

Sphynx-Plank

1. Lying on your stomach, set your elbows directly underneath your shoulders. The elbows should be “forearm-distance” apart, which means you should be able to reach and touch opposite elbows with your hands. Without actually letting the arms slide on the floor, pull the elbows and hands back towards your hips, creating a traction force on your spine. Keep your navel on the floor while you lift your sternum and chest. Maintain the pull with your arms. Keep the chin tucked. You should feel the stretch in your thoracic spine as you are moving it into extension. Hold 10 seconds.
2. To transition into the plank, move the hands together and press your palms into each other—this engages the rotator cuff muscles. Also push your chest away from the floor to engage your serratus anterior and stabilize your scapulae. Pull the belly toward the spine, engaging your deep abdominals. Tuck the toes in and lift your body off the floor.
3. Stay in the plank and keep your abs engaged the whole time. Try to keep your body as straight as possible. It may be necessary to tuck the tailbone and tilt the pelvis to avoid hyperextending the back. Keep breathing and checking to ensure that your position is unchanged. Hold 10-60 seconds as directed by your PT
4. Slowly lower yourself down from the plank and back into the sphynx and alternate between the two. Make sure to protect the shoulders by stabilizing the scapulae and making the shoulders the last thing you relax on the way down.

