

# fit<sup>by</sup> nature

THE ADVENTX™ TWELVE-WEEK OUTDOOR FITNESS PROGRAM

## the basic workouts

This chapter provides an overview of the two basic sets of movements you'll use throughout this program: the Daily Dozen and the Home Stretch. The Daily Dozen is a set of twelve simple exercises you can do anywhere, anytime, that encompass flexibility, strength, and endurance. The Home Stretch is your regular stretching routine. Do this whenever you feel you need extra flexibility, and especially after your regular workouts to prevent muscle tightness and fatigue.

### THE DAILY DOZEN: CALISTHENICS FOR EVERYDAY CONDITIONING

I recommend you perform the Daily Dozen every day. You need no equipment, not even workout clothing—you can even do this workout in your pajamas. Each exercise takes 1 minute (45 seconds of movement followed by 15 seconds of rest), so the entire routine will take just 12 minutes a day. If you think about it, those 12 minutes each day add up to 18 hours in 90 days. That's a huge amount of strengthening and fitness to gain by doing something in the time it takes to brew coffee in the morning.



steam engine (1)



steam engine (2)



toe toucher (1)



toe toucher (2)

## STEAM ENGINE

**How to do it:** Stand with your feet shoulder width apart and your hands clasped behind your head. Lift your left knee, simultaneously bending and twisting to touch your right elbow to the left knee, keeping the muscles of your core (your abdominals and lower back) engaged. Alternate, using your right knee and left elbow, keeping your hands behind your head.

**Notes:** This great compound exercise stretches the hamstrings and back muscles in several directions: up, down, and diagonal. It also promotes good balance: when the knee comes up, you're balancing on the standing leg. And it's a good exercise for your core muscles: start with good posture and stomach muscles tight through the full range of motion to exercise your lower back, abdominal, and chest muscles.

## TOE TOUCHER

**How to do it:** Stand with your feet hip width apart and arms extended straight out to your sides at a 90-degree angle from your body. Bend from the waist as you touch your left hand to your right foot, return to standing position, and then bend again to touch your right hand to your left foot. Alternate sides, keeping your arms straight at all times. The movement here comes from the waist. Keep your core muscles engaged and your back straight (don't hunch over).

**Notes:** This is a forward bend with a slight twist, which exercises the abdominal muscles, lower core muscles, hamstrings, and glutes. In the morning, it can be tough if the legs are tight—go gently, taking care to warm up. Don't press to go all the way down to your feet if you're feeling tight.

## TWISTER

**How to do it:** Start in the same posture as the Toe Toucher. Slowly twist at the waist to the left as far as

you can, and then slowly return to facing front, before twisting to the right. The motion here comes from the hips, not your back, as you twist side to side. The head moves in the direction of the twist, along with the arms. As with all of these exercises, keep your core engaged.

**Notes:** Pause at the end of each twist before moving in the opposite direction. Take care not to throw your body around on this movement. Go through the full range of motion for your core muscles (abdominals and lower back). Practice care when performing this movement if you have any underlying lower-back problems, going slowly through the full range, and stop if you have any pain in your back.

## SIDE BENDER

**How to do it:** Stand with your feet together, arms raised straight above your head, palms facing together. Keeping your arms straight, slowly bend to the right. Slowly straighten and bend to the left. Alternate sides.

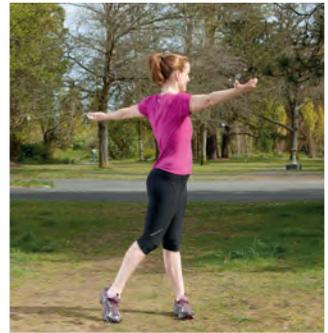
**Notes:** This exercise works the sides of your abdominal muscles (called the obliques). Stand as tall as you can with your hands to the sky, palms together. Remember that the motion is side to side—not forward, and not twisting. Imagine that your body is sandwiched between two panes of glass and all you can do is move side to side. As with the Twister, be mindful of your lower back, holding your abdominal core tight, stopping if you feel discomfort.

