

[IMAGE]

Don't Walk the Plank: 5 Challenging Variations

By Editorial Staff

Pirates used to make their victims "walk the plank" for self-amusement or as a form of psychological torture; these days, the word *plank* has an entirely different meaning as a core-strengthening exercise. Trouble is, too many people only do the basic plank. That's as outdated as the pirate-mandated plank walk. Here are five great – and challenging – variations of the standard plank, courtesy of Yahoo Health.

1. *Juke & Jive*: In a standard two-handed plank position (both hands on the ground at shoulder level, feet evenly spaced behind you, knees straight), pivot on one foot and bring the knee across your abs / pelvis, rotating the hips; then switch course and twist the elevated leg / heel up behind you, rotating your hips again as you do so.

2. *Lunge and Kick*: In standard plank position, lift one leg off the floor and bend the knee toward your hands as far as you can – then reverse course as you extend the leg back, keeping a straight line from the heel of your extended leg to your head (which should be facing down at this point). Do 3-5 reps, switch sides and repeat.

exercise - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark 3. *Mechanical Arm*: In standard plank position, lift one hand off the ground and drive it forward as you lower your hips toward the ground. Then drive hips upward toward the ceiling as you bring the extended arm / hand back toward your buttocks. In the end position, your head should be pointed down toward the ground and your buttocks should be elevated toward the ceiling as high as possible. Do 3-5 reps, switch sides and repeat.

4. *Reach for the Sky*: In standard plank position, lift one hand off the ground and rotate it in under the plant arm, rotating your hips / core. Then reverse the maneuver, extending the hand out and up until it's essentially parallel to your plant arm. (Pretend you're reaching for something under your body and then pulling it out from under you and as high over your body as possible.) Do 3-5 reps, switch sides and repeat.

5. *Jumping Jack*: In side plank position (forearm supporting weight at shoulder height, feet stacked one on top of the other), raise top leg up to hip height and simultaneously raise top arm from hip height above your head. Do 3-5 reps, switch sides and repeat.

Go slow, use proper form (don't strain your neck or arch your back violently; all of these planks can – and should – be completed with control), and And of course, talk to your doctor before beginning any new exercise program, particularly if you have a pre-existing health condition. For more plank variations (12 including the five discussed, along with demonstration images to help you perform all 12), [click here](#).

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