

JENNIFER COHEN'S 6 TOP TONERS



Jennifer Cohen,
fitness expert
for Weight Watchers®

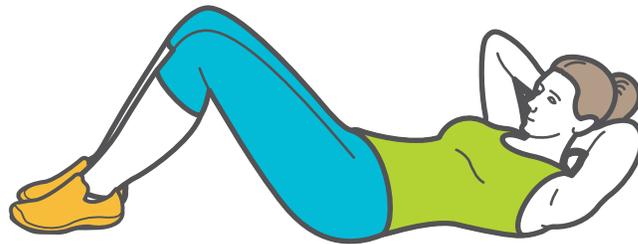
Our Weight Watchers® fitness expert outlines six classic toning moves that will help get you strong and firm in no time.

Even if these moves are already in your activity routine, these tips from Jennifer Cohen will help you do them right — which means you'll get the maximum benefit from every moment you spend on them.

The Move: **Abdominal Crunches**

Crunches won't help you lose belly fat or give you a six-pack (sorry). But they can help strengthen and firm up parts of your mid-section, which can in turn improve your posture and balance. And they're a great exercise to do along with the plank, which strengthens your entire abdominal wall. The key to developing core strength with abdominal crunches is to be a stickler for proper form.

The Classic Crunch: Lie on the floor on your back, knees bent and feet flat on the floor, hip-width apart. Place your hands behind your head with your elbows extended wide and parallel to the floor. With your chin lifted, gaze at the ceiling, press your lower back against the floor, then exhale and contract your abdominal muscles by pulling your belly button toward your spine as you lift your shoulders off the floor. (Don't pull on your head or neck or tuck your chin to your chest; you don't want to strain or use your neck to lift yourself!) Make sure you're using your abdominal muscles to lift you up and down. When you get to the top, hold this raised position for a couple of seconds, then inhale as you slowly lower your shoulders to the floor. Do three sets of 12 to 15 repetitions.



CLASSIC

[Remember: Be safe and be smart with any new exercise plan. Keep the following guidelines in mind: check in with your doctor before starting an activity plan, warm up before you begin any exercise session, keep a check on your intensity level and cool down afterwards. And keep well hydrated before, during, and after your workout.]

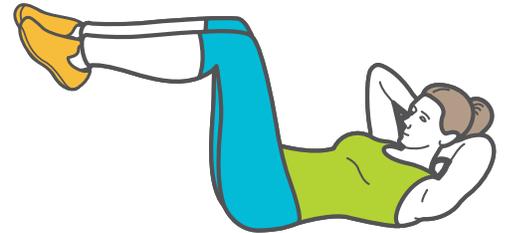
VARIATIONS

The Perpendicular Crunch: Start in the same position as the Classic Crunch but raise your legs up in the air so they're perpendicular to the floor, feet touching. Lift up, hands behind head, chin up, belly tucked in. Pause for a couple of seconds at the top, then slowly lower your shoulders to the floor. Do three sets of 12 to 15 repetitions. This variation will challenge your upper abdominal muscles even more.

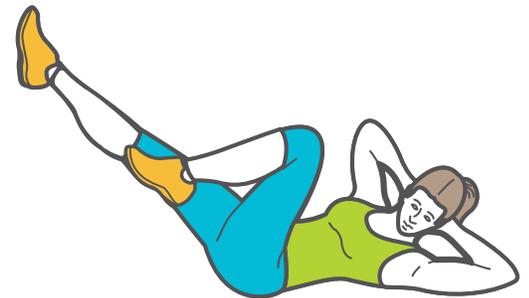
The Perpendicular Leg Drop: Assume the same starting position as the Perpendicular Crunch — with your legs raised perpendicular to the floor — but place your hands under your lower back (for added support) instead of behind your head. Press your entire back against the floor and slowly lower your legs straight down until they're a few inches from the floor. Pause, then raise them to the perpendicular position again. Do three sets of 12 to 15 repetitions. This will crank up the challenge for your lower abdominal muscles.

