



The PLANK is a simple exercise for body, mind and spirit.

all about plank!

Be sure to establish good habits from the beginning.

The plank is a simple exercise – but there are MANY areas to pay attention to....

The PLANK exercise has existed for centuries - finding its earliest roots in yoga. Now we see the plank exercise offered in almost every fitness regime across the globe. The Plank is a very simple isometric (non-moving) exercise, offering a multitude of benefits, and its so incredibly efficient that even ONE minute a day will make a difference – both mentally and physically. The Plank is for EVERY-BODY – people of all shapes and sizes, and people of all different fitness levels. The

KEY is technique and alignment. This article will give you all the tools you need!

A+ exercise!



Practice plank every day!

Did you know?

If executed properly, the plank exercise will strengthen your abdominals, back, shoulders, arms and legs. Give yourself just 1 minute of plank EVERY day, and enjoy the benefits of healthy posture, a strong core, and a more confident mindset!

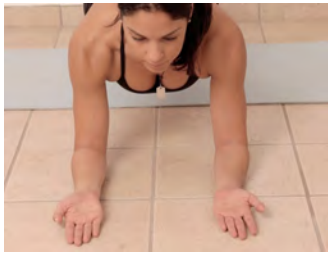
Life is all about options!

Begin on the floor, on your hands and knees. The first thing you should practice is hand position options.

When you hold plank for 30 seconds, or a minute... or 6 minutes... you may want to “switch it up a bit” so that you continually use different muscles, and also so that you don’t get bored. Try the following positions:



1. Straight arms on palms. Notice that Brenda’s hands are below her shoulders (not wider). Notice that her “elbow pits” are rotated forward.



2. On elbows, with palms up. This is the best position for you if you suffer with hand, wrist or shoulder issues.



3. Straight arms on knuckles. This is the most challenging position, but offers the greatest benefits – strengthening hands and wrists.



It begins in the FEET!

Your feet are your connection to the earth – and therefore, you should be fully aware of your feet whenever you practice any form of exercise.

During Plank, it is important to fold your foot (as shown in the photo above). Balance your weight on the mound that spans from beneath your big toe to your pinkie toe.

Then– energetically push through your heels.

This positioning will align and stimulate the muscles through the legs, giving you better balance and a stronger, more efficient plank posture.



THIS LOOKS PAINFUL!!

ALIGN YOUR SPINE!

When Joseph Pilates cued the plank position, he would tell his students “Head to Heel... Like Steel!” This is a smart visual cue that you can use also, when practicing the plank on your own. In the photo to the left, Brenda is dropping her head, slumping through her shoulders, and allowing her lower back to hang without using the support of her abdominals. These are common mistakes that make the Plank difficult and painful to endure. Instead, imagine pulling out from the crown of your head, opening up your upper back, and fully aligning your spine. You’ll find that holding like a plank of wood is more comfortable and much more efficient!



PLANK WITH PURPOSE

At willPower productions, we coach our students to plank EVERY DAY.

Remember – exercise doesn't have to be harder – just smarter – do a little bit every day! Once you are committed to a daily plank – progress at a pace that works well for you.

1. If you have never planked before, 30 seconds is a respectable starting point!

2. Add 5 seconds to your plank each week. Eventually you will reach 3 minutes each day.

3. Once you achieve a 3 minute plank, and are eager for more, begin to plank twice a day!

REMEMBER: Quality vs. quantity!
A well-aligned 30-second plank is better than a poorly aligned 1 minute plank!

Anywhere, Anytime!

The beauty of the Plank, is that you don't need a gym – exercise shoes – or special equipment. You can Plank Anywhere, Anytime... which means that you will never need to miss a day of exercise again! (This is where your own personal willPower needs to take over.) Just get it done... and have fun! Bring your kids along, or teach a friend. Then be sure to join www.worldplank.com



Music Makes the World Go 'Round!

Getting through your Plank exercise may be a little easier if you use a Plank song. The music will act as a time marker, as well as a slight distraction as you sing along. Choose a song that has POSITIVE lyrics – with words that inspire and motivate you. Choose songs that you love – or try one of the willPower favorites: (you can find these songs and many more at iTunes)

1. "Gotta Get Through This" - Daniel Bedingfield
2. "Be OK" - Ingrid Michaelson
3. "I Won't Back Down" - Johnny Cash



At willPower productions, we know that exercise is linked to a positive mental attitude. By holding plank a little bit everyday, and focusing on your own personal affirmation, you will give yourself the gift of positive intention as well as a little rush of endorphins.

Take the first step! Just a little plank every day! Good luck... and enjoy!

Stacey Lei Krauss

CEO, willPower productions, llc.

www.willPowerfit.com



Talk yourself UP!

Spending time alone with yourself in Plank is a great time for self talk and meditation. When you have a minute or two all by yourself... why not:

1. Make your mental list of daily tasks... (then DO them!)
2. Remind yourself about your most recent New Year's Resolution – and get back on track
3. Tell yourself something that you need to hear... i.e. "My presentation is going to knock their socks off!"
4. *Exhale:* get rid of negative thoughts
Inhale: breathe in positive intention