



Core #1 - Atlas

Outline

1. Prone or planks - 60 seconds
2. Side/lateral holds - 60 seconds
3. Supine - 60 seconds
4. Prone knee bent - 60 seconds
5. Donkey kicks - 15-25 repetitions each leg
6. Fire hydrant - 15-25 repetitions each leg
7. Hurdles - 15-25 repetitions each leg
8. Opposite arm/leg - 15-25 repetitions each leg
9. Double eagles - 15-25 repetitions each leg

Goals

This is the first core routine in our three part system. It's designed to work on the basics and the foundation of what will be a rock solid set of hips, glutes, abs and lower back. Once you've mastered the basics in this routine, you'll be able to safely move on to more advanced routines and exercises. Furthermore, this routine doesn't require Swiss balls, medicine balls, or a gym, which makes it the go-to for travelers and to those just getting started.

Like all the core routines you have available to you now, these exercises are designed to help you improve your running economy and maintain proper form to race faster, finish stronger, and prevent injuries.

The benefit of this routine is that we target all planes of the body from the abs, obliques, hips, glutes and lowerback. In essence, this is the "bread and butter" core routine for runners.





Prone or Front Plank



Muscle groups emphasized: erector spinae, rectus abdominis (abs), and transverse abdominus.

Value for runners: This exercise triggers your deep core muscles and the muscles in your back, which will help you maintain proper form during the latter stages of a race. Strengthening these deep core muscles, particularly the transverse abdominus, also prevents hip, lower back, and glute injuries.

Logistics: Hold plank position for up to 60 seconds.

Notes: Flex your deep core muscles to prevent your lower back from sagging down or from angling up. You should be able to rest a board flat on your back, glutes, and legs. Beginners can balance their weight on their hands until they feel comfortable moving to the elbows. Advanced runners can place their feet on a swiss ball or extending their elbows further out in front of their center of gravity.

Side Plank



Muscle groups emphasized: transverse abdominus, gluteus medius and gluteus minimus muscles (abductors), the adductor muscles of the hip, and the external and internal obliques

Value for runners: The obliques, adductors, and abductors help stabilize the hips and prevent excessive twisting motion. The side plank will prevent injuries to the hip and the IT band and also correct possible hip drop problems.





Logistics: Hold the side plank position for up to 60 seconds.

Instructions: Like the front plank, do not let your hips bend towards the ground or point towards the air. There should be a straight line down from your head to your feet. Beginner runners can balance on their hands instead of their elbow. Advanced runners can lift their top leg off the ground.

Supine Holds



Muscle groups emphasized: Hamstrings, glutes, lower back

Value for runners: The supine plank strengthens the hamstring and the glutes to strengthen the posterior chain, which helps generate explosive power during the running stride and also protects against injury from speed work.

Logistics: Hold the supine plank position for up to 60 seconds.

Instructions: Keep your core muscles tight and in a straight line. You do not want your hips/waist to dip or to be elevated. This is a difficult exercise, so beginners will definitely need to start on their hands instead of their elbows. Advanced runners can lift one leg off the ground and alternate.

Prone or plank with bent knee



Muscle groups emphasized: Erector spinae, rectus abdominis (abs), and transverse abdominis and hip flexor.





Value for runners: This modification of the basic plank engages your hip flexor and quads to place you in a more running specific position.

Logistics: Hold the supine plank position for up to 60 seconds.

Instructions: Flex your deep core muscles to prevent your lower back from sagging down or from angling up. You should be able to rest a board flat on your back, glutes, and legs. Beginners can balance their weight on their hands until they feel comfortable moving to the elbows.

Donkey Kicks



Muscle groups emphasized: Glutes, lowerback, hips

Value for runners: Donkey kicks strengthen the glutes, which help maintain a powerful and fluid stride and ward off knee and hip injuries.

Logistics: Perform 15-25 repetitions each leg.

Instructions: Try not to swing or use momentum to bring the leg up. Your leg should pause for 2 seconds just after it is parallel with your lower back, and then slowly lower it back to the starting position. Advanced runners can add ankle weights or use theraband or bungee cords to add resistance.

Fire Hydrants





Muscle groups emphasized: Hips, abductors

Value for runners: The abductors help stabilize the hip. Strong abductors will prevent most knee and hip injuries such as IT band syndrome.

Logistics: Perform 15-25 repetitions each leg.

Instructions: Focus on using only your hips to make this movement and not shifting your body. Pause for 1 second at the top and then slowly bring back down.

Hurdles



Muscle groups emphasized: Hips, abductors, glutes

Value for runners: Hurdles are a dynamic movement that combine the benefits from the fire hydrant exercise and the donkey kicks. This exercises will help “open up” the hips and improve your range of motion.

Logistics: Perform 15-25 repetitions each leg.

Instructions: Keep your back in a straight line and originate the movement at the hip. Imagine trying to balance a broom on your back.

Opposite arm/leg





Muscle groups emphasized: Lower back, Glutes

Value for runners: Opposite arm, opposite leg helps isolate each glute and each side of the lower back to identify and address any structural weaknesses so your dominant side can't take over.

Logistics: Perform 15-25 repetitions.

Instructions: Don't jerk or go too fast with the movement. Use slow repetitions with a 2 second pause at the top.

Double Eagles



Muscle groups emphasized: transverse abdominus, gluteus medius and gluteus minimus muscles (abductors), the adductor muscles of the hip, and the external and internal obliques

Value for runners: The double eagle will help you run with less side-to-side motion by strengthening the oblique muscles. Not only with this help prevent hip and knee injuries, it will make you more efficient and therefore faster.

Logistics: Perform 15 repetitions.

Instructions: Work hard to keep your back flat on the ground and try not to rest your legs on the ground or in the vertical position.