## THREE-QUARTER SQUAT

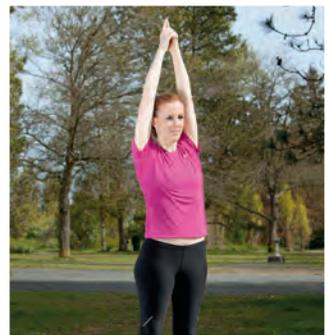
**How to do it:** Stand with legs shoulder width apart and arms at your sides. Swing your arms forward and up, raising them above your head, palms facing forward. At the same time, bend your knees as if you were sitting in a chair. Hold the Squat briefly, then stand up by pushing through your heels, until you are in a full upright standing position.



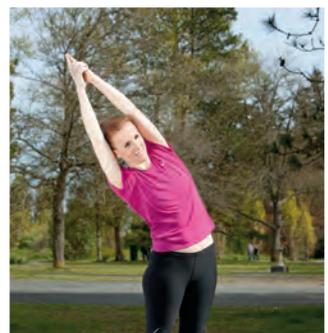
twister (1)



twister (2)



side bender (1)



side bender (2)



three-quarter squat



lunge (1)



lunge (2)

**Notes:** Many people refer to the Squat as the king of exercises because it's an all-body exercise that works everything from the feet to the fingertips when performed correctly. It also contributes to good balance—especially important as you get older. Keep it simple: stand upright with good posture, feet shoulder distance apart with your weight on your heels. Imagine roots underneath your heels, anchoring you to the ground. Keep your stomach muscles tight. Then think of sending your hips backward to achieve a sitting movement, as though you're easing into a chair. As you rise, drive the weight of your body into your heels until you are fully upright. Be sure to keep your back straight at all times. If you feel your back curving, you've probably gone a little too far. If you can't go down very far, that's okay; it's better to do a small Squat, keeping good form, than a deep Squat that causes you to bend your back.

## LUNGE

**How to do it:** Stand upright, feet and legs together, hands on hips, elbows out to sides. Step your right leg backward. Bend your left knee until the kneecap is directly above your foot, causing the leg to form a 90-degree angle. Simultaneously lower your right leg until the knee almost rests on the ground, forming another 90-degree angle. Step back to starting position, and repeat, stepping backward with the left leg. Continue to alternate legs.

**Notes:** Lunges are a simple exercise as long as you maintain good posture. When you step backward, make sure you're not stepping too far or too little. On the downward position on the Lunge, the forward knee should be just over the forward ankle. Technically, the correct angle for the shin bone is a bit more than 90 degrees, but it's important not to let the knee travel out too far over the ankle. The motion of the leg as you move into the Lunge should be downward, not forward. If, after the initial step backward, your front knee moves forward instead

of down, you're compromising your knee. Another tip is to make sure that the knee on the forward leg is in line with the hip on the same side of the body—it should not push to the left or to the right. If the movement challenges you at first, try taking a smaller step backward, or lower your back knee less.

## SUMO SQUAT

**How to do it:** Stand with your feet a little wider than hip distance apart, toes pointing out at 45-degree angles. Put your hands on your hips and bend your knees out to the sides, making sure to keep them in line with the toes. Lower your body in a Squat until your thighs are parallel to the ground, and then push up through your heels to a standing position. Repeat.

**Notes:** With the hips more open than in the Three-Quarter Squat, this exercise allows you to go deeper into the movement. The same rules apply as in a regular Squat: keep your weight on your heels, and keep your abdominals, glutes, and hamstrings tight and strong as you move through the exercise. You can reach up to the sky with your arms as you move down into the Squat, exercising the chest and the upper back.

## PUSH-UP

**How to do it:** Start with palms and toes on the ground, body in the air, as straight and strong as possible. Your arms should be directly underneath your shoulders, and you can spread your fingers wide for stability. (If this is more of a challenge than you'd like right now, do a modified Push-up with your knees on the ground.) Keeping the back and neck straight, inhale, bend your elbows and lower yourself until you are about 2 inches off the ground. Exhale as you push back up into the starting position. Repeat.

