

Sit-up

Unanchored bent-knee version with fingertips lightly beside the temples

Key positions



1. Start: establish head, back and foot support



2. Raise the trunk without pulling the neck

Muscles worked

Main muscles

- Rectus abdominis flexes the trunk and controls the rise.
- Hip flexors contribute substantially to bringing the trunk toward the thighs.

Supporting muscles

- Obliques assist trunk flexion and postural control.
- Transversus abdominis and other stabilizers help brace the abdomen and control the pelvis.

What makes it useful

Use the abdominals and hip flexors to raise the whole trunk toward sitting. The movement extends beyond a small shoulder-blade crunch and requires controlled rising and lowering.

Movement & technique

Sit-up | Keep fingertips light. Sit up without pulling the neck, then lower slowly.

Before you start

Use a nonslip mat on a stable floor with room for your whole body. Begin without weights or a foot anchor and choose a comfortable knee bend.

1 Establish a supported start

Lie on your back with knees bent and feet planted. Rest your head, shoulders and back on the mat, keeping the pelvis settled without forcing a precise knee angle.

2 Keep the fingertips light

Place fingertips lightly beside the temples without gripping the neck. Gently brace the abdomen, keep the jaw and neck comfortable, and prepare to move without pulling the head.

3 Exhale and raise the trunk

Exhale and raise the whole trunk toward sitting through controlled spinal and hip flexion. Keep fingertips light; avoid momentum, forcing a vertical endpoint or requiring elbow-to-knee contact.

4 Inhale and lower slowly

Inhale and lower slowly, restoring back, shoulder and head support without hitting the mat. Keep feet and pelvis settled, reset your balance, and repeat only within a controlled range.

Form reminders

- Keep fingertips light; never grip the neck or pull the head to sit up.
- Raise the whole trunk through natural spinal and hip flexion, without jerking.
- Keep feet and heels supported; begin within a range you can control without a foot anchor.
- Control both directions instead of chasing speed or height; avoid jutting the chin or arching back at the top.

Finish safely

- Stop for back, neck or hip pain or dizziness. Reduce range and seek coaching if you cannot control the rise or descent.
- Avoid jerking, neck pulling or dropping the head and back onto the mat. Keep breathing and stop before control is lost.

References

1. ISSA - Sit-ups vs Crunches: Form and Muscle Roles (www.issaonline.com)
2. Howcast - Sit-up Lesson (Max Tapper) (howcast.com)
3. Howcast - Sit-Up Properly (movement reference) (www.youtube.com)