GoalTodo

Build up to 100 push-ups in one session, from a test day

Build up to 100 push-ups

24 weeks · Mon, Nov 30 → Sun, May 16

Week by week

Tick a box each time you do a session.

Nov 30–Dec 6
Week 1

Find your step

Test day

- [ ] Test: warm up, then try each step of the ladder in turn: wall, kitchen counter, sturdy table, knees on the floor
  a few good reps at each step until you find the hardest one where you can do 8 good reps; write it down
- [ ] Push-ups at your step
  2 sets of 8, slow and controlled, with a rest between

Done when: You've found your step, the hardest one where you can do 8 good reps, and written it down

Sticking point: Start lower than you think. A wall push-up with a straight body teaches more than a sagging one on the floor.

Dec 7–13
Week 2

Two sessions, two sets

Learn the move

- [ ] [ ] Push-ups at your step
  2 sets of 10, with a rest between

Done when: You do 2 sets of 10 good reps at your step in both sessions

Sticking point: Film one set on your phone from the side. Check for one straight line from your head to your heels (or knees).

Dec 14–20
Week 3

Three sessions a week

Build

- [ ] [ ] [ ] Push-ups at your step
  3 sets of 10, resting a minute or two between sets

Done when: You do 3 sets of 10 good reps at your step in all three sessions

Dec 21–27
Week 4

Three sets of 12

Build

- [ ] [ ] [ ] Push-ups at your step
  3 sets of 12, resting a minute or two between sets

Done when: You do 3 sets of 12 good reps at your step in all three sessions

Sticking point: If 12 is too many, stay on 10 and repeat the week. Moving down the ladder before you're ready is how form slips.

Dec 28–Jan 3
Week 5

Try the next step down

Easier week and next step

- [ ] Push-ups at your step
  2 sets of 10, easy
- [ ] Test: after a warm-up, try the next step down the ladder
  as many good reps as you can in one set

Done when: You do 8 good reps at the next step down. Already on your knees? Your next step is a full push-up: stay on your knees for weeks 6 and 7

Sticking point: If you can't do 8 at the next step yet, repeat weeks 3 and 4 at your current step, then try again. That's normal, not a setback.

Jan 4–10
Week 6

Settle into your new step

Build

- [ ] Push-ups at your new step
  3 sets of 8, resting a minute or two between sets

Done when: You do 3 sets of 8 good reps at your new step in all three sessions

Jan 11–17
Week 7

Twelves at your new step

Build

- [ ] Push-ups at your new step
  3 sets of 10 on Monday, 3 sets of 12 on Wednesday and Friday, resting a minute or two between sets
- [ ] Slow lowering from the top of a full push-up
  3 slow lowers to the floor, then drop your knees to come back up

Done when: You do 3 sets of 12 good reps at your step, and lower yourself slowly to the floor from a full push-up 3 times

Sticking point: If your step is still the wall or the counter, keep moving down the ladder before you try for a full push-up: repeat weeks 5 to 7 and enter a new date.

Jan 18–24
Week 8

Your first push-up

Test day

- [ ] Push-ups at your step
  2 sets of 10, easy
- [ ] Test: after a warm-up, as many good-form full push-ups from the floor as you can
  one set; write the number down, even if it's 1

Done when: You do at least one full push-up from the floor with your body in a straight line and your chest close to the floor

Sticking point: Not yet? Keep doing 3 sets of 12 on your knees plus the slow lowers for another two weeks, then test again and move your date. Your first one often comes suddenly.

Jan 25–31
Week 9

Start counting full push-ups

Build

Push-ups
15 push-ups in all, in sets of about half your Friday test number (sets of 1 are fine), resting a minute or two between sets. If your number is 1 or 2, do single full push-ups only while each still looks like your first, and do the rest of the total on your knees

Knee push-ups to top up
2 sets of 8 to 12, after your full push-ups

Done when: You do 15 good-form push-ups in small sets in all three sessions, as many of them full push-ups as you can

Sticking point: Sets of one, with a good rest between, are a perfectly good way to get there. Knee push-ups fill the gap while your full ones catch up.

