

Meet Janis Argianas



Janis is an AFAA Certified Personal Trainer and is AFAA Certified in Group Fitness. She has worked in fitness for more than 20 years and has extensive experience as an instructor. Janis has taught classes in aerobics, step, strength training, core and yoga as well as classes geared specifically towards seniors.

In her spare time Janis enjoys playing with her granddaughters and gardening.

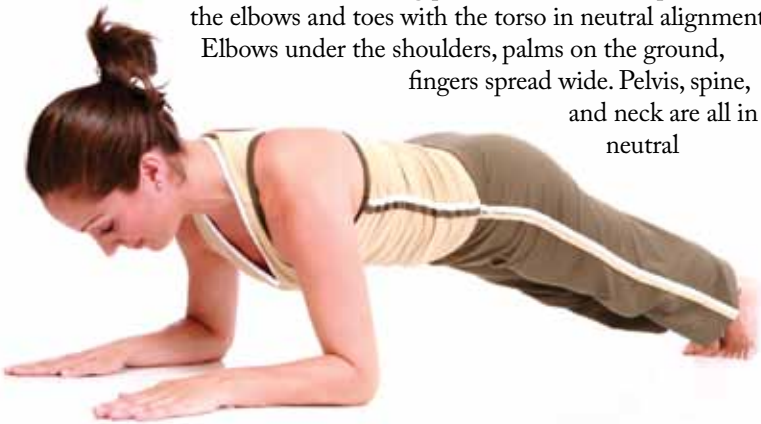
Featured Exercise: The Plank

By Janis Argiana, *Fitness First* Personal Trainer

Muscles used: The plank is a torso stability exercise in which the core muscles are challenged isometrically as stabilizers. The torso muscles challenged are rectus abdominis, external and internal obliques, transverse abdominis, lumborum, erector spinae, and the multifidus. The scapular muscles of the back are also challenged.

Exercise purpose: to learn to maintain neutral alignment in the plank position and provide a significant challenge to the core stabilizer muscles. A neutral spine maintains the four curves of the spine in their ideal alignment; neutral scapulae are fully depressed and mid-way between retraction and protraction.

Execution: The starting position for the basic plank is on the elbows and toes with the torso in neutral alignment. Elbows under the shoulders, palms on the ground, fingers spread wide. Pelvis, spine, and neck are all in neutral



alignment with abdominals contracted. Hips and shoulders are level. A straight line is maintained from the heels to the head. If a plank is performed for stability-training purposes, it is usually held without movement for several seconds (10-60). There are no moving joints; everything is stabilized and perfectly immobile.

Care must be taken not to hyperextend the spine. Prolonged holding in this pose without sufficient abdominal support may compromise the back. Engage and contract all spinal and scapular stabilizing muscles simultaneously and isometrically.



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