

Injury Prevention Exercises: Planks

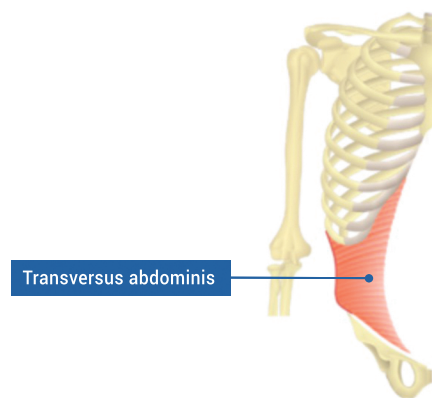
Performing the plank exercise can help make job tasks **easier on your body** by:

Strengthening your core

Keeping a strong core – the group of muscles from the ribcage to the hips, including the **transversus abdominis** – is key to proper spine health. The core helps hold the spinal column upright, braces the back, and stabilizes the pelvis.

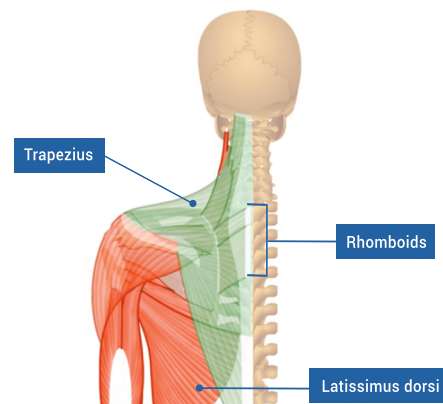
When core muscles are weak or unbalanced, more stress gets placed on the discs of the spine and surrounding ligaments, increasing the risk of back injury or pain. By engaging your core, the plank exercise provides stability at the spinal level to prevent excessive motion and facilitate good posture.

This exercise also trains your body to engage the abdominals and maintain a neutral spine position throughout the day. Make sure you're engaging your transversus abdominis by drawing your belly up into your spine. Performing this regularly can help prevent *lordosis*: when the curve of your spine arches too far inward, causing low back pain and decreased mobility.



Providing shoulder stability

The plank also serves as a great shoulder stability exercise given the proper positioning. When holding this position, the main muscles of your shoulder – **rotator cuff, rhomboids, trapezius, and latissimus dorsi** – act as the primary stabilizer for your body weight. Make sure to maintain continual engagement of this muscle group by positioning your elbows directly under your shoulders. You should be able to draw a straight line between the two.



Tips for proper plank form:

- ✓ Stack your shoulders above your elbows
- ✓ Your elbows should be bent 90°
- ✓ Contract your core & glute muscles
- ✓ Keep your back straight & hips lifted

Try to avoid:

- ✗ Arching your back
- ✗ Tilting your head up
- ✗ Lowering your hips

