



35 Days Strong

Doing 35 press ups in a row may sound tough, but you can do it... and we are here to show you how! By taking part in the 35 Days Strong challenge, you will be helping to end violence and fight poverty so that all women, everywhere, can create the future they want.

Here is our day-by-day guide to completing your challenge, including a daily description of each exercise and video links to demonstrations, which we hope will help. Good luck!



Today we're going to start with negative press ups – don't worry, they aren't negative at all! They are a like half press up: you only need to lower yourself to the ground, you don't have to push yourself back up. Start in a high plank position, as seen in the image. Focus on controlling your body on the way down – lowering yourself as slowly as possible until you are completely on the floor. It is important to keep your back straight! Then re-set and go again. If you're unsure on how to do this, you can [watch this YouTube clip](#).

Repeat this five times for five sets. Take a rest between sets.



It's time for an exercise that we will be doing a lot of in this challenge: the triceps dip. Use a chair, bed, stairs or another platform. Put your hands behind you on the platform and sit down on the floor. Your feet should be firmly planted and about shoulder width apart on the floor. Keep your chest open, squeeze shoulder blades together and push yourself up off the floor, but do not fully straighten your elbows. Then lower yourself back down so your elbow is about the same height as your shoulder. If you're unsure on how to do this, you can [watch this YouTube clip](#).

Repeat this eight times for four sets.



Rest day! Getting stronger takes time, so we need to rest too. No exercise today.



Day 4

Feeling rested? We are going to do our first press up today! But let's not go too fast, we will use an elevated surface such as a table, stairs or a bench. You can make it as high (and therefore easy) as you want. Challenge yourself! Place your hands on the elevated surface, opposite your shoulders. Keep your back straight (tighten your abs!) and push yourself up. Then lower yourself in a controlled manner. If you're unsure on how to do this, you can [watch this YouTube clip](#).

Repeat this seven times for five sets.



Day 5

Enough movement yesterday? Today we are going to stay still... and do some planks! Keep your hands flat on the floor under your shoulders, lift onto your toes and keep your back straight. Watch your breathing, push yourself out as flat as possible and tighten your glutes as seen in the image. If you're unsure on how to do this, you can [watch this YouTube clip](#).

Hold it for 45 seconds and then take a rest. Repeat this three times.



Day 6

Rest Day! Today is a well-earned rest day. You could use the extra time to catch up on what's been happening on our [35 Days Strong Facebook page](#) and get some top tips from others participating in the challenge too.



Day 7

We are back to negative press ups! You'll remember these from day one, and hopefully you'll be able to do more than last week. Tomorrow is another rest day, so push yourself today!

Repeat this as many times as you can for three sets. Continue until you can't anymore, take a rest and start the next set.



Day 8

Rest day! Are your arms aching? No problem, you can spend today recovering.



Day 9

Today we are challenging you with two exercises! Luckily, you have done them both before. We will do some elevated press ups followed by some negative press ups. For the elevated press ups, if possible, use the same height platform that you used on day four. You are doing so well!

Repeat the elevated press ups six times, for three sets. Follow this up with six negative press ups on the floor.



Day 10

The triceps dips are back and you will hopefully notice an improvement in your strength and stamina. Remember to really open your chest and squeeze your shoulder blades at the back.

Repeat this nine times for three sets.



Day 11

Rest Day! No workout today. Instead, why not inspire yourself by learning about the cause you're helping to support. Read ActionAid's blog [here](#) about Sonali, an acid attack survivor from Bangladesh. She speaks about her experience, how she has recovered from her attack and why she stands with women and girls to say #MyBodyIsMine. Hopefully, it will inspire you and keep you motivated.



Day 12

We are continuing with the elevated press ups today, but this time, use a lower platform – for example, move down a stair if you're using stairs.

Repeat the elevated press ups six times, for three sets. Follow this up with six negative press ups on the floor.



Day 13

Today we're doing triceps dips again. Are they getting easier? You can make it harder for yourself by going more slowly.

Repeat this nine times for three sets.



Day 14

Rest Day! How's that muscle ache? It may be tough, but you're doing great! If you need some extra inspiration, visit our website to read more about ActionAid's work to end violence against women and girls. On this page you will see Jyoti's story. Jyoti is a survivor of domestic abuse and now works at ActionAid's One-Stop Crisis centre in India as a counsellor and outreach worker to help other survivors. She does this because she wants to give back to the centre that helped her rebuild her own life. You can [read more about Jyoti and our work in India here](#).



Day 15

Today you'll be doing a familiar exercise, but with a new look. You start with a negative press up, lowering your body in a controlled manner. When you almost reach the ground, bring your knees to the floor and press yourself back up. Once you are up, lift back onto your toes and start again. Watch these YouTube links for examples of [negative press ups](#) and [knee press ups](#) and then combine the two moves. You can do it!

