



# GROWING STRONG

## TEEN STRENGTH AND FITNESS ORIENTATION GUIDE

[ymcarivercrossing.org/7th-grade](https://ymcarivercrossing.org/7th-grade)

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RIVER CROSSING YMCA



# WELLNESS CENTER GUIDELINES

Welcome, and remember, this is YOUR time. Have fun, de-stress, connect with others and seek support when you need it. You got this!

Use of the Wellness Center and Y Synergy space is for members ages 12+

Use of the free weight area is for members ages 15+

- **Demonstrate community.** Y core values are caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.
- **Keep clean.** Wipe down equipment and mats before and after use.
- **Stay kind.** Cell phones should be used for music and personal video purposes only. Please use headphones. Taking photos or video of fellow members without their permission will result in immediate membership termination.
- **Take care of equipment.** Re-rack and avoid unnecessary slamming or dropping of weights.
- **Respect the dress.** Proper attire for the activity you are engaged in is required at all times, including athletic footwear for your safety and tops that cover your chest.
- **Communicate.** Tell a staff member if your experience is not to your satisfaction, especially if our equipment is malfunctioning or you need support.
- **No food or glass.** Food and glass bottles are not permitted in the Wellness Center.
- **Welcome youth.** Youth ages 12-14 must wear Y issued wristbands while in the Wellness Center after successfully completing our Teen Orientation.
- **Wait there is more!** Please refer to your Member Code of Conduct for further descriptions and policies.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO WARM UP?

**Warm Up** – A slow exercise that uses the larger muscle groups of the body. Warming up performed before physical activity prepares the body for what is about to come. Warming up can be “general movements,” or “specific,” using movements similar to what will be needed for the activity. Warming up also prevents injury to the muscles.

Warm up may also include dynamic stretches moving the joints through a full range of motion, however static stretching should come after the workout as part of the cool down.

## WHAT ARE SOME DIFFERENT KINDS OF WARM UPS?

- March in place
- Jumping Jacks
- Knee lifts in place
- Arm circles/Alternating arm circles
- Walking
- Torso twists (twist from right to left)
- Jogging on track or treadmill
- Biking on stationary bike

**Tip!** Warm up for 5-10 minutes, focusing on the same muscles that will be used in the main workout.



# INTRODUCTION TO CARDIOVASCULAR ACTIVITIES

Aerobic exercise, also known as cardio, is a type of physical activity that involves continuous, rhythmic movements that increase heart rate and breathing rate. It helps strengthen the heart, lungs and cardiovascular system. Examples of aerobic exercise include: walking, running, swimming, cycling, dancing, stair climbing and rowing.

The Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE) chart is used to subjectively measure how hard someone feels they are working during physical activity. It helps individuals gauge their exercise intensity. RPE provides a valuable tool for managing exercise intensity, ensuring you are varying your intensity throughout your workouts, tracking progress and preventing overtraining.

## RATE OF PERCEIVED EXERTION CHART

10	<b>Max Effort Activity</b> feels almost impossible to keep going. Completely out of breath, unable to talk, cannot maintain for more than a very short time.
9	<b>Very Hard Activity</b> very difficult to maintain exercise intensity. Can barely breath and can speak only a few words.
7-8	<b>Vigorous Activity</b> borderline uncomfortable, short of breath, can speak a sentence.
4-6	<b>Moderate Activity</b> breathing heavily, can hold short conversation, still somewhat comfortable, but becoming noticeably more challenging.
2-3	<b>Light Activity</b> feels like you can maintain for hours, easy to breathe and carry a conversation.
1	<b>Very Light Activity</b> hardly any exertion, but more than sleeping, watching TV, etc.

## WELLNESS CENTER CARDIO

Visit the Wellness Center and practice using the Treadmill, Stationary Bike, Rower and Elliptical Machine. These machines are all available to help support your cardio training at the Y. When using these machines it is important that you only go at a speed and/or incline where you can maintain control for safety.

All of these pieces have different programs and options to support your workouts, but a good rule of thumb is to use the **GREEN Quick Start button** when first learning how to use these machines.



# INTRODUCTION TO STRENGTH TRAINING

## What is strength training?

The practice of using weight machines, free weights, resistance bands or body weight to build muscles. With resistance, muscles have to work harder to move. This allows them to grow stronger and more efficient.

## Benefits of strength training:

- Builds healthy muscles, joints and bones
- Improves endurance, total fitness level and sports performance
- Helps to prevent injuries and speed up recovery time

# STRENGTH MACHINES IN THE WELLNESS CENTER

**Leg Press:** Legs

**Leg Extension:** Front of your legs

**Leg Curl:** Back of your legs

**Chest Press:** Front chest

**Mid Row:** Upper back and arms

**Lat Pull-Down:** Mid back and arms

**Shoulder Press:** Shoulders

**Biceps Curls:** Front of your arms

**Triceps Dip:** Back of your arms



**Tip!** Each of the strength machines at the Y have pictures showing how to use each piece of equipment along with which muscle groups are being used.

# LET'S TALK STRENGTH

**REPETITION(Reps):** How many times you do an exercise from start to finish. For strength training you will **typically perform 8, 10 or 12 reps.**

**SET:** How many times you perform your repetitions. For strength training you will **typically perform 2-3 sets.**  
Example: 3 sets of 12 reps

**Strength training should be done 2-3 times per week for best results!**

## BODYWEIGHT EXERCISES: IT'S ALL ABOUT FORM.

Including bodyweight exercises in your workout is a great way to build functional strength, improve both muscle strength and endurance, enhance your posture and can be done without any equipment.