Bicycle Crunches: Lie on your back with your feet together and extend your legs straight out in front of you, a few inches off the floor. Place your hands behind your head with your elbows wide. Keep your left leg straight and bend your right knee toward your upper body as you twist and touch your left elbow to your right knee. Then, twist and turn so that your right leg straightens and your left knee bends and touches your right elbow. Keep bringing your opposite elbow to your opposite knee in a slow, controlled fashion, maintaining good form throughout. Do three sets of 12 to 15 repetitions. This move gives your upper, lower, and oblique abdominal muscles a great workout.

Gear Up! To make crunches more challenging, you can undermine your stability and take your ab muscles through a greater range of motion by doing the Classic Crunch on a Swiss exercise ball. Use the same basic motion as the Classic Crunch but place the curve of your back against the ball: Start with your back and shoulder blades resting on the ball, then exhale as you crunch up until your shoulder blades rise off the ball; pause for a second, then inhale as you lower yourself back down. Do three sets of 12 to 15 repetitions.



PERPENDICULAR



BICYCLE

Fit It In: Start your morning by doing a set of crunches, or do a set just before you slip into bed at night. You can also incorporate these into any strength-training workout.

The Move: Lunges

Just as push-ups are a fantastic all-in-one exercise for your upper body, lunges provide an excellent workout for your lower body. Lunges strengthen and tone your glutes, quads, hamstrings, and core, and the balancing aspect can give your hip flexors a workout, as well. Plus, doing a sequence of lunges elevates your heart rate, which helps you burn more calories than you would with other strength-training moves. To do lunges, all you need is your body and enough floor space to move forward and back or from side to side.

The Classic Lunge: Stand with your feet together and your abdominal muscles engaged to stabilize your spine. Step forward with your right foot as far as you can go, landing on the right heel first and bending your knee at a 90-degree angle; your back heel should be lifted off the ground. Keep your chest lifted and your belly button pulled in as you slowly shift your weight onto the right foot, placing it firmly on the floor, and lower your body until your right thigh is parallel with the floor. (Don't let your right knee extend past your toes and don't lean forward; keep your back straight.) Hold this low position for a few seconds, then push off with your right foot and bring it back beside your left foot, returning to an upright position. Repeat this move with the left foot. Do three sets of 12 to 15 repetitions lunges with each foot.



CLASSIC

VARIATIONS

Walking Lunges with a Twist: Follow the same steps as the Classic Lunge but hold a medicine ball in both hands. With each lunge, as you step forward, extend the medicine ball in front of you at chest level, moving your arms in the direction of the leg that is extended forward (towards your right shoulder if you're stepping out with your right foot). As you bring your feet back together, bring the medicine ball back in front of you. Repeat on the left side. Do three sets of 10 repetitions with each foot. This variation gives you an upper body workout, as well as challenging the oblique muscles in your abdomen.

Reverse Lunge: Start in the basic lunge position but instead of stepping forward with your right foot, lunge backwards with your right foot, making sure your knees are bent at 90-degree angles and your right heel is lifted off the floor. Keep your belly button pulled in and your chest up. Hold the lunge for a few seconds, then bring your left foot next to your right. Alternate legs and do three sets of 12 to 15 repetitions with each foot. This variation provides an extra challenge to your hip flexors, glutes, and hamstrings.

Lateral (Side) Lunge: Stand with your feet hip-width apart. Take a giant step (about 12 to 18 inches) to the side with your right foot, keeping it parallel with your left foot, and squat, sticking your butt out behind you as if you were going to sit in a chair. Keep your chest lifted and put your weight on your right leg and lean onto it, bending at the hip, until your right thigh is nearly parallel to the floor (try to bend this knee as close to a 90-degree angle as you can). Pause for a few seconds, then push off with your right foot and return to the starting (upright) position. Repeat with the left leg. Do three sets of 12 to 15 repetitions with each foot. This exercise also targets the insides and outsides of your thighs and your calves.

Gear Up! To make lunges even more challenging and add some upper-body strengthening, hold a 5- to-8-pound weight in each hand as you do your lunges.



