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Alternating Inchworm and Pike from a Plank Exercise Using a Stability Ball

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flexors (iliopsoas, rectus femoris, and sartorius).

EXERCISE DESCRIPTION

This exercise for the core stabilizers, abdominals, and hip flexors combines 2 separate exercises, the inchworm from a plank and the pike from a plank, into 1 fluid exercise, performed sequentially and repetitively using a stability ball. The actual exercise, performed in 2 parts, begins and ends from a plank position with an inchworm and then a pike performed in the middle. Body balance and upper-body static strength are required, in addition to core strength, to be successful.

PART 1 OF ALTERNATING INCHWORM AND PIKE FROM A PLANK EXERCISE—PLANK TO INCHWORM TO PLANK

START POSITION—PLANK

Select an appropriate sized stability ball. Determination is based on a person's height.

- <58 inches in height: 35-cm ball
- 58–65 inches in height: 45-cm ball
- 66–72 inches in height: 55-cm ball
- 73–78 inches in height: 65-cm ball
- >78 inches in height: 75-cm ball

Position the body with the abdomen on the top of the ball and the hands contacting the floor in front of the ball (Figure 1).

SUMMARY

THE TECHNIQUE OF THE ALTERNATING INCHWORM AND PIKE FROM A PLANK EXERCISE USING A STABILITY BALL IS DESCRIBED AND DEMONSTRATED IN THIS COLUMN.

TYPE OF EXERCISE

Core stability and strength exercise with challenge of balance and upper-body static holds.

MUSCLES INVOLVED

Core stabilizers, abdominal muscles (external and internal obliques and transverse and rectus abdominis), hip



Figure 1. Start and end position for the alternating inchworm and pike from a plank.

Exercise Technique



Figure 2. Midposition for Part 1 - the inchworm.



Figure 3. Midposition for Part 2 - the plank.

Walk on the hands into a plank position so that the shins rest on top of the ball.

The ears, shoulders, hips, knees, and ankles should be aligned and parallel to the floor.

Draw the navel to the spine and inhale fully in preparation for movement into the inchworm.

MIDPOSITION—THE INCHWORM

From the plank position, lift the hips slightly and contract the abdominal muscles (Figure 2).

Begin exhaling slowly as the knees are bent and brought toward the chest and abdomen.

Continue exhaling fully and contract the abdominals until both hips and knees are flexed as fully as possible.

END POSITION—PLANK

From the inchworm position, begin inhaling slowly as the hips and knees are extended (Figure 1).

Continue inhaling until starting plank position is achieved.

Maintain a neutral spine throughout with the ears, shoulders, and hips in alignment and parallel to the floor, the scapulae slightly retracted, and the shoulders pulled down away from the ears.

PART 2 OF ALTERNATING INCHWORM AND PIKE FROM A PLANK EXERCISE—PLANK TO PIKE TO PLANK

START POSITION—PLANK

Start from the plank position at the end of part 1 (Figure 1).

MIDPOSITION—THE PIKE

From the plank position, begin exhaling slowly and flex the hips keeping the knees straight. Draw the buttocks toward the ceiling (Figure 3).

Continue exhaling fully until a pike position is assumed.

In the pike position, do not lock the elbows.

Maintain a neutral spine throughout with the ears, shoulders, and hips in alignment, the scapulae slightly retracted, and the shoulders pulled down away from the ears.

END POSITION—PLANK

From the pike position, begin inhaling slowly as the hips are extended. Keep the knees straight throughout the movement (Figure 1).

Continue inhaling until starting plank position is achieved.

Maintain a neutral spine throughout with the ears, shoulders, and hips in alignment, the scapulae slightly retracted, and the shoulders pulled down away from the ears.

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