Get amazing abs, arms and shoulders with one move.

**THE MOVE** Plank pose

**THE PAYOFF** More than just a yoga pose or preparation for a push-up, this ultra-effective move tightens and tones the abdominal muscles, gives your arms and shoulders definition and strengthens your back and leg muscles. Having a sleeker, stronger core of muscles will make you look and feel better in virtually everything you do.

**THE RIGHT WAY**

➤ Begin on your hands and knees, with your wrists directly under your shoulders. Your arms should be straight, your fingers pointing straight ahead and your knees lined up directly under each hip.

➤ Contract your abdominal muscles, pulling your navel toward your spine so your body forms a straight line from your head to your hips. Find your center of balance so your arms and thighs are perfectly vertical and parallel to each other.

➤ Slightly raise one of your legs and extend it behind you. Place the ball of that foot on the floor. Then extend the other leg behind you and place the ball of that foot on floor, maintaining your torso position.

➤ As you balance on your hands and the balls of your feet, your body should be in the Plank pose, forming a straight line from your head to your heels.

➤ Be sure to keep your buttocks contracted and your leg and abdominal muscles tight in order to maintain the position. Hold this pose for 30 seconds.

**MUSCLES WORKED**

1. erector spinae
2. triceps
3. biceps
4. middle deltoid
5. posterior deltoid
6. external and internal obliques
7. rectus abdominis

**WORKOUT SCHEDULE**

Do this exercise 3-4 times a week, as part of a regular total-body strength-training program. As you progress, strive to hold the Plank position for 45-60 seconds if possible.

**EXPERT ADVICE**

“To ensure that you use correct alignment, look straight down at your arms and line your elbow creases up with the tops of your wrists,” says Leigh Crews, National Academy of Sports Medicine and Cooper Institute-certified trainer and owner of Dynamic Fitness Inc. in Rome, Ga. “This helps distribute your weight equally between arms and legs and maintain a straight line from head to heels.”

**MISTAKES TO AVOID**

➤ Don’t let your belly sag toward the floor: doing so will place stress on your lower back that could lead to injury.

➤ Don’t let your head drop or your shoulders hunch up toward your ears; if you do this, your arms, shoulders, back and abdominal muscles will be doing less of the work.

➤ Don’t let your hips lift up into a “V” position; doing so will give you less core strength.