**WALKING
WITH TWIST**

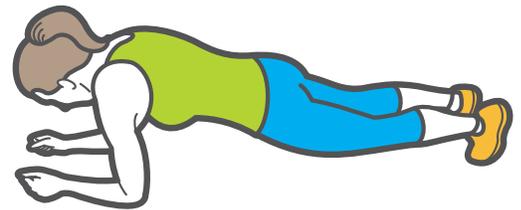
Fit It In: Include lunges as part of any strength-training or circuit workout. You can also do them while watching TV or talking on a cordless phone. These are easy moves to sneak in throughout the day.

The Move: The Plank

It may seem hard to believe that the seemingly simple plank exercise can build hard-core strength — until you try it. Because you're raising your body off the floor and holding it flat from head to toe, the plank helps develop strength in the abs, lower back, hips, shoulders, arms, legs, and butt. It's one of the most effective exercises for building core strength and stability — and it can help improve your posture, prevent injuries, and tone your abs. All you need is your own body and enough floor space in which to lie down and stretch out.

The Classic Plank: Lie face down on the floor (or a mat) and raise yourself up onto your forearms and your toes, keeping your elbows right underneath your shoulders. Keep your hips raised and your back flat, with your neck in line with your spine, so your body resembles a “plank” or tabletop that's parallel to the floor. Pull your belly button towards your spine to engage the deep abdominal muscles that help support your back; as you balance, gravity will naturally pull your midsection toward the ground — don't let it sag! Hold this position for 30 seconds, then relax. Do three sets.

The Modified Plank: If the Classic Plank is too difficult, start with the modified version. Start in the same position as the Classic Plank but raise yourself up onto your hands and knees instead of your forearms and toes, with hands right underneath your shoulders. Pull your belly button toward your spine to engage the deep abdominal muscles that help support your back. Hold this position for 30 seconds, then relax. Do three sets. Because your knees are supporting some of your weight, this Modified Plank makes it easier to lift your body off the floor while maintaining proper form, and allows your core to get stronger gradually.



CLASSIC

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VARIATIONS

Plank with Leg Lift: From the initial Classic Plank position, lift your torso by pushing yourself up from your left forearm onto your left hand, then push up from your right forearm onto your right hand; lift your right foot off the floor either up in the air behind you or a few inches out to the side (choose what feels best), keeping both legs completely straight. Hold the leg lift for a couple of seconds, then return to the starting position. Repeat with the left foot and leg. Start with 10 on each side; do three sets. This variation is extra challenging for your hip and leg muscles.

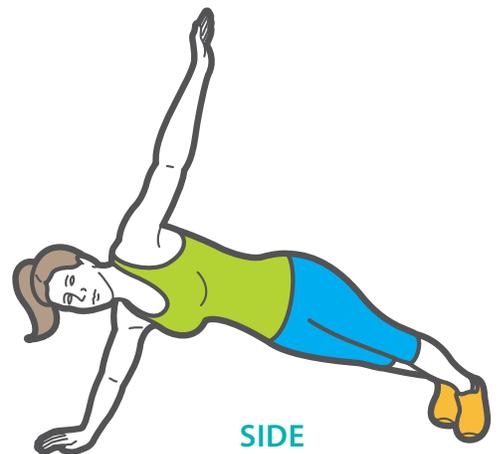
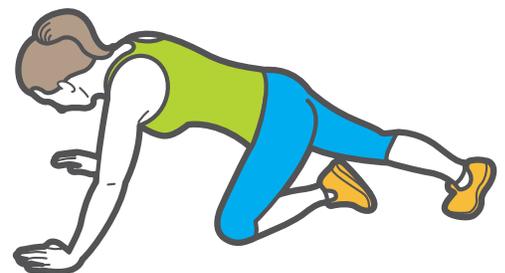
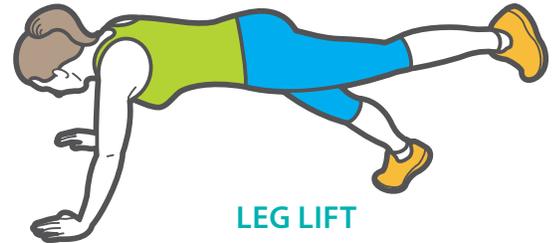
Plank with a Twist: While holding the Classic Plank position, lift your torso by pushing yourself up from your left forearm onto your left hand, then push up from your right forearm onto your right hand; lift your left foot and bring your left knee in toward your right elbow, then return to the starting position. Then, lift your right foot and bring your right knee toward your left elbow. Do 10 on each side and work up to three sets. This variation engages the oblique muscles on the sides of your abdomen.

