Introduction

Strengthening exercises won't necessarily make you a faster runner, but it will make you a stronger running and help you reduce the chance of getting injured. Below are some examples of body weight exercises you can perform to help get you started and get you stronger.

DISCLAIMER

Please make sure you are being safe in all aspects of your training and running. Please use appropriate safety equipment when needed and ensure you consult a Doctor if you are unfit or have not recently taken on a physical fitness program recently.

Rest, Sets, Repeats

Repeat	A repeat is one completion of an exercise like a squat or pushup, and will usually be in a group of between 8 to 20 repeats of the exercise.
Set	A set is series of repeats of the one exercise, with a rest interval in between each set. For example, 2 sets of 8 pushups, you would perform 8 pushups in a row, stop for about 30 seconds to rest, then perform the second set of 8 pushups.
Rest	The rest is the time you stop for in between each set of repeats. We will keep things simple here and you only need to rest for about 20 to 30 seconds between each set.

In the following we will talk about the number of times you need to perform the exercises, and will use the following terms.

Body Weight Squats

Stand with your legs shoulder width apart. Bend your knees as if your are lowering your butt back into a chair, trying to keep your weight on the heels of your feed. Try to lower your butt until your quads are parallel with the ground, and you can help keep balance by keeping your hands out in front of you or resting on top of your head.

To start with you could perform 3 sets of 8 repeats and build up to 3 sets of 16 repeats.

Single Leg Dead Lifts

This exercise looks like a drinking bird toy and is performed by standing on one leg and then leaning forward, trying to touch a point on the ground in front of you. Your non standing leg needs to be straight out behind you when you lean forward and try to keep you back completely straight.

To start, you could perform 3 sets of 8 repeats on each leg, so this will be a total of 6 sets. You could then build up to 16 repeats in time.

Lunges

A lunge starts by standing tall with your feet hip width apart. Take a big step forward with your right foot, shifting your weight forward, and allow your heel to hit the floor first. Lower your body with your right leg, until your right thigh is parallel to the floor. Drive back with the right heel up to the starting position again.
Once you finish the right leg, repeat with the left leg, making sure the whole time your upper body stays upright and does not fall forward.

With lunges, one repeat would be the right leg then the left leg. Once again you could start by performing 3 sets of 8 repeats then building up to 3 sets of 16 repeats in time.

Push Ups

To do a full push up you need to start on the floor on all fours with your hands slightly wider than your shoulders, and try to keep relaxed and not locking your elbows, keeping them slightly bent. Extend your legs back so your are balanced on your toes and hands. An easier option can be to balance on your knees instead of your toes. With your arms almost straight, slowly bend your elbows and lower yourself to the floor, with your elbows at a 90 degree angle. Then push back up through your hands back to the starting position..

To start with you could perform 3 sets of 8 repeats and build up to 3 sets of 16 repeats.

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Chair Dips

If you are doing push ups, you should also make sure you are doing chair dips to make sure you balance out the work of your arms. Start by sitting on the edge of a chair or seat and place your hands behind your hips. You hands should be on the edge of the chair and should be shoulder width apart. Lift your butt off the chair and walk your feet forward. Using your arms, slowly lower your body downward, making sure your elbows do not bend further than 90 degrees. Then extend your arms, raising your body up to support your body with your arms..

To start with you could perform 3 sets of 8 repeats and build up to 3 sets of 16 repeats.

Glute Bridges

To perform a glute bridge, lie on your back and bend your knees so your feet a flat on the floor. Brace yourself and then drive your heels into the floor and push your hips up until your body is in a straight line from your shoulders to your knees. Slowly lower yourself down to complete one repeat of the exercise.

Again it is good to start with performing 3 sets of 8 repeats and build up to 3 sets of 16 repeats.

Mountain Climbers

To do mountain climbers you start in a push up position with your hands shoulder width apart and directly beneath your shoulders. Pull your right knee towards your chest which is your starting position. As quickly as you can, simultaneously swap the position of your legs, by pulling your left leg up to your chest at the same time as you drive your right leg out. Switch your legs again with your right knee at your chest and your left leg out. This is one full repeat of a mountain climber.

When starting with mountain climbers, try to complete 3 sets of 10 mountain climbers and work up to 3 sets of 20.

Sit Ups

Start your sit ups lying on the floor facing the ceiling, bend your knees with your feet flat on the floor. Place your hands on your head or ears, engage your core and lift your upper body up off the floor at the hips, allowing your head to approach your knees. Lower your body down to the start position which brings you to one complete repeat.

Perform 3 sets of 8 repeats and build up to 3 sets of 16 repeats.

Planks

A plank is another way to develop good core strength, as well as strength in your arms, shoulders and glutes. To perform a plank, place your hands directly under your shoulders, just like the start position of a push up. Straighten your arms up and hold at the top position for twenty seconds to start. Stabilize yourself by squeezing your glutes and stomach muscles.

Start by holding the plan for 20 seconds, and then work up to holding as long as you can. If you cannot start with your legs straight, you can start resting on your knees.

Summary

As always consistency is the key. The eight week plan outlined is very basic but if you are not sure, is a good start. It builds gradually and should hopefully help you build you strength as you go. It is also a good starting point if you want to eventually look at adding weights into your regime. Good luck and remember to stay safe and have fun.