Below are common bodyweight exercises that people typically have trouble doing correctly when just starting out, along with tips on how to improve your form.

### PUSH UPS

Choose between full body push ups or push ups performed on your knees, with your hands elevated on a bench, or with your hands on a wall. Arms are directly under the shoulders. Make sure the head and neck are aligned with the spine; lower the body as one unit toward the floor, drawing the abdomen up and in and keeping the spine/low back neutral.

**Targets the chest, triceps and shoulders.**

**Tip!** If you start to dip or sag in your back or your hips start to pop up, take a break or try a more moderate version while you work towards building strength.

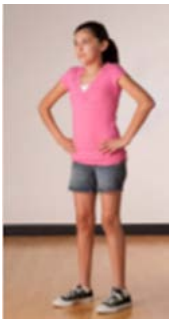
1



2



1



2



### SQUATS

Imagine a chair is behind you and you are sitting down onto the chair until your knees are at a 90 degree angle but no less. Make sure to keep the knees back behind the toes and the feet are shoulder width apart with toes pointed forward.

**Targets the hamstrings and gluteal muscles.**

**Tip!** Focusing on keeping your weight in your heels and your chest lifted.

### CURL UPS/CRUNCHES

Lay down with knees bent and feet flat on floor with the hands resting at the sides. Draw belly button to spine, tightening the abdominals bringing the chest towards the hips. Shoulders and chest should lift off of the floor. Make sure you are not pulling on your head/neck. A good visual reminder is to imagine that you have an orange placed between your chin and your chest.

**Targets the abdominals.**

**Tip!** Hands can be by your sides, across your chest or behind your head. Just make sure if they are behind your head you are not pulling on your head/neck!

1



2



## OPPOSITE ARM LEG LIFTS/BIRD DOG

Start on your hands and knees (tabletop position) and slowly lift the opposite arm and leg until they are parallel to the floor. Keep neck in line with your spine and abdominals tight.

**Targets upper and lower back.**

**Tip!** Maintain a neutral spine and engaged core throughout the movement by keeping your back straight and avoiding any sagging or arching, while also drawing your abdominal muscles in to stabilize your spine. Focus on controlled, smooth movements.

1



2



1



## KNEE CURL UPS

Start by lying down on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Draw your belly button to your spine while bringing your knees inward and upward so your hips lift slightly off of the floor.

**Targets lower abdominals.**

2



**Tip!** Practice lifting and lowering with control rather than using momentum and swinging your body.

## WALKING LUNGES

Remain upright keeping a straight back. Step forward with the right foot and drop the left knee towards the floor into a lunge. Keep the right knee behind the toes. Make sure to not shift your weight forward; instead drop directly towards the floor. Push off of the floor with rear foot and repeat with left foot.

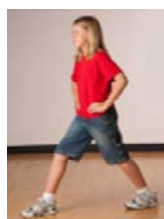
**Targets quads, hamstrings and calf muscles.**

**Tip!** If you find you are wobbly, start by practicing a stationary lunge by planting your feet in a staggered lunge stance then lowering and lifting your body with control for 5 - 15 reps. Then change legs to practice on the second side.

1



2



3



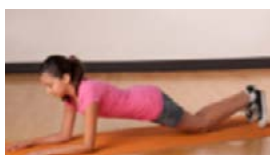
## PLANK

Begin by lying face down. Lift your hips and knees off of the floor so that your body weight is supported by your forearms and toes, forming a straight line from your head to your heels. Draw the belly button towards your spine to help activate the abdominals; making sure to keep your head and neck in line with the spine.

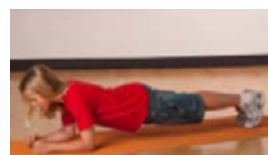
**Targets the abdominals, lower and upper back and hip flexors.**

**Tip!** Think about driving your elbows into the floor and pushing back through your heels if on your toes. If your back starts to sag or your hips stick up in the air, take a break.

1



2



# COOL DOWN

Cool down activities help your body transition from a higher intensity workout or sport to a resting state, allowing your heart rate and breathing to return to normal and reducing muscle soreness. Examples include light walking or jogging, easy biking, slow swimming, static stretches targeting the muscles used during the workout and deep breathing exercises for relaxation. Stretches should be held for 15–30 seconds and are best performed at the end of a workout once the body is warmed up.

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# Stretching Exercises

by DAREBEE © [darebee.com](http://darebee.com)

						
	shoulders	lower back	hamstrings	quads	inner thighs	hips
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

## SMART GOALS

SMART goals are objectives that are **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant** and **Time-bound**. Setting SMART goals provides a structured approach to goal setting, helping you focus your efforts, track progress, provide motivation and increase the likelihood of success.

### SMART GOAL

Think about it: What is a fitness goal that you have, and how can you make it a SMART goal?

**Specific:** What do I want to achieve?

**Measurable:** How will you track your progress?

**Achievable:** Is this goal realistic based on your current fitness level and the time you have to devote to working on it right now?

**Relevant:** Does this goal make sense and align with your overall athletic or fitness aspirations? Do I feel motivated to achieve it?

**Time-bound:** Set a realistic deadline for achieving your goal.

Do you need help setting a SMART goal, coming up with a plan to achieve your goal or are you looking for additional support as you begin your fitness journey? Set up an appointment to meet with a personal trainer for a free Fitness Consultation to help get you set up for success at the Y!





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