Plank Tower: From the Classic Plank position, lift your torso by pushing yourself up from your left forearm onto your left hand, then push up from your right forearm onto your right hand; hold this higher position for 5 seconds, then lower yourself back down onto your left forearm, then your right forearm. Do this sequence 10 times, for a total of three sets. This cranks up the challenge for your arms and shoulders as well as your core.

Side Plank: Lie on your left side with your shoulders, hips, knees, and feet in alignment and your feet stacked on top of each other. Using your right hand for balance, raise yourself up with your left hand flat on the floor, arm extended. Maintain balance using your hand and the side of your left (lower) foot; rest your right arm along your right side or hold your arm in the air. Hold this side plank for 5 seconds, then release; do 10 total. Then, roll onto your right side and do 10 on that side. Do three sets on each side. This variation challenges your stability and improves core strength by targeting the oblique muscles along the sides of your abdomen.

Gear Up! To make the plank even more challenging, you can undermine your stability by doing this exercise with your forearms on a Bosu ball or Swiss exercise ball. Simply put, the more wobbly or unstable the surface makes you feel, the harder your muscles have to work.

Fit It In: Start your morning by doing the plank — whether before your shower or after. It's a great way to activate your core muscles and to help maintain better posture throughout the day. You can also incorporate it into any strength-training workout.

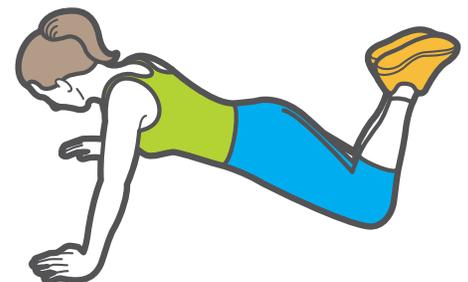
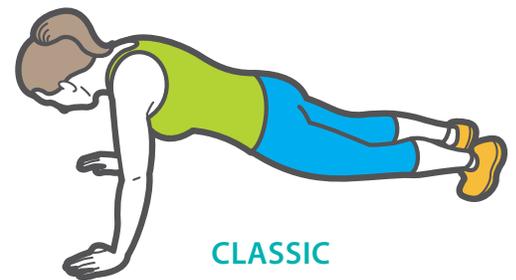


The Move: Push-Ups

I love push-ups! They're my favorite strength-training move because they work so many different muscles at the same time, and they're the single most effective exercise for your upper body. Besides strengthening and defining your chest, shoulders, abs, back, biceps, and triceps, push-ups can help improve your posture and prevent back and neck pain. Keep in mind: Women tend to have less upper body strength so push-ups can be extra challenging at first. But with regular practice, both sexes will be impressed by the extent to which push-ups can improve their upper body strength and tone.

The Classic Push-Up: Lie face-down with your legs straight behind you and your feet together, the balls of your feet on the floor and your heels in the air. Place your palms on the floor so they are directly under your elbows. Straighten your arms so that your body rises well above the floor, keeping your neck straight and your chest lifted, eyes focused on the floor below you, abs held tight, and your body as straight as a board (belly button pulled in; no sagging allowed!). Slowly bend your arms and lower your body toward the floor until elbows are bent at a 90-degree angle and upper arms are parallel to the floor. (Too difficult? Lower yourself just halfway down.) Exhale, then push back up to the starting position. Do three sets of 10 repetitions. [Note: If you feel strain in your neck, stick with the Modified Push-Up, below.]

