

Why do Abdominal Exercises ?

A couple of months ago we looked at exercises which would benefit the core. The abdominal muscles are part of the core, and there are benefits to having strong abs (aside from having a six pack!). Strong abs are critical to ensure balance in the trunk, which can prevent back injury, and provide more power and stability in daily activities.

Many people perform way more abdominal exercises at higher repetitions than are necessary. Significant benefit can be gained from training three times a week with around 20 repetitions.

It's also important to ensure that the tummy is held in (tense the core muscles) whilst doing these exercises, or you'll develop a six pack cunningly concealed behind adipose tissue....

As with all exercise you'll need to persevere: results don't come overnight, but sticking with a regular and consistent programme will bring the results over a couple of months. Some of these suggestions are quite hard, so take care and ease into them. When on your back, try not to arch the spine.

As ever: if you haven't exercised for a while, or have any medical conditions which might cause problems, check with your Doctor to ensure it's safe to increase your activity levels. Remember, pain is a sign that something is wrong....

Cross Leg Cruch

Lie down with one leg crossed over the other. Keep both feet off the floor, and as you do the exercise bring the leg into the chest. At the same time, do a sit up with hands behind your head. Keep your lower back on the floor, focus on a point directly above you, and don't pull your head up.



Reverse Curl

Place your hands by your sides, with your feet up towards the ceiling. Slow, small movements are required to push your pelvis and lower back off the floor. Avoid swinging the legs forward and back, and for stability the legs can be crossed. **Avoid if you have lower back pain.**



Plank

Avoid if you have lower back pain. Resting on your forearms, and your toes, hold your body up. Look straight down, hold the tummy in. Keep your elbows under your shoulder blades with your forearms facing forward. Aim to keep a straight line throughout your legs and spine and don't sag !.



Hip Rolls

This is a good exercise, and suitable for beginners. Lie on your back, with your hands out by your sides, palms down. Bend your legs, keeping feet firmly flat on the floor. Lower the knees to one side turning at the waist. Aim to allow the thighs to touch the floor, then slowly repeat again on the other side. Avoid letting the shoulders come up off the floor, and take it slow.



Hands Over Knees

Place one leg across the other, keeping the foot close to your bottom. Hold your head with one hand, keeping your chin off your chest, and avoid pulling on your neck. Take the other hand across your body, just above your knee. Left hand to right knee, then vice versa. Take it slow and don't force it.



Alan Clinch

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