

## Step Aerobics

Step Aerobics is a cardiovascular activity with dance origins. Workouts consist of a series of combinations performed on a raised bench to the timing of the music. Even tempo music is needed to perform a fluid step aerobics routine. The music is usually broken down into 8-count measures.

The main benefits of step aerobics include an increased cardiovascular endurance, improved agility, and an increase in coordination. Workouts can be adjusted to fit most endurance levels. The intensity of a step aerobics routine can be increased or decreased by adding/removing arm movements, raising/ lowering the height of the step, and by increasing/decreasing the tempo of the music.

It is important to step your whole foot on to the bench, and to step heel to toe. If you do not get your whole foot on the bench (you heel hanging off the edge) then you may strain your Achilles tendon located in the back of your ankle.

It is also important that you step straight up on the bench so that the bench does not slide out from under you.

When performing a step routine, keep breathing consistently and evenly. This helps you regulate your heartbeat and circulate oxygen to your muscles.

Please see the steps at the end of the study guide for pictures of the steps.



## Stability Balls (Exercise Ball)

- Crunches performed on a stability ball improved abdominal muscles by 24 to 38 percent over crunches done without a ball.
- "Abs workouts using a stability ball engage smaller core muscles than more traditional forms of exercise. Those smaller muscles help you keep your balance on the ball."
- You'll sculpt all the muscle groups in the abdominals — particularly the transverses for a flat stomach; they're sometimes missed in regular sit-ups — as well as the obliques for a whittled-down, smaller waist.
- The support gives you the sense that you're not working as hard as you actually are; you can probably do many more sit-ups on the ball than you'd be able to do on the floor."
- Yoga-based movements on a ball can also help improve digestion and help prevent back pain and injury.

### Sample Exercises on the stability ball

#### 1. Abs Crunch

This is one of the most effective ways to strengthen, flatten and tone the abs. Doing the exercise using a BalanceBall or stability ball eliminates the impact of a hard surface on the spine, which helps you perform the movement more precisely. It also helps increase lower back strength, support the spine, promote better posture and prevent lower back injury.



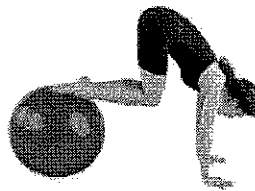
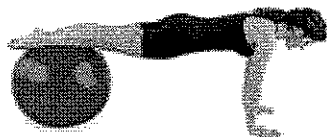
Begin in Positive Seated Posture; roll out until lower back is resting comfortably on ball. Place feet flat on floor, shoulder-width apart. Position hands behind head to support its weight, elbows pointing directly out to sides. Raise head even with torso and gaze straight up.

Inhale deeply; on exhale, contract lower abs. Hold the flex and inhale; on exhale, slowly curl torso forward, flexing middle and upper abs to raise chest up and toward pelvis. Allow head to follow chest. Do not force or pull head forward. Allow abs to do the work.

Raise chest until you feel abs completely contracted; hold for 3 to 5 comfortable, deep breaths. Release slowly, allowing head and chest to drop back down to torso level. Breathe. Repeat 10 to 12 times. Add more repetitions as you become stronger.

## 2. Donkey Kicks

This exercise can appear more challenging than it really is. Designed to strengthen and tone the entire torso, this movement helps to tone the waistline, flatten the abs, and strengthen the lower back and spine to help prevent injury. This super-efficient exercise packs a lot of punch — it's really a total-body move that also shapes and defines the muscles in the arms and legs.



Begin by kneeling in front of ball. Lean forward, placing chest on ball and hands out in front of you. Push forward with feet and walk hands out until shins and tops of your feet rest on ball. Keep body in a flat position, head in line with torso. Focus gaze on floor. Flex abs to prevent back from sagging. Flex abs and slowly pull knees toward chest. Pull forward until hips and knees are aligned vertically. Press firmly through hands and arms for support and balance. Hold for 2 to 3 even breaths; release by extending legs back into starting position. Repeat 6 to 8 times. Add more repetitions as you gain strength in arms and abs.

### 3. Pushups

Think pushups are only for arms and pecs? Think again. Using a BalanceBall or stability ball boosts this move's abs sculpting benefits by activating the core (the abs and torso) to help you maintain balance during the movement.



Begin by lying over ball on chest, hands on floor in front of you. Walk hands forward until knees are resting on top of ball. Keep head level; focus on floor. Flex abs to stabilize torso. Position feet together, hands shoulder-width apart. Inhale; on exhale, slowly lower head and chest as far as is comfortable, keeping elbows tight alongside body. Hold for one breath and press back up to starting position. As a variation, when releasing chest to floor, extend elbows out to sides. This will help work chest more deeply.

### Muscle Endurance Workouts

**Muscular endurance is a health-related component of physical fitness.** It is the ability of a skeletal muscle or group of muscles to continue contracting over a long period. When you have good muscular endurance you have:

- the ability to resist fatigue while holding a position,
- carrying something for a long period of time, or
- repeating a movement without getting tired.

**Dynamic muscular endurance is higher numbers of repetitions and with lower resistance.** Dynamic muscle endurance is the muscle's ability to contract and relax repeatedly.

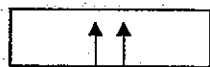
- **An example of an exercise requiring dynamic endurance is the push-up.** At some point, the muscles will become fatigued, and you will no longer be able to perform them.
- Examples of everyday activities requiring dynamic endurance are carrying groceries to your car, raking your yard, and playing several sets of tennis. Each of these activities requires some muscular strength, but they also require the muscle to repeat the movement over a period of time.

**One of the most popular methods is circuit resistance training.** This training takes place by moving from one station to the next, usually set up in a circle. At each station a different exercise is performed with high repetitions but low to moderate resistance. Fifteen seconds of rest is provided while changing stations. Approximately ten exercise stations are used, and the exerciser repeats the circuit two to three times.

**Many people are interested in endurance exercises because they can take inches off of body measurements.** Usually some strengthening and some changes in body contour occur. Also, endurance exercises:

- speed up metabolism, and
- your body burns calories at a higher rate for several hours after the endurance exercise.

# STEP MOVES



Left Right

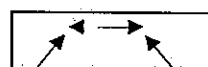
## BASIC STEP

Up, Up, Down, Down  
(RLRL or LRLR)



## V STEP

Up Wide, Up Wide, D, D  
(RLRL or LRLR)



Right  
Left

## TURN STEP

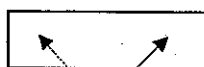
Up, Up, Down, Down  
(RLRL or LRLR)



## ALTERNATE KNEES

Up, Knee, Down, Down  
(Lead Right/Lift Left Knee,  
Lead Left/Lift Right Knee)

Can modify replacing KNEES  
with HAMSTRING CURLS,  
SIDE LEG LIFTS OR KICKS



## TRAVELING KNEES

Up, Knee, Down, Down  
moving on the diagonal  
(Lead Right/Lift Left Knee,  
Lead Left/Lift Right Knee)

Can modify replacing KNEES  
with HAMSTRING CURLS,  
SIDE LEG LIFTS OR KICKS

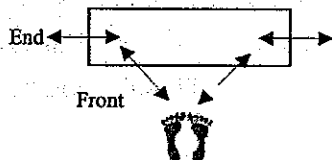


## REPEATER KNEES

Up, 3 Knees, Down, Down  
staying center or on diagonal  
(Lead Right/Lift Left Knee,  
Lead Left/Lift Right Knee)

Can modify replacing KNEES  
with HAMSTRING CURLS,  
SIDE LEG LIFTS OR KICKS

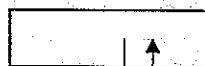
Can do Repeaters in 2's, 3's, 4's, or 5's



## L KNEE STEP

Up, Knee, Off End Down, Down,  
Up, Knee, Off Back Down, Down  
(Alternate R, L lead as in Traveling Knees)

Can modify replacing KNEES with HAMSTRING CURLS, SIDE



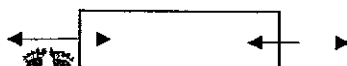
## UP TAP DOWN TAP

From Side: Up, Up, Down, Down  
(RLRL or LRRL)



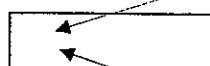
## OVER THE TOP

From Side: Up, Up, Over and  
Down, Down  
(RLRL or LRLR)



## ACROSS THE TOP

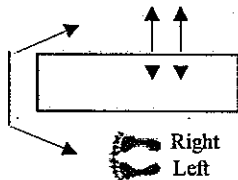
From the End: Over Top the  
"long way"  
(RLRL or LRLR)



## A STEP

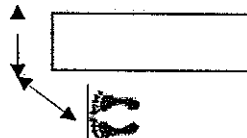
From Side: Up, Up, Down,  
Down in "A" shaped pattern  
(RLRL or LRLR)

# MORE STEP MOVES



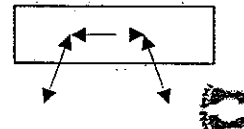
## PIVOT TURN

Up, Knee 1/2 Turn around both  
Corners, Down, Down



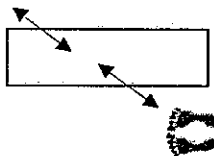
## 1/4 TURN

Up, Knee 1/4 Turn around  
corner, Down, Down



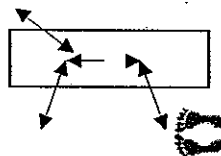
## U STEP

Turn Step with smaller range  
of motion (RLRL or LRLR)



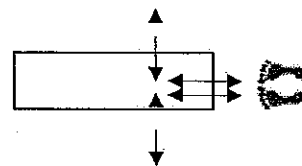
## CORNER TO CORNER

From Side: Over the top  
in a diagonal direction  
(RLRL or LRLR)



## TURN STEP STRADDLE

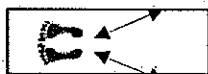
Turn Step ending in  
Straddle (R, L, Straddle,  
Straddle or L, R, Straddle,  
Straddle)



## T STEP

From End: Up, Up, Down  
Straddle, Down Straddle,  
Up, Up, Down Back, Down  
Back (RLRLRLRL or  
LRLRLRLR)

## MOVES STARTING FROM TOP:



## SIDE LUNGES

From Top Facing Side:  
Alternate R, L Touching Foot  
to Floor on Side of Bench in  
slight diagonal direction  
Can also do doubles: 2 lunges  
each side

## SQUATS

SIDE LUNGES  
performed slowly with  
larger range of motion

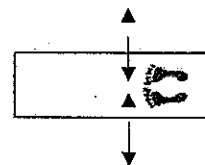


## BACK LUNGES

From Top Facing Front:  
Alternate R, L Touching  
Foot to Floor behind bench.  
Can also do doubles: 2  
lunges each side. Can do  
FAST or SLOW

## BASIC DOWN

Down, Down, Up, Up  
(RLRL or LRLR)



## STRADDLE DOWN

From Top Facing Side:  
Down Straddle, Down  
Straddle,  
Up, Up (RLRL or LRLR,  
same leg keeps leading)

## STRADDLE DOWN KNEES

Similar to above:  
Down Straddle, Down Straddle,  
Up, Knee Lift (alternating lead  
leg)