**Notes:** Push-ups are a major, full-body exercise. The most important part of the Push-up is the position in which you begin the movement. Imagine a plank of



sumo squat (1)



sumo squat (2)



push-up (1)



push-up (2)

# the push-up

Push-ups are one of those exercises with a *reputation*: many people find them very intimidating. At adventX,

we simply modify the exercise as needed to work with the upper-body strength of each athlete, with the expectation that each athlete will eventually be able to perform many push-ups, no matter what their starting strength was. If full push-ups are hard at first, definitely use the knees-to-ground variation, but consider that by changing your mind-set, you might just surprise yourself. Just practice, work within your effort level, and pretty soon you'll be amazed at what you can do.



crocodile (1)



crocodile (2)



scissors (1)

wood on your back to keep good alignment throughout. Your hands should be shoulder width apart, fingers pointing forward. Breathing is especially important for the Push-up; remember to inhale on the downward phase of the movement, and exhale on the upward phase. As you push up, be aware of pulling your elbows into your body, and remember to engage all of your core muscles (abdominals and lower back).

## CROCODILE

**How to do it:** Lie on the ground on your back with legs extended, and place your hands under your buttocks. Your head and neck should be slightly off the ground, eyes looking up to the sky. Lift both legs just off the ground using your abdominal muscles. Keeping your left leg in place, raise your right leg straight up to a 90-degree angle from your body. Lower the right to just above the ground while at the same time raising the left straight up. Continue alternating legs.

## SCISSORS

**How to do it:** Start in the same position as in the Crocodile, above. Move the legs apart as far as you can, an inch or so off the ground, and then slowly move them

together, crossing your right leg over your left (if you can). Extend the legs apart again, and then move them together, this time crossing left leg over right. Repeat.

**Notes:** Both Crocodiles and Scissors are advanced exercises. They are great strengtheners, but can also put some pressure on the lower back, so take care if you have any lower back issues—slow down and go through the full range of motion, never pushing through pain. Beginners would do well to bend their knees slightly for these exercises. When you feel ready, straighten the legs completely for a more challenging movement. As with all of the other exercises in the Daily Dozen, the key is good posture, so begin by engaging the core muscles. In both of these exercises, you should have a neutral spine (see sidebar on next page).

## STEAM ENGINE ON BACK

**How to do it:** Lie on your back with your hands behind your head, head slightly raised, taking care not to pull on your neck. Extend your legs fully, holding them an inch or so off the ground. Bend the left knee in toward your body as you extend your right elbow to touch the left knee. Alternate the movement, touching your right knee to your left elbow as you extend the left leg fully.

**Notes:** Also known as the Bicycle, this movement is very similar to the first exercise in the Daily Dozen, the Steam Engine. It's a simple movement: bring one knee up to the opposing elbow while extending the opposite leg as far out as you can at the same time. The best way to raise the quality of this exercise is to reach the extended leg as far out as you can. This is a fantastic exercise for the abdominal muscles, the lower back, and the hamstrings.

## PLANK

**How to do it:** Get into a Plank position by supporting your body weight on your elbows and lower arms and toes, with your midsection lifted and held very firm and



scissors (2)



neutral spine



steam engine on back



plank



plank variation

# neutral spine

Neutral spine can be best described as placing equal tension on the front and back of your body—in other words, your abdominals and lower back muscles work equally hard, and you’re not favoring one side of your body or the other. To see if you’re in neutral spine position,

lie on the floor face up. You should be able to slide only your fingers underneath the small of your back. If the back is pressed to the ground, there’s too much tension in the abdominals; if there’s too much of an arch in your back, allowing room for more than your whole hand or forearm, there’s probably too much tension in the back.

strong. Hold this posture for 45 seconds if you can—and challenge yourself by holding it even longer once you have the hang of it. When you’re really going strong, try raising one arm or one leg—or one arm and the opposing leg at the same time—for a portion of the movement.

**Variation:** Try the plank with your hands on the ground, instead of your elbows.

**Notes:** The Plank is a very simple, smart exercise. It can be done either with the elbows on the ground, or in the Push-up position—in other words, the beginning posture of a traditional Push-up. It’s often referred to in military circles as the watching TV exercise, because when you do it with your elbows on the ground, you look like a kid propped up watching television. Simply get into the position and hold it for a predetermined amount of time. Your goal for the Daily Dozen should be for 45 seconds or longer. Your body should be firm, not sagging; if the body sags, or your butt pushes up into the air, you’ve reached your limit.

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Start doing the Daily Dozen today and you’ll instantly add six hours of exercise every month. *That’s* efficiency—and it will pay off in the workouts to come.

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