

20-Minute Park Workout By Cathy Moxley

Adapted from: http://moms.kaboose.com/park_workout.html

Not every exercise is right for everybody.

If any of the exercises cause pain in your joints or otherwise causes discomfort beyond tired muscles, it may not be right for you. It is normal to experience muscle soreness after trying a new exercise routine, but that should subside quickly.

This workout is designed to be a circuit.

You'll go through each of the exercises one by one, doing each exercise for approximately 30-60 seconds and then switching quickly to the next exercise. Beginners may want to stop there, with just one set. More experienced exercisers may want to go through the circuit a second or even a third time through, with all three sets taking approximately 20 minutes total. How many repetitions can you expect to complete in 30-60 seconds? A general range will be approximately 12-30 repetitions, depending on the exercise and on your own level of endurance. If you are a beginner, you may need to stop after just 30 seconds, but as you get stronger, you'll likely be able to continue each exercise for a *full* 60 seconds!

Before beginning, warm up your muscles.

Take a brisk walk around the playground for about three to five minutes and you'll be ready!

1. Playground Push Ups

Place your hands about shoulder-width apart on a playground platform that is about waist high. You'll keep your feet planted about four feet away from the platform and your elbows straight. Keep your body straight



and slowly bend your elbows until your chest just about touches the platform, then push yourself back to your starting position. Be sure to avoid arching your back or sagging through your midsection and for the most benefit, make a good effort to go through the full range of motion.

Note: The great thing about playground pushups is that you can make them harder or easier by varying the height of the surface you use for your hand placement. If you're a beginner, choose something fairly high, so that you are standing almost straight up for the starting position. For a real challenge, choose a low platform so that your body is much closer to horizontal, as with traditional push-ups.



2. Monkey Bar Pull Ups

Hang from the low monkey bars with your legs outstretched in front of you and heels on the ground. Pull yourself up as high as you can and then lower back down to the starting position. Your back will be a bit rounded in the starting position. As you pull yourself up, you'll notice that your back straightens considerably. Make an effort to consciously squeeze your shoulder blades together during the movement for maximum toning.

3. Park Bench Dips

Sit on a park bench and then lift your body weight up and out, palms on the edge of the bench and facing out and your elbows straight. Your knees will be bent and your feet flat on the ground. Bend your elbows and then straighten to dip down and up. Be sure not to rock back and forth *away from* and *back to* the bench. Instead, keep your back very close to the bench during the entire movement and limit the movement to *up and down*.



4. Slide Lunges

Stand in a lunge position with your back foot up on the bottom of the slide. Lower down, bending your front knee to about 90 degrees, being careful not to let your front knee to jut out beyond your toes. Push back up to your starting position, focusing most of your weight through your front heel (rather than your back foot). Be sure to keep your body erect and to keep the movement going up and down rather than forward and back, which would place undue strain on the knee. After your first 30-60-second set, you'll need to switch legs and repeat on the other side.

5. V-Sit Ab Toner

Sit on the end of a park bench, facing sideways (so that the back of the bench won't be in your way). Place your hands on the bench on either side of you, and lean forward while drawing your knees in toward your chest. Next, lean back while extending your legs out in front of you. Stay balanced on your rear end. Repeat the movement back and forth as smoothly as possible, while holding in your abdominals as tightly as possible during the motion.



6. Hanging Ab Toner

This one is tough! Hang from the high monkey bars. (Your feet should not be able to touch the ground.) Pull your knees up as high as you can and then lower them back to your starting position. Be sure to keep the movement slow and controlled and avoid using momentum (ie swinging your legs up there!). Beginners may want to work this one into the routine gradually!