

IT TAKES TWO

No trips to the gym, no special equipment... just a partner. That's all you need to shape up, says Nawaz Modi Singhania

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RAB a partner and try these cool exercises to target the entire body. They take only a few minutes per session. Do them thrice a week. Partner workouts help inch loss, toning up, increase body strength and flexibility and correct posture.

Upper Body: Exercise 1

Basic exercise: Stand straight with legs apart and face your partner. Keep your arms bent in front of you at chest level, palms facing one another, halfway between you and your partner. Your hands are on the inside, while the partner's palms are on the outside, on the back of your palms. Press steadily in/out isometrically against the partner's palms.

It targets: The whole upper body, but when pushing inward mainly the chest muscles are targeted, and while pushing outward the focus is the shoulders, upper back, and arms.

Check points: Keep the elbows down close to your side. Don't let them rise up.

Lower Body: Exercise 2

Basic exercise: Sit down with your legs extended, but at an 'L' angle to the partner. Back support is required, so either lean onto a wall with your back reclined, or recline back onto your palms. Keep the leg that is closest to the partner straight, and bend the other one, placing the foot on the floor. Put your foot on top of your partner's extended leg, so the ankles meet at right angles. Keep the leg that is straight slightly bent at the knee. Push up/down to offer your partner resistance. Having done this for two sets, use the same leg, but switch positions. Do two sets here, then change legs.

It targets: The entire lower body, but when you push upward, the quadriceps (front of the thigh) are the focus. When you push down you target the hamstrings and the gluteals (back of the upper legs and the butt).

Check Points: If you have a weak lower back, for additional back support, lean back further, or recline back onto the elbows. The person pushing down needs to scoop the pelvic up and then push down making it a point to use the hamstrings and the gluteals through the exercise. Bending the working leg a little more will help to further accentuate the contraction.

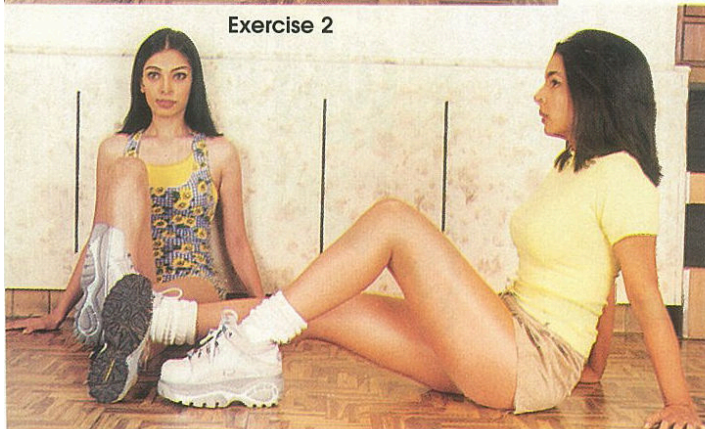
Abs: Exercise 3

Basic exercise: Lie down side by side and bend your legs (at a 90° angle) and keep them apart (shoulder width at the knees and the feet). Your feet should be next to your partner's hips.

Extend the arms out at the shoulder level, parallel to one another and to the ground, palms facing down. Your arm should meet your partner's at the lower arm. In other words, it means fingers to elbow for both of you. Roll back and forth, slowly rolling your back down onto the mat, and then lifting it off again, one vertebra at a time, keeping just the head and the shoulders off the floor on one



Exercise 1



Exercise 2

A Few Rules

- Warm-up before starting, and be make sure you take time to 'cool down' once you're done.
- Breathe normally right through all of the exercises. There is a tendency to hold our breath during isometric (static) exercises, unless we consciously make an effort to breathe regularly.
- Work to the extent where an exercise is difficult, but not impossible. If you are the stronger person of the two, keep your working limbs (arms or legs) straighter and further away from your body. If you are the weaker partner, then make sure that you keep your working limbs more bent and closer to your body.
- Isometrics are not suitable for those with HBP (high blood pressure) or CVD. In that case, these exercises need to be modified to isotonic (exercises with movement). Ask a fitness professional for guidance regarding the same.
- Each person will assume the role of both partners. Do two sets, each of eight slow counts of exercises one and two before changing positions and repeating the same.
- When working the upper and lower body, wrists and ankles should never turn too much. They must remain straight.

Well, what are you waiting for? Go on, get fit!

end (when you're down), and bringing your head between your knees on the other (when you're up). Exhale as you come up, and inhale as you lower down. This exercise is isotonic. Do four (up and down is counted as one). Repeat after a few moments.

It targets: The abs, mainly the rectus abdominus muscle (main, long abdominal muscle).

Check Points: Don't rush through the exercise. Don't jerk on your way up. Keep the back rounded at all times and the chin close to the chest. The legs have a tendency of straightening out which needs to be kept in check.

When you sit up, make sure the pelvis doesn't slide forward, but stays in place as you tighten and squeeze the abs.