Feb 1–7
Week 10

20 in small sets

Build

Push-ups
20 push-ups in all, in sets of about half your latest test number (sets of 1 or 2 are fine), resting a minute or two between sets. If your latest number is under 4, do up to half of them on your knees

Knee push-ups to top up
2 sets of 8 to 12, with the same straight line from head to knees

Lighter push-up day
10 full push-ups in all, in easy sets

Done when: You do 20 good-form push-ups in sets on Monday and on Friday, most of them full push-ups

Sticking point: Lots of small sets is how this level works. Five sets of 4 is as good as two sets of 10.

Feb 8–14
Week 11

20 again

Repeat week

Push-ups
20 push-ups in all, in sets of about half your latest test number, resting a minute or two between sets, with more of them full push-ups than last week

Knee push-ups to top up
2 sets of 8 to 12, with the same straight line from head to knees

Lighter push-up day
10 full push-ups in all, in easy sets

Done when: You do 20 good-form push-ups on Monday and Friday, with more of them full push-ups than last week, or they feel easier

Sticking point: Repeating a week isn't standing still. It's how the next jump stops feeling like a jump.

Feb 15–21
Week 12

Lighter days, then retest

Easier week and retest

- [ ] Push-ups
  15 full push-ups in all, in easy sets
- [ ] Push-ups
  10 full push-ups in all, in easy sets
- [ ] Test: warm up with a few minutes of easy movement and a few easy push-ups, then do as many good-form full push-ups as you can in one set
  one set, stopping at the first rep where your hips drop or your chest no longer gets close to the floor; write the number down

Done when: You've done your retest on Friday and written the new number next to your earlier ones

Sticking point: Rest on Thursday so you test with fresh arms. If the number hasn't moved, that happens: use it anyway, and repeat the last build week before going on.

Feb 22–28
Week 13

30 in sets

Build

- [ ] [ ] Push-ups
  30 full push-ups in all, in sets of about half your latest test number, resting a minute or two between sets
- [ ] [ ] Knee push-ups to top up
  2 sets of 8 to 12, with the same straight line from head to knees
- [ ] Lighter push-up day
  15 full push-ups in all, in easy sets

Done when: You do 30 good-form full push-ups in sets on Monday and on Friday

Sticking point: If you can't finish the 30 on your toes, do the last few on your knees and repeat the week.

Mar 1–7
Week 14

40 in sets

Build

- [ ] [ ] Push-ups
  40 full push-ups in all, in sets of about half your latest test number, resting a minute or two between sets
- [ ] Lighter push-up day
  20 full push-ups in all, in easy sets that stop well short of your limit

Done when: You do 40 good-form push-ups in sets on Monday and on Friday

Mar 8–14
Week 15

40 again

Repeat week

- [ ] [ ] Push-ups
  40 full push-ups in all, in sets of about half your latest test number, resting a minute or two between sets
- [ ] Lighter push-up day
  20 full push-ups in all, in easy sets

Done when: You do 40 good-form push-ups on Monday and Friday, and it feels easier than last week or takes fewer sets

Sticking point: Repeating a week isn't standing still. It's how the next jump stops feeling like a jump.

Mar 15–21
Week 16

Lighter days, then retest

Easier week and retest

- [ ] Push-ups
  25 full push-ups in all, in easy sets
- [ ] Push-ups
  15 full push-ups in all, in easy sets
- [ ] Test: warm up with a few minutes of easy movement and a few easy push-ups, then do as many good-form full push-ups as you can in one set
  one set, stopping at the first rep where your hips drop or your chest no longer gets close to the floor; write the number down

Done when: You've done your retest on Friday and written the new number next to your earlier ones

Sticking point: Rest on Thursday so you test with fresh arms. If the number hasn't moved, that happens: use it anyway, and repeat the last build week before going on.