Stretching

Stretching after a run is a great way to help you cool down and improve your bodies flexibility. Just like body weight exercises, it's also an easy and convenient way to help you limit the chance of getting injured. At all times when you are stretching, make sure you continue to breath deeply and regularly and aim to stretch to the point of tightness or slight discomfort. Make sure you don't feel pain when doing any of the stretches below and if you do, please stop and speak to a medical professional.. We've provided a list of some basic static stretches you can do after your run or workout, but there this is not an exhaustive list, so feel free to find something that works for you. Try to keep balanced when performing the stretch and try to hold the stretch for 20 to 30 seconds, but of course do not try to cause yourself pain.

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Hamstring Stretch

The hamstrings are the back part of your thigh, and run from the hip to the knee. To perform this stretch, you sit on the ground and extend your left leg, while moving your right leg towards your inner thigh. Lean forward as if you are reaching towards your left foot. You should feel this stretch in the back of your leg, from the knees to your hip.

Spine Stretch

To stretch your entire spine, lie on your back with your arms stretched out to your side and bend your right knee towards your chest. Then gently let your right knee fall towards the left while keeping your right arm and shoulders on the ground, where you should feel a stretch in your spine. Once you return to the start position, repeat on the other side.

Hip Flexor Stretch

To stretch your hip flexor step your left leg forward and keep both feet pointing straight ahead. With your back leg straight, while avoiding to stick your butt out, slowly bend your front leg, pushing your right buttock forward. Repeat on the other leg and you should feel a stretch across the front of your right hip joint.

Thigh Stretch

To stretch your thigh out start by grabbing the top of your left foot behind you and gently pull the heel towards your left buttock. Try to keep your knees together and after you perform the stretch on the left leg, do the same with the right leg.

Iliotibial Band(ITB) Stretch

To stretch your ITB, cross your right leg behind your left leg, keeping both feet on the ground. Lean to your left side and push your right hip outwards, trying not to bend forwards, and you should feel the stretch along to outer right thigh and hip. Repeat on the other leg when complete.

Buttock Stretch

Get back onto the ground and lie on your back with your knees bent and both feet flat on the floor. Bring your right leg up and over your left thigh and while grasping the back of your left thigh with both hands, pull your left leg towards your chest. Return your feet to the floor again and repeat with the right leg when finished.

Calf Stretch

To stretch your calf step your right leg forward and bend your front leg, keeping your back leg straight. Both feet should be pointing forward, while you push your left heel into the ground, keeping your left leg straight. You should feel this stretch in the back of your left leg, and once finished, change legs performing the stretch on your right leg.

An Example Training Week

In the following, we have put together example training sessions for you to add to the end of your training runs on day 2, day 4 and day 6. Our example has simply chosen five body weight exercises and stretches to be performed three times a week.

Week 1 - 2

Exercises		Stretch	
☐ Push Ups	Three sets of eight	☐ Hamstrings Stretch	Hold for 20 seconds
☐ Tricep Dips	Three sets of eight	☐ Thigh Stretch	Hold for 20 seconds
☐ Air Squats	Three sets of eight	☐ Buttock Stretch	Hold for 20 seconds
☐ Glute Bridges	Three sets of eight	☐ Spine Stretch	Hold for 20 seconds
☐ Sit Ups	Three sets of eight	☐ Foam Roller	3 to 5 minutes on your legs

We start off easy and can be repeated on days 2, 4 and 6 of your weekly training. This should still take you between 10 and 15 minutes.

Week 3 - 4

Exercises		Stretch	
☐ Lunges	Three sets of 12(each leg)	☐ Hamstrings Stretch	Hold for 30 seconds

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Week 3 - 4 (cont)

☐ Single Leg Dead Lifts	Three sets of 12(each leg)	☐ Thigh Stretch	Hold for 30 seconds
☐ Mountain Climbers	Three sets of 12(each leg)	☐ Buttock Stretch	Hold for 30 seconds
☐ Chair Dips	Three sets of twelve	☐ Spine Stretch	Hold for 30 seconds
☐ Plank	Hold for 30 seconds	☐ Foam Roller	4 to 6 minutes on your legs and back

We build up the number of repeats in week 3 and 4 and introduce some different exercises. This should still take you between 10 and 15 minutes.

Week 5 - 6

Exercises		Stretch	
☐ Push Ups	Three sets of 14	☐ Hamstrings Stretch	Two sets, hold for 20 seconds
☐ Tricep Dips	Three sets of 14	☐ Thigh Stretch	Two sets, hold for 20 seconds
☐ Air Squats	Three sets of 14	☐ Buttock Stretch	Two sets, hold for 20 seconds
☐ Glute Bridges	Three sets of 14	☐ Spine Stretch	Two sets, hold for 20 seconds
☐ Sit Ups	Three sets of 14	☐ Foam Roller	6 minutes on your legs and back

We are building up the number of repeats and the amount of time we are stretching for as our strength improves. This should still take you about 15 minutes.

Week 7 - 8

Exercises		Stretch	
☐ Lunges	Three sets of 16(each leg)	☐ Hamstrings Stretch	Two sets, hold for 20 seconds
☐ Single Leg Dead Lifts	Three sets of 16(each leg)	☐ Thigh Stretch	Two sets, hold for 20 seconds
☐ Mountain Climbers	Three sets of 16(each leg)	☐ Buttock Stretch	Two sets, hold for 20 seconds
☐ Chair Dips	Three sets of 16	☐ Spine Stretch	Two sets, hold for 20 seconds
☐ Plank	Hold for 45 - 60 seconds	☐ Foam Roller	Two sets, hold for 20 seconds

The final two weeks of the body weight exercises continues to build. This should still take you about 15 minutes.

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