

Home Workout Guide: No-Equipment Strength

What to focus on, the exercises, the muscles they train and a routine to follow

You can build real strength at home with just your bodyweight. The keys are **good form, training every major movement pattern, and making the work gradually harder** with tempo, pauses and tougher variations. This guide lists the exercises with the muscles they train and how they help, plus a beginner and an intermediate routine with no equipment.

1. What to Focus On

The principles

Why this matters: Strength without weights comes from smart progression.

PRINCIPLE	WHAT IT MEANS	TIP
Progressive overload	Muscle grows when work gets gradually harder. With no weights, add reps, slow the tempo, use harder variations or pause at the hardest point.	Aim to beat last week by 1 rep or a slower lowering phase.
Form first	Controlled reps, full range you can own and steady breathing.	Better to do fewer clean reps than many sloppy ones.
Train every major pattern	Squat, hinge, push, pull (back work), core and carry or single-leg work.	Keeps the body balanced and reduces injury risk.
Leave 1 to 3 reps in reserve	Stop a little before you can't do another rep, and go harder on the final sets as you progress.	Builds muscle with less joint stress.
Slow the lowering phase	Take 3 seconds to lower in squats, push-ups and bridges.	Makes bodyweight moves much tougher and builds control.
Consistency over intensity	3 to 4 sessions a week, 30 to 45 minutes, done for months.	Results come from repeating the work.
Fuel and recover	Eat enough protein (eggs, dal, curd, paneer, chicken, fish), and sleep 7 to 8 hours.	Muscle is built during recovery.

2. Legs and Glutes

Your biggest muscles

Why this matters: Big muscles burn the most energy and support walking, standing and posture.

EXERCISE	MUSCLES TRAINED	HOW IT HELPS	EASIER / HARDER
Bodyweight squat	Quads, glutes, adductors, core	Builds basic leg strength used in sitting, standing and climbing stairs.	Easier: squat to a chair. Harder: 3-second lowering, pause squat, jump squat.
Reverse lunge or split squat	Quads, glutes, hamstrings, balance muscles	Trains each leg alone, fixes imbalances and challenges balance.	Easier: hold a wall. Harder: rear-foot elevated split squat (Bulgarian).
Glute bridge	Glutes, hamstrings, lower back	Strengthens the hips and supports the lower back.	Harder: single-leg bridge or a long pause at the top.
Step-up on a sturdy stair	Quads, glutes	Real-life strength for stairs and climbing.	Harder: slower lowering, add a backpack.

Single-leg Romanian deadlift (bodyweight)	Hamstrings, glutes, core, balance	Trains the hip hinge, a pattern vital for lifting safely.	Easier: touch a wall. Harder: slow tempo or hold a backpack.
Wall sit	Quads, glutes	Builds endurance and mental toughness with no joint movement.	Harder: lengthen the hold or lift one foot.
Calf raise	Calves	Supports ankles and walking or running.	Harder: single-leg, slower lowering.

3. Push (Chest, Shoulders, Triceps)

Upper-body pressing

Why this matters: Pressing builds the chest, shoulders and arms used in daily tasks.

EXERCISE	MUSCLES TRAINED	HOW IT HELPS	EASIER / HARDER
Push-up (incline, standard)	Chest, front shoulders, triceps, core	The best bodyweight upper-body builder.	Easier: hands on a wall or table. Harder: slow lowering, feet raised, pause at the bottom.
Pike push-up	Shoulders, triceps, upper chest	Trains overhead pressing, the closest to a shoulder press.	Easier: hands elevated. Harder: feet on a chair.
Triceps dip using a chair or bed edge	Triceps, chest, front shoulders	Builds the back of the arms.	Easier: bend knees. Harder: straighten legs, slow lowering. Keep shoulders comfortable.
Diamond or close-grip push-up	Triceps, inner chest	Shifts focus to the arms.	Easier: on knees or incline.
Plank shoulder taps	Shoulders, core, chest	Builds shoulder stability and anti-rotation core strength.	Harder: slow taps with feet closer together.

4. Back and Posture

Often neglected at home

Why this matters: Pulling and back work balances pressing, and helps shoulders and posture.

EXERCISE	MUSCLES TRAINED	HOW IT HELPS	EASIER / HARDER
Superman hold	Lower back, glutes, upper back	Strengthens the muscles that support posture.	Harder: lift arms and legs and hold longer.
Prone Y-T-W raises	Rear shoulders, mid and upper back	Counters desk and phone posture and balances all the pushing.	Harder: pause 2 seconds at the top.
Reverse snow angels (face down)	Upper back, rear shoulders, glutes	Builds the often-neglected back of the body.	Harder: slow tempo and longer holds.
Towel or bedsheet row (towel pulled against a door handle, or a sturdy table row if safe)	Lats, upper back, biceps	Adds a real pulling movement. Use only a sturdy, safe anchor.	Easier: lean back less. Harder: lean further back.
Bird dog	Lower back, glutes, core, shoulders	Teaches spine control and stabilisation.	Harder: pause, and draw small elbow-to-knee circles.

5. Core

Stability and strength

Why this matters: A strong core transfers force and protects the lower back.