Mar 22–28
Week 17

50 in sets

Build

- [ ] [ ] Push-ups
  50 full push-ups in all, in sets of about half your latest test number, resting a minute or two between sets
- [ ] Lighter push-up day
  25 full push-ups in all, in easy sets that stop well short of your limit

Done when: You do 50 good-form push-ups in sets on Monday and on Friday

Sticking point: Halfway to 100. Keep the sets at about half your test number, even when you feel strong: it's what keeps every rep good.

Mar 29–Apr 4
Week 18

60 in sets

Build

- [ ] Push-ups
  60 full push-ups in all, in sets of about half your latest test number, resting a minute or two between sets
- [ ] Lighter push-up day
  30 full push-ups in all, in easy sets that stop well short of your limit

Done when: You do 60 good-form push-ups in sets on Monday and on Friday

Apr 5–11
Week 19

60 again

Repeat week

- [ ] Push-ups
  60 full push-ups in all, in sets of about half your latest test number, resting a minute or two between sets
- [ ] Lighter push-up day
  30 full push-ups in all, in easy sets

Done when: You do 60 good-form push-ups on Monday and Friday, and it feels easier than last week or takes fewer sets

Sticking point: Repeating a week isn't standing still. It's how the next jump stops feeling like a jump.

Apr 12–18
Week 20

Lighter days, then retest

Easier week and retest

- [ ] Push-ups
  35 full push-ups in all, in easy sets
- [ ] Push-ups
  20 full push-ups in all, in easy sets
- [ ] Test: warm up with a few minutes of easy movement and a few easy push-ups, then do as many good-form full push-ups as you can in one set
  one set, stopping at the first rep where your hips drop or your chest no longer gets close to the floor; write the number down

Done when: You've done your retest on Friday and written the new number next to your earlier ones

Sticking point: Rest on Thursday so you test with fresh arms. If the number hasn't moved, that happens: use it anyway, and repeat the last build week before going on.

Apr 19–25
Week 21

75 in sets

Build

- [ ] **Push-ups**
  75 full push-ups in all, in sets of about half your latest test number, resting a minute or two between sets
- [ ] **Lighter push-up day**
  35 full push-ups in all, in easy sets that stop well short of your limit

Done when: You do 75 good-form push-ups in sets on Monday and on Friday

Apr 26–May 2
Week 22

85 in sets

Build

- [ ] **Push-ups**
  85 full push-ups in all, in sets of about half your latest test number, resting a minute or two between sets
- [ ] **Lighter push-up day**
  40 full push-ups in all, in easy sets that stop well short of your limit

Done when: You do 85 good-form push-ups in sets on Monday and on Friday

May 3–9
Week 23

Your last big week

Peak

- [ ] **Push-ups**
  90 full push-ups in all, in sets of about half your latest test number, resting a minute or two between sets
- [ ] **Push-ups**
  30 full push-ups in all, in easy sets
- [ ] **Push-ups**
  40 full push-ups in all, in easy sets

Done when: You do 90 good-form push-ups in sets on Monday, then keep Wednesday and Friday easy

Sticking point: Don't try for 100 early. The lighter days this week are what leave you fresh for next week.

May 10–16
Week 24

Your 100

Finish line

- [ ] Push-ups
  30 full push-ups in all, in easy sets
- [ ] Your 100: warm up, then 100 good-form full push-ups in one session
  100 in all, in as many sets as you need, resting a minute or two between sets; keep a tally

Done when: You do 100 good-form full push-ups in one session

Sticking point: If you stop short, write down how many you did, rest two days and try again. Or repeat last week and enter a new date. Every rep you did still counts.

Is 100 push-ups a day a good idea?

It can be a good goal, but you don't need to do 100 every day, and most people shouldn't start there.

Your muscles need rest days. Push-ups work the same muscles (chest, shoulders and the backs of your arms) every time. Victoria's Better Health Channel says each muscle needs at least 48 hours of recovery time, and a Cleveland Clinic exercise physiologist says push-ups don't have to be done daily to have great benefits. The NHS asks adults for muscle-strengthening activity on at least 2 days a week, working all the major muscle groups.

