

SEVEN STEPS TO RUN STRONGER

Visit the Men's Running website at www.mensrunninguk.co.uk for video demonstrations of these magnificent seven

HOME HELP

No gym? No worries. You can build a rock solid runner's core with these seven exercises without leaving your living room. Just turn Jeremy Kyle off, will you?

Strength and conditioning for the majority of recreational runners is always the element of training that goes out the window. You just want to run, right? The problem is, without paying attention to the strength of your key running muscles, you will increase the risk of injury as you run further and train more often. You need to be strong enough to run any distance from 5K right up to the full marathon.

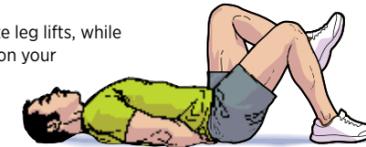
Strength and conditioning can be made to sound far too complicated when, in fact, you don't need a gym or any equipment at all.

Complete these seven simple exercises in your own living room, in a park or even in the office if you've got the space, and a boss who doesn't mind you bashing out press-ups in front of the photocopier. Off you go.

1 THE FINGER CRUSHER

Get into a sit up position, find the natural arch in your back, place your hands under the arch, engage your lower abs and pelvic floor and push your spine down on to your hands, trying to crush your fingers.

PIMP IT: Do slight alternate leg lifts, while still keeping the pressure on your hands even.



2 THE PLANK

Keep a straight line from the neck down through the legs to your ankles, engage all your core muscles by sucking your belly button (we did that to a girl in a bar once, we got thrown out) up to the ceiling. Keep your chest over your elbows.

PIMP IT: Hold this for 30 seconds to one minute and build it up gradually. If this is too hard to begin with, you can avoid lower back pain by doing this with your knees on the ground.



3 THE SIDE PLANK

Make a right angle with your supporting arm, your feet together and your stomach strong. Rise up, making sure you squeeze your glute and push your pelvis through. Hold it for 30 seconds.

PIMP IT: Lift your free arm into the air, keep your side really strong, and don't let your middle sag.



4 THE BRIDGE

From the sit up position, keep your stomach strong, engage your glutes and roll up into a bridge. Keep your hips high by squeezing your glute muscles.

PIMP IT: Make this tougher by crossing your arms over your chest.



5 PRESS-UP

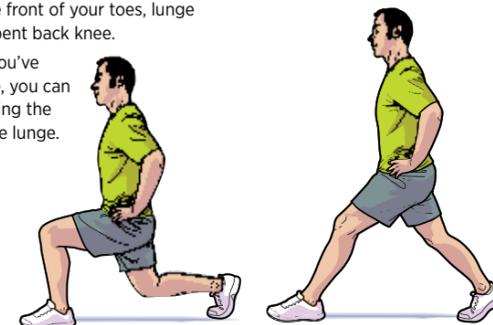
Press-ups are a key exercise to improve your arm swing when running. They work your pecs, triceps, abs and lower back. Every male runner should eventually be able to do 30 to 40. Place your hands shoulder and a half's width apart, get into the plank position, lower your chest to the floor and push back up, not just pushing through your chest and arms, but also through your core.



6 SPLIT LEG LUNGE

This works the running muscles in a full chain movement. Point your toes forward, keep your back heel lifted and with hands on hips, lunge down, squeezing the glute of your rear leg. Make sure everything goes down in the centre and not forwards. Your knee should NOT be over the front of your toes, lunge forward with a bent back knee.

PIMP IT: Once you've nailed this move, you can progress to driving the knee up from the lunge.



7 ONE LEGGED SQUAT

This also works everything in a full chain movement. Stand on one leg, engage your glute on your standing leg, keep your hips facing forward and aligned with your knee and toe. You don't want your knee to roll inwards, so go down as far as you can without that happening.

PIMP IT: You can use a Swiss ball between yourself and a wall for balance.