EXERCISE	MUSCLES TRAINED	HOW IT HELPS	EASIER / HARDER
Plank	Whole core, shoulders, glutes	Builds deep core strength for posture and lifting.	Easier: knees down. Harder: longer hold or arm-leg lift.
Dead bug	Deep abdominals, hip flexors	Safe core strength that protects the lower back.	Harder: slower tempo and straighter legs.
Side plank	Obliques, glutes, shoulders	Builds side-core stability.	Easier: bent knees. Harder: add hip dips.
Leg raises or reverse crunch	Lower abs, hip flexors	Targets the lower abdominals.	Easier: bend knees. Harder: slow lowering.
Mountain climbers	Core, shoulders, hip flexors, cardio	Gets the heart rate up while working the core.	Harder: speed up with control.
Hollow hold	Abdominals	An advanced test of full-front core strength.	Easier: bend knees.

6. Full-Body and Conditioning

Optional finishers

Why this matters: These raise the heart rate and add variety once the basics are in place.

EXERCISE	MUSCLES TRAINED	HOW IT HELPS	EASIER / HARDER
Burpee (step-back version for beginners)	Full body, cardio	A single move for strength and conditioning.	Easier: step back, no jump. Harder: push-up plus jump.
Squat to reach or squat thrust	Legs, core, shoulders	Raises heart rate with low skill demand.	Harder: add a jump.
Bear crawl	Shoulders, core, quads	Builds coordination, shoulders and core.	Harder: slower, lower knees.
Skater hops or side lunges	Glutes, quads, adductors	Trains side-to-side strength and balance.	Easier: step instead of hop.

7. Warm-up and Cool-down

About 8 minutes

Why this matters: A short warm-up improves performance and reduces injury risk.

STEP	TIME	WHY
Joint circles and marching	1 minute	Neck, shoulders, hips and ankles wake up gently.
Cat-cow and world's greatest stretch	1 to 2 minutes	Spine and hip mobility.
Bodyweight squats, glute bridges, arm swings	2 minutes	Warm the muscles you will use.

Easy rehearsal set of the first exercise	1 set	Grooves the pattern before working sets.
Cool-down	3 to 5 minutes	Slow breathing and stretches for quads, hamstrings, chest, hips and calves.

8. Beginner Routine

3 days a week, 30 to 35 minutes

How to do it: Do the exercises in order, resting 45 to 60 seconds between sets. Repeat it on all 3 days, adding reps or a slower tempo each week.

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	CUE
1. Squat to chair	3 x 8-12	Controlled lowering.
2. Incline or knee push-up	3 x 6-10	Stop 2 reps before failing.
3. Glute bridge	3 x 10-15	Pause 1 second on top.
4. Prone Y-T-W raises	2 x 8 each	Squeeze shoulder blades.
5. Reverse lunge to wall support	2 x 6-8 per leg	Hold a wall if needed.
6. Dead bug	2 x 6-8 per side	Slow, back pressed down.
7. Plank (knees if needed)	2 x 15-30 s	Straight line, steady breathing.

9. Intermediate Routine

4 days a week, 35 to 45 minutes

How to do it: Do it as a full-body session, or split it: exercises 1, 3 and 5 on lower-body days and 2, 4, 6 and 7 on upper-body days. Rest 60 to 90 seconds.

EXERCISE	SETS x REPS	CUE
1. Tempo squat (3 s down) or Bulgarian split squat	4 x 10-15 / 3 x 8-12 per leg	Pause at the bottom.
2. Standard or feet-elevated push-up	4 x 8-15	Slow 3-second lowering.
3. Single-leg Romanian deadlift	3 x 8-10 per leg	Hips square, back flat.
4. Pike push-up	3 x 6-12	Head between arms.
5. Single-leg glute bridge	3 x 10-12 per leg	Pause at the top.
6. Reverse snow angels or towel row	3 x 10-15	Control the movement.
7. Side plank and hollow hold	3 rounds of 20-40 s	Brace the whole core.

10. Weekly Schedule

Fit it into your week

Why this matters: Rest days are when muscles actually grow.

LEVEL	SCHEDULE	NOTE
Beginner (3 days)	Mon, Wed, Fri: beginner routine. Walk 20 to 30 minutes on other days.	Rest at least a day between sessions.
Intermediate (4 days)	Mon: Lower body. Tue: Upper body and core. Thu: Lower body. Fri: Upper body and core. Walk or mobility on other days.	Alternate lower and upper days.

11. Rest, Progress and Safety

Keep improving safely

Why this matters: Slow, steady progress beats rushing and getting injured.

TOPIC	WHAT TO DO	WHY
Rest between sets	45 to 90 seconds for most sets, 90 seconds to 2 minutes for hard lower-body sets.	Enough to recover without cooling down.
Beginner pace	Start with 2 sets for 2 weeks, then move to 3.	Gradual build.
Progress every 1 to 2 weeks	When the top of the rep range is easy, move to a harder variation.	Keeps the challenge going.
Deload every 4 to 6 weeks	Do about half the sets for a week.	Lets joints and body recover.
If something hurts	Shorten the range, switch to an easier version or skip it. Sharp or joint pain is not normal.	Protects you from injury.
See a doctor first if	You have heart disease, high blood pressure, joint or back problems, are pregnant or recovering from injury or surgery.	Get tailored advice.

Note: This is general fitness information written from general knowledge, not medical advice. Check with a doctor before starting if you have a health condition, pain, are pregnant or recovering from injury. Stop if you feel sharp pain, dizziness or chest discomfort.