So this plan's finish line is 100 good-form full push-ups in one session, in as many sets as you need, with a rest between sets. You get there with three short sessions a week and a rest day between each. It's a clear test you can pass on one day, and the rest days are part of the plan, not a break from it.

- Why not 100 in a single set? That's a much harder, different goal, and this plan doesn't promise it.
- Why not 100 spread over a whole day? Ten sets of 10 spread from breakfast to bedtime is a lot easier, and many people who can already do 10 or more could manage it soon. Doing all 100 in one session is a fairer test of how far you've come.
- What about doing 100 every day for 30 days? If you're starting from fewer than 10, jumping to 100 a day leaves your muscles no time to recover, which is why this plan builds up instead. Once 100 in a session feels comfortable, more push-up days are your call. Our suggestion is to keep at least one rest day between hard sessions, and to stop at any joint pain.

Be honest with yourself about time. The lengths below are our own design, built on the strength-training rule the NHS and Better Health give: start gradually and add a little at a time. Better Health says most beginners get stronger quickly at first, then level off. So expect the later weeks to feel slower, and expect to repeat a week or two. The plan page moves your date when you do.

This plan is about what you can do, not how you look. It makes no promises about changing your body.

How the plan works

Week 1 is a test day. Warm up, then do as many good-form push-ups as you can in one set and write the number down. If you can't do a full push-up yet, you find your step on the push-up ladder instead (see below).

Three push-up days a week: the plan uses Monday, Wednesday and Friday, so there's always a rest day between sessions. Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday work just as well.

Each session has a total, done in sets. Make each set about half your latest test number, and rest a minute or two between sets. If your test number is 12, a session of 40 is about seven sets of 6. Wednesday is a lighter day with a smaller total.

You retest about every four weeks, after a few easier days. Your new number sets the size of your sets for the next four weeks.

Repeat weeks give your body time to catch up. A shorter plan leaves some of them out, but never a test week or the last weeks before your 100.

Each week has a "done when". Tick it, then move on. If you can't yet, repeat the week. A rep only counts if it looks like your first one.

Which level to pick

Do one honest test first: as many full push-ups from the floor as you can, with good form.

- I can't do a full push-up yet: you can't do one from the floor with your body straight, or you've never tried. You start on the push-up ladder, with a wall, a counter, a table or your knees. 24 weeks.
- I can do 1 to 10: you start with full push-ups in small sets, topped up with push-ups on your knees. 16 weeks.
- I can do more than 10: you start straight away with totals of full push-ups in sets. 12 weeks.

If you're between two, pick the earlier one. Starting a little easy costs you nothing, and it means every rep is a good one.

Before you start

Speak to a GP or doctor first if you haven't exercised for some time, or you have a medical condition or a worry about your health, including a past injury to your wrists, elbows or shoulders.

Stop straight away if you feel pain or become unwell. Tired, burning muscles near the end of a set are expected. Pain in a joint isn't (see warning signs below).

Push-ups aren't a whole workout. They train your chest, shoulders and arms. The NHS suggests working all the major muscle groups, including your legs, hips, back and stomach, on at least 2 days a week. The Get strong plan covers those, and you can do it alongside this one.

Start gradually. The NHS says to build up over a period of weeks. That's what the plan does, so resist doing extra.

Good form

- Hands: flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart and directly below your shoulders, fingers facing forward.
- Body: one straight line from your head to your heels. Tighten your stomach and squeeze your bottom, and keep your head in line with your spine. Don't let your lower back sag or your hips lift.
- Elbows: angled back towards your sides, not flared straight out. Cleveland Clinic's exercise physiologist prefers elbows close to your sides, and ACE (the American Council on Exercise) says keeping them close may reduce stress on your shoulders.
- Depth: lower slowly until your chest is close to the floor, then press back up until your arms are straight.
- Speed: slow and controlled, down and up. Rushing is when form slips.

The same cues work at every step of the ladder. On your knees, the straight line runs from your head to your knees. If you're not sure about your form, film a set from the side, or ask a fitness professional to watch one.

