4 Exercises You Should Be Doing

Squats: the squat is an important lower body exercise as it engages the glutes, hamstrings, and quads, but it is a bit of a picky movement and not always easy to get exactly right. The key to a safe and effective squat is to start with a slight move back with your glutes (butt) as if you are going to sit in a chair and then distribute your weight into your heels as you bend at the knees. Keep your chest up throughout the whole movement. Your feet should be slightly wider than shoulder-width apart and knees should track over your toes. You should be able to see and wiggle your toes at the lowest point of the squat.

Push-Ups: the push-up is an effective upper body exercise that engages not just the chest, but the shoulders, triceps, back, and core muscles as well. It's a common misconception that push-ups must be performed from the toes, but many modifications make it possible for even beginners to perform a push-up successfully. Start by placing your hands a bit wider than shoulder-width apart and tipping forward from your knees. Lower your upper body towards the floor while keeping your back straight. For less intensity, move knees in so you are in an all-fours position. For more intensity, come on to toes initially in a wide stance and then move them to a narrow stance.

Rows: the back often gets overlooked because, well…out of sight, out of mind! However, to maintain shoulder and back health and improve posture, the row is a great overall exercise for the back. It can be performed in various positions, but a great starting point is the quadruped row. Start on all fours with a dumbbell in each hand. Keep your back straight, abdominals pulled in tight, hands directly below your shoulders, and knees directly below your hips. Row up with one arm, pulling the elbow up and bringing the dumbbell to your armpit. Keep your elbow tucked throughout the movement.

Planks: the plank can be performed from the knees or toes, and the elbows or hands. It's a great exercise to improve core strength, and your core is important for almost every move you make! Start from your elbows and tip forward from your knees, making sure to keep your shoulder blades pulled down, your back straight, and abdominals pulled in tight. For more intensity, try performing the plank from your toes.