

Midlife Trouble-Zone

WORKOUT PLAN

Don't let menopause-related weight gain bring you down. Fight back with this meno-pot-busting routine targeting the belly, upper arms and derriere.

Created by MyLifeStages Fitness Expert Sandra Augustin, Owner of Fitness Rehab in Sacramento, California
Photography provided by D and M Studios.

BEGINNERS: Perform one set of each exercise 2x per week.

INTERMEDIATE: Perform two sets of each exercise 2x per week.

ADVANCED: Perform two sets of each exercise 2x per week with dumbbells (where appropriate).

{ CORE/WAIST EXERCISES }



1 SIDE PLANK

Target Waist and Core

Action Keep spine in neutral with ears, shoulders and hips in alignment. Make sure elbow is lined up directly under shoulder. Hold pose for 10-20 seconds. Three sets each side.

Modifications or Variations Use bottom knee to support body weight or for more advanced: two elevated legs increases workload of waist muscles.



2 ELBOW PLANK

Target Abdomen and Low Back and Core
Added Benefit: Strengthens shoulder stabilizers.

Action Keep spine in neutral with ears, shoulders and hips in alignment. Make sure elbows are lined up directly under shoulders. Hold pose for 10-20 seconds. Three sets.

Modifications or Variations Spread feet apart, just beyond shoulder width for greater stability. Keep feet close together for greater challenge.



3 MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS

Target Abdomen, Low Back and Core
Added Benefit: Strengthens shoulder stabilizers and triceps.

Action Start in straight elbow plank, or push-up position. Keep spine in neutral with ears, shoulders and hips in alignment. Make sure elbows and wrists are lined up directly under shoulders. Bring left knee toward chest without letting toes touch the ground. Return to starting position, then bring right knee toward without letting toes touch the ground. Perform three sets for 20 seconds.

Modifications or Variations Use bottom knee to support body weight or for more advanced: two elevated legs increases workload of waist muscles.



4 WINDSHIELD WIPERS

Target Waist and Core

Action Start on back with knees to chest. Keeping pelvis in a slight tilt (hip bones toward ribcage), rotate both knees toward right elbow, return to center, then rotate both knees to left side and return center. Perform 10 repetitions to each side for three sets.

Modifications or Variations Straighten knees and extend toes toward ceiling (directly above belly button) and lower feet toward right hand, return to center, then rotate both toward left hand and return center. Perform 10 repetitions to each side.



5 HANGING KNEE RAISES

Target Abdomen and Core
Added Benefit: Strengthens shoulder stabilizers.

Action Depress elbows and arms in sling for proper posture. Bring knees to chest while keeping elbows pointing forward and upper arms parallel to ground. Return to starting position. Perform 10 repetitions for three sets.



6 HANGING OBLIQUES

Target Waist and Core
Added Benefit: Strengthens shoulder stabilizers.

Action Depress elbows and arms in sling for proper posture. Lift knees toward right shoulder while keeping elbows pointing forward and upper arm parallel to ground and return to starting position, then lift knees toward left shoulder. Perform five repetitions to each side for three sets.

1 DUMBBELL ROWS

Target Latissimus Dorsi, Posterior Deltoids, Rhomboids, Biceps
Added Benefits: Improves posture, strengthens low back, adds shape to front of arms.

Action Feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent, hinge from the hips until torso is at a 45° angle. Allow the weight or weights to slide down the legs naturally. Hold dumbbells outside your hips. Bend and lift the elbows up and squeeze the shoulder blades together bringing the dumbbells towards your waist. Then lower the weight back down to the starting position. Keep the shoulders down while lifting elbows. Maintain active torso stabilization. Exhale during the pull when elbows are bending.

Modifications or Variations If good form is restricted reduce the angle of the hip hinge. For greater challenge, increase the angle towards 90 degrees.



2 PUSH UPS

Target Pectorals, Anterior Deltoids, Triceps
Added Benefits: Strengthens core and firms backside of arms.

Action Place hands on step or on the floor shoulder distance apart. Body is in a prone (face down) position with toes on the floor. Slowly bend elbows lowering the chest towards the floor or step platform. Extend elbows, pushing the chest away from the step or floor until you are back in starting position. Keep shoulders down and back, with neck and spine in a neutral position. Keep the elbows slightly bent at the top of the movement. Exhale during the pressing motion as you extend your elbows.

Modifications or Variations To decrease intensity perform push up with knees on the floor. Perform push up on knuckles if participant has wrist issues.



3 OVERHEAD PRESS

Target Trapezius, Deltoids, Triceps
Added Benefit: Adds shape to shoulders and firm backside of arms.

Action Standing in ready position (split stance), position hand weights at shoulder height with elbows turned out to sides and palms facing forward. Press arms overhead until arms are extended then return to starting position. Press the weight slightly forward while keeping the neck and wrists in neutral. Exhale during the press as you extend the elbows.

Modifications or Variations Can be performed unilaterally (one arm at a time) for greater challenge with stability.



1 REVERSE LUNGE



Target Glutes and Hamstrings
Added Benefit: Great for balance training.

Action Start with feet together. Instead of stepping forward into a lunge, take a large step backwards. Use a broom stick or counter top for balance and confidence-building for your first few repetitions. Alternate your lead leg for 20 repetitions.

Modifications or Variations Add dumbbells to increase intensity.

2 STEP UPS



Target Glutes and Hamstrings
Added Benefit: Great for balance training.

Action Use a sturdy chair or patio bench for step up platform. Make sure the bench/chair is no higher than knee height. Place one foot toward the middle of the platform with the heel of the foot firmly planted. Stand straight up on platform extending all the way through supporting knee and hip. Tap foot on top of bench for stability, or elevate knee to challenge balance. Slowly return to floor. Perform 10 repetitions and repeat on other leg.

Modifications or Variations Add dumbbells to increase intensity.

3 BUTT BUSTERS



Target Glutes
Added Benefit: Improves hip stability in stationary leg.

Action Part I: Start on the floor on your hands and knees. Lower forearm and elbows to the floor making sure elbows are lined up directly under shoulders to prevent sway in low back. Starting with the right leg, lift knee to hip-height pointing toes to ceiling and return to floor. Keep speed of motion slow and controlled. Avoid arching low back by engaging abdominals through full range of motion. Perform 10 repetitions.

Part II: Return to hands and knees. Lift same leg hip-height to the side, at a 90 degree angle with your hip, and return to floor. Keep both elbows straight and maintain neutral spine by engaging abdominals through full range of motion. Perform 10 repetitions. Repeat parts I&II on opposite leg. Perform 10 repetitions.

Modifications or Variations Place small dumbbell before active knee for increased intensity.