The push-up ladder

If a full push-up is too hard, do it on a raised surface. The higher your hands, the easier it is. Cleveland Clinic suggests starting against a countertop or any raised surface and working your way down little by little, to your knees on the floor and then a full push-up.

1. Wall: stand at arm's length, hands flat on the wall at chest height.
2. Kitchen counter: hands on the edge, feet back so your body is straight.
3. Sturdy table or desk: lower again. Make sure it can't slide or tip.

4. Knees on the floor: hands under your shoulders, a straight line from your head to your knees. A folded towel under your knees helps.

5. Full push-up: on your toes.

When to move down a step: when you can do 3 sets of 12 good reps. Better Health gives the same rule for any strength exercise: build to two to three sets of 8 to 12, and once 12 is comfortable, progress.

Rest days and recovery

▪ Leave a day between push-up days. Better Health says each muscle needs at least 48 hours of recovery time, which is why the plan uses Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

▪ Don't add extra push-up days, even on a good week. The rest is when you get stronger.

▪ Rest between sets, too. The NHS describes muscle strengthening as working your muscles to the point where you may need a short rest before carrying on.

▪ Easy movement on rest days is fine: a walk, a bike ride or your other training.

▪ Easier weeks come before each retest. Keep them easy. You test better with fresh arms.

Warning signs: when to stop

Stop the session if you feel pain in your wrists, elbows or shoulders, any sharp or sudden pain, or you feel unwell. The NHS says to stop an exercise immediately if you feel any pain or become unwell.

▪ Pain that lasts: rest from push-ups. If shoulder or wrist pain isn't getting better after 2 weeks, or it's getting worse, see a GP or doctor. The NHS says shoulder pain that doesn't improve after 2 weeks might need treatment.

▪ Get urgent medical help the same day for sudden or very bad pain, if you can't move your arm or wrist properly, or if you have pins and needles that won't go away or no feeling in your arm. In the UK, ask for an urgent GP appointment or contact NHS 111.

▪ Tingling or pins and needles that keep coming back or last a long time: see a GP or doctor.

▪ Don't diagnose it yourself. A doctor or physiotherapist can tell you what's going on and when to restart. In many parts of the UK, you can refer yourself to NHS physiotherapy without seeing a GP first.

When you come back, start a step or two easier than where you stopped, and build up again.

Gear

There's nothing to buy.

▪ A wall, a kitchen counter and a sturdy table for the ladder.

▪ A mat or folded towel for knee push-ups.

▪ A notebook or the notes on your phone for your test numbers. Seeing them go up is half the fun.

Common mistakes

▪ Counting bad reps. If your hips sag or you stop halfway down, that rep doesn't count. Make the set smaller instead.

▪ Going until you can't do another rep, every set. Sets of about half your test number keep every rep good. Save the all-out effort for test days.

▪ Hands too wide or too far forward. Keep them under your shoulders.

▪ Skipping rest days. Doing push-ups every day doesn't get you there faster.

▪ Rushing down the ladder. Move to the next step only once 3 sets of 12 feel solid.

▪ Testing too often. Test in the retest weeks, after the easier days, not whenever you feel strong.

Your 100, and after

- Keep Monday of your last week easy, and rest on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.
- Warm up with a few minutes of easy movement and a few easy push-ups.
- Do sets of about half your latest test number, resting a minute or two between them. Ten sets of 10 is fine. So is twenty sets of 5.
- Keep a tally on paper so you don't lose count.
- Stop at any joint pain. If you finish short, write down your total, rest two days and try again.

After 100, keep two or three push-up days a week with rest days between, and keep your other strength training going. If you want a new challenge, Cleveland Clinic describes harder versions such as diamond push-ups (hands close together) and pike push-ups, or try the Do your first pull-up plan to balance all that pushing with pulling.

If you fall behind

Missed 1 week: Carry on with the week you're on. Don't double up sessions to catch up: keep the rest days.

Missed 2 weeks: Repeat the last week you finished in full, then carry on. If that runs past your date, leave out a repeat week, never a test week or the last two weeks.

Missed 3 weeks: Go back to your last easier week and retest. Use the new number and pick up from the build week whose total you can do with good form.