Repeat this seven times for four sets.

**You're nearly
halfway there!**





Day 16

Today we will do a slightly less intensive exercise – shoulder blade press ups. Go into a high plank position, as if you are about to attempt a full press up (don't worry, you aren't!) keep your arms/elbows straight. From here, sink your shoulder blades and squeeze them together as if you want to hold a pencil between them. Hold this for five seconds and then come up again. The movement is small, but it trains muscles essential to your press ups. If you're unsure on how to do this, you can [watch this YouTube clip here](#).

Repeat this twelve times for three sets.



Day 17

And we celebrate that with a rest day. How's it going so far? Have you managed to impress your friends and family with your training? Send them a message today with an update and you will undoubtedly receive some motivational responses back. Don't forget to keep sharing your JustGiving page.



Day 18

Today we're going to do elevated press ups again. Try and lower the platform from last time – it must remain challenging!

Repeat this nine times for four sets.



Day 19

The shoulder blade press up is back! Take a little longer over the movement to make it more difficult and really focus on the muscles in your shoulders.

Repeat this twelve times for three sets.



Day 20

Another rest day! You've earned it.



Day 21

These are the last negative press ups we will do, so give it everything you've got! You will do the negative press-up on your toes and come back up on your knees – like on day 15.

Repeat this as many times as you can for three sets. It might be getting harder, but don't give up!



Day 22

Yesterday was a tough day, so today is another rest day! It is important to remember why you are doing this – to help end violence against women and girls. In the current coronavirus crisis, lockdowns around the world are bringing a rise in domestic violence, leaving women and girls at increased risk of all forms of abuse. We want to share with you a story about Talat, one of the women leading ActionAid's response to the pandemic in India where she is delivering food packages to vulnerable members of society. You can [read more about her story here](#).



Day 23

We are going to do a real press up, but with the help of some cushions! You need to put one or two cushions on the floor and then get into the starting position for a press up with your chest directly over the cushions. Lower yourself down until you hit the cushion, then press up again. [Here is a demo of a standard press up.](#)

Repeat this 15 times for four sets.



Day 24

Back to an old favourite – the triceps dips! You will notice a big difference to the last time you did these on day 13.

Repeat this twelve times for three sets.



Day 25

Rest day! Only ten more days to go!



Day 26

Get that cushion back out from day 23 and let's continue with some press ups.

Repeat this twelve times for three sets.



Day 27

Triceps dip. Remember your elbows should sit at the same height as your shoulders. Chest open, shoulders back.

Repeat this twelve times for three sets.



Day 28

The final week is fast approaching – thank you so much for all your hard work so far! Now is a great time to send a reminder to your friends and family to sponsor you for your challenge. You may also want to share with them the story of Millicent, to show how their support could make a difference.

Millicent is from Uganda and endured years of physical and mental abuse from her ex-husband. One day, he poured acid on her face, causing her to lose an eye. Millicent feared for her life and the lives of her children until she was referred to the ActionAid Gender Based Violence Shelter for support.

You can [read more about her story and our work in Uganda here.](#)



Day 29

The practice round! We are going to do a real, full press up without any support. We will do very short sets. If you're unsure on how to do a standard press up, [watch this YouTube clip here.](#)

Repeat this 3-5 times, for seven sets. Take a rest in between.



Less dynamic, but no less challenging – it's plank time again! Challenge yourself as much as possible and remember to tighten your abs and squeeze your glutes!

Hold for a minute, repeat this twice.



Rest Day! We are taking it a bit easier this last week, as in just four days you are going to achieve 35 press ups in one go. It won't be easy, but you will give it your best shot, and that is what really matters.



Push ups today, using a cushion one more time as an aid. Slowly lower yourself down and then push up explosively.

Repeat these as many times as you can for three sets.



It's almost time for the grand finale! Are you ready for it? Take two rest days now so that you can prepare physically and mentally! This is also a great time to share your fundraising page far and wide with friends and family – to get as much support as possible. Make your challenge count!



The time has come, today we are going for the 35! **Good luck!** We'll be with you in spirit cheering you on and can't wait to hear how you do. You could ask someone to film you doing the press ups so that you can share the clip afterwards with all the people who supported you and us.

Congratulations!



Thank you so much for taking part in 35 Days Strong! You have been incredible, and you have achieved so much in such a short space of time. Not only can you now do 35 press ups(!), but you have raised money to help change the lives of women and girls living in poverty. You can [read more about how your support will help to end violence against women and girls here](#).

We would love to hear how you got on with the challenge, so please get in touch at events@actionaid.org or call 01460 238 000. You can also share your thoughts and top press up tips on our [Facebook group](#).

Remember to keep sharing your JustGiving page and let all your family and friends know you have completed the challenge!

Thank you again and well done from all of us here at ActionAid UK.