DUCK WALK

Technical points:

Begin with the feet hip width apart, lower yourself into a full squat, rock onto your toes and place one foot (i.e. right) in front with the heel on the ground, as if talking a step, and transfer the body weight onto it. Back heel (left) is lifted off the ground, abdominal muscles are activated and your back is leaning very slightly but it's straight.



[Fig 55: Duck Walk]

When stepping forwards, gradually transfer your body weight on the front foot (right). You cannot move the back leg until you shift 100% of your weight onto the front foot.

As you transfer the body weight on the right foot, drop the left knee down close the ground (without touching the ground) and then squeeze it up to your chest straight away, the left foot moving straight forward and under your body, not out to the side, if you can. You will feel tension in your abdominal muscles when you squeeze the knee to your chest, like an ab crunch, if you keep your body straight and move the back foot under the body not to the side. If you slouch there is no room for the knee to lift and the foot will go out to the side.

Fig 56: Duck Walk shows the whole process explained above moving from right foot forward to left foot forward. To get the most out of this exercise do you best to keep your body straight and move the back foot under the body, like the wheels of a car, and not out to the side.

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[Fig 56: Duck Walk]

Step with the left foot forward, place the whole tripod on the ground, and continue walking, this time dropping the right knee very close to the ground and then squeeze it up to the chest and step with the right foot forward.

Continue transferring the body weight and walking. The slower the better.

Duck Walk Backwards

Walking backwards is the same but you need to fully transfer your bodyweight on the back foot until your front foot can easily come off the ground, when there is almost no weight on it. You fully roll onto your back foot.

Benefits:

Strengthening quadriceps, gluteus maximum, core, tibialis anterior, foot and ankle muscles, knee and hip stability muscles.

Improving balance.

Mobilising ankle, foot and hip and taking the joints through their full range of motion.

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Common errors and/or weaknesses to be aware of:

- Feet move out to the side instead of forward and under the body. This is common at the beginning, as you progress feet should move forwards.



[Fig 57: Duck Walk]

- Slouching. There is a slight lean at the hip but the back is straight, just not necessarily vertical. However if you slouch there is no room for the knee to lift to the chest.

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[Fig 58: Duck Walk]

- Placing hands on the ground to recover balance. Again common at the beginning, and it's not necessarily wrong, just inefficient. As stability muscles and sense of balance improve hands should not make contact with the ground anymore.

- Front heel comes off the ground. Ensure you ground the front tripod before moving on.

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