The Modified Push-Up: Start in the same position as the Classic Push-Up but raise yourself up onto your knees instead of the balls of your feet, lifting your feet off the floor. Follow the same protocol from there and do three sets of 10 repetitions. This Modified Push-Up will make it easier for you to maintain the proper form for the duration of the exercise and allow your upper body muscles to get stronger gradually.



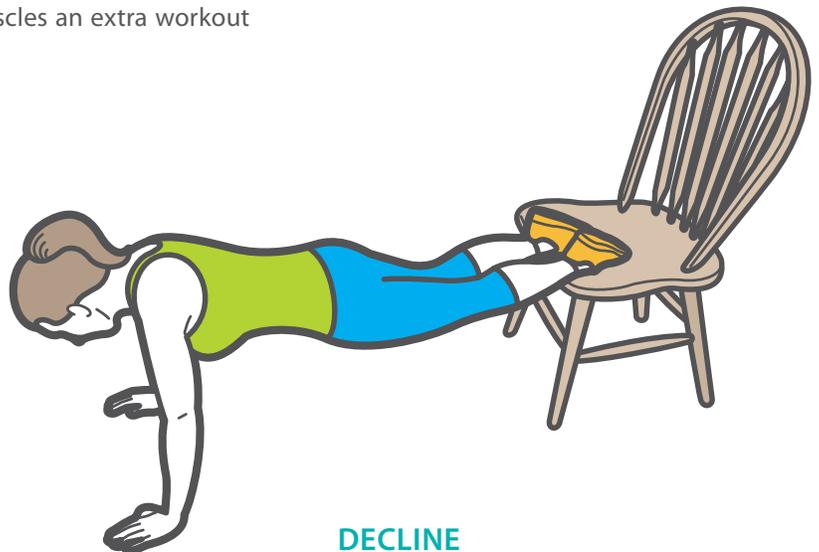
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VARIATIONS

Wide-Hand Push-Ups: Start in the Classic Push-Up position — with your feet together, and your back and arms straight — but move your hands wider than your shoulders so they are two to three feet apart. Bend your elbows and slowly lower your chest until it nearly reaches the floor. Straighten your arms and return to the starting position. Do three sets of 10 repetitions. This variation will crank up the challenge for the muscles in your chest and your triceps.

Decline Push-Ups: Follow the same form for the Classic Push-Up but place your toes on a step or chair and your hands on the ground. Proceed from there. Do three sets of 10 repetitions. Because you're working against gravity, this variation forces you to engage deeper muscles in your shoulders, back, and abs.

Gear Up! To make Decline Push-Ups even more challenging, you can undermine your stability by placing your ankles on a Swiss exercise ball and your palms on the floor. This will give your core muscles an extra workout and help you hone your balance at the same time.



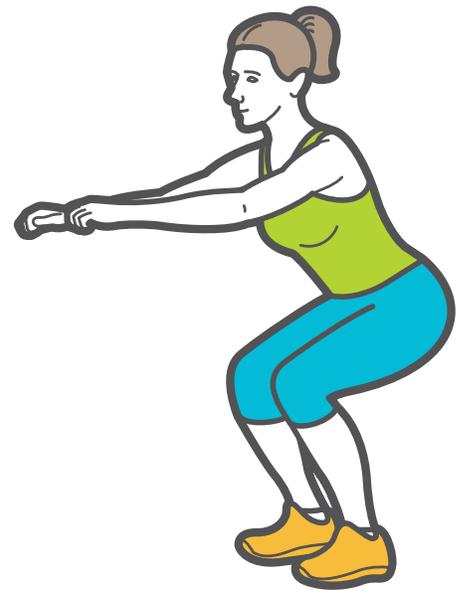
Fit It In: Include Push-Ups as part of any strength-training workout. You can also do them while watching TV or before you turn in for the night, while you're waiting for coffee to brew in the morning, or whenever you have a few minutes. These are easy moves to slip in at different times of the day (or evening).