Missed 4 or more weeks: Do a fresh test, choose the level and week that match what you can do today, and enter a new date on the plan page to see if it's realistic.

Sources

Cleveland Clinic
`https://health.clevelandclinic.org/how-to-do-a-push-up`
“Your hands should be shoulder-width apart and directly below your shoulders — in other words, you should be perfectly squared up or aligned.”

Cleveland Clinic
`https://health.clevelandclinic.org/how-to-do-a-push-up`
“If you don’t feel like you can, make a plan and start with doing push-ups against a countertop or any raised surface and then little-by-little work your way down until you can do it on your knees on the floor and then a full push-up.”

Cleveland Clinic
`https://health.clevelandclinic.org/how-to-do-a-push-up`
“And even if push-ups are part of your routine, they don’t have to be done daily to have great benefits.”

American Council on Exercise (ACE)
`https://www.acefitness.org/resources/everyone/exercise-library/41/push-up/`
“Stiffen your torso by contracting your core/abdominal muscles ("bracing"), your glute and quadriceps muscles and align your head with your spine.”

American Council on Exercise (ACE)
`https://www.acefitness.org/resources/everyone/exercise-library/41/push-up/`
“Do not allow your low back to sag or your hips to hike upwards during this downward phase.”

American Council on Exercise (ACE)
`https://www.acefitness.org/resources/everyone/exercise-library/41/push-up/`

“This shifts the emphasis from the chest muscles onto the triceps and may reduce stresses in the shoulder joint.”

Better Health Channel (Victoria State Government)
`https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/resistance-training-health-benefits`
“Increase the frequency of workouts, keeping in mind that each muscle needs at least 48 hours of recovery time.”

Better Health Channel (Victoria State Government)
`https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/resistance-training-health-benefits`
“Your aim is to gradually increase to two to three sets for each exercise – comprising eight to 12 reps, every second or third day. Once you can comfortably complete 12 reps of an exercise, you should look at progressing further.”

Better Health Channel (Victoria State Government)
`https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/resistance-training-health-benefits`
“Most beginners experience a rapid increase in strength, followed by a plateau or levelling-out of strength improvements.”

NHS
`https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/how-to-improve-strength-flexibility/`
“It's a good idea to do muscle-strengthening activities that work all the major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms) on at least 2 days a week.”

NHS
`https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/how-to-improve-strength-flexibility/`
“Remember to start gradually and build up over a period of weeks.”

NHS
`https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/how-to-improve-strength-flexibility/`
“For an activity to be muscle strengthening, it needs to work your muscles to the point where you may need a short rest before continuing.”

NHS
`https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/physical-activity-guidelines-for-adults-aged-19-to-64/`
“Speak to your GP first if you have not exercised for some time, or if you have medical conditions or concerns.”

NHS
`https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/strength-and-flex-exercise-plan-how-to-videos/`
“Stop the exercise immediately if you feel any pain or become unwell.”

NHS
`https://www.nhs.uk/symptoms/shoulder-pain/`
“Shoulder pain that does not improve after 2 weeks might be caused by something that needs treatment.”

NHS
`https://www.nhs.uk/symptoms/shoulder-pain/`
“In many areas you may be able to get help, such as physiotherapy, from NHS community musculoskeletal (MSK) services without needing a referral from a GP.”

NHS
`https://www.nhs.uk/symptoms/hand-pain/wrist-pain/`
“Do not try to diagnose the cause of the pain yourself.”

NHS
`https://www.nhs.uk/symptoms/shoulder-pain/`
“you have pins and needles that do not go away”

NHS
`https://www.nhs.uk/symptoms/pins-and-needles/`
“Everyone can get pins and needles but see a GP if you keep getting it or it lasts a long time.”

This plan online	`https://goaltodo.com/100-push-ups`
Reach it with others on Welang	`https://welang.com/goals`
Reach it on your own in HourLife	`https://www.hourlife.com`

This plan is a guide, not medical advice. See a doctor before starting if you have a health condition, are pregnant, or haven't exercised in a long time.