The Squat is widely recognized as one of the most comprehensive and beneficial exercises to do.

**BENEFITS:** The Squat strengthens the entire body. It tones and shapes hips, glutes, thighs and strengthens and firms your core and abdominals.

**STEPS:**
1. Stand with feet approximately hip-width apart, hips over knees, and knees over ankles.
2. Look straight ahead with chest out and shoulders back.
3. Slightly bend your knees and keep your feet firmly on the ground. (A wider stance emphasizes your hips, glutes and the back of your thighs while a closer stance targets the front of your thighs). 
4. Keep your core tight or “contracted” throughout the movement.
5. Lower down so that your upper thigh is parallel to the floor, or as far as you can comfortably go. You should look like you’re in an imaginary chair.
6. Push through your heels and squarely your glutes while returning to the standing position.

**CHALLENGE MOVEMENT:**
1. Slow down while performing the movement. Lower down for 4 seconds, hold at the bottom for 2 seconds and then take 4 seconds to stand back up and return to the starting position.
2. Grab a pair of dumbbells and hold them in your hands (let your sides or shoulders) to increase the resistance, alternating sides with each repetition.

The Push-Up is a great exercise for all skill levels. When performed properly, nearly every muscle in the body is involved, resulting in excellent overall conditioning and increased calorie burning.

**BENEFITS:** The Push-up might just be the perfect workout! It works your chest, abdominals, shoulders and lower back. It is an amazing upper body exercise and challenges your core at all times.

**STEPS:**
1. Place feet hip-width apart and hands directly beneath your shoulders with your body forming a straight line from heel to shoulder.
2. Keep your abdominals tight and body straight throughout the movement.
3. Slowly bend your elbows and lower your upper body towards the ground until your chest is level with your elbows.
4. Straighten your arms while pushing down on the floor to raise your upper body back to the starting position.

**CHALLENGE MOVEMENT:**
1. Move your hands closer together to target your triceps.
2. Add a rotation at the top of the movement. Lift one hand off the ground, keeping that arm straight and rotating shoulders until you are stretching straight up to the ceiling. Your feet will not change position so only your upper body will rotate. Return to starting position and repeat by alternating sides.

The Crunch tones, defines and strengthens the abdominal or “core” muscles.

**BENEFITS:** The Crunch is a core-training exercise that improves your balance by strengthening your abdominal muscles. Strong core muscles improve your posture and help prevent lower back pain and muscle injury.

**STEPS:**
**NOTE:** Do not “sit-up” completely to perform these exercises; instead, limit your range of motion. Limiting your range of motion will cause your abs to tighten and tone your core.
1. Begin flat on your back with your knees bent and the heels of your feet only a few inches from your glutes.
2. Bring your fingers to your temples and point your elbows towards your knees.
3. While exhaling, bring your shoulder blades off the ground about 6 inches.
4. Hold for 1 or 2 seconds, then slowly relax.
5. Begin the next repetition when your shoulders and head are just about to touch the ground.

**CHALLENGE MOVEMENT:** Try doing crunches with a Stability Ball. Sit on the ball with your feet planted on the ground. Roll back to look off the ceiling so the ball is just below your lower back, then crunch. This method allows for a wider range of motion and also can be less stressful for the neck and back.

The Burpee combines cardio and strength into one exercise. It is a total body exercise that will work both your upper body and lower body at the same time.

**BENEFITS:** The Burpee can be performed anywhere and works your glutes, thighs, chest, abdominals and arms. It’s also a cardio exercise that raises your heart rate and burns calories.

**STEPS:**
1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and bend over at your knees and hips.
2. Place your hands on the floor in front of your feet and kick your feet back to get into a push-up position.
3. Lower your chest to the ground and do a push-up (go to your knees to modify the push-up)
4. Jump your feet back into the original position, stand up and jump!

**CHALLENGE MOVEMENT:**
For added intensity, bring your knees into your chest when you jump.

The Lunge is one of the best exercises for your legs, glutes, calves and core.

**BENEFITS:** The Lunge works on your balance, leg strength and agility. It also tones your entire lower body.

**STEPS:**
1. With your chest lifted, chie up and abs tightened, take a big step forward with your left foot.
2. Lower your hips until both knees are bent at about a 90-degree angle.
3. Make sure your front knee is directly above your ankle and your back knee doesn’t touch the floor.
4. Keep the weight in your heels as you push back up to the starting position.

**CHALLENGE MOVEMENT:**
1. Reverse Lunges: This is the same idea as the forward lunge, expect you step backwards. Keep your front knee over your shoe and your back knee pointing downward.
2. Walking Lunges: Walking lunges are the same as basic lunges except you alternate legs and you keep walking forward. Try doing walking lunges across the floor and back several times in a row. Add a set of dumbbells and do some overhead shoulder presses while lunging and feed your heart rate up.

The Shoulder Press is one of the best shoulder toning exercises available.

**BENEFITS:** The Shoulder Press develops strength and stability in the abs, lower back, glutes and thighs. Most importantly, it helps stabilize and strengthen your shoulders, including your rotator cuff, which is where most shoulder injuries occur.

**STEPS:**
1. Select a weight that allows you to complete 8 to 12 repetitions for 2 to 3 sets with good form.
2. Stand with your feet about shoulder-width apart and slightly bend your knees.
3. Hold the dumbbells with an overhead grip (hands facing front) and position them even with your shoulders.
4. Exhale and press the weight overhead until your arms are fully extended.
5. Pause for 1-2 seconds and then slowly lower the weight back to your shoulders.

**CHALLENGE MOVEMENT:**
Combine a squat or a lunge with this movement to enhance the calorie burn! On the way up from your squat or lunge, begin the pressing movement described above. On the way down, your dumbbells should remain at your shoulders.

The Plank is one of the best exercises to work your abs, arms and back all at once.

**BENEFITS:** The Plank can be performed anywhere! This exercise targets multiple muscle groups. It works the abs, back, legs and arms.

**STEPS:**
1. Get in a push-up position and lower down so your elbows and forearms are on the ground. Your elbows should be directly under your shoulders.
2. Make sure you are straightening your core and squeezing glutes together during the entire exercise period.
3. Your spine should be straight like a table-top. Do NOT round your spine.
4. Your legs and feet should be hip-width apart. You may want to start with your legs and foot a little wider until you feel comfortable keeping them at hip-width. (If the plank is too hard with legs and feet a little wider, then stop at your knees).
5. Hold for 30 seconds, then relax. Try to increase your time each day!

**CHALLENGE MOVEMENT:**
1. Lie down on your left side and place your feet together on top of each other.
2. Prop yourself up on your left elbow and forearm.
3. Begin exercise by raising your hips on that your body forms a straight line from your ankles to your shoulders.
4. Hold this position for a set amount of time. Lower down and repeat on right side.

Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider before you start a new exercise program and for answers to your questions about your physical fitness.