The Move: The Squat

When it comes to strengthening and toning your lower body, squats are one of the best exercises around. They challenge your glutes (the muscles that shape your butt) as well as your quads (in the front of your thighs), hamstrings (in the back), the muscles in your inner and outer thighs, and your calves; in addition, the muscles in your abdomen and back help provide stability and control. Think of it as one move with many different benefits: You're producing serious muscle tone and strength along with calorie-burning results by making different muscles work together to lower and raise your body.

The Classic Squat: Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, and place a chair behind you to inspire good form. Keeping your head in line with your spine, lean your upper body forward and raise your arms straight out in front of you to shoulder level as you bend your knees to slowly lower your butt (as if you were going to sit in the chair); your weight should be in your heels, not your toes. Your knees should be over your toes and your thighs should be parallel to the floor. Hold the squat for three seconds, then exhale as you lift yourself back to the starting position. Do three sets of 12 to 15 repetitions.

Gear Up! To make the Classic Squat more challenging, you can use a medicine ball or free weight to work your upper body at the same time. Simply hold the medicine ball (or free weight) with both hands out in front of your chest, and squeeze it as you lower yourself into a squat; as you stand back up, pull the ball back toward your chest.



CLASSIC

VARIATIONS

A Plié Squat: Stand with your feet wider than hip-width apart, with your toes pointing out. Bend your knees and lower your body until your thighs are parallel to the floor; meanwhile, keep your belly button pulled toward your spine, your hips right under your shoulders, and your knees directly over your toes. Hold the squat for three seconds, then exhale as you return to standing. Do three sets of 12 to 15 repetitions. This variation challenges your inner thighs.

Wall Squat: Place a Swiss exercise ball between your lower back and the wall. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, with your feet right underneath your knees when your knees are bent at a 90-degree angle; you'll want to experiment to get your positioning right before you start. To do the move, bend your knees and slowly lower your body, rolling the ball down the wall with the small of your back until your thighs are parallel to the floor. Pause for a few seconds, then roll the ball back up to the starting position. Do three sets of 12 to 15 repetitions. This variation engages your ab and lower back muscles even more. (No exercise ball handy? Do wall squats by placing your entire back and the back of your head against the wall.)

Gear Up! To make the Wall Squat more challenging and get an upper-arm workout, too, hold a three- to five-pound dumbbell in each hand. When you reach the low point of the squat, hold the position and do a set of bicep curls, raising the weights until your elbows are bent at 90-degree angles; do another seven repetitions, then return to standing. Next, do the same squat but this time hold the position and bring the dumbbells all the way to your armpits, then lower the weights until your elbows reach 90-degree angles; repeat with another seven repetitions, then return to standing. For the final set, do the Wall Squat, then eight complete bicep curls, lifting the dumbbells from your hips to your armpits, then back down. Work up to three complete sets.



PLIÉ



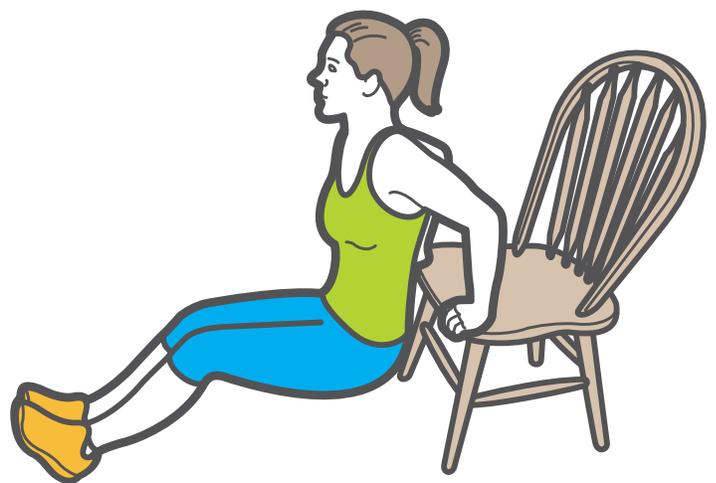
WALL

Fit It In: Include squats as part of any strength-training workout. Or, get up from your desk every hour and do a set at work; you can also do them while you're talking on the phone or cooking dinner at home. These are easy moves to sneak in throughout the day because they can be done anywhere.

The Move: Triceps Dip

In this streamlined move, you use your arms to lift and lower your body from a sitting position. It looks easy, but don't be fooled: Triceps Dips can lead to big results. They help strengthen, tone, and define the muscles in your upper arms, and help strengthen your shoulders, too. Best of all, you really can do them anywhere — in your living room or kitchen, at your desk, at the park, you name it. All you need is your own body and a stable chair or bench.

The Classic Dip: Stand with your back to a sturdy chair or bench and bend your legs as if you were going to sit down, placing your palms behind you on the front edge of the seat (about shoulder-width apart). Keep your feet on the ground in front of you so that most of your body weight is resting on your arms. Keeping elbows close to your sides, bend your arms to slowly lower your body until elbows are bent at a 90-degree angle and upper arms are parallel to the floor. Your knees should bend and hips should drop down toward the ground, staying as close to the seat as possible. Hold the dip for a second, then exhale and straighten your arms back to the starting position. (Caution: Don't lower your body so far down or forward that you overstress your shoulders.) Do three sets of 10 to 12 repetitions.



CLASSIC

VARIATIONS

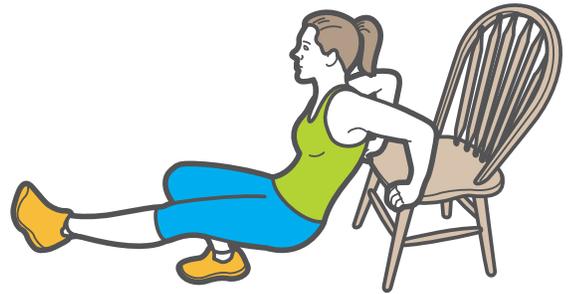
Once you've mastered the Classic Dip, try:

One-Leg Triceps Dips: Start in the same position as you would for the Classic Dip, then lift your right foot a few inches off the floor. Hold this position as you lower and raise your body toward the floor. Do 10 to 12 repetitions, then switch sides and raise your left foot. Do three complete sets on each side. This variation cranks up the challenge for your triceps and your shoulders.

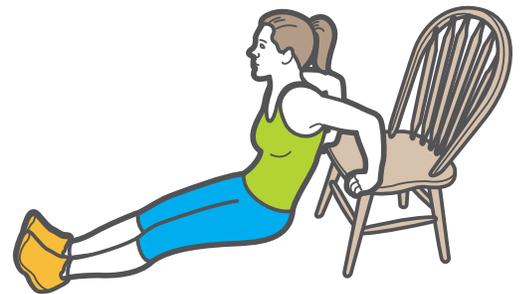
Straight-Leg Triceps Dips: With palms on chair, straighten legs in front of you with the edges of your heels pressed into the ground. Lower and lift your body while keeping your knees absolutely straight. Do three sets of 10 to 12 repetitions. This variation challenges your triceps and shoulders more intensely because you're lifting more of your body weight.

The Double-Chair Triceps Dip: Once you get really good at all the other variations, start in the Classic Dip position but put both your feet flat on the seat of a second chair with your legs extended straight. Lower and lift your body from this position. Do three sets of 10 to 12 repetitions. This advanced move engages your triceps and shoulders more intensely and works your core more because you'll be raising more of your body weight.

Gear Up! To make Triceps Dips more challenging, roll a Swiss exercise ball under your calves once your hands are on the seat, and dip down and up from this position.



ONE-LEG



STRAIGHT-LEG

Fit It In: Include Triceps Dips as part of any strength-training workout. Or, get up from your desk every hour and do a set at work; you can also do them while watching TV, in the kitchen, at the park, you name it. These are easy moves to sneak in throughout the day.