



Young Athlete Center Runners 10 Exercise Program

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1. Planks

a. Standard plank: Start by lying on your stomach, propped on your forearms. Tighten your abdominal and gluteal muscles and lift your hips and legs into a plank position. Keep your elbows directly under your shoulders. Make sure to keep your back and hips level with the ground to avoid a “V” shape or sagging your belly down towards the ground. Hold this position as long as you can, aiming for 2 sets of 30-60 seconds.



b. Side plank: Start by lying on your side, resting on your forearm with your legs stacked one on top of another. Place your opposite hand on your hip. Make sure to keep your head and ankles in a straight line with your torso. Tighten your abdominals and lift your hips up off the floor until your body is in a straight line and your hips and shoulders are facing forward. Be careful to not rotate or flex your hips into a “V” shape. Hold this position as long as you can, aiming for 2 sets of 30-60 seconds on each side.



2. Push-up

Start in the push-up position with your arms slightly wider than your shoulders with your feet together. Keep your shoulders, hips and feet in a straight line. Lower yourself while keeping your elbows at your sides. Push yourself back up while maintaining a straight back. Be sure to keep your chin tucked in during the exercise. Complete 3 sets of 10 push-ups, resting between each set.



3. Clamshell

Start by lying on your side with your top shoulder and hip pointing toward the ceiling. Keep your back straight and feet together. Bend your legs and gently lift your top knee up and away from the bottom knee while keeping your feet together and back straight. Do not allow your hips to roll backward while you lift your knee. Lower your knee back down and repeat. Complete 3 sets of 10 lifts, then roll over onto the other hip and complete 3 sets of 10 lifts, resting between each set.



4. Single leg bridge

Start by lying on your back with your feet on the ground, knees bent and shoulder width apart. Straighten one knee so one leg is in the air. Tighten your abdominals and gluteal muscles as you lift your bottom up until your back is straight with the bent knee. Make sure to keep your hips level and don't allow one side to drop as you lift with your leg. Hold for 5-10 seconds then slowly lower your leg back to the starting position. Repeat. Perform exercise on both legs. Make sure to not extend your back as you lift. Complete 3 sets of 10 exercises on each leg, resting between each set.



5. Eccentric gastrocnemius (calf muscle) strengthening

Start by standing on a small step or platform with your heels hanging off the edge. Hold on to a stable surface for balance as needed. Keeping your knees and body straight, rise on to your toes with both feet. Holding this position, lift one foot up while staying on the toes of the opposite leg. Slowly lower the heel of your stance leg until it is lower than the edge of the step. Repeat. Perform exercise on both legs. Complete 3 sets of 10 exercises on each leg, resting between each set.



6. Arch lifting

Start by standing with feet directly under your hips and relaxed knees. Rotate the arch of your foot upward keeping your toes and heels in contact with the ground. Do not allow your toes to tighten and grip the ground. Hold for several seconds, relax then repeat. Complete 3 sets of 10 exercises, resting between each set.



7. Half kneel hip flexor stretch

Start by kneeling with one foot forward and the other knee bent underneath the hip. Tighten your abdominals and tilt your pelvis backwards. Keep your back straight, abdominals tight and shift your body weight forward until a stretch is felt in the front of your hip. Avoid allowing your back to arch or hips to rotate. Hold for 20-30 seconds then repeat on opposite side.



8. Standing quad stretch

Start by standing in an upright position. You may wish to hold on to a stable surface for balance. Bend one knee, pulling your heel towards your bottom. Grasp your ankle with the same side arm, pulling it towards your body. Do not allow your foot to come outside of alignment with your thigh. Tighten your abdominals and tilt your pelvis backwards. Do not allow your lower back to extend. Hold for 20-30 seconds then repeat on opposite side.



9. Standing hamstring stretch

Start by standing upright with your back straight and hands on your hips. Place the heel of one foot on a short step or bench in front of you, hips facing forward and leg straight. Gently bend forward at your hips keeping your back straight until you feel a stretch in the back of your thigh. Keep a slight bend in your stance leg. Do not bounce in this position. Hold for 20-30 seconds then repeat on opposite side.



10. Lower leg stretches

a. Gastroc/soleus (calf muscle): Start by standing upright by a wall, table or bench. Place your hands on the support surface and stagger your legs so one leg is in back with knee extended (straight) and one leg is in front with knee bent. Lean your weight forward until you feel a stretch in the back of your calf on the back leg. Make sure your toes are facing the wall, keeping your heels on the ground and keeping your back straight. Hold for 20-30 seconds then repeat on opposite side. Repeat exercise with feet slightly closer together and back knee bent. Hold for 20-30 seconds then repeat on opposite side.



b. Anterior tibialis (front shin muscle): Start by standing in the upright position. Place one foot behind you with the top of the toes and foot on the ground. Press the top of your back foot in to the ground until a stretch is felt in the front of the lower leg. Keep your back straight and hips facing forward during this stretch. Hold for 20-30 seconds then repeat on opposite side.

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St. Louis Children's Hospital Specialty Care Center

Young Athlete Center 24-hour Injury Hotline: 314.273.9200

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