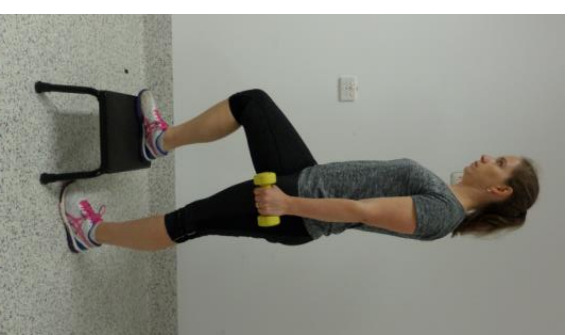
Touch other foot onto step

Step back and down to floor to start position

Repeat

Key points:

Increase speed as able



Donkey Kick (level 1) – low

Start position:

4-point kneeling on elbows and knees

Movement:

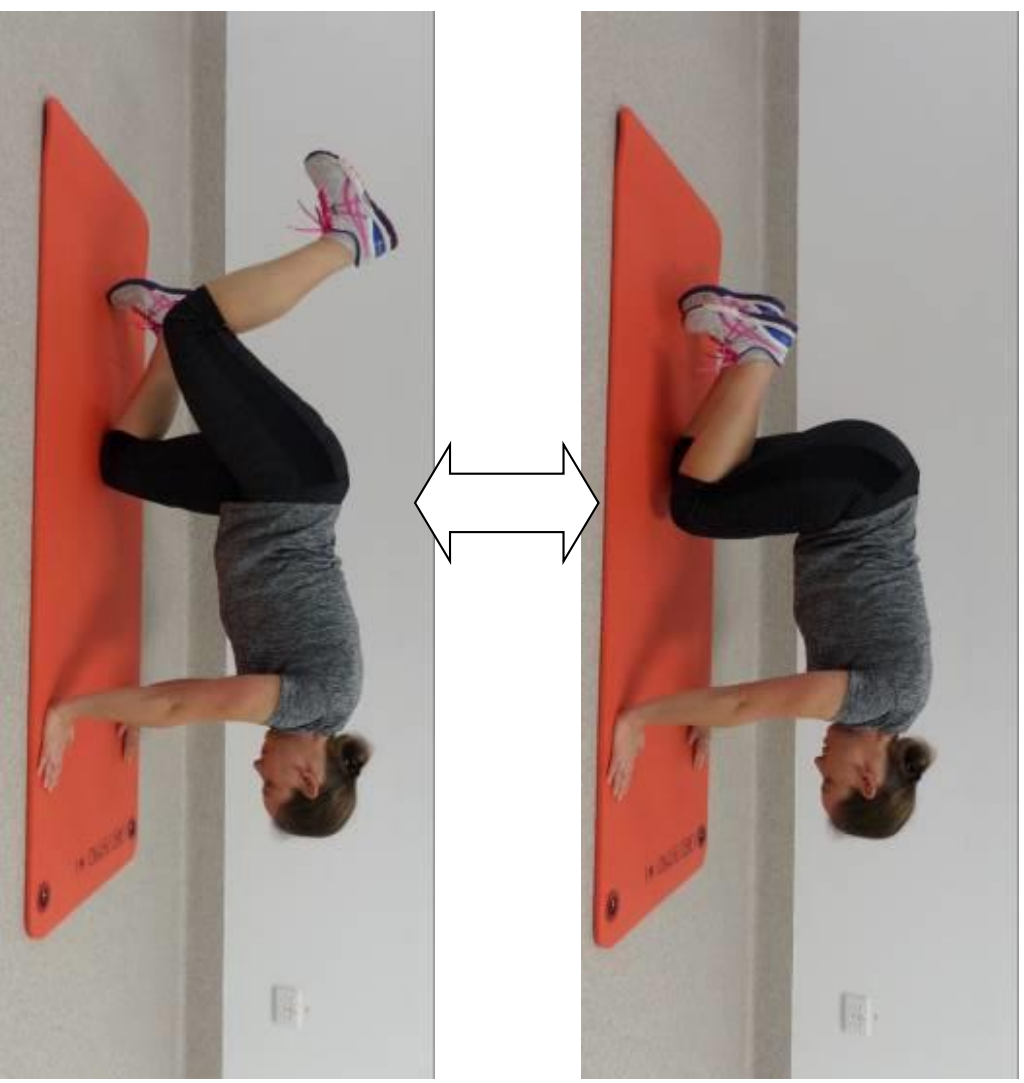
Lift foot up until the knee is in line with your hip

Slowly lower the leg down

Repeat

Key points:

Keep your back still, squeeze bottom muscles



Donkey Kick (level 2) – high

Start position:

4-point kneeling on elbows and knees

Start with one knee off the floor in line with the hip

Movement:

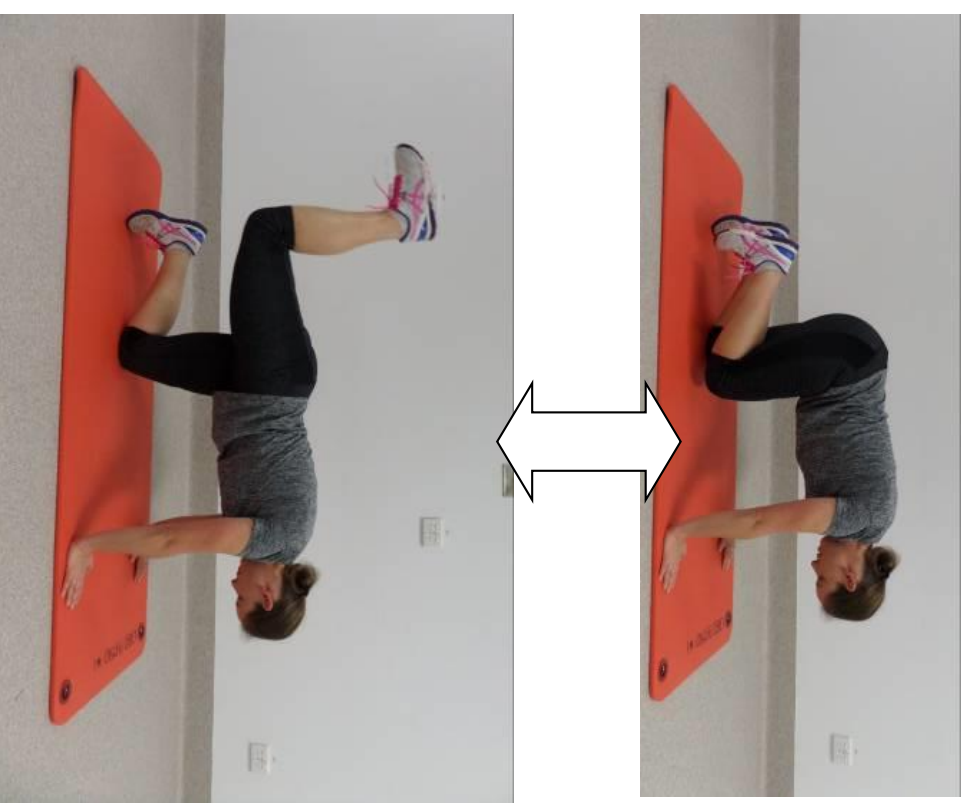
Lift foot up until the knee is above the line of the hip

Slowly lower the leg down

Repeat

Key points:

Keep your back still, squeeze bottom muscles



Donkey Kick (level 3) – with plank

Start position:

On elbows and toes with body in a straight line

Movement:

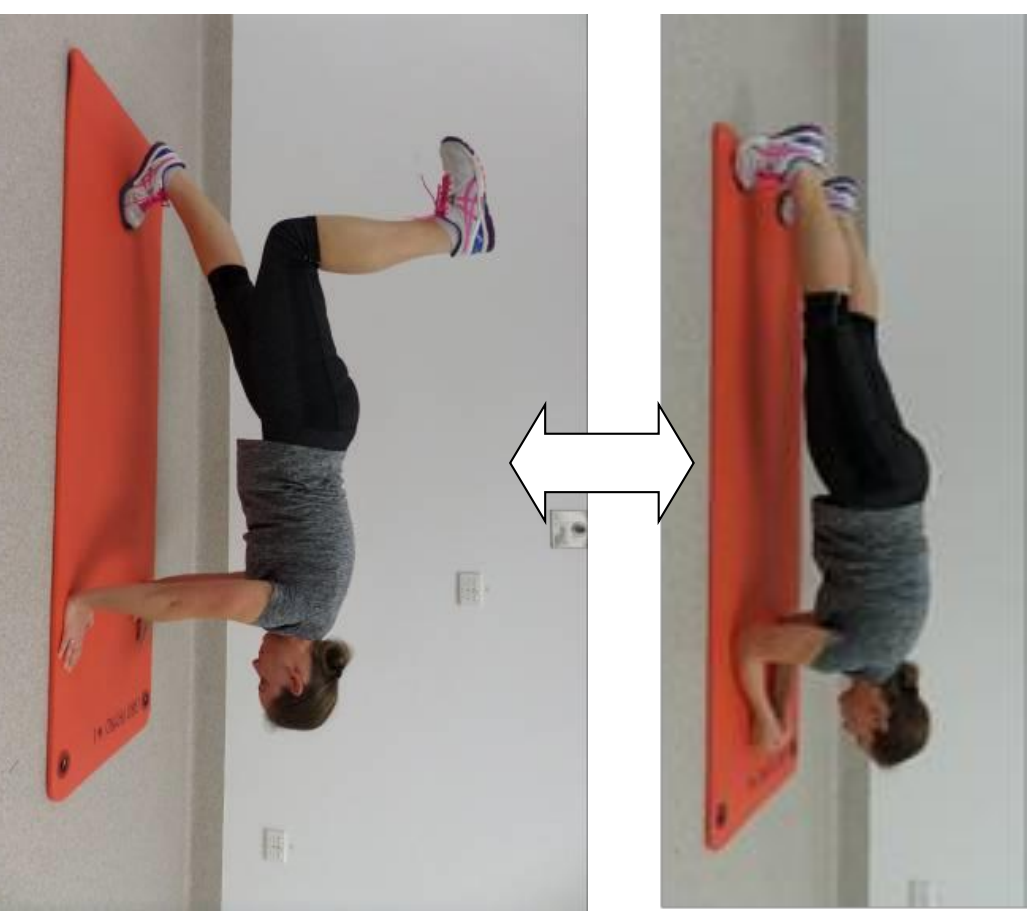
Bend knee and lift foot up until the knee is above the line of the hip

Slowly lower the leg down

Repeat

Key points:

Keep your back still, squeeze bottom muscles



Squats (level 1) – sit-stand

Start position:

Stand with a chair or bench behind you

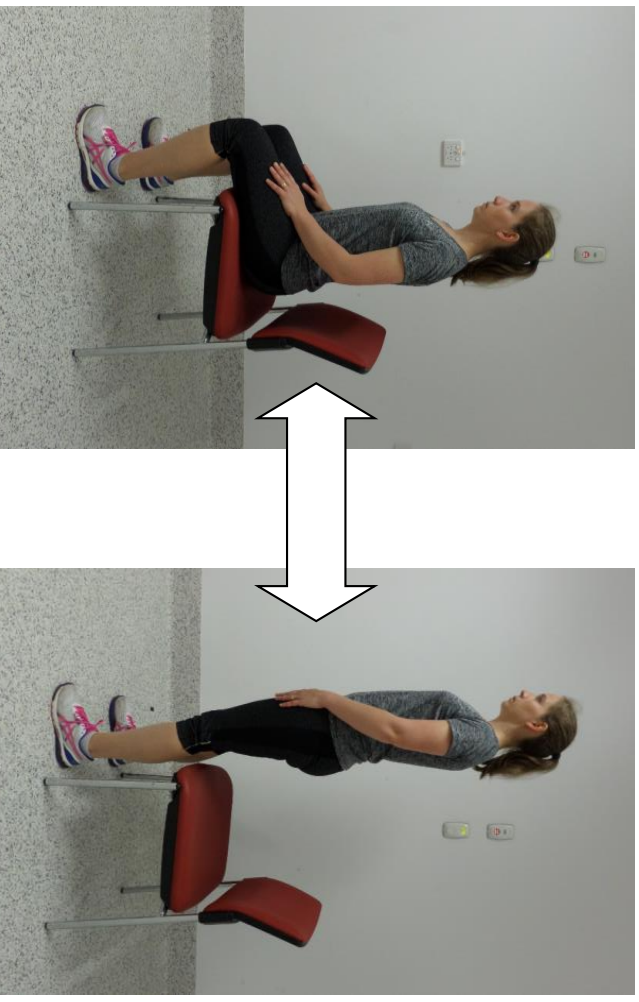
Face feet forwards and shoulder width apart

Movement:

Sit to stand and repeat

Key points:

Even weight through your legs



Squats (level 2) – air squat

Start position:

Stand upright with feet shoulder width apart and facing forwards

Movement:

Bend you knees

Move your bottom backward like you are going to sit on a chair

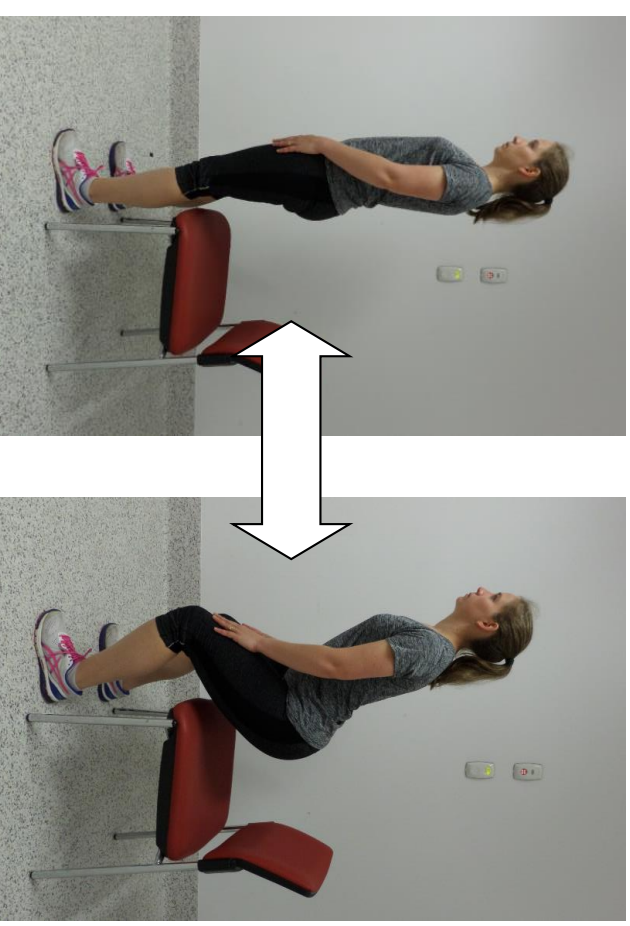
Hold for 3 sec

Stand back into start position

Key points:

Don't let you knees go past your toes

Should not be painful on the knees



Squats (level 3) – jump squat

Start position:

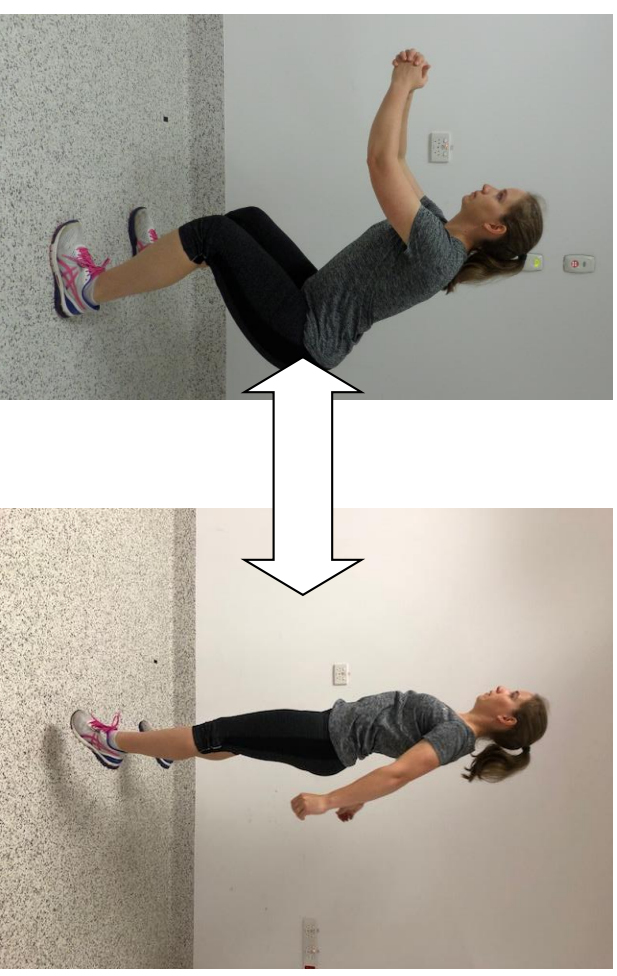
Bend your knees and stick your bottom out into a squat position

Movement:

Push through your legs into a jump and return to your squat position

Key points:

Switch on your pelvic floor muscles as you land



Calf Raises (level 1) – double calf raises

Start position:

Stand with feet shoulder width apart

Movement:

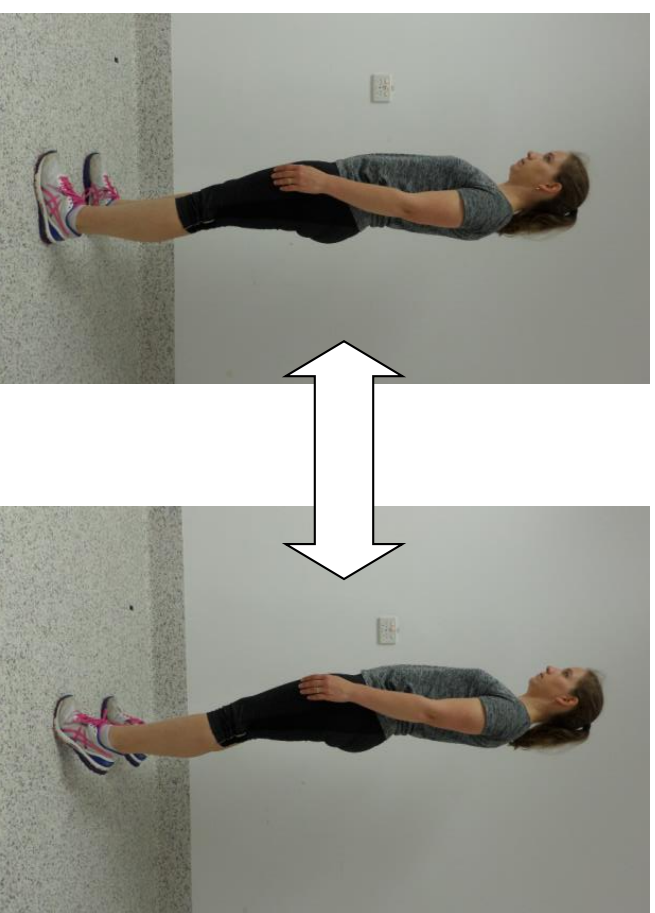
Lift body up to stand on balls of feet

Slowly lower down

Repeat

Key points:

Keep knees straight



Calf Raises (level 2)

– single calf Raise on ground

Start position:

Stand on one foot

Movement:

Lift body up to stand on ball of one foot

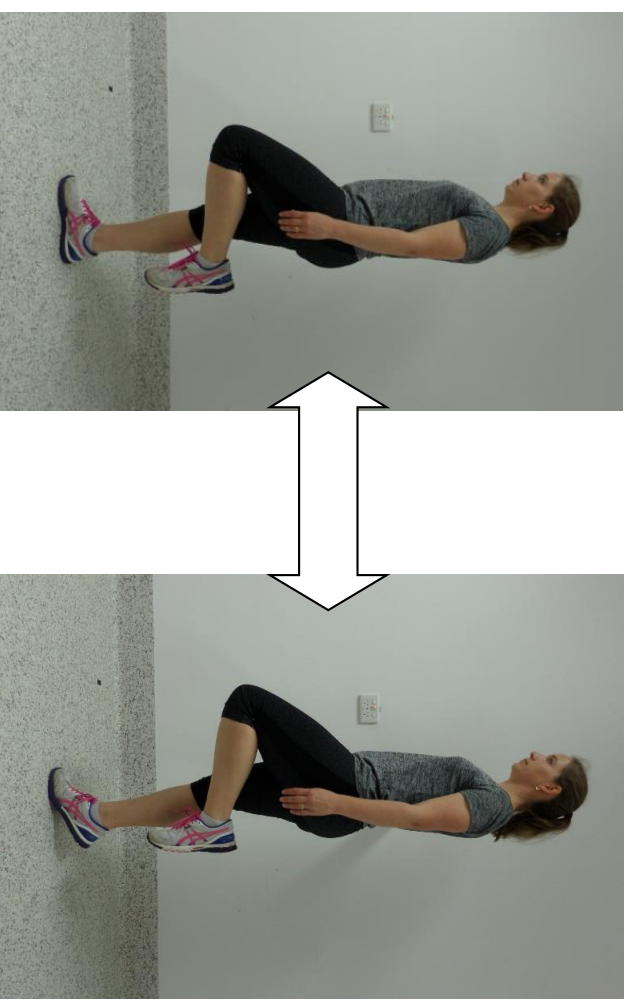
Slowly lower down

Repeat

Repeat on other side

Key points:

Keep knee straight



Calf Raises (level 3)

– calf raises on step

Start position:

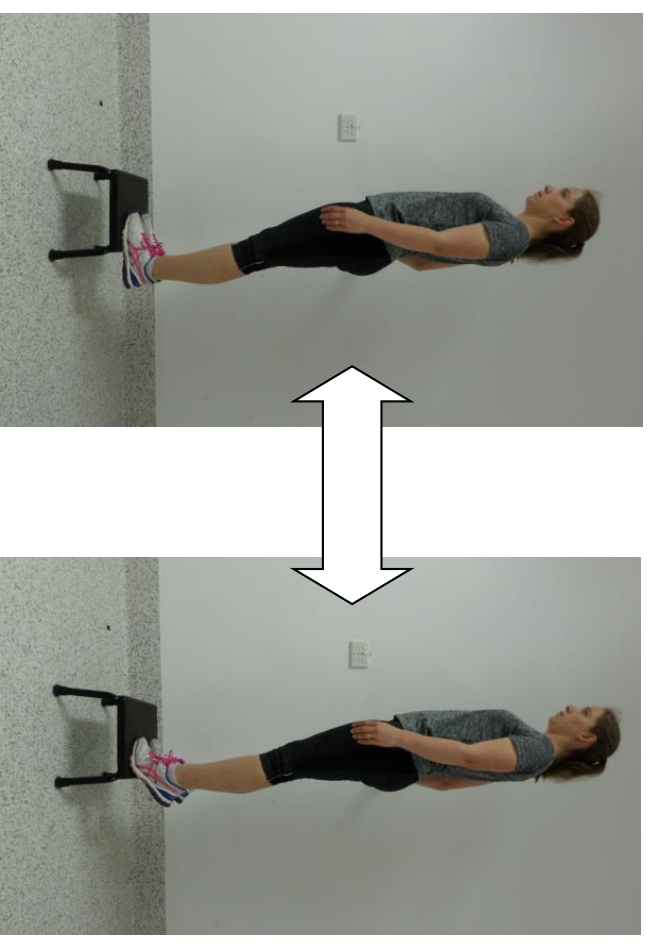
Stand with one or both feet on the step
Place balls on feet on the step and the
heels off the edge of the step

Movement:

Lift body up to stand on balls of feet
Slowly lower down
Repeat

Key points:

Keep knees straight
Try single leg to increase difficulty



Lunges (level 1) - bounce

Start position:

Stand with one leg out in front
Face feet forwards

Movement:

Bend both knees to move back knee
towards the floor

Hold for 2-3sec

Return to start position

Repeat with same leg

Key points:

Keep front knee behind level of
toes



Lunges (level 2) – leg swap

Start position:

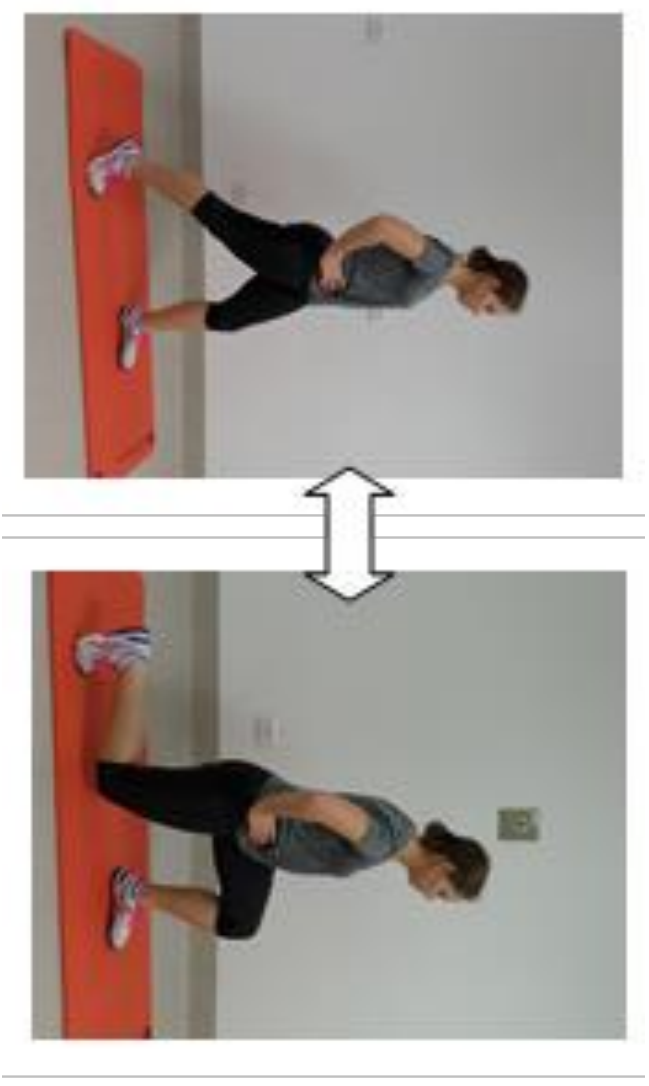
Stand with one leg out in front
Face feet forwards

Movement:

Bend both knees to move back
knee towards the floor
Hold for 2-3sec
Straighten up to start position
Step to swap legs
Perform on other side

Key points:

Keep front knee behind level of
toes



Lunge (level 3) –jumping leg swap

Start position:

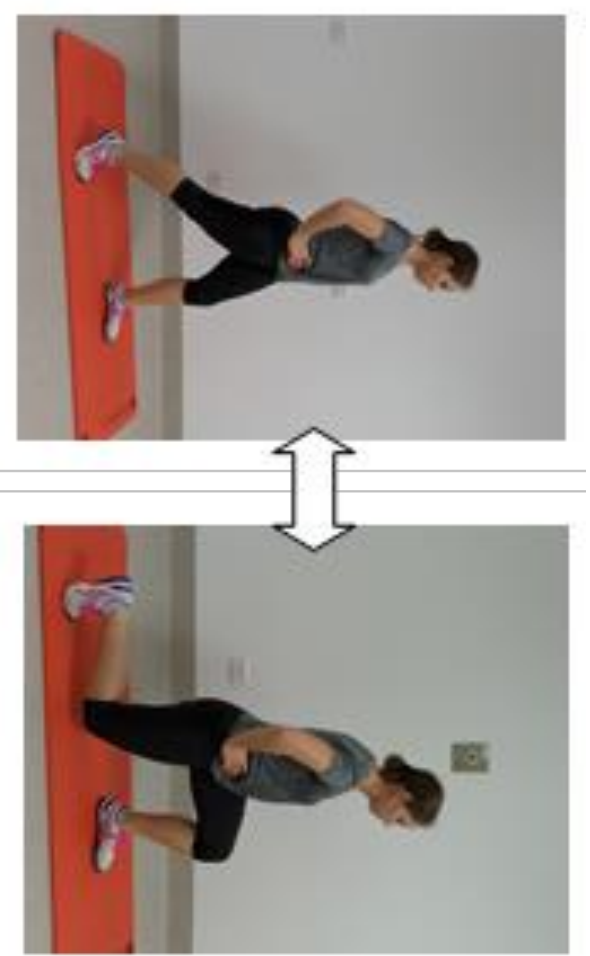
Stand with one leg out in front
Face feet forwards

Movement:

Bend both knees to move back knee
towards the floor
Hold for 2-3sec
Jump up and swap legs in the air
Perform on other side

Key points:

Keep front knee behind level of toes



Deadlift (level 1) – light dumbbell

Start position:

Stand tall with a dumbbell in each hand resting forward onto the front of your legs

Movement:

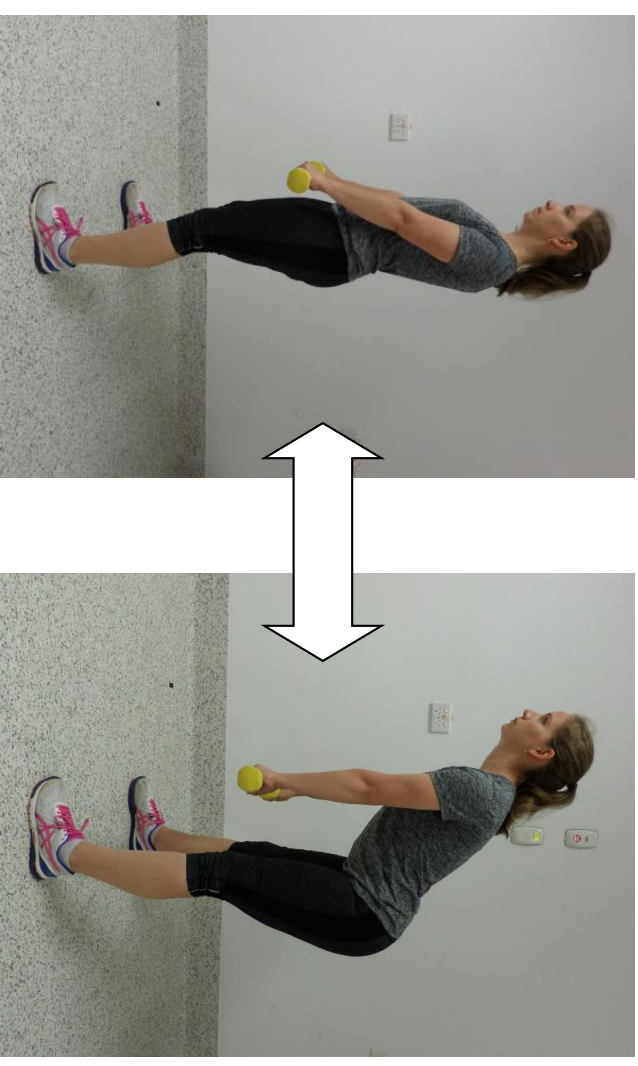
Hinge at your hips to move the dumbbells past your knees

Keep your legs straight

Return to standing

Key points:

You should feel this working the back of your legs (hamstrings)



Deadlift (level 2) – heavier dumbbell

Start position:

Stand tall with a weight in each hand and resting forward onto the front of your legs

Movement:

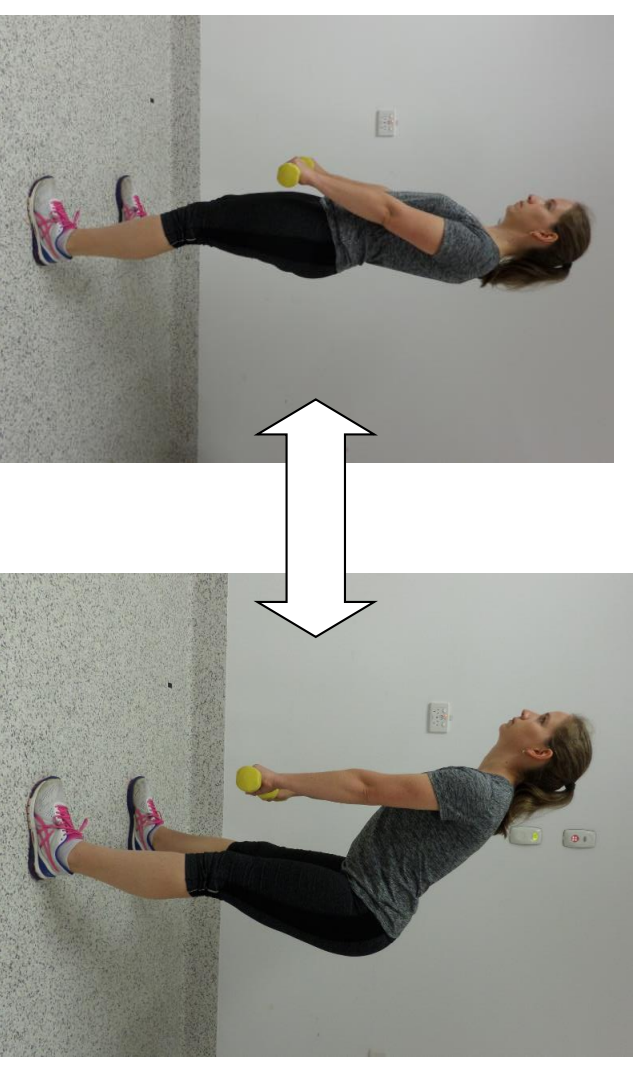
Hinge at your hips to move the weights past your knees

Keep your legs straight

Return to standing

Key points:

You should feel this working the back of your legs (hamstrings)



Deadlift (level 3) – dumbbell swing

Start position:

Stand holding a weight with both hands between your legs

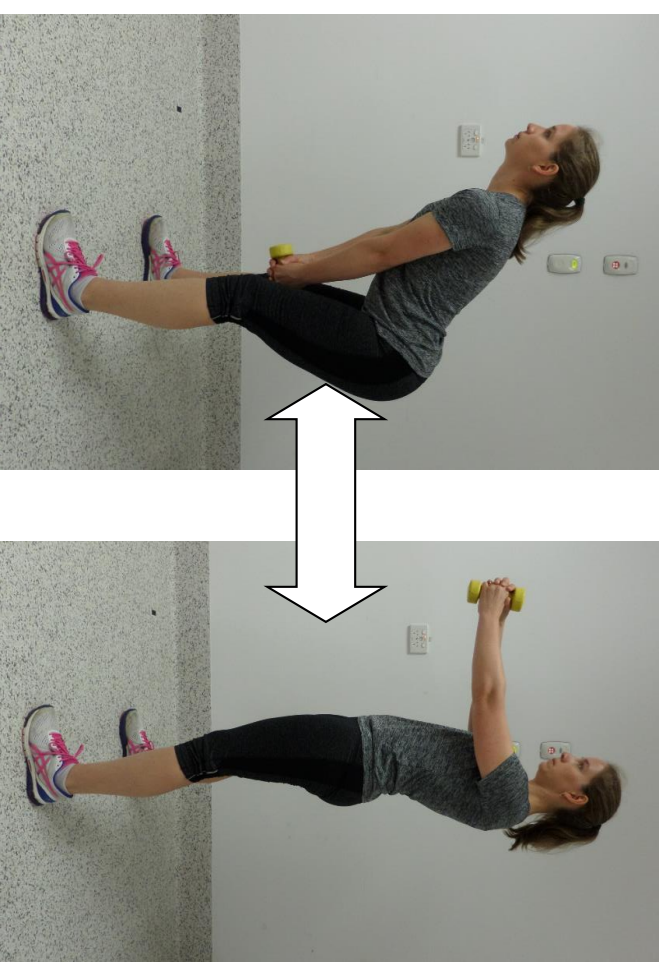
Movement:

Hinge at your hips to move the dumbbell backwards between your legs and then upwards towards the roof

Keep your legs straight

Key points:

You should feel this working the back of your legs (hamstrings)



Jogging (level 1) – marching on the spot

Start position:

In standing

Movement:

Alternatively bring each knee towards the chest

Key points:

Switch on pelvic floor muscles with each bounce



Jogging (level 2) – light jogging on the spot

Start position:

Standing

Movement:

Lightly jog on the spot

Key points:

Switch on pelvic floor muscles with each step



Jogging (level 3)

– fast jogging with high knees

Start position:

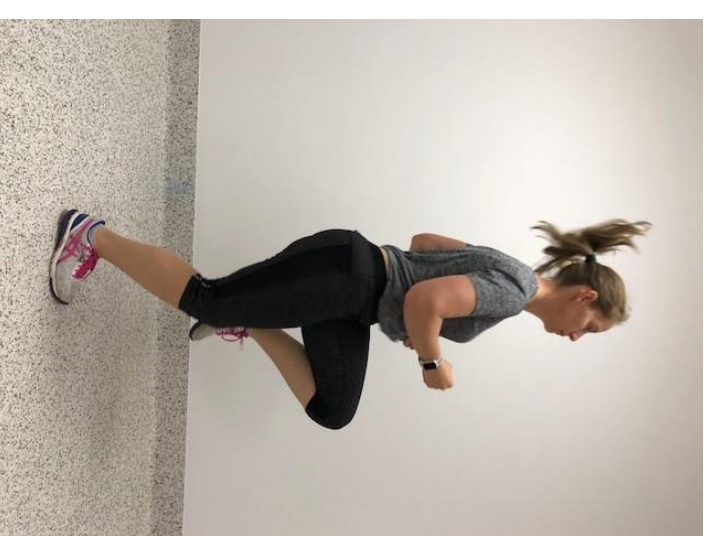
In standing

Movement:

Jog fast on the spot with high knees

Key points:

Switch on pelvic floor muscles with each bounce



Side Ski Jumps (Level 1) – step outs

Start position:

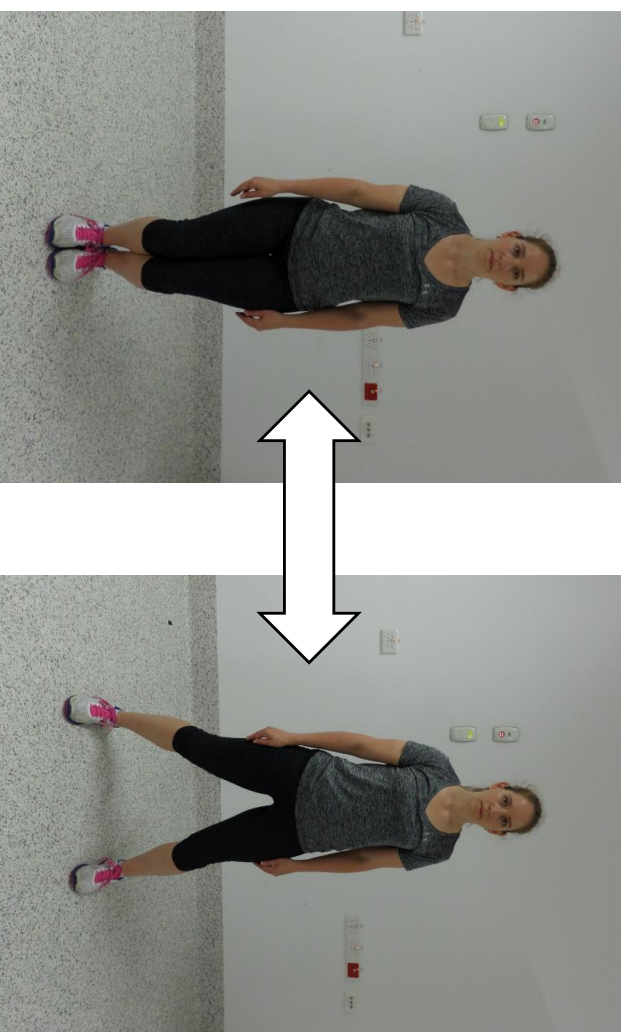
Stand with feet together

Movement:

Step one foot outwards, and bring opposite foot to it. Repeat in other direction.

Key points:

Switch on pelvic floor muscles with each step



Side Ski Jumps (Level 2)

– hop with toe touch

Start position:

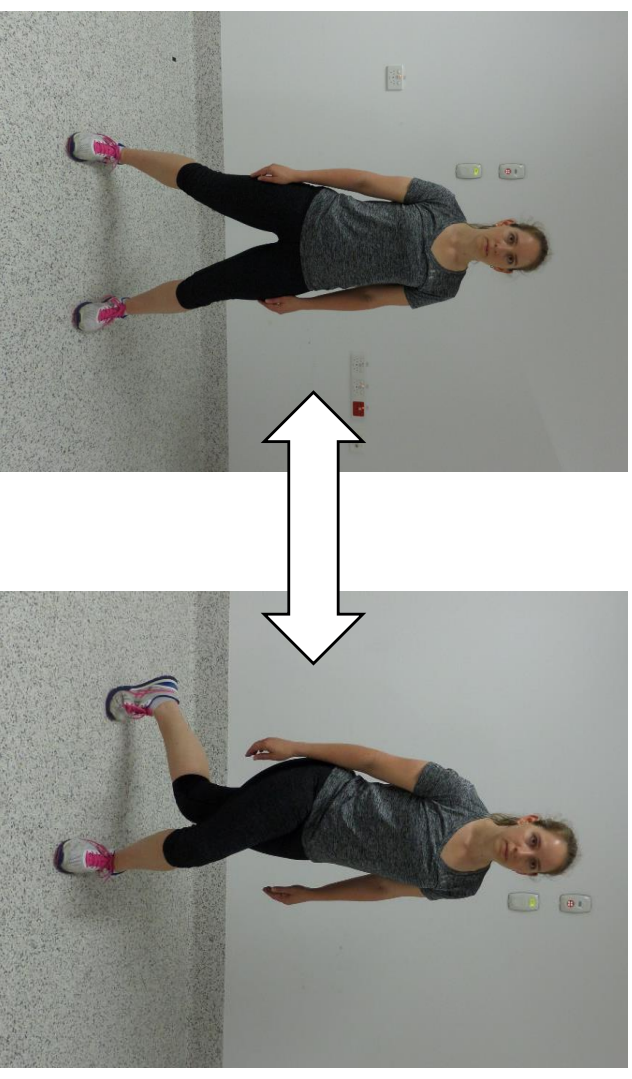
Stand with feet apart

Movement:

Hop one foot outwards, balance on this foot, and step opposite foot behind it

Key points:

Switch on pelvic floor muscles with each hop



Side Ski Jumps (Level 3)

– hop without toe touch

Start position:

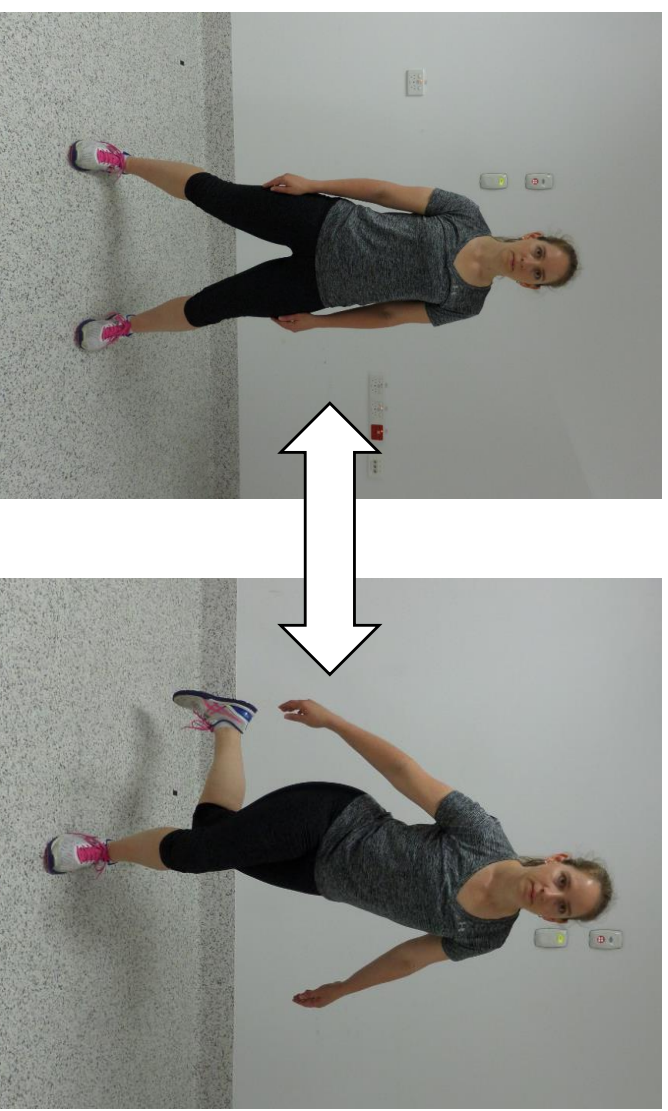
Stand with feet together

Movement:

Hop one foot outwards, balance on this foot, and move opposite foot behind it, keeping your foot off the floor

Key points:

Switch on pelvic floor muscles with each bounce



Trampoline (Level 1) – walking on toes

Start position:

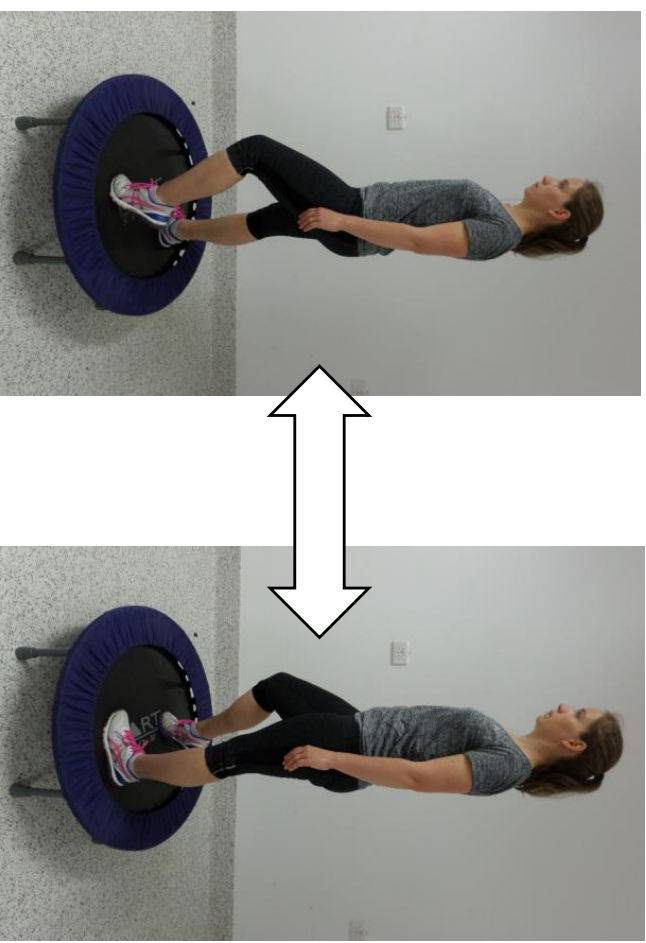
Stand on the trampoline

Movement:

Bounce forward onto alternate toes, keeping feet grounded on the trampoline at all times

Key points:

Switch on pelvic floor muscles with each bounce, keep knees soft



Trampoline (Level 2) – side shuffle

Start position:

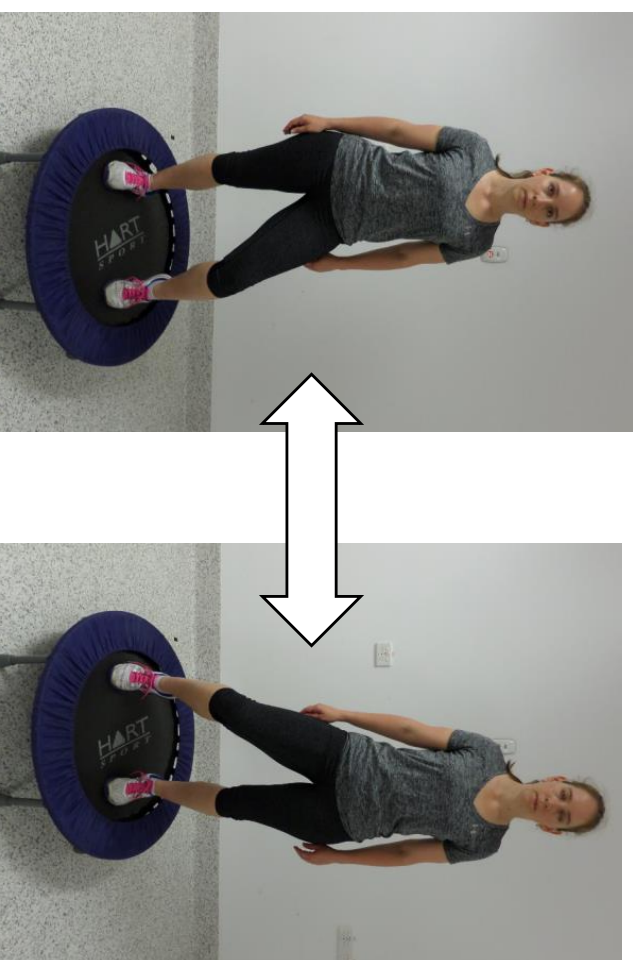
Stand on the trampoline

Movement:

Bounce sideways onto alternate feet, allow your heels to lift off the trampoline

Key points:

Switch on pelvic floor muscles with each bounce, keep knees soft



Trampoline (Level 3) – jumping

Start position:

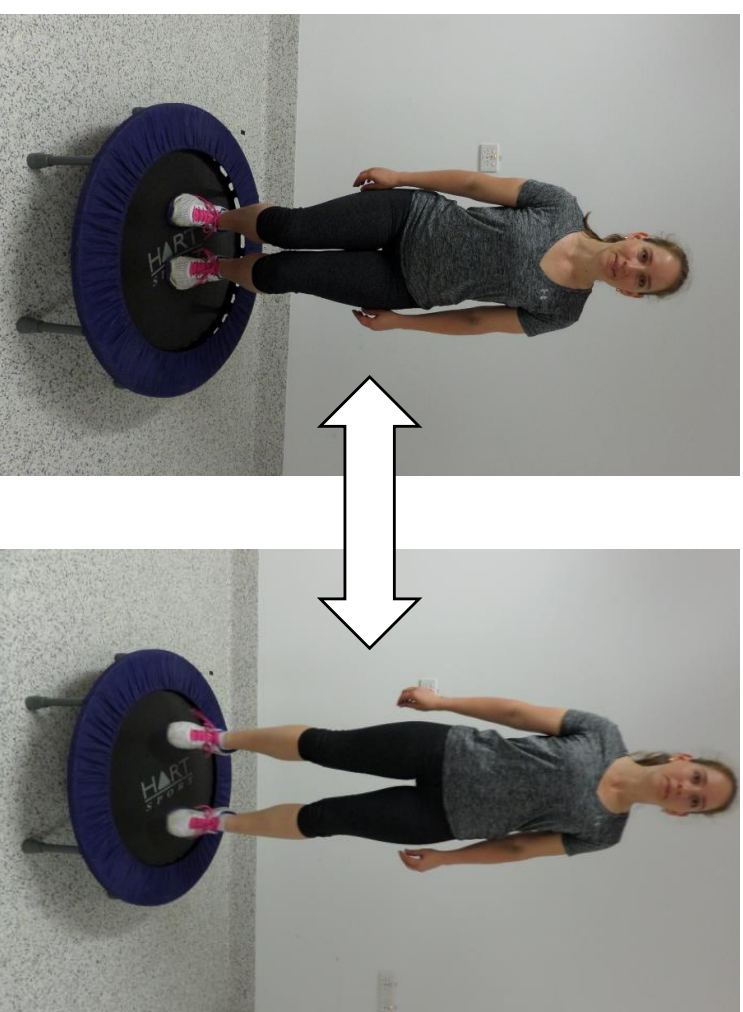
Stand on the trampoline

Movement:

Jump up and down on trampoline

Key points:

Switch on pelvic floor muscles with each bounce, keep knees soft



Narrow Jumping (Level 1) – calf raises

Start position:

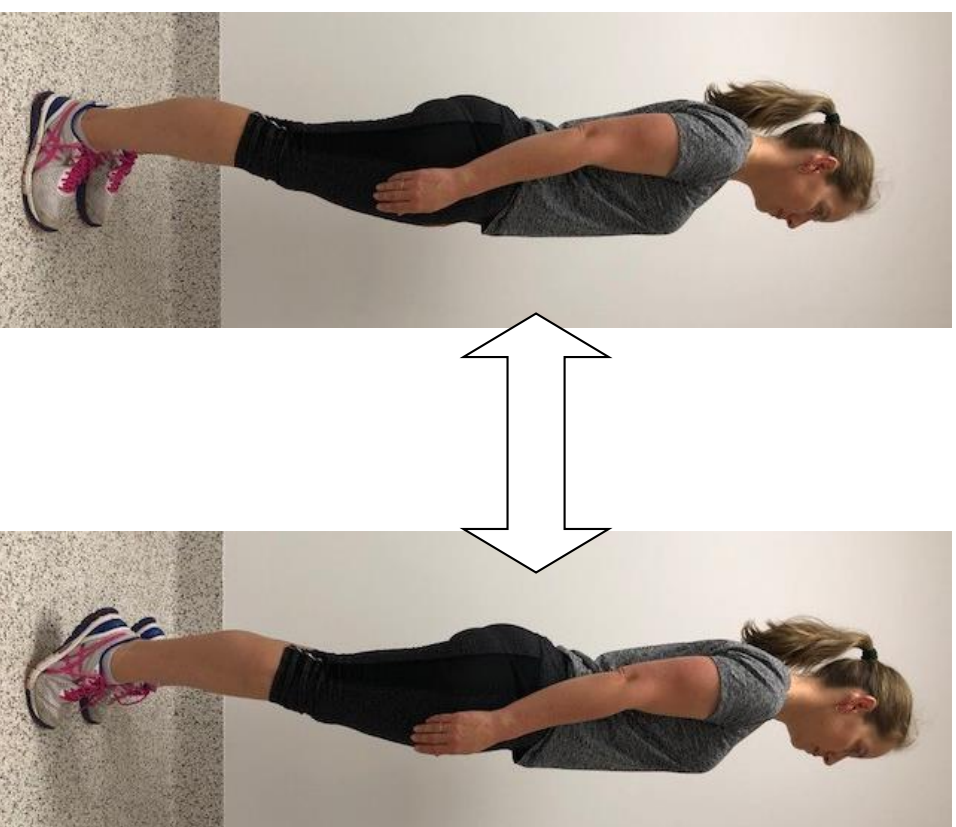
Stand with feet together

Movement:

Push onto your toes, keeping your feet on the ground at all times

Key points:

Switch on pelvic floor muscles



Narrow Jumping (Level 2)

– light jump

Start position:

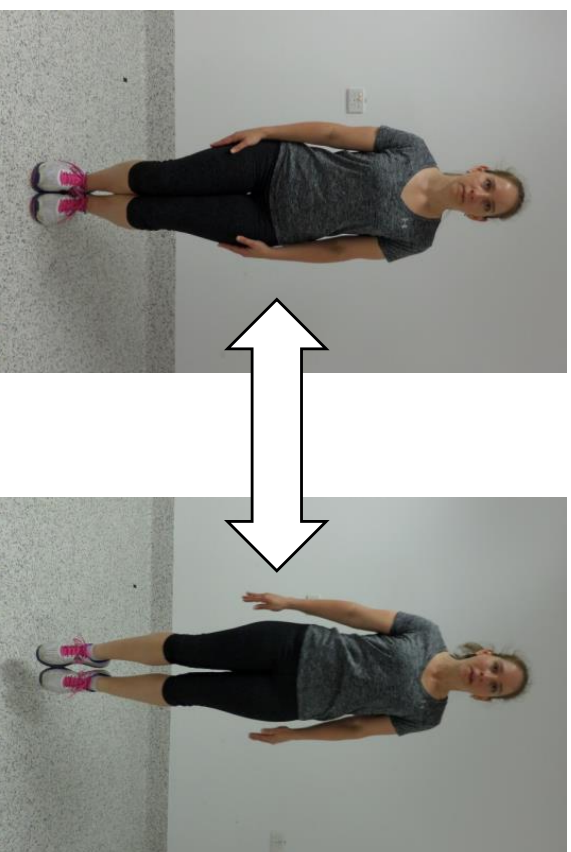
Stand with feet together

Movement:

Lightly jump up and down

Key points:

Switch on pelvic floor
muscles with each bounce,
keep knees soft



Narrow Jumping (Level 3) – high jump

Start position:

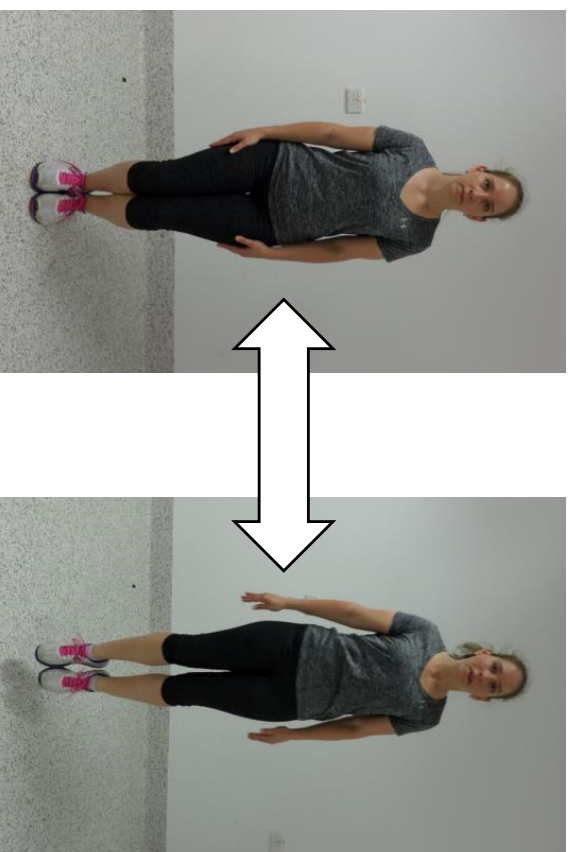
Stand with feet together

Movement:

Jump up and down

Key points:

Switch on pelvic floor
muscles with each bounce,
keep knees soft



Wide Jumping (Level 1) – calf raises

Start position:

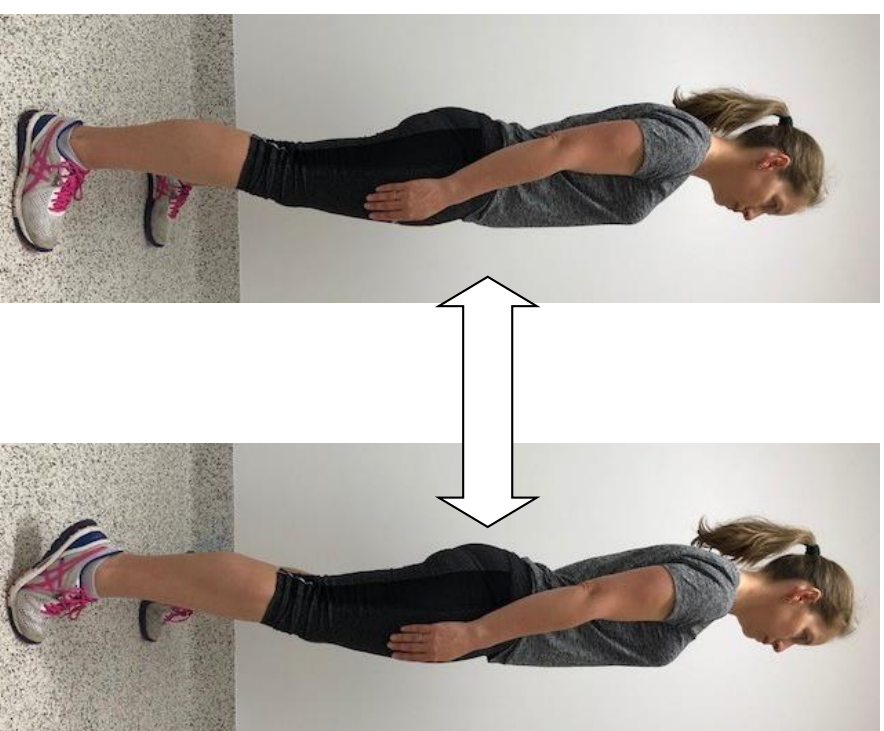
Stand with feet greater than shoulder width apart

Movement:

Push onto your toes, keeping your feet on the ground at all times

Key points:

Switch on pelvic floor muscles



Wide Jumping (Level 2) - light jump

Start position:

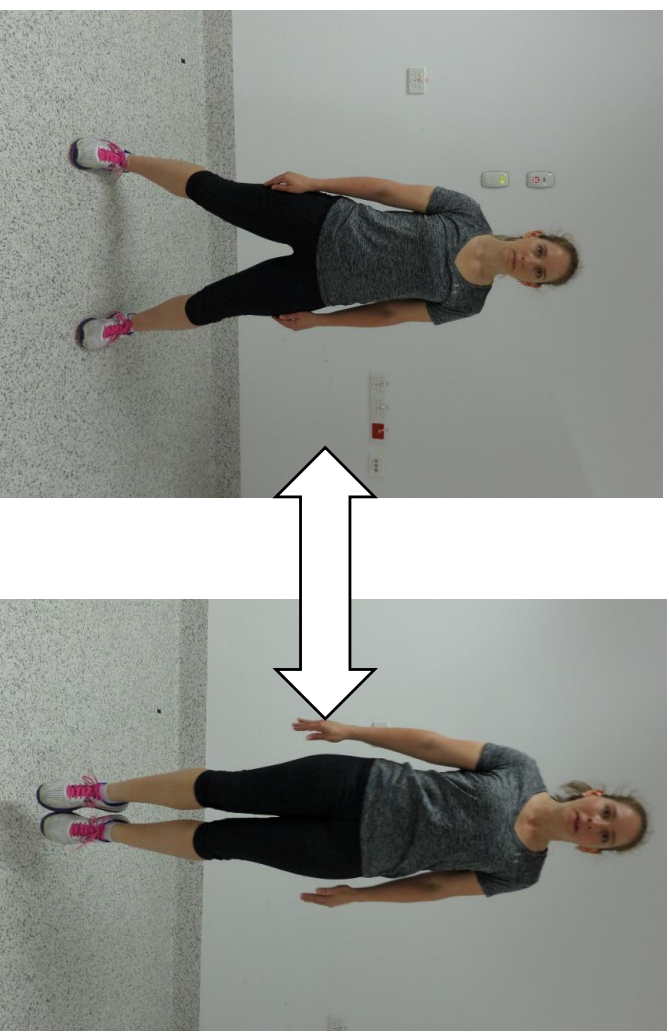
Stand with feet greater than shoulder width apart

Movement:

Lightly jump up and down

Key points:

Switch on pelvic floor muscles with each bounce, keep knees soft



Wide Jumping (Level 3) – star jumps

Start position:

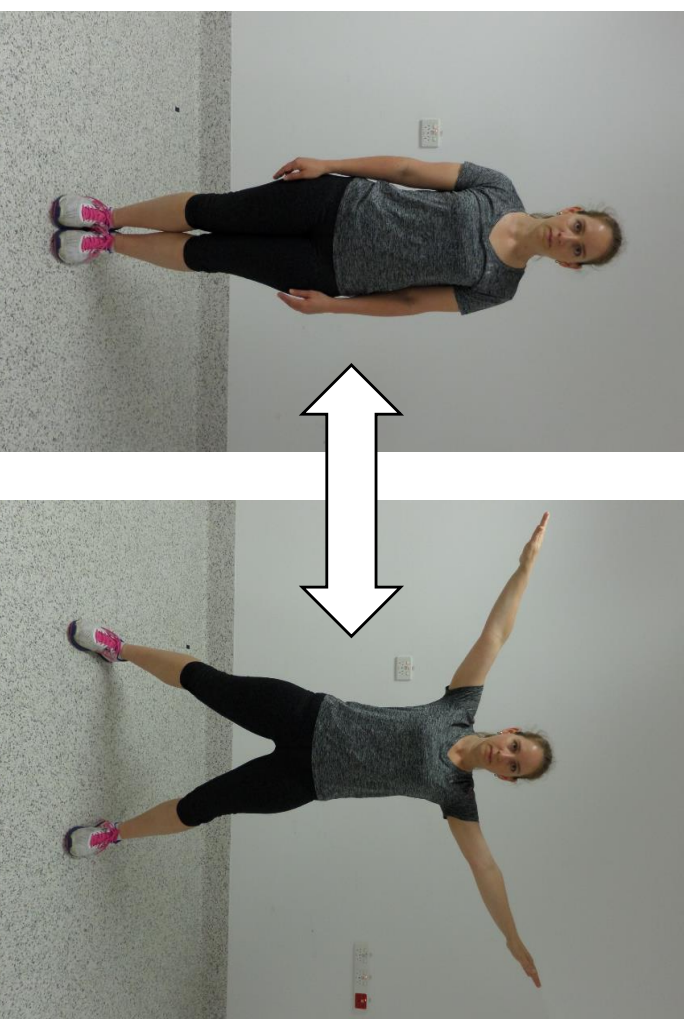
Stand with feet together

Movement:

Jump feet outwards and
back inwards towards centre

Key points:

Switch on pelvic floor
muscles with each
bounce, keep knees soft



Mountain climbers (level 1) – against bed/bench/rails

Start position:

Leaning onto a bench putting weight through hands, keeping elbows straight, body in a straight line

Movement:

Bend knees alternately to march feet on the spot

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy, keep bottom down



Mountain climbers (level 2) – on the floor

Start position:

On hands and toes, elbows straight
Body in a straight line and weight through
hands

Movement:

Bend knees alternately to march feet on
the spot



Key points:

Draw in lower tummy, keep bottom down

Mountain climbers (level 3) – on foam

Start position:

On hands (on foam mat) and toes
with elbow straight
Body in a straight line and weight
through hands

Movement:

Bend knees alternately to march
feet on the spot

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy, keep bottom
down



Knee lifts (level 1)

– knee lifts

Start position:

Stand with feet shoulder width apart

Hold wall/chair for balance support if required

Movement:

Lift knee up to hip height

Maintain upright posture

Alternate each leg

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy



Knee lifts (level 2) – with rotation crunch

Start position:

Stand with feet shoulder width apart

Movement:

Lift knee up to hip height

Rotate upper body to bring opposite elbow to knee

Return to upright posture

Alternate each arm and leg

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy



Knee lifts (level 3) – with rotation crunch and squat

Start position:

Stand with feet shoulder width apart

Movement:

Lift knee up to hip height

Rotate upper body to bring opposite elbow to knee

Return to upright posture

Squat down

Repeat alternating sides

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy



Burpees (level 1)

– step out burpee on bed/wall

Start position:

Stand in mini squat position

Movement:

Lean forwards to place hands onto bed/wall

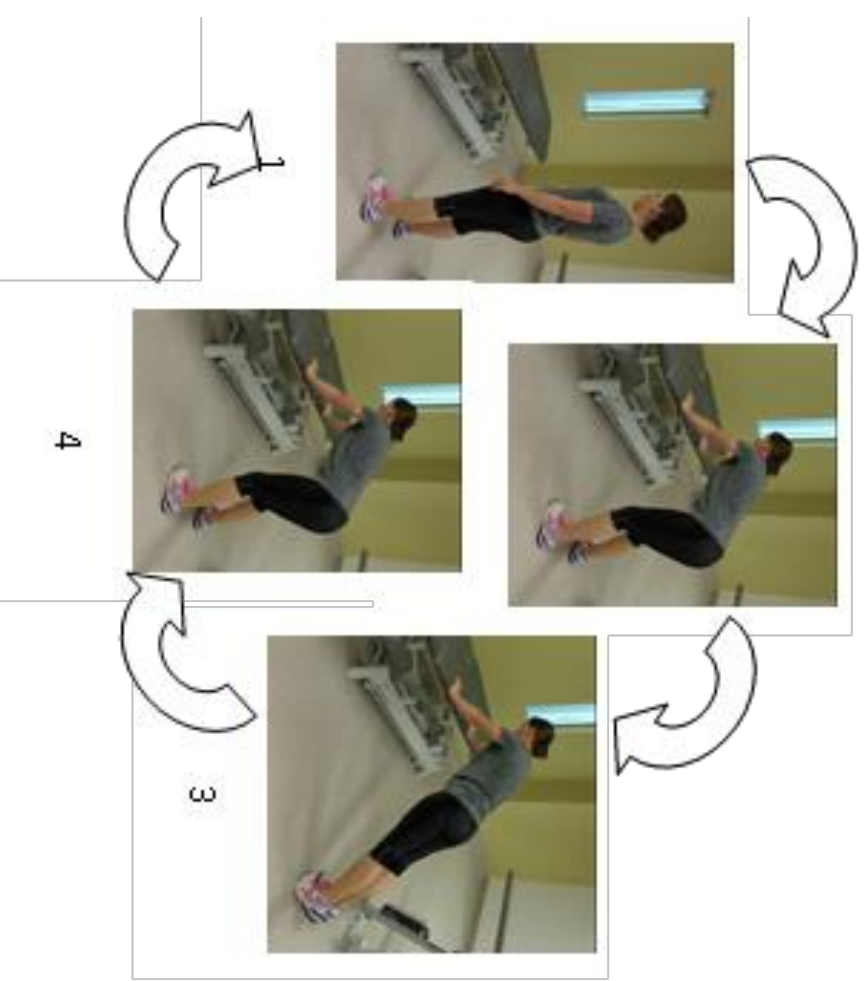
Step feet backwards into plank position

Step feet forwards into squat position

Repeat

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy and keep bottom down when in plank



Burpee (level 2)

– step out burpee on floor

Start position:

Stand in upright position

Movement:

Squat down to place hands on floor in front of you

Step feet backwards into plank position

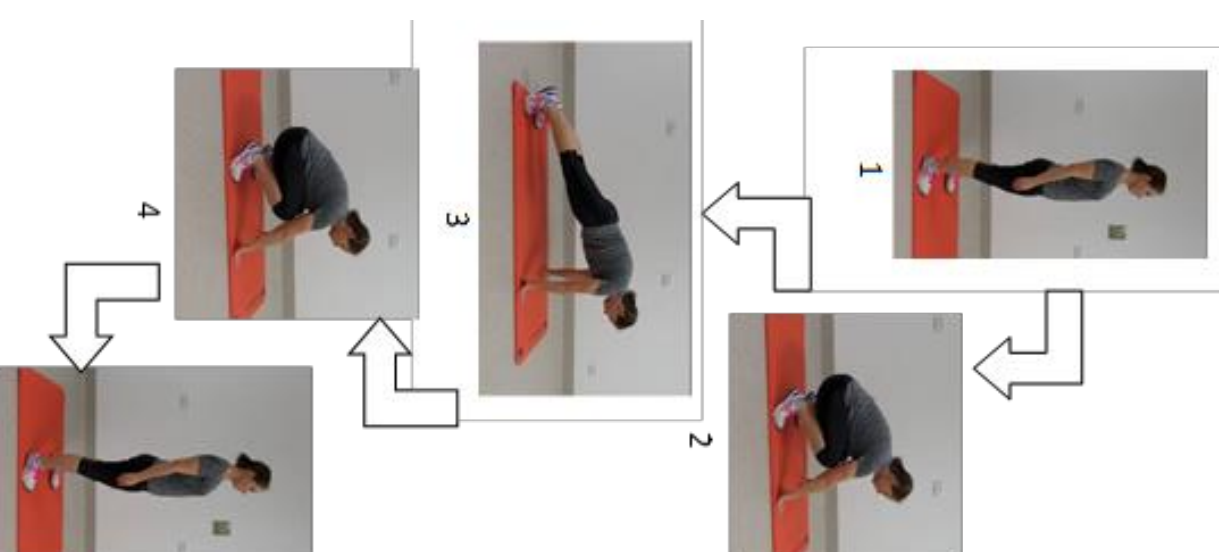
Step feet forwards into full squat position

Stand up

Repeat

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy and keep bottom down when in plank



Burpee (level 3) – jumping burpee

Start position:

Start in standing squat position

Movement:

Squat down to place hands on floor in front of you

Jump feet backwards into plank position

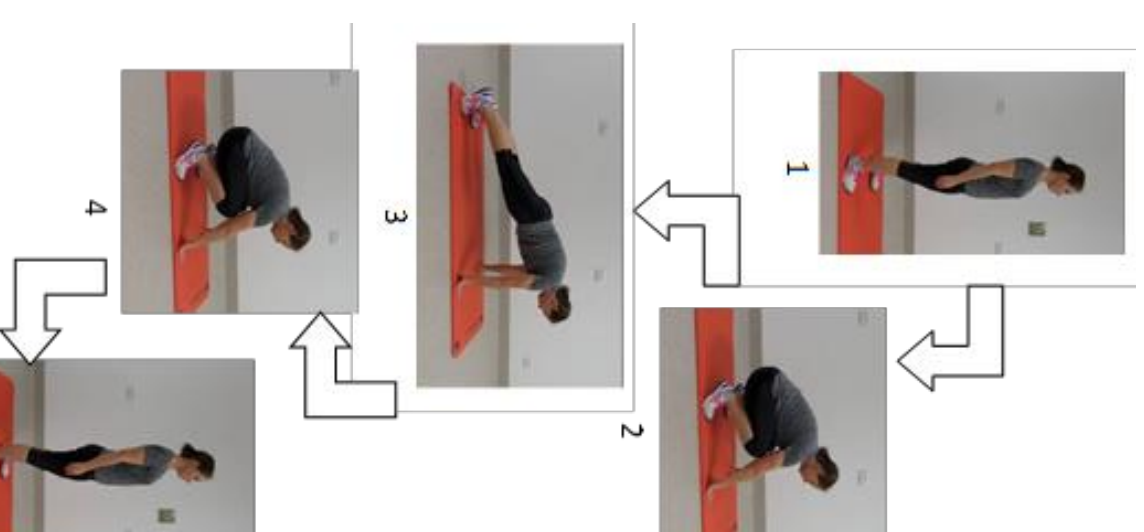
Jump feet forwards into full squat position

Stand up and reach up tall

Repeat

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy and keep bottom down when in plank



Punches (level 1) – with no weight

Start Position:

Stand upright with feet apart

Hands positioned with fists in front of chest

Movement:

Straight – punch alternate fists out front with effort

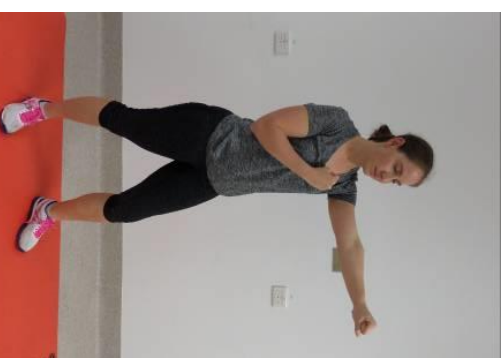
Upper cuts – punch alternate fists from hip to on front of chest

Hooks – punch alternate fists from shoulder around to front of chest

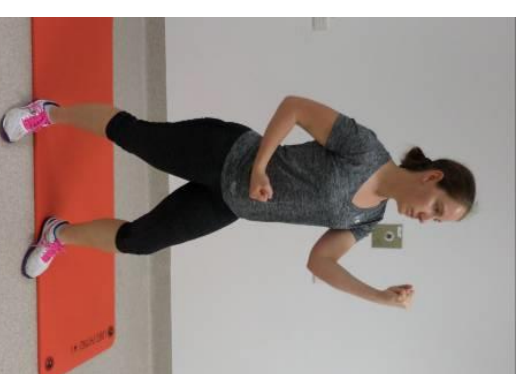
Key points:

Draw in lower tummy to stabilise

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STRAIGHT



UPPER CUTS



HOOKS

Punches (level 2) – with 0.5kg weight

Start position:

Stand upright with feet apart

Hands positioned with fists in front of chest

Movement:

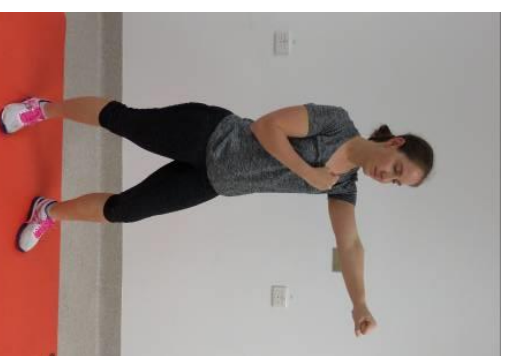
Straight – punch alternate fists out front with effort

Upper cuts – punch alternate fists from hip to on front of chest

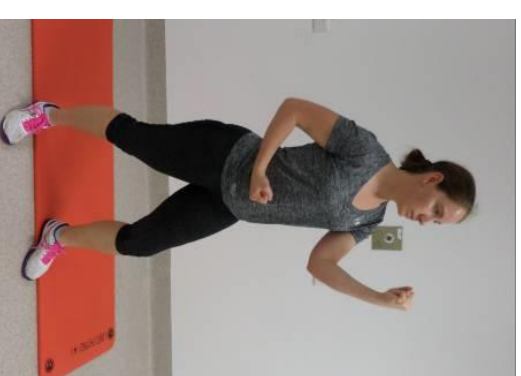
Hooks – punch alternate fists from shoulder around to front of chest

Key points:

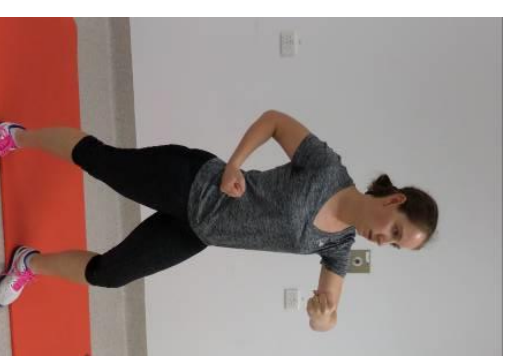
Draw in lower tummy to stabilise



STRAIGHT



UPPER CUTS



HOOKS

Punches (level 3) – with 1kg weight

Start position:

Stand upright with feet apart

Hands positioned with fists in front of chest

Movement:

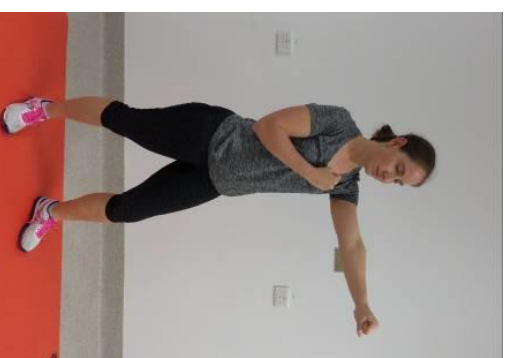
Straight – punch alternate fists out front with effort

Upper cuts – punch alternate fists from hip to on front of chest

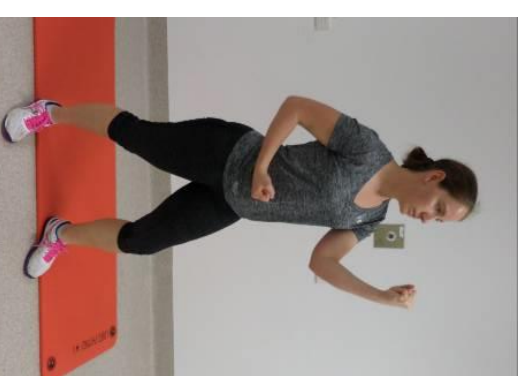
Hooks – punch alternate fists from shoulder around to front of chest

Key points:

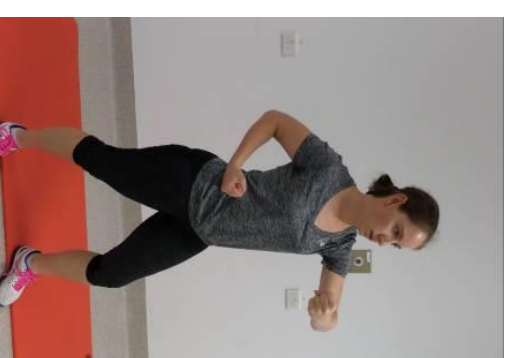
Draw in lower tummy to stabilise



STRAIGHT



UPPER CUTS



HOOKS

Bike (level 1) – low resistance

Start position:

Sitting on bike

Movement:

Pedal fast on a low resistance

Key points:

Sit tall



Bike (level 2) – moderate resistance

Start position:

Sitting on bike

Movement:

Pedal with moderate resistance

Key points:

Sit tall



Bike (level 3) – high resistance

Start position:

Standing on bike

Movement:

Pedal with high resistance

Key points:

Stand tall

Switch on your pelvic floor muscles



Plank (level 1) – on knees

Start position:

On elbows and knees with weight forwards onto elbows and pelvis close to the floor

Movement:

Hold still

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy, tuck pelvis under, breathe



Plank (level 2) – on toes

Start position:

On elbows and toes with body in a straight line

Weight forwards onto elbows

Movement:

Hold still

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy, tuck pelvis under, breathe



Plank (level 3) – with back leg lift

Start position:

On elbows and toes with body in a straight line

Weight forwards onto elbows

Movement:

Slowly kick straight leg towards ceiling keeping leg straight

Repeat with the other leg



Key points:

Draw in lower tummy, tuck pelvis under, breathe

Table top leg extension (level 1) – single leg small

Start position:

Lie on your back with knees bent, feet on floor

Movement:

Lift one leg to make a table top

Extend leg out straight keeping it high

Bend back to table top

Return foot to mat

Repeat on the other side

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy, gently flatten back into floor, breathe



Table top leg extension (level 2) – single leg big

Start position:

Lie on your back with knees bent, feet on floor

Movement:

Lift one leg into table top

Extend leg out straight taking it close to the floor

Bend back to table top

Return foot to mat

Repeat on the other side

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy, gently flatten back into floor, breathe



Table top leg extension (level 3) – double table top

Start position:

Lie on your back with knees bent

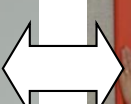
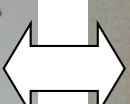
Movement:

Lift one leg at a time into tabletop

Lower one leg at a time down

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy, gently
flatten back into floor, breathe



Crunching (level 1) – knee crunch

Start position:

4-point kneeling

Movement:

Tuck knee up to chest

Hold for 2-3sec

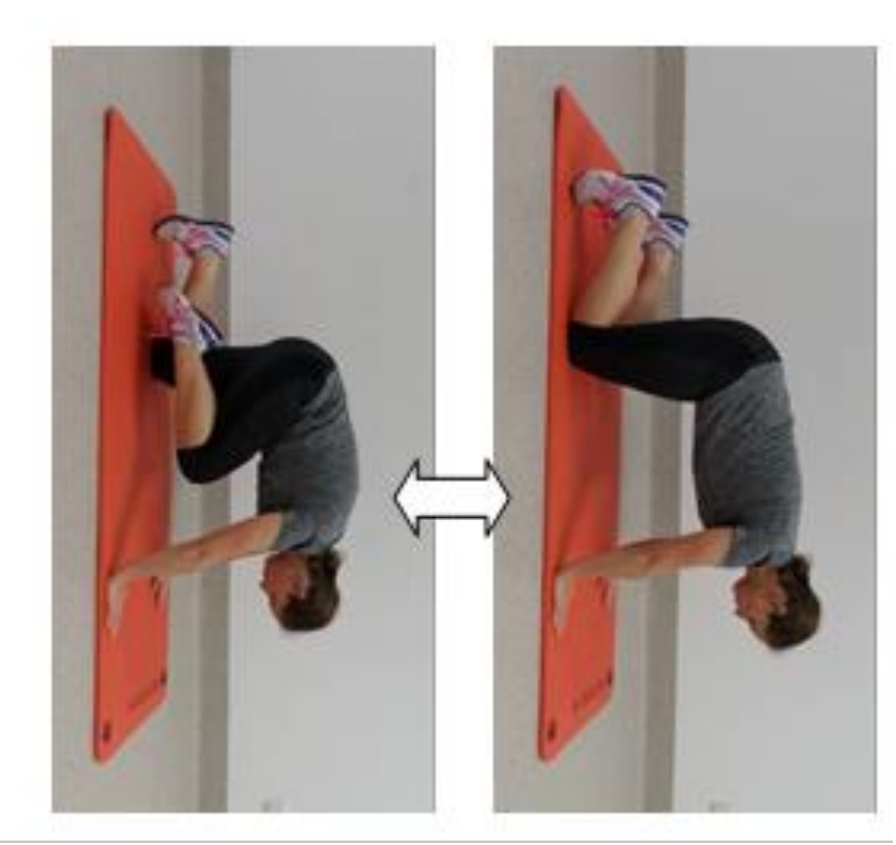
Extend leg out behind and touch
toes to floor

Repeat

Repeat on the other side

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy, breathe



Crunching (level 2)

– bicycle crunch with toe touches

Start position:

Sit on chair

Movement:

Cycle/alternate legs up and down
touching feet onto floor

Key points:

Stable back position by drawing in
tummy, breathe



Crunching (level 3)

– bicycle crunch without toe touches

Start position:

Sit on chair

Movement:

Cycle/alternate legs up and down
keeping feet off floor

Key points:

Stable back position by drawing in
tummy, breathe



Bird Dogs (level 1) – single arm and leg

Start position:

4 point kneel onto hands and knees

Movement:

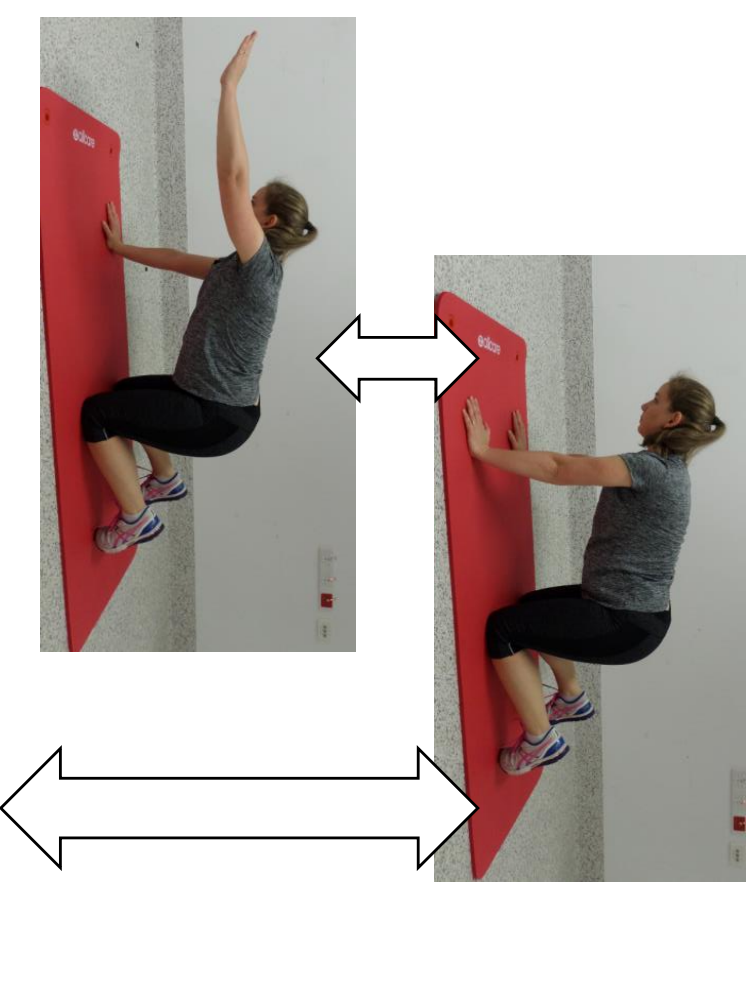
Extend your arm and return to 4 point kneel

Extend your leg and return to 4 point kneel

Alternate sides

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy, breathe



Bird Dogs (level 2)

—opposite arm and leg on knees

Start position:

4 point kneel onto hands and knees

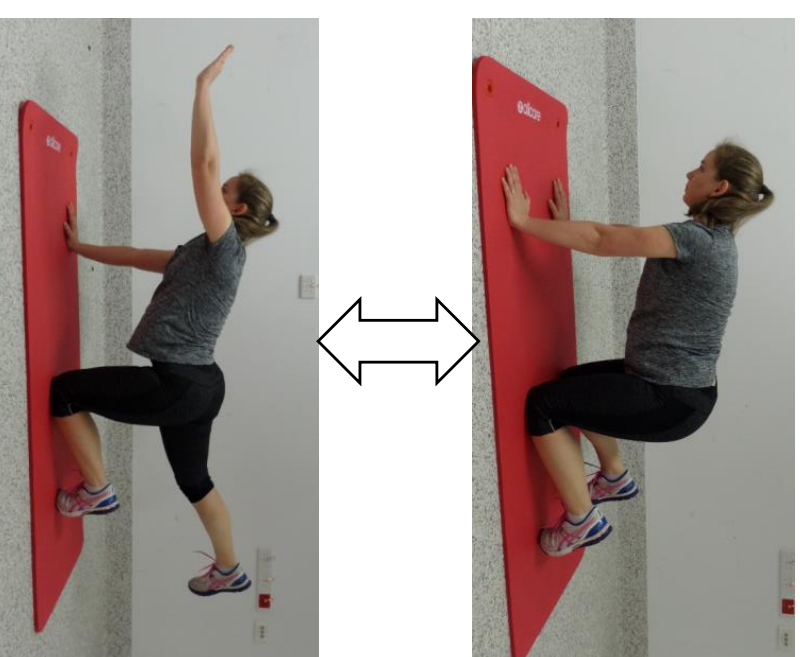
Movement:

Extend your opposite arm and leg
and return to 4 point kneel

Alternate between sides

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy, breathe



Bird Dogs (level 3)

– opposite arm and leg in plank

Start position:

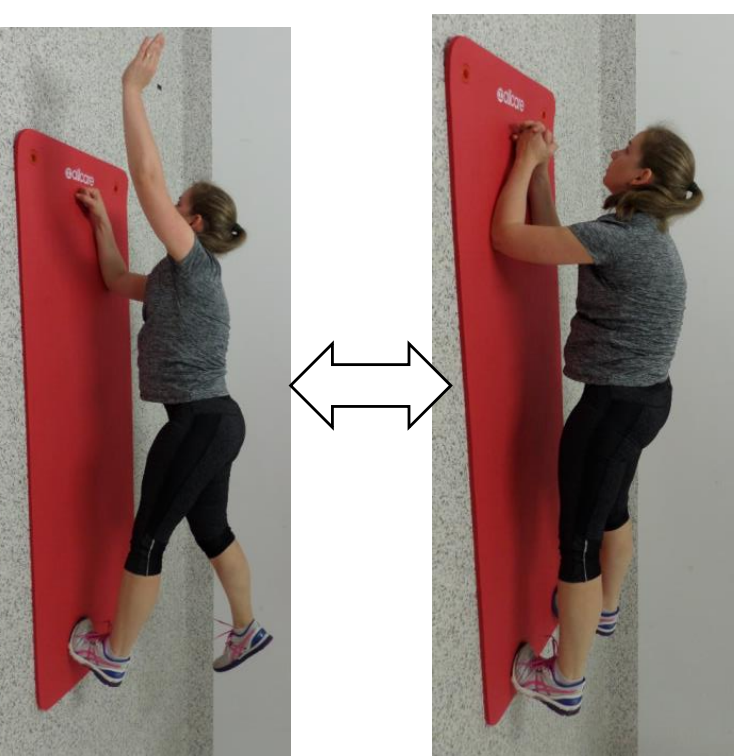
On elbows and toes with body in a straight line
Weight forwards onto elbows

Movement:

Hold plank and extend opposite arm and leg
Alternate between sides

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy, breath awareness



Side Plank (level 1) – knees

Start position:

Rest onto your side with your knees bent.

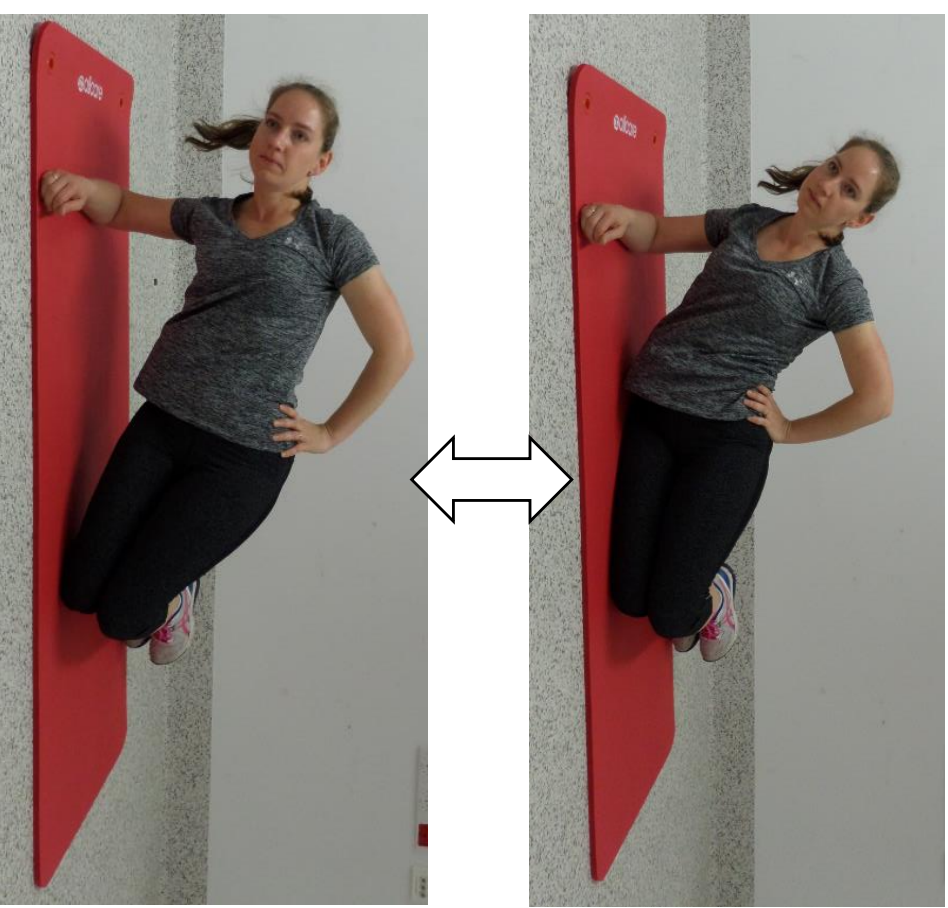
Keep your shoulders, hips, and knees are in a straight line

Movement:

Lift your hips off the ground

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy, breathe



Side Plank (level 2) – toes

Start position:

Rest onto your side with your legs straight.

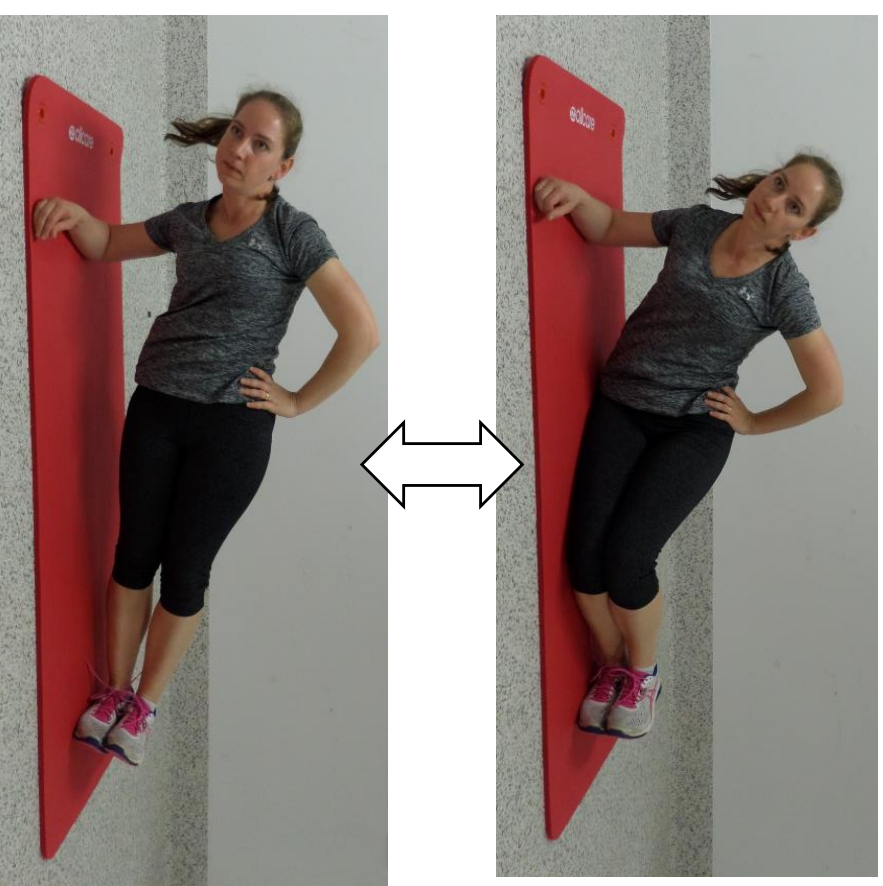
Keep your shoulders, hips, knees, and feet are in a straight line

Movement:

Lift your hips and knees off the ground

Key points:

Draw in your lower tummy, breathe



Side Plank (level 3) – toes with arm extended

Start position:

Rest onto your side with your legs straight.

Keep your shoulders, hips, knees, and feet are in a straight line

Movement:

Lift your hips and knees off the ground and extend your top arm toward the ceiling

Key points:

Draw in your lower tummy, breathe



Crunches (level 1) – knees

Start position:

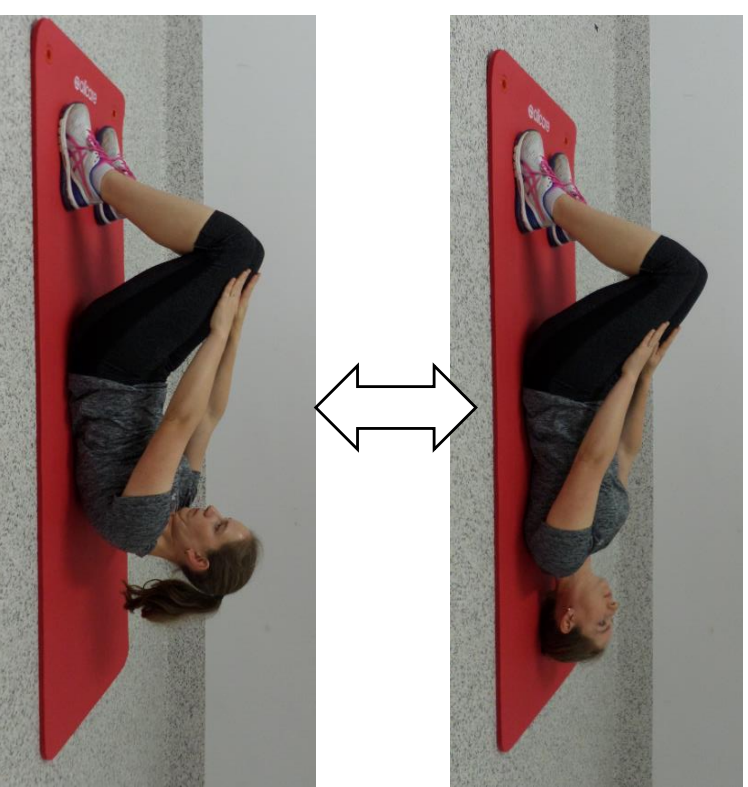
Lie on your back with your knees bent

Movement:

Draw in your lower tummy and your pelvic floor as you slide your arms up your knees

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy and pelvic floor muscles



Crunches (level 2) – sit-up

Start position:

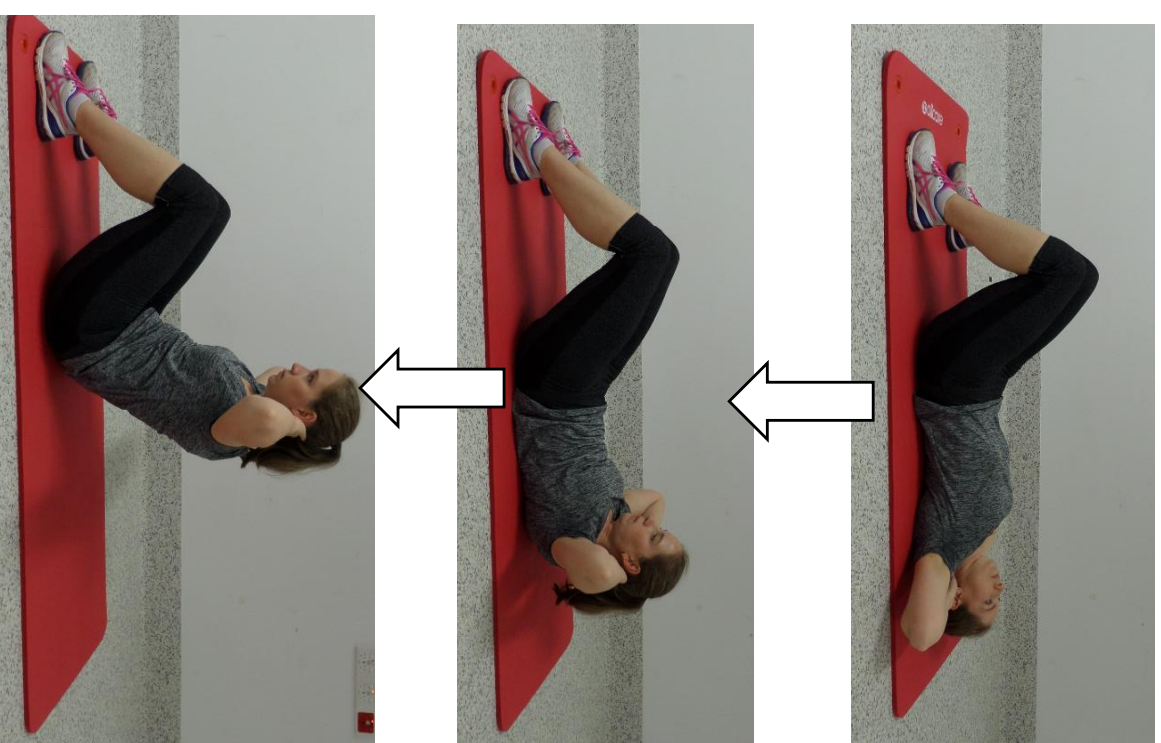
Lie on your back with your knees bent

Movement:

Draw in your lower tummy and your pelvic floor as you move into a sit position

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy and pelvic floor muscles, use something to stabilise your feet if required



Crunches (level 3) – dumbbell sit-up

Start position:

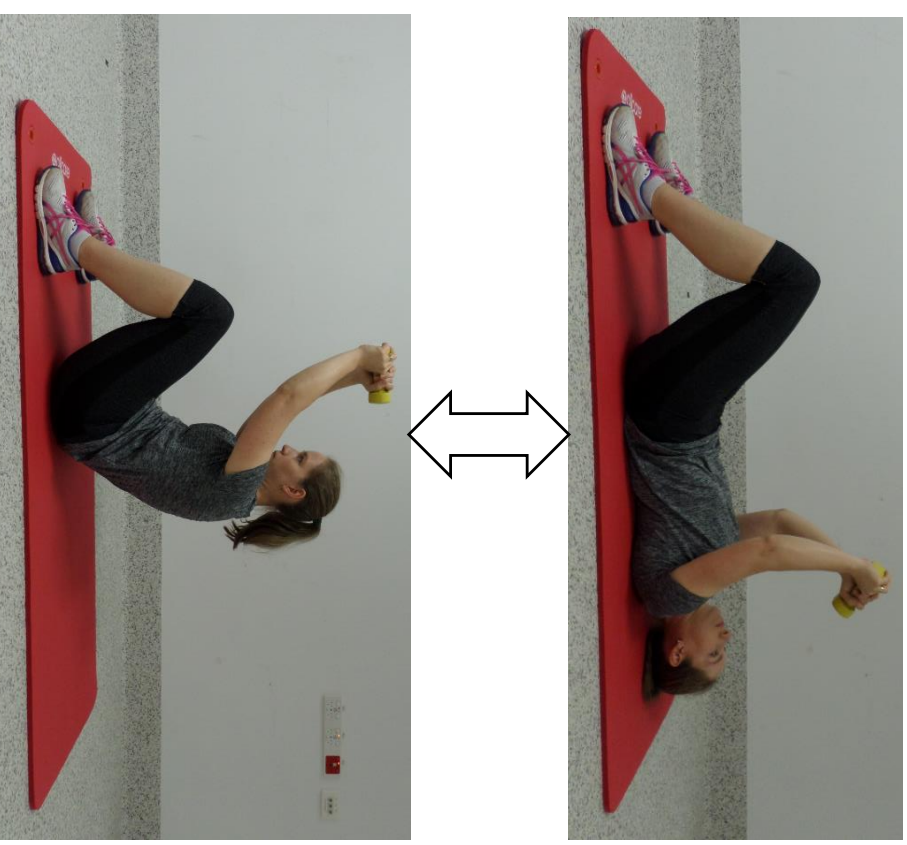
Lie on your back with your knees bent

Movement:

Draw in your lower tummy and your pelvic floor as you move into a sit position holding a dumbbell in your hands

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy and pelvic floor muscles, breathe



Oblique Crunches (level 1)

- hands behind head

Start position:

Lie on your back with your knees bent

Movement:

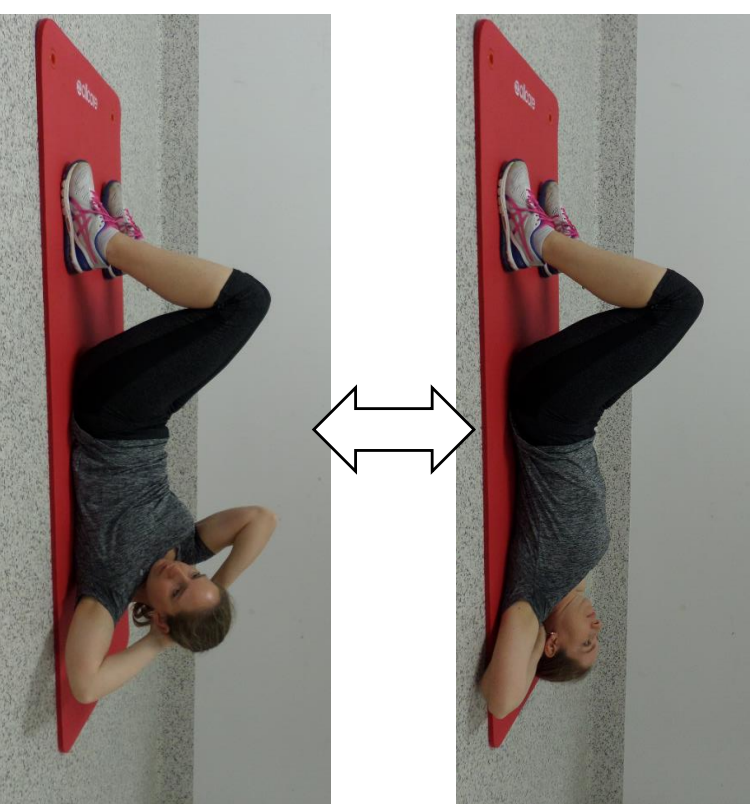
Draw in your lower tummy and your pelvic floor as you move your right shoulder to left knee

Keep lower back on floor

Repeat alternative sides

Key points:

Draw in lower tummy and pelvic floor muscles, breathe



Oblique Crunches (level 2)

- half sit up

Start position:

Balance with feet flat on floor

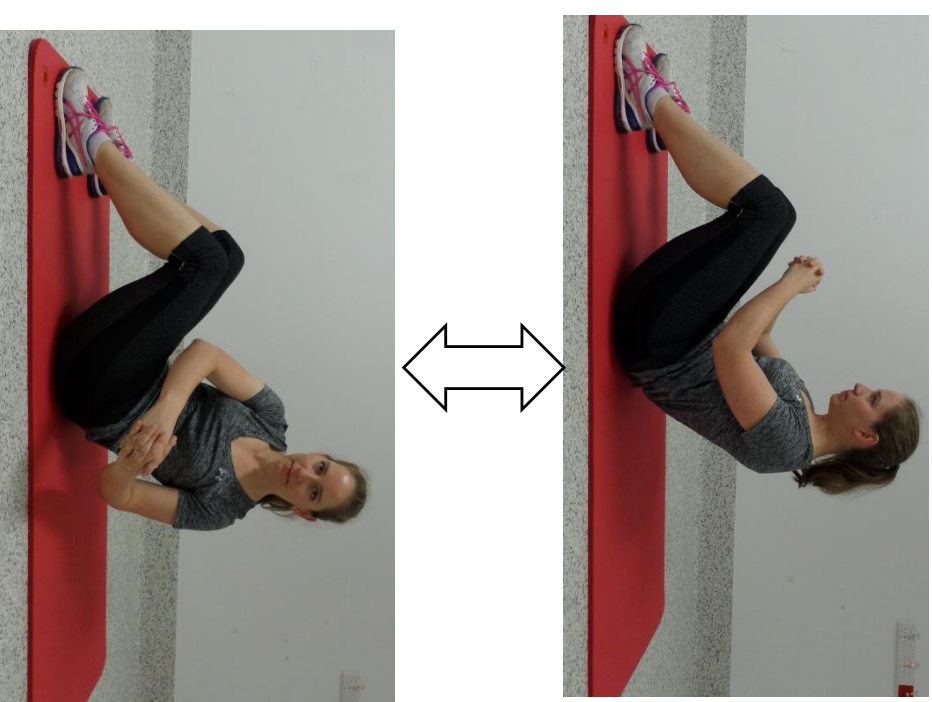
Movement:

Draw in your lower tummy and your pelvic floor as you move your right shoulder to left knee

Repeat alternative sides

Key points:

Draw in your lower tummy and pelvic floor muscles



Oblique Crunches (level 3) - half sit up with weight

Start position:

Balance with feet flat on floor

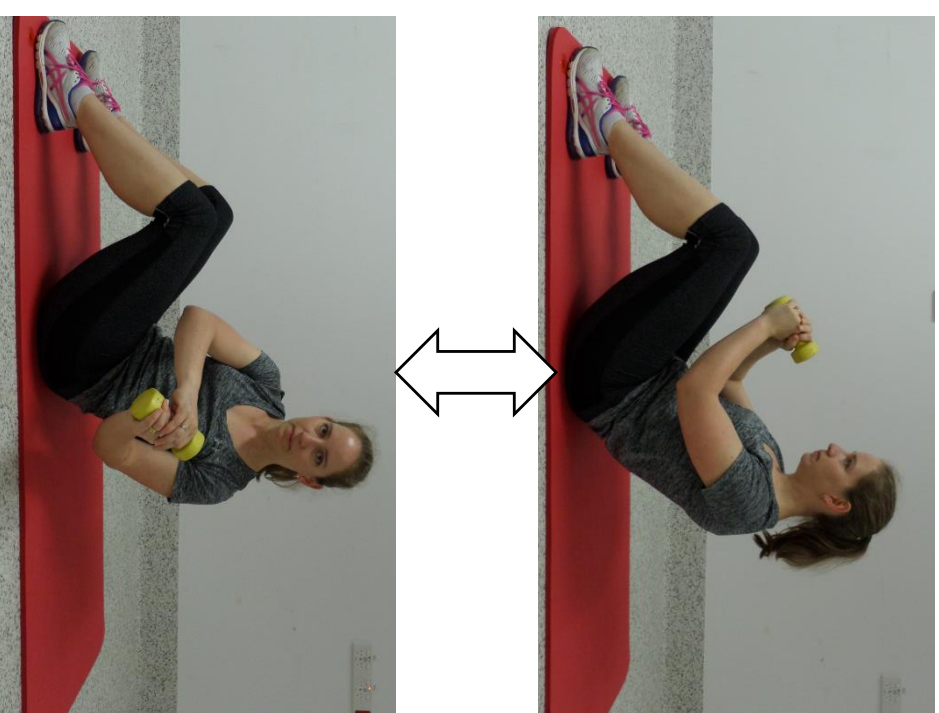
Movement:

Draw in your lower tummy and your pelvic floor as you move your right shoulder to left knee holding a weight in your hands

Repeat alternative sides

Key points:

Draw in your lower tummy and pelvic floor muscles, breathe



17. Abbreviations

ATHENA	<u>A</u> n exercise <u>t</u> raining and <u>h</u> ealthy <u>e</u> ating group <u>p</u> rogram
PFMT	Pelvic Floor Muscle Training

18. References

1. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. Urinary incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse in women: management. UK: NICE; 2019.
2. Berzuk K, Shay B. Effect of increasing awareness of pelvic floor muscle function on pelvic floor dysfunction: a randomized controlled trial. *International Urogynecology Journal*. 2015;26(6):837-44.
3. Langston K, Ross LJ, Byrnes A, Hay R. Secondary-prevention behaviour-change strategy for high-risk patients: Benefits for all classes of body mass index. *Nutrition & Dietetics*. 2020.