

The Proper Way To **P.P.L.S.** (*pronounced as Please*): **Plank, Push Up, Lunge and Squat**
presented by Bridget L. Reynolds, CPT

Safety Cues: On Push Ups and Planks:

Planks and Push Ups are exercises that target the chest, shoulders, core and more. Mastering the basic plank and push up position is essential, especially before attempting more challenging variations (side plank, burpees, etc). The following are things to keep in mind to protect your health and safety while executing these exercises.

Things to Keep In Mind When Doing a Plank:

- 1) Start off on all fours (hands and knees),
 - a. Spread Fingers Wide
 - b. Press Through Four-Corners of Palm and All fingertips
 - c. Make Sure Shoulders Are On Top Of Wrist.
 - d. Knees Under the Hips
- 2) Assess Your Upper Body Strength
 - a. Lift one knee off floor, then opposite/ Get on toes;
 - b. Maintain Hand Proper Position
 - c. Keep Shoulders Stacked On Top of Wrist
 - d. **Do not** lock out elbow joint
 - e. Make sure shoulders, hips and knees are in alignment
 - f. Tighten stomach muscles
- 3) Maintain Position for as long as comfortably possible
- 4) Modify for Less Intensity/Hurting Wrist
 - a. Come down on forearms and/or knees
 - b. Place dumbbells on the floor for each hand to support wrist
- 5) Add variation for more complexity
 - a. Balance on hand/arm
 - b. Stack legs feet on top of each other (side plank)
 - c. Optional: Lift One Leg Up ("star")



Things to Keep In Mind When Doing a Push Up

- 1) Start off in Either a Basic Plank or Modified Plank
- 2) Go Down to Bottom of Your Push Up
 - a. Bend Elbows to Lower Chest to Floor
 - b. Elbows don't go past 90 degrees
- 3) Return to Start Position
 - a. Don't lock out elbow joint at start/return position

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Safety Cues: On Squats and Lunges

Squats and Lunges are functional exercises (useful for everyday living) and are foundational exercises you must master to progress within your program. If done properly, squats and lunges should not hurt your knees. The following are things to keep in mind to protect your health and safety while executing these exercises.

Things to keep in mind when lunging

- 1) Both feet are together and straight ahead in the direction you're lunging in
- 2) Stomach tight
- 3) Chest lifted and proud
- 4) Shoulders Down and Back
- 5) Hand on your hips or arms to the side with palms facing in
- 6) When stepping out to lunge remember to:
 - a) land on your heel/keep your weight in your heel
 - b) think "90 degree angle". Keep front knee over ankle and don't extend past toes
- 7) The back leg: The knee should be parallel to the floor and the heel of the foot is lifted/be on your toes. Back knee **NEVER** goes all the way down to the floor.



When actually executing the lunge, you would 1) Pretend your body is a carousel and a pole is connected from the top of your head, down to the floor. 2) Slide up and down your imaginary pole using your back leg. 3) Remember to **NEVER lock out your knees** when returning back to the top of the movement.

Things to keep in mind when squatting

- 1) Chest Lifted (Proud and Open)
- 2) Stomach tight
- 3) Shoulders Down and Back
- 4) Feet about shoulder width apart/feet facing forward
- 5) When Squatting
 - a) Back is "straight" and Chest is NOT parallel with floor
 - b) Shoulders and Back are not rounded
 - c) Push Hips (Buttocks) as far back as it can go as though you are sitting
 - d) Think "90 degree angle" Keep front knee over ankle and don't extend past toes
- 6) Keep **weight in the heels** and **NOT** in the **toes/knees**
- 7) Push Up **through heels** back to start position (standing up straight)
- 8) Remember to **NEVER lock out your knees** when returning back to the top of the movement.
- 9) If you are taking care of your knee joint, do not do a deep knee bend squat. Squat shallow.
- 10) If needed, put a chair behind you prior to squatting to mimic a "sitting" action. This will not only help you perfect your form, but also alleviate a fear of falling when doing the movement.

