

## August Exercise of the Month Center Plank

**Purpose:** To strengthen the core muscles

**Primary Muscles:** Erector Spinae, Rectus Abdominus, Transverse Abdominus

**Secondary Muscles:** Trapezius, Rhomboids, Rotator Cuff, Deltoids, Pectorals, Glutes, Quadriceps, Gastrocnemius

**Equipment:** Exercise mat (optional)

### Starting position:

- ❖ Lie on stomach with the elbows close to body and directly under the shoulders, palms down and hands facing forward
- ❖ Pull the toes towards the shin and contract the quadriceps and core to extend the legs and stiffen the torso

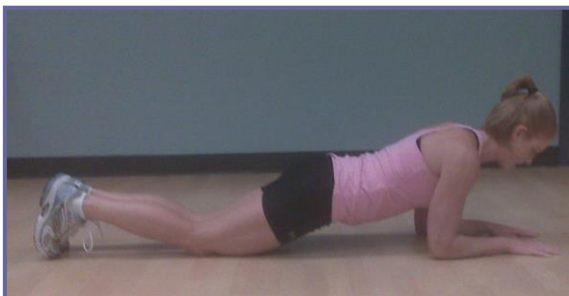
### Hold position:

- ❖ Slowly lift the torso off the mat while maintaining a stiff torso and legs; avoid any arching (sagging) in the lower back, upward tilt of the hips or bending in the knees
- ❖ Relax the shoulders, keep them positioned directly over the elbows with palms facing down
- ❖ Exhale and inhale while holding this position for 20-60 seconds

### Modifications:

- ❖ **Beginner:** For less intensity, perform this exercise on the knees. Begin by placing elbows on the floor just under the shoulders, and rest on the knees. Pull the abs tight to hold your body in a straight line from head to knees without sagging in the middle, eyes looking naturally forward. Hold this position for 20-60 seconds.
- ❖ **Advanced:** For more intensity, perform this exercise while raising one foot off the floor. Bring the body up to plank hold. With core muscles engaged, raise the right foot a few inches off the floor while keeping the knees straight and torso stiff. Hold for 20-60 seconds then repeat with the left, or alternate lifting right and left every 10 seconds to fulfill a 60-second set.

**Beginner:**



**Intermediate:**



